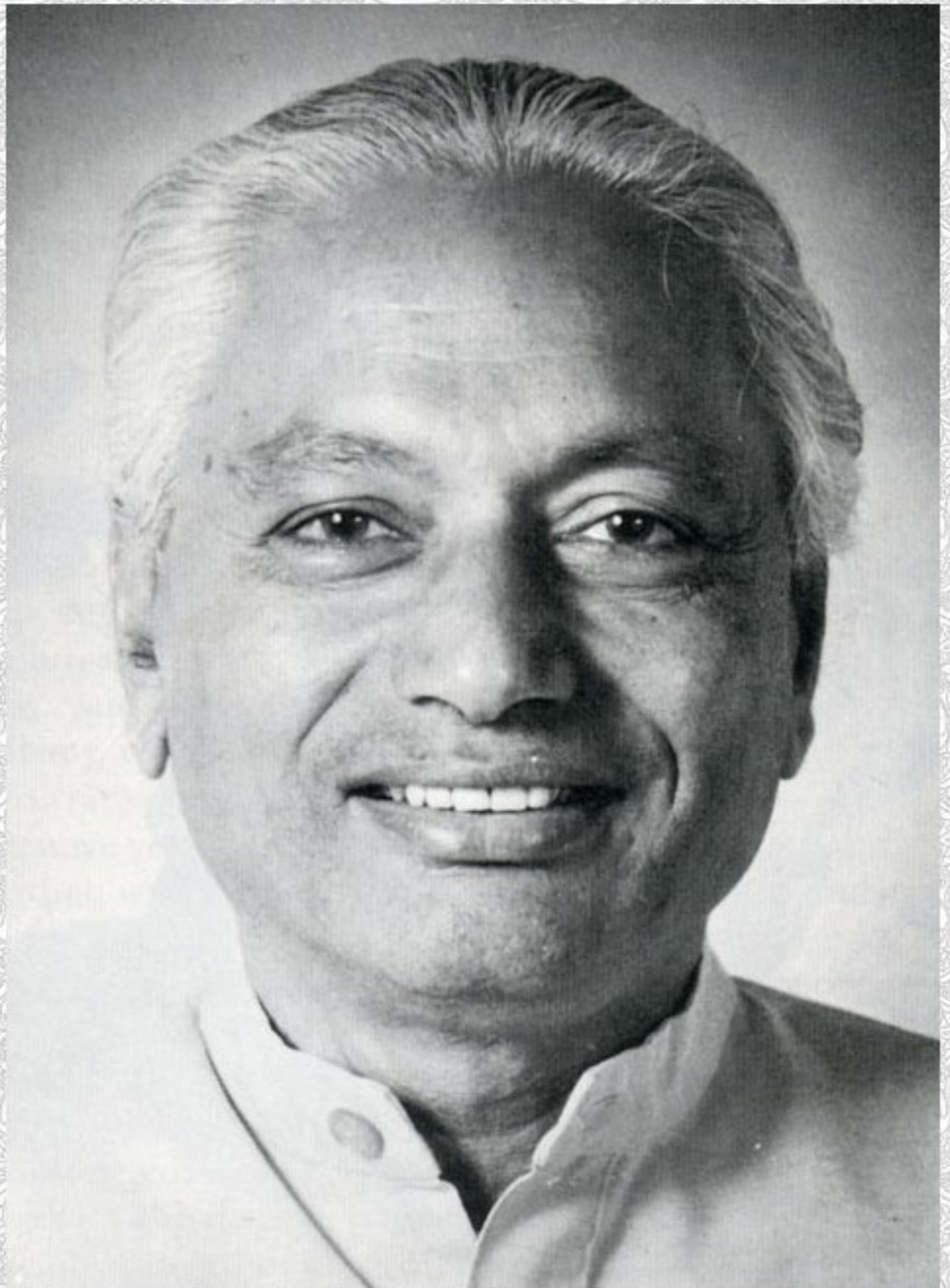


Yoga is Enlightened Living

Swami Venkatesananda



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NOTE

The European Yoga Union had organised a Yoga Congress at Zinal - Switzerland, during the first week of September. The General Secretary of the Union, Mr. Gerard Blitz, and the President of the German Yoga Federation, Prof. Martin Ludtke, had requested Swami Venkatesananda to participate in the Congress. Swami Venkatesananda delivered two Talks which were later followed by a lively discussion.

October 1975

I am very happy to be here and I am thankful to the organizers, particularly to the enlightened, whose name is Mr. Blitz - the Leader of the Congress.

They were looking for a proper word to represent the theme of the talk today 'Yoga as Enlightened Living'. I would have suggested 'Yoga as Blitz' - blitz in German means lightning. And I am particularly happy that all the yoga teachers of Europe, England and other parts of the world are here. I was told that yoga teachers belonging to several schools of thought, holding different views of yoga are here. Often we are tempted to divide yoga and even to suggest that there is a true yoga and a false yoga. If I look at that problem to begin with, I see something very clearly and that is - in this world, in you, in me, in everything we touch, there is some truth and there is something that is false. There is a mixture, the mixture of the true and the false.

There is truth in every form of yoga. There is truth in every school of yoga and that truth is, inevitably perhaps, mixed with an opinion, an idea. We are taking this thing called yoga as an example, but you can see that this mixture covers our entire life. When you go out of this hall and look at the mountain, you will see this. What am I seeing? A mountain. Does the mountain hit me on my head and say, "Look at me, I am a mountain"? Does it even say, "I am the mountain, and if you do not call me a mountain you are a fool"? No. It is nameless and formless, as the reality. When that reality exists, without a name and a form or a definition, there is peace. When you look at "that" without calling it a mountain, there is peace. Can you immediately see that that which is true is peace? Absolute peace? What is "it"? What is "that"? If I am honest, I must confess I do not know, I think it is a mountain. Where there is no knowledge, there is a vacuum and that vacuum is immediately filled by thought. There is no vacuum in nature. I do not know, and therefore I think. I do not know who I am, but then it is disgraceful, and I do not want to confess that I do not know what I am and so I think. I think I am an Indian, I think I am a swami. What is a swami? Strip this robe and there is no swami there. I am a man. If I stand in front of an x-ray plant it does not see a man. I refuse to face this truth that I do not know, and therefore that vacuum is immediately filled with scores and dozens of, "I think, I think, I think" "I think I am an Indian, I think I am a yogi, I think I am ..." and, following on that, "I think I am happy, I think I am unhappy. I think this is pleasure, I think this is pain." Our whole life is destroyed by this thought, which may have its own place - but which takes the place of knowledge. I must first see this clearly - that in all that I experience, in all that I see, there is a mixture of the true and the false, and where the truth is not seen, where there is no knowledge, the false takes over, thought takes over. And, as soon as thought steps into my life, everything is divided. There is a good yoga and a bad yoga. There is a good swami and there is a bad swami. There is an Indian and a European. This is what destroys my life.

What do I do next? Where do I go from there? I am told that "if only you would think positively Swami, everything would be alright. You do not think that you are the body, you are the personality, you are the man, you think 'I am the self.' And therefore we have even created what is known as the brahmacara vritti or the formula or 'feeling' 'I am the Infinite'. Do not think you are a small man, think you are the cosmic being. It does not help me either. What is positive thinking? What is thinking 'I am God'? It is still thinking. To begin with, I thought I was ignorant. I never know when I am ignorant. I do not know what ignorance means. If I know what ignorance means, it becomes knowledge. There is something which thought thinks it thinks it knows. And then I think, I project an idea of God, I project an idea of knowledge. I project an idea of the absolute, of truth, and I keep chewing my own ideas. It is a beautiful pastime. I can go on like that for eternity, without ever solving this basic problem of the inner conflict created by thought.

Is there a way out of this? Is there a way out of this terrible vicious circle in which we keep running round and round thinking about thinking, thinking about thought, thinking about knowledge, creating ideas about knowledge, creating ideas about enlightenment? We all have brilliant ideas of enlightenment, like seeing some light between the eyebrows - the third eye. One of the great saints of India defined the third eye, which is called in Sanskrit, divya caksu or jnana cakcu. He said it is not a third eye that is stuck in your forehead, it is not the wisdom eye, but it is the 'eye' that is wisdom. The wisdom that sees straight, straight into it, without thinking, without the interference of thought. The wisdom that is able to become aware right now where your left toe is.

I do not know if you have read a very delightful series of little stories by a person called Mullah Nasrudin. I remember a delightful little anecdote. He went to see a friend of his and that friend lived in a house which did not have electricity. It was getting dark and the friend looked at this Mullah and said: "Hoy, Mullah, it's getting dark, better light the candle. You'll find one on your left-hand side". And Mullah looked at him and said, "If it is dark, you fool, how do I know where my left hand is?" That, that thing, that knowledge, that awareness, that consciousness, that intelligence in you, is able to see directly, without the use of thought. Is it possible to let that work? Is it possible at all?

In the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali there is an aphorism: "svapna nidra jnanalambanam va" which means "reflect on the message of dreams and sleep." Do not be terribly concerned with this world, do not take this that you see as the truth because in dream you also see all sorts of scenes which are nowhere but within you, within your own imagination. That image is in me, and that image is outside, that's all. I do not know whether you are outside, I think you are outside. Your image is formed in me, in here somewhere, even physiologically speaking. So do not take these things too seriously. Enquire,

look within. Is there a possibility of a life which is not pestered by thought? Yes, and Patanjali reminds us: "Look at the state of your own sleep" Nidra - sleep, according to Patanjali again, is another vritti, an other idea, an other concept, another notion that arises in consciousness, in you. It is also a thought. It is also a form of thought, where you think or you do not think.

Many of the serious meditators also adopt this delightful trick. You sit bolt upright. That's quite easy if you train yourself to sit right, or nowadays if you visit some sport shops, they even have some supports which keep you straight - straight-jackets, and then you think: "I do not think." Either you think of a God - which is your own projection, your own creation, your own little sweet baby - do not abandon it - or if you do not like this kind of visualization, you abandon all that and you sit and think "I do not think!" That's another form of sleep. It is delightful, it is refreshing, it is relaxing, it is harmless. If you are able to sit and do it. So, if you merely look at these daily phenomena called dream and sleep, you realise that it is possible to let this intelligence function without the interference of thought and the volition "I am", "I think". Merely a possibility is indicated. I am emphasizing that because there is no use thinking about dreams. There is no use analysing your dreams because the analysing mind is not the dreaming mind. If you can possibly analyse your dreams while you are dreaming, you will probably get at the meaning. Probably. But we do not do that. The dreaming has gone and then the waking mind tries to figure out what the dream may mean.

I did not want to take your time telling these little stories, but I think its nice sometimes to hear some stories. A man dreamt one night of a flaming figure number nine, radiant, red and shining. He was going to the racecourse the next morning to gamble, and when he saw this number nine illuminated throughout the night - every time he woke up from sleep or went back to sleep, the number nine was there, he was convinced it was a message from God. And the message was "Number nine, remember number nine when you are on the race-course." The taxi that he took to the racecourse was number nine, the entrance was number nine, everything was number nine: sure, there was a message. And he betted nine thousand, nine hundred and ninety nine pounds on horse number nine, absolutely convinced that he would get nine million pounds back. The horse came number nine. That was the message.

So, can I interpret the dream while dreaming, or if you are my friend, the interpreter, can you dream my dream while I am dreaming it? And if you can, probably you can interpret my dream while you are dreaming my dream, and pull out the right meaning of it. No, do not 'think' of dreams, do not 'think' of sleep. I do not know what sleep means because the moment I wake up I realise I was asleep - but I am not asleep anymore. Patanjali merely drops a hint here, that dream has a message for you.

Sleep indicates that there is a state where thinking does not have to dominate your life. That's it. The rest has to happen directly. I do not know what ignorance means, but I can become aware that my life is dominated, destroyed by thought. Can I become aware of 'the thought' without thinking? There is a beautiful word for it. It is called 'vichara' in sanskrit, which unfortunately has been translated into 'enquiry'. It is not enquiry in the sense of analysis, thinking about thinking about thinking. The root 'char' means 'to move'. Can this consciousness, can this understanding, can this awareness, which at present is moving away from the center, thinking about what this may be, can the course of this movement be reversed, so that instead of thinking of these, you perhaps begin to think of your self? Watch very carefully, you are still thinking. I begin to think that thought is a menace. I begin to think that even a good thought is a thought. When you begin to do that, you are directly understanding the beautiful definition given by Patanjali in the Yoga Sutras. "Yogas citta vritti nirodhah". Chitta is the ocean called awareness, the ocean called consciousness, the ocean of intelligence, the ocean that is indivisible. Ocean cannot be divided. You can stick a hundred names on your maps but it is just one indivisible mass of water. And vritti, chitta vritti, is like a wave. Can you, sitting here, visualise an ocean? What is the relation that this wave has to the ocean? Is there a wave apart from the ocean? I am going to ask you a very difficult question. You have now understood that the wave is part of the ocean. I do not like that expression either. You cannot describe as 'a part' that which cannot be parted from the rest of it. My arm is a part of me. If there is a good surgeon here he can take it and put it somewhere else, so therefore it is called a part of me. If you cannot take it away, take it apart, pull it apart, it has no parts. Space has no parts at all. It is one whole. Now you are seeing the waves on the ocean. You are enlightened now. You have understood all this Patanjali teaching - how to go beyond thought and how to look at the truth and so on. Can you look at this ocean and not see the waves? Can you take the waves and throw them away? "Oh no, I do not want the waves, I want the ocean?" No. The wave is there. The wave is the ocean, but while you were looking at it, something within you started ticking, saying: "Oh, that is the ocean, and that is the wave on top," The wave is not on top of the ocean. The whole thing is called the ocean.

Now we come to this important word - nirodah. What does it mean? I look at this ocean and I look at these waves. Now there seems to be within me a notion that the waves are something apart, something which came into being, something which seems to exist and something which seems to dissolve in the ocean. The wave seems to rise from the ocean. Hah, as if it is ... sitting on - a crow is sitting on my head. The wave rises on the ocean, or from the ocean, and it seems to exist. All these are words ... on top of the ocean or it dissolves in the ocean. While we say all this, we are creating a distinction, a division that is untrue, false. I am not suggesting that the wave is false, but the division that the mind creates, that thought creates - between the wave and

the ocean - is false. An enlightened person looks at the same ocean, and he has the same vision. He has the same vision, but in that vision there is no division. There is direct perception, direct understanding, direct experience without the division of the thought saying that this wave came out of the ocean, it stood there and it got into the ocean. If that is somewhat clear, the real meaning of the word 'nirodah' is somewhat clear also. It is the abolition of the non-existent division.

If the division is true, it cannot be got rid of. Truth cannot be got rid of. There is a lovely verse in the Bhagavad Gita: "Nasato vidyadevabho nabhavo vidyade satah" - meaning: "The truth can never cease to be and the unreal never comes into being." The division of the wave and the ocean is only a dream, an idea. Let that disappear. That disappearance is called the 'nirodah'. You are not suppressing your thoughts, you are not expressing your thoughts, you are not indulging yourself, you are not becoming an ascetic, you are not running away from the world, you are not getting into the world - getting drowned. I do not want to wipe the world out of my vision; but, seeing the truth, can this idea that I have concerning this truth, be discarded? How does one do that? If you are "there" already, perhaps, like the Buddha, like these great born sages, the moment one little conflict hits you, hah - you wake up to it. As long as thought that creates all these divisions continues to function, conflict cannot be avoided in this world. We are caught up in this trap, in this trap of "I think", in this trap of ideas, in this trap of concepts, in this trap of thinking thoughts.

If one little experience puts you right through into a direct apprehension of truth, then you are a yogi, a born yogi and you do not have to learn yoga. Or you may need just a little help, just a little push; such seekers may be helped with just a little push. A Zen master might suggest to you, "Sit down, relax completely, and listen to your own breathing, and, while you are listening to the breathing, see where a change takes place. You know, all of us are very fond of this deep breathing. The more I breathe, the better I live. Inhale. Can I inhale more? No, it wants to burst. Can you go on breathing in? Why not? You cannot do that? Why not? And in the same way some yogis tell us in India that you must exhale, exhale, exhale, and empty, empty yourself. I am prepared to die, and I exhale, hold the lungs empty. But you gasp and inhale. Who made you do that? When you look into this changing of inhalation and exhalation, you also have a direct vision of something that is beyond the 'me'. That which does not know the difference between life and death - that is eternal life. Whether this body is there, is not there, falls, stands, walks or breathes, doesn't matter at all. There is something which keeps going. That is what pranayama teaches you, isn't it? It is quite simple. I sit and inhale and exhale. Then, to spoil me, there are some doctors who come and tell me: "There is a centre in the brain which is a sort of thermostatic switch which

goes on and off." So, I have an other idea - a thermostat stuck in my brain. Again, I do not get anywhere.

I may need a much stronger prod, goad or inspiration. The Hatha Yoga texts give us kumbhaka. Take a deep breath, do jalandara bandha, and hold your breath. The more you hold, the nearer you are to enlightenment, if not in this birth, in the next one. Can I, when there is this what you call panic - it is not panic but what you call panic; happens in me, can I ...? I cannot even die. I hold my breath out and something makes me breathe again. It is fantastic ... that's it. But you won't leap. Only a little window is opened, you look through the window and what are you looking at? You are looking at the sky, the same sky, not the whole sky, but the sky. The total sky can never be seen by your eyes and the total truth can never be comprehended by the individual mind or soul or whatever it is. That's all. I've got my inspiration.

The message is clear that the 'I' is not so important in this world. And yet I want to know - what is this 'I', what is this thought, the thought of 'I', 'I am', 'I think'? And so we enter into what is called meditation. Meditation is not merely sitting and closing your eyes. You do not have to close your eyes because with eyes closed your brain will still see something. With open eyes, if I am not interested, I may not see. In the Yoga Sutras, a beautiful series of meditation exercises is given.

"Vitarka vicara nanda smita nugamat sampra jnatah" - a sort of path is carved out. First, vitarka; you let the mind indulge in thinking thoughts and counter-thoughts. "I see this, but then I saw something in my dream, which I knew was false." Then I learn to look directly within to see where thought arises. Can I distinguish that spot where the thought arises? Is there any difference in the source, in the ground of that experience? Is there a distinction between a pleasant touch and an unpleasant touch? Is there a difference between the right hand and the left hand? Is there a difference between a good man and a bad man? Is there a difference between happiness and unhappiness? Is there a difference between pleasure and pain? Are they not all different waves that are the ocean?

That intelligence which sees this directly, is called 'vichara'. 'Vichara' is not analysis or enquiry. It is when the consciousness, when this intelligence, when this awareness moves directly within, to see that all these are thoughts, all thoughts are the same, all feelings are the same, whether the feeling is called pleasant or unpleasant, pain or pleasure, happiness or unhappiness, Indian or European. The aggregate of all these is what I have so far considered "me". The "me" is, therefore, the unified ground of all these. When thus the unified ground of thoughts, feelings and experiences is directly seen, there is joy, like, not unlike, the experience of sleep in which however there is still this "I".

I started somewhere. I started seeing differences in this world - good and evil, etc. etc. and then these seem to disappear because I realise that all these divisions were in me, created by me, and then - there's just this "me" left. But the "me", as long as it is there, is capable of creating a division. Evil thoughts may have to be sublimated to become good thoughts. But as long as I have value for these thoughts, I will still continue to think. Yogis emphasize that one must have a pure heart in order to make any progress in yoga. Right, quite right. Why do I run after what is called pleasures? Because I have given them a lot of value. Switch it off. When that is switched off, then the mind naturally moves in one area called the good. That is called Brahmacharya. Brahmacharya means when the mind moves in Brahman, when the mind moves in God, when the mind moves in good or when the mind moves in a single area - neither divided between seeking what I call pleasure, nor avoiding what I call pain, where there is no attraction for pleasure, where there is no attraction at all and the mind moves in just a single area. That is brahmacharya and that is also transcended. The distinction between even what is called good and what is called evil vanishes. And then there is "I". The object seems to have gone, but the "I" is there. Once again you look at the mountain. The idea that it is a mountain does not arise, but still there is in me the feeling: "I see ... it. I see it. It? I do not know if it is it but I see." Ahah, when the eyes are open there is seeing. What is it that jumps up within and says, "I see?" There is a lovely sutra in the Yoga Sutras - "drista drisimatrah suddhopi pratyayanupasya". The meaning is this: "The seer is seeing." Somehow, an idea arises, a wave arises, which thinks it sees. There your enquiry ends.

"Nirvicara vaisaradye 'dhyatma prasadah"

When the enquiry comes to an end, then there is Divine Grace - for the undivided intelligence or consciousness, cosmic consciousness, cannot be realised by the finite, the divided consciousness. "I" cannot see God. "I" cannot see the totality. The wave cannot become aware of the whole ocean. It is only the ocean that can become aware of the wave. It is only the ocean that can become aware of itself.

All that we have achieved in yoga is that this divider which is the dividing agent, the division of division, has gone. That's all. That which created the problems has ceased to be. In order for the ocean to continue to be the ocean, you need not take a big broom or vacuum cleaner and take all the waves away. You cannot do it. With the ocean, with the waves and with the currents, it is the ocean. With all of us in the entire universe it is still the same cosmic consciousness. Only the division has disappeared. That vision in which this division has gone is called love. That life in which there is no division, is love.

In everything related to the life we live, there is a mixture of the true and the false. There is no exception to it. It is true that all of us will find enlightenment, but if one of us - and it is always me - please remember that word, if I think I am here to enlighten you, that is false. That which is, is reality, is true. But if I think I know the reality, it is false. That the grass is green is true; but if I think I know why it is green, then it is falsehood. Similarly, that dreams have some significance, some meaning, is true; but the objection is to my saying that I know what that significance is, what the meaning is.

Our whole life is haunted by this mixture of the true and the false. Yoga is practised in order to wipe out the false. In the Bhagavad Gita, there is a lovely expression: "yunjyad yogam atmavisuddhaye", meaning: Practise yoga in order to purify the self.

It has been cloudy today. You did not see the sun very much, but the sun is there. When the clouds are blown off, the sun is not created anew, but discovered. Dis-covered in the purest and simplest sense of that word. The cover has been removed. One can easily see that there may be several forms of this cover. The whole earth may turn round so that naturally the sun is obscured - such things exist in nature. Even the chair on which I am sitting today will attain enlightenment because the truth is everywhere, omnipresent, but in the case of this chair there is perhaps a natural turning away from the light. There is an artificial obscuring of the light, like the clouds. You practise yoga and the clouds are blown off. When you stand in brilliant sunlight and close your eyes, this is willful neglect of the light. Perhaps this is the case with most people. Standing right in the brightest sunlight, willfully closing one's eyes and saying "No, it is darkness" or "This is what I think light is!"

The light shines everywhere and somehow it is obscured. By what is it obscured? By the self, I, me, even to the extent of saying, "I know what the truth is." That which says, "I know" does not know. "Avijnatum vijantam vijnatam avijanatum". "They who know, do not proclaim they know. They who proclaim they know, do not know". Because the truth is: "Yato vaco nivartanto aprapya manasa sa anandam brahmano vidvan na bibheti kadacana", meaning: "That truth, which is bliss, is beyond description, beyond conception, beyond all concepts, beyond all thoughts, beyond all description." The description may be of the truth, but the description is not the truth. The truth is there but the description is provided by 'me', and that 'me' has to be wiped out. Yoga does nothing more than this. Yoga does not produce enlightenment. The bliss is there all the time - strangely enough, that which is called blitz in German, is called bliss in English. You call it blitz, enlightenment, and the English call it bliss, supreme happiness. Both mean the same thing.

The self, which is involved in this word selfishness, pervades our life. It touches everything and it pollutes everything. It pollutes the body, it pollutes my life style. It pollutes my food. It pollutes my thoughts, feelings and emotions. It pollutes my knowledge and understanding. It pollutes my very soul, as it were.

While they turned their attention on themselves in order to effect self purification, the Yogis asked themselves: what is the self? Of course the body. And please remember - the body is not to be neglected. But, with a little enquiry I discover that the body is not an independent entity by itself. "Tasiaysa eva sartra atma ya purvasya". Whose body is this? There is something within. The body belongs to that. What is it? Energy. "Tenaisa purnah". By that energy, by that prana, the whole body is filled. Not in the sense in which we, the men and women, fill this hall, but in the sense that this hall is filled by space, and that space is filled by air. Every cell of it, every molecule, every particle of it. This body is entirely filled with this energy or prana. How does this energy function? How does this prana function? There is the mind within and the mind functions and motivates this prana.

And so, by such contemplation, the Yogis arrived at five categories, viz. the physical, the vital, the mental and the scientific - scientific in the very scientific sense of the word science, which means knowledge - the self which is of the nature of knowledge, scientific. And then, transcending all this - one should beware of using the word transcending, seeing all this is the ananda, the fifth, which is bliss, the bliss which is beyond the "me". On every plane of consciousness there is the me which is the cover, and beyond that cover is that which is beyond the me; in the body, in the vital sheath, in the mind and in the intelligence. The wiping clean of the self reveals that "which is beyond the me". And therefore the Yogi, without neglecting anyone of these aspects, strives to bring about a purification of all the aspects of this personality. Not one is to be neglected. That is Integral Yoga. Yoga means integration, so there is no need to call it Integral Yoga, but my master, Swami Sivananda, insisted upon that word in order that we may not forget it.

If you watch your own body, it refuses to be overfed. A great saint of South India said something very beautiful. "Oh my stomach, it is very difficult to live with you. If I tell you, 'I will give you three days food, fill your self up,' you refuse.' Once the hunger is satisfied one more handful of food brings the whole thing out. It does not want to take it. Alright, I look at the stomach again: "Sorry, you won't have any food for the next three days. You torture me." You know what the body says? That there is a limit, a moderation, the middle path. Neither this nor that. Neither extremes, but somewhere in the middle is the truth. "Yuktaharaviharasya yuktacestasya karmasu yuktasvapnavabodhasya yogo bhavati dukkhaha" says Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita. The meaning: "Yoga destroys misery in the case of that person

whose eating habits, activity, and everything in life, are all appropriate. Appropriate in the sense of moderation. Neither too little nor too much. And this, my Guru Swami Sivananda translated into a beautiful song which He Himself composed, and with your permission I will sing it. It is the famous tune of the Hare Rama.

Hare Rame Hare Rama , Rama Rama Hare Hare,
Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare,

Eat a little, drink a little, talk a little, sleep a little,
Mix a little, move a little, rest a little, serve a little.

Not only that

"Do asana a little, pranayama little, reflect a little, meditate a little,
Do japa a little, do kirtan a little, worship a little, have satsang a little.

Why this insistence upon a little?

Why should I not, for instance, meditate twenty-four hours of the day? I do not know if it is possible. But if it is possible, it is dangerous. The self does not function only on the mental plane. So you cannot shut out the mental plane and consider yourself free. It is there in your body, it is there in your vitality. You can suppress it for a time, but then it must explode. The Yogis say: "Even if you suppress it for the rest of your life you will die with those impressions and you will have to carry on from there. Perhaps, if I have been suppressing all this and behaving as if I were a log of wood or stone, it is inevitable that the next birth will be as a log of wood or stone. When we practice all these in moderation, then it is possible for us to discover the activity of the self in all its aspects - how the self dominates our physical being with its cravings, with its restlessness, with its pursuit of pleasure; how on the vital level, the emotional level, the self pollutes the pure emotion which could be devotion and turns it into attachment, bondage, friendship and affection. In Sanskrit, there is a word 'sneha' - usually translated into friendship, but it also means glue. You stick it until it is stuck and then, when you want to take it away, you peel it off. Everywhere we get stuck. When the time comes for us to part, you shed tears. Sometimes when the glue sticks too hard, if you pour a little water, it will come off. In the same way, if you and I get too close, too fond of each other, there's glue between us. Pour a little water - the tears, and perhaps it peels off more easily.

The emotions have to be purified of the self. All at the same time. The mind has to be purified of the self, the thoughts have to be purified of the self. That is the business of yoga. Yoga is practised only for this, not for any other purpose. When the self is completely gone, when the glass is absolutely clean,

it is transparent. It is totally transparent. Because it is transparent it does not obstruct the inner light in which we see ... in which the truth sees itself. The truth sees itself, the truth functions, the light functions. Life becomes totally enlightened.

Another important aspect of this transparency of purity is that its presence is not known. When the body is clean, pure, unpolluted, non-toxicated, and when it is in a state of what you call health, it enables you to forget it. I wonder if you appreciate this? He is a perfect servant who makes his presence unfelt, who serves without being noticed, without asking for attention. Can you do that? The body does it, the heart does it. The heart goes on functioning, and as long as it is in a state of perfect health, its presence is not even noticed. Those of you who are yoga teachers can play this trick. Stand up on a platform in your class, and enquire: "Who thought of your big toe during the past five minutes? Were you aware that you had a big toe during the past five minutes?" "No." And one man says: "Yea!" "Ahah, its hurting you." If it is in a state of good health, it does not demand attention. I feel this is true of us too. If we are in a state of good health, we do not demand any attention from anybody. In the same way the mind which is transparent does not experience unhappiness, does not make its presence felt. The emotions, in a state of purity, in a state of transparency, do not bother you. You are not totally devoid of emotions, but the self is absent, the dirt of self is absent, and when the mind functions without the dirt of the self, it is as if the light of God itself flows through that mind without any obstruction whatsoever. And there is knowledge, knowledge not of the subject and the object, but knowledge.

To bring this about is the object of yoga. And since it involves all, Swami Sivananda demanded: "Please do not neglect any of these aspects." If I have to pay attention to all these, then I must, perforce, not look for specialization, not look for the extremes. I know it is possible because I have seen it in the Master's life. He exemplified it, He revealed it. Perhaps you have read some of His books on Hatha Yoga? He practised a few asanas. He practised the sirshasana, the head-stand for a few minutes a day when He was in good health. He was fond of it and He did it in His own way. He had a sort of tripod method, putting the two palms and head on the floor, in a tripod style. And He did what is called sarvangasana, shoulder stand. Perhaps some of you could do the shoulder stand very much better than He could. But, perhaps by saying this, we are blaspheming the whole spirit of yoga.

In yoga one does not compare oneself with others. You can do your best, and if you do that best, perfect. Do not look at somebody else. You will break your neck. He recommended that to each one of His students. "Practice some yoga asanas every day. Reach out to your own perfection. That is what self-discovery means. Do your best. Reach out to your own perfection without comparing yourself with others, without the spirit of competition. What for?"

Am I trying to save on doctors' bills? If people went to Him: "Ah, Swamiji, I've got a violent head ache. What asana is good for it?" He might very simply answer. "Aspirin-asana." Why must you use yoga asanas for curing aches and pains? Take an aspirin and that's finished.

In the Hatha Yoga Pradipika there is a warning that Hatha Yoga itself is to be practised only as an aid to Raja Yoga. Not as an end in itself. Because, if I practise the asanas for the sake of the asanas themselves or for the sake of the body, I am bound to be disheartened sometime or the other when my eyesight begins to fail or when senility creeps in. The self has slipped out of that and it is wandering somewhere else. It is building its own image of a yogi and that image is bound to be hurt one day or the other. Hatha Yoga is very good, asanas are excellent and Swami Sivananda very strongly recommended them, but with common-sense and with the spirit of yoga unlost. Keep it there, keep the spirit of yoga all the time. What is the spirit of yoga in connection with this Hatha Yoga? The spirit of yoga is to discover something which is beyond the self, beyond the me.

(Swamiji asks someone to come forward and stand on a chair)

I would very much like you to watch her. Right? Now I am requesting her to lift one of her legs - she uses her mind, uses 'me' - "hah", she tells herself "I want to raise my right leg." And as she does so, something within the body reacts, wakes up. Watch how she dances. "Go on, lift it up, as high as possible." Watch, she is not doing this. She merely wants to raise her leg up. If you are doing this, you find within yourself millions of little actions. The abdominal muscles tremble, tense, relax, tense, relax - the whole thing is alive. By assuming unusual positions of the body, you are discovering that intelligence which sustains it. It is a fantastic thing if I can do that, in that manner. You pick up this simple Hatha Yoga pradipika again and find, to your amazement, that it mentions only half a dozen or perhaps twelve or fifteen asanas, and they are most of them so simple that anybody can do them with two days' practice. But, mark this, you read the effects and the benefits. "He who does this conquers old age, he who does this goes beyond death, he who does this ...", and you think: "My God, just by standing on my head I am going to conquer old age and go beyond death?" Are those yogis bluffing us? No. If, while I am doing that, I watch every little bit of this action that goes on in the body, and thereby suddenly discover what a tremendous intelligence fills every cell of this body, next time you look at yourself, you feel like saying: "To that which is in that body, 'salutations'. Therefore whenever someone suggests that this posture is dangerous and that posture is dangerous, I feel like saying: "Why do you not listen to something within you. That intelligence within you will not allow the body to be injured or killed, unless - do not take what I am going to say seriously, you are a fool and in which case you are fit to

be killed. Listen, listen to the body, listen to the intelligence in that body. It is a fantastic thing, beyond the me, beyond the self.

When this intelligence beyond the self is discovered, a tremendous revolution, inner revolution takes place. The next time I have pain in the stomach, I do not run about doing this or that, but again, humbly, prayerfully, worshipfully, I listen, "God, what do you want to tell? What is your message?" That tremendous intelligence which I discovered during the practice of asana is trying to communicate, trying to say something, trying to convey something. But it is the mind that interprets it, it is the self that interprets it as pain and endeavours to suppress it. Instead I listen: "What is it? My stomach, what do you want?" It says, "Do not send any more food for the next two days."

"Ok. Thank you." Hatha Yoga enables us first to listen to the language of the body, to become familiar with the language of the body, and to realise that that which sustains this body is beyond "me". It knows what to do and when to do it. Even what I call illness or disease, is its own action, curative, final or terminal action. It may be a curative action or it may be a terminal action, finished, time up.

Patanjali's insistence upon "shtira sukham asanam", is perhaps meant only with this end in view. If during the practice of the yoga asanas there is violent pain in the body, this attention is lost. The mind is overwhelmed by this pain, the attention is overwhelmed by this pain and then you do not want to do it.

You cannot concentrate, you cannot discover this beauty, that is the body intelligence.

When the body is in a state of well being - I hate to use the word "health" in connection with the body, when the body is in a state of well being, it enables you to forget it and carry on your life. In that state you suddenly discover that all your actions are polluted by this self. Whereas this body functions without demanding attention, whereas the body is your most obedient servant, who does not even think of a recompense or reward, the self demands recognition and reward. Whatever I do in life is polluted by the self. The self creates craving for pleasure, profit, prestige, the most obnoxious thing that one can think of; at least a banana satisfies my hunger, whereas prestige does not satisfy my hunger at all. It is totally useless. And yet the self creates a craving for all those, thereby destroying peace of mind, destroying my life altogether.

The discovery of the existence of the self in my actions, is called Karma Yoga. Discovery of the self. That is, I see that all my actions and my whole life here is polluted by the self. I see only the self on top. Why am I doing? Because I want that. The 'I' is all the time dictating. So, I do not see what is underneath, I see only what covers the spirit of action. In all relationships in this world,

there is an expectation. I see that that expectation is directly connected to frustration. Something is sticking out of a wall made of stones and you think it is a lovely tail of a dead snake. You only pull the tail of the snake ... hum, the head comes and hits you, I only tickled the tail but the head came and bit me. The head belonged to the tail, and the tail belonged to the head. It is just one snake. I cannot have hope without frustration. If I have some hope and it is fulfilled today or tomorrow, I think that the frustration has nothing to do with hope. Frustration is around the corner again. If I serve you, and expect you to look after me and do this or that, you may do it for a few days and then one day you will get fed up and say, "Swami, when are you leaving?" It is coming and that frustration is related to this expectation. The self projects this expectation without knowing that frustration is coming. When I see this, when I see the whole play of this self, I drop it, and then I look within trying to understand the whole dynamics of action. Neither the energy, nor this body, nor this intelligence, has anything whatsoever to do with the "me". Why does the "me" expect anything at all?

"Karmany eva 'dhikaras te ma phalesu kadacana ma karmaphalahetur bhur ma te sango 'stv akarmani"

Again another verse from the Gita. "You have a right to live, to work and to function, as everything in the universe functions." Leave it at that. Do not go one step further. Work, work, work, participate in the activities of the world without raising any expectations, without any hopes, without fear, without attachment. Let there be spontaneous activity.

In the same way we have the play of the self in the realm of emotions. And the yogi evolved a fairly elaborate system of adoration of God without forgetting to remind you that love of God means love of all beings, not just man, because God is omnipresent, which means that that which underlies the "me" and the "you" is God. That which forms the substratum for the "me" and the "you" is God. Emotion animates, gives life to life itself. Service or life without emotion is lifeless, soulless. Very often there is a misunderstanding that the Yogi is a very straight-faced and lifeless person who does not even smile, the eyes looking constantly at the nose. No. There must be passion, there must be emotion. But emotion plus self is bondage, sneha, sticking plaster, and emotion minus self is liberation, freedom, divine passion.

Then the self plays on the mental level, on the intellectual level, with thoughts, concepts and ideas. That is where Raja Yoga comes in, and one has to meditate whether one really knows how to meditate or not. One has to meditate. Of course the yogis insist upon yama, niyama, and so on, but even this yama and niyama has to come from within. Ahimsa, non-violence - I should not hit you, I should not curse you, I should not be aggressive ... but then I am aggressive, violent to myself. One is as good or bad as the other.

The layman, when he is insulted, hits, responds, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, and at least the account is settled. But a so-called religious person, when he is slapped, suppresses his anger and pretends to bear it though he is hurt. That is punishing you. That is not ahimsa. When you are established in ahimsa, you are not even hurt. That can only come as a result of the direct experience of the ground beyond the self. When I see that this body is a bag of potatoes and when you call this bag of potatoes “a fool”, I know, “Ok, that’s alright, not such a bad idea”, then you are able to laugh. So even this yama-niyama are the fruits of meditation.

Then you have the asana and pranayama. I am sure you know a lot about all this. But it is interesting again to remember, and remind ourselves, of Patanjali's definition of pranayama, or the fruit of pranayama.

"Tatah ksiyate prakasa varanam dharanasu ca योग्याता मानसाह".

Meaning, “When you practice pranayama, the veil that covers the inner light is removed and the attention is not distracted.” When the attention is not distracted, the self does not arise again and the light is never obscured.

It is possible for these distractions to come in various forms, one of them being what is known as psychic experience. It is fantastic. Even the desire and craving for psychic experience is a craving, not psychic, not experience. It is again the same old wretched self. In order to safe-guard oneself against this, the master Swami Sivananda insisted that one should sustain the lamp of enquiry - vichara, which is perhaps the proper field of what is known as Jnana Yoga, constantly alive within oneself. There is a psychic experience, but who is the experiencer? That experiencer is beyond the psychic experience. The psychic experience itself is nothing but a projection and a play of the self. And the scripture reminds us once again.

“Etamannamayamatmanam upasankramya etam pranamayam atmanam upasankramya etam manomamayamatmanam upasankramya etam vijranamayamatmanam upasankramya etam anandamayamatmanam upasankramya ... etatsama gayannaste ... haaavu haaavu haaavu”

Thus the yogi, with the inner light shining brightly, transcends all these, sees all these as dirt; the self, the play of the self in all these planes, is nothing but self, dirt, filth. And once that is removed, all these are gone.

The ultimate expression of the bliss of the yogi is thus expressed in the Upanishads.

“haavu haaavu haaavu”

What have you gained from all this, from all the practice of yoga? What have you got? What is your experience? Inexpressible.

OM

QUESTIONS

There are a few questions with me. Firstly we can look at them and in the meantime you can be thinking of more. First lets start with some chanting of Om Namah Shivaya.

The first question: "You mentioned something about Swami Sivananda's practice of yoga asanas. What about his other spiritual practices, like karma yoga, bhakti yoga, and so on?"

The Master Swami Sivananda embodied in Himself all the principles of Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Raja Yoga and Jnana Yoga, for He did not see any division or distinction among these. To Him it was Integral Yoga. And He was an embodiment of this Integral Yoga. His whole life was a commentary on this Integral Yoga. It might take a bit long to explain all this. However, against the background of the practice of yoga as the overcoming of the self, it is possible

to give a few interesting practices that Swami Sivananda adopted in His own life which may be of some use to us.

He was a great giver. There are one or two here who have seen Him. He was a great giver and He loved to go on giving. You should be very careful here because you cannot give unless you also know how to receive. So, He gave and He received freely. On both occasions He expressed gratitude to the other person. If you gave Him something, he expressed gratitude, which was obvious simple good manners. But if He gave you something, He was again grateful to you. He would give something, and when you looked into His eyes, into His face, you knew that He was supremely grateful you were there to receive. That was beautiful. And of course in the other aspects of service, one could see in His actions that there was no consideration of self at all. There were occasions when He came close to death but still He went on with His unselfish service. In whatever He did there was no thought of self at all, it was you that mattered to Him. It may not be very easy to explain. There are certain formulas in Indian tradition which a devotee uses while he makes an offering to God, in temples and so on, with a devotional and worshipful attitude. Whenever Swami Sivananda served, whenever He gave, He always used that formula. So that, when He served, when He gave, when He worked, it was not as though He was doing all this to another person, but to the godhead in Him, to the divine omnipresence. This was evident in everything He did. That is, in short, His karma yoga.

Next, His bhakti was something unique. It was something wonderful which all of us can adopt. In the tenth chapter of the scripture which you all know - the Bhagavad Gita, there is a list, as it were, of divine manifestations which we

encounter in our daily life. The sun, the moon, the oceans and trees are specifically mentioned as divine manifestations. He used that formula so that when He came out of His room and looked at the river Ganges, He bowed down, "Here is a manifestation of God". He looked at the Himalaya, and bowed down, "Here is a manifestation of God". And of course holy men or whoever He met He greeted with "Om Namō Narayanaya" - "Salutations to God." And what was extremely embarrassing to the disciples was that He bowed down to them. He used the formula "Om Namō Narayanaya.", "To the indwelling spirit, salutations." You can use another formula - "Gruss Gott" - a marvelous formula which means, "I greet God.". This went on to such an extent that in 1950 when some demented man assaulted Him and nearly killed Him, to Swami Sivananda even that person was God, a manifestation of God. "If God's energy, if God's consciousness was not there, how would you even come up to hit me with an axe?" So, even you are God. The master bowed down to him, saluted him, as if he was a very holy man. There was a theft in the ashram and when that was brought to His notice He said about the thief, "What an intelligent man. What a clever thief. He found out everything about the ashram movements and took something away." There is an expression in the Gita: "I am the gambling of the cheat." It is possible in this manner to grow constantly in the awareness of the omnipresence of God. It is easy for you and me to see God in certain symbols, but it is not so easy for us to recognise God's omnipresence, which therefore is undivided. I do not know if you are interested, but it can be mentioned in passing that even though He was a great yogi, an enlightened person, He did not abandon even for one day the ritualistic forms of divine worship and adoration. I hope you will not be offended here, but you ask a yoga student, "Do you worship God? Do you do some japa or practise some devotional practices? or, "Do you go to the church?" "Ah no, I practise Yoga", as if you are up there in cosmic consciousness already. Not a single day passed without Him doing His own private ceremonial worship in His own room, in His own small way.

When it came to Raja Yoga practices - yama-niyama was natural. Self-discipline was natural to Him. From that we students could gain a lesson - that these must be natural. I cannot practise love, I cannot practise ahimsa. Even the expression "I love you" is defective. "I" is here and you are there.

I am sure there are married couples here. Even in your relationship this "I love you" does not work. When this 'I' has collapsed here and that 'I' has collapsed there, what happens is love. As long as the 'I' is there there is no love. In His case, because the vanity, the ego-sense, the self had been dispelled by the enlightenment, He was able to say, "I had no obstacles at all in my meditation". I heard it from His own lips, "I had no obstacles at all in meditation. I had no obstacles at all in my yoga." I would love to hear the same statement from you.

I mentioned yesterday that He practised some asanas and He was very fond of pranayama. I do not know whether you would call it a serious practice, or a non-serious practice, but He was constantly devoted to it. His pranayama was quite simple - alternate nostril breathing, with a little retention, and no counting, no ratio. But this He did whenever He could spare even a period of five minutes, even if He was resting. During the last few years of His life, He couldn't even sit up very much and lying down - He would do His pranayama. Lying down He would even do bhastrika. He said: "Why not? What's wrong? I am breathing and I am breathing better, that's all. Do you not breathe lying down?" And He revealed that that gave Him tremendous energy.

One thing more in this connection and that is that He had an extraordinary way of practising what is known as "pratyahara" - disconnecting the inner senses from the outer world. He had a unique and remarkable method which it is good to share with you. One who practised this, He used to say, can practise what He called, "battle field pratyahara". What was that? You take a mantra, any mantra you like, and learn to repeat it right at the moment you wake up from sleep in the morning. After that, spend a few minutes sitting up in whatever posture you want, link the mantra with the breath and repeat it mentally. Form an association of the breath with the mantra. That is the important thing. Then you get up and do your work. Every time you turn your attention upon the breath, you realise the mind has started repeating the mantra. It is a sort of conditioned reflex. If you practise this diligently and earnestly for some time, then it will be possible for you to sit in a market place where everybody is talking or doing something or other, and merely by turning your attention upon the breath, you will cut your self away almost completely. Especially for lady students of yoga who are bothered by gossiping neighbors, it can be a wonderful help. You do not want to offend the friend, but she comes and starts talking, talking, talking. You just look at her and listen to the mantra. She can talk her head off and it does not matter at all.

Jnana Yoga is not only meditation, enlightenment and illumination, but also constantly contemplating the truth concerning the self. That He did, not only by privately studying the scriptures every day but by what we did last night during satsanga. He was very fond of this. As my brother Van Lysebeth said this morning, even when He could not sit upright He had to lie down in bed, a proper bed and that bed had to be carried wherever the satsang was held - lying down He still attended the satsanga, participated in the satsanga - a thing which we may not do on account, maybe, of a false sense of prestige. Satsanga was important and, as again Mr. Van Lysebeth said this morning, it revived the presence of all the masters. Ten or fifteen of us got together, somebody reads the Bible, somebody reads the Koran, somebody reads the Gita, somebody reads the Upanishads, and we, with closed or open eyes, listen to this. It is a scripture, not a personal thing and have no business to

carry on a mental dialogue with it. I listen to it, and as I listen to it that presence is invoked right here, where we hold the satsang. In Swami Sivananda's satsang each reading was followed by some kind of singing or chanting. That chanting was again very beautifully woven into the satsang, so that after you hear what you heard, you go on singing, and as you go on singing, the mind, the brain, is more or less silent, the heart opens up and the message drops into your heart. It does not matter what language you sing in, it does not matter whether your voice is hoarse, it does not matter whether you know how to sing or whether you do not know how to sing. Satsanga has a tremendous effect, a tremendous effect upon all of us.

Thank you for asking the question.

Part of the next question was answered this morning by Mr. Van Lysebeth. It is a fantastic question.

"How do you consider the Guru problem (the Guru has become a problem) for occidental vedanta seekers - its necessity, the relationship between the Guru and the disciple, and the danger?"

I think all this has been beautifully dealt with by Mr. Van Lysebeth. I think one beautiful verse from the Guru Gita may be useful: "Isvaro gurur atmeti murti bheda vibhagine, vyomavad vyapta dehaya daksinamurtaye namah."

What is this Guru and who is a problem? Ignorance always creates a problem. Ignorance is a problem. But if that is removed, nothing need be a problem. The Guru least of all. What is this Guru? Even a great master like Ramana Maharishi pointed out, "It is when a seeker yearns for liberation, thirst for liberation, and longs for liberation that that longing is intense enough to provoke the omnipresence or God as it were, to show some mercy, then that mercy, that Grace of God manifests as the guru. How does this happen? This might happen as a human person, as a phenomenon, a sub human person, or a personal experience. If I am groping and there is an intense feeling that I am inadequate to overcome this "I" myself, which I want to do, at that moment the guru appears. When that Guru appears before you, let us say as a human person, it is God's Light and Grace itself that comes to you as this person, and that must invariably direct your gaze to the inner light.

That was your prayer, wasn't it? You prayed for this. If the motive is already questionable, then the prayer is not sincere, the aspiration is not sincere, the longing is not correct. Then I get caught up in this human problem. It is not so much a guru problem as a human problem. Therefore this verse from the Guru Gita says, "The one reality is apparently threefold." Not really. Reality is indivisible. This one reality apparently has a three fold appearance and that is: One is called God, the other is called the guru , the third is called the self"

The "I", the "self", prays to God. God manifests as the guru, in order to lead the self to God. If something goes wrong in this, there is some error somewhere and it is better to stop and take a look.

The next question:

“Could you stress the importance of yama-niyama for occidental adepts, most of whom were brought up in a materialistic profiteering environment, and especially ahimsa in relation to the problem of miscarriage - i.e. provoked miscarriage in pregnancy.

I think luckily for us the first question concerning Swami Sivananda's spiritual practices have solved one problem. Yama and niyama have been described ad infinitum by everybody. Yama is ahimsa, satyam, brahmacharya - that is, non-violence, truthfulness, celibacy or chastity, non-greed etc. Niyama are certain practices like purity, cleanliness, santosha, contentment, austerity, svadhyaya, etc. It is not always realised or stressed that the term used in the Yoga Sutras for these are "anga". They are really not steps, they are "angas" - limbs. If you look at a new born baby, that infant has all the limbs already at the first hour of birth. Maybe the proportions are not what they are now, maybe the size is not what it is now, maybe the functional efficiency is not as it is now, but the whole lot is there. A male infant is a male infant right at birth. A female infant is a female infant right at birth. There is nothing missing which comes on later. So on the very first day of the commencement of your yoga practice all the eight limbs of yoga must be there in you. Whenever people pointed out to Swami Sivananda, “How can you teach meditation to him? He eats meat, tells lies, he is violent, he is angry. Must you not insist that he should be very well established in all this yama and niyama?”, the Master had a very nice way of dealing with questioners. He would answer, “If you wait till you attain perfection in yama and niyama, you will not start meditating for three life-times!” So all these have to be done together.

What is ahimsa? What is non-violence? Is it non-violence if I do not hurt you, if I do not hit you, or if I refuse to handle a knife? There is a surgeon here and if I have some serious problem like ‘a piece of glass in my foot, and if she says, "Oh no, Swami, I practise ahimsa. I won't cut your foot, it would be a disaster. What is ahimsa? Ahimsa is possible only after the self has completely vanished, when there seems to be no value, no sense at all in being aggressive, either in relation to you or in relation to oneself, and when neither that personality nor this personality seems to be of any particular value. One is no more important than the other. One is no more valuable than the other. When the self has completely gone, what remains is ahimsa. We are told in some of the oriental scriptures that such a person - please listen to this rather carefully, even if he destroys the world, does nothing - because there is no

personality there. What this cosmic being wants to happen, happens. If there is an earth-quake, whose responsibility, whose fault is it. If there is a sudden volcanic eruption, whose fault is it? Whom would you hold responsible for it? And in a certain way, you may be the volcano. That is not at all easy for the limited, finite, conditioned mind to understand. Only that is ahimsa, all the rest is practice. In practice one has to see very clearly that even breathing involves some violence. Often people ask: "Swami, if I am sitting in meditation and there is a mosquito, shall I kill it or not?". If it is a man who is asking this question, the answer usually is: "Stop beating your wife tomorrow, we will talk about the mosquito later!"

In that spirit, in that context, one has to decide about the other part of the question.

This next question:

"You said yesterday that the pain we feel in doing asanas is helpful?"

You put the body in a certain position in order to discover that intelligence which is the self, which is the annamaya atman, the self that appears as the body. We are not looking at the body as flesh at all, we are looking at the body as the visible manifestation of the divine intelligence, and the practitioner of yoga asanas discovers this intelligence from movement to movement, not only from moment to moment. And during the course of this asana practice the student realises that whereas the will, the desire, the competitive spirit, the self may push the body towards pain, something within springs up and stops it. So, to the extent that this movement towards pain, towards discomfort is responsible for provoking this inner intelligence to spring into action, it is slightly helpful. The yoga-asanas tend to lead you towards discomfort. If I do not want to get into this uncomfortable position at all, then I do not come to your yoga class. If I do not want to bend my body and my bones, if I want to be absolutely comfortable, I buy myself a wheel chair. Without contradicting this, asanas are not meant to cause pain, though they may lead you towards discomfort and the discomfort is experienced by the luxurious lazy muscles and joints that you have. Without contradicting that, a little discomfort is experienced by the lazy body and there again, once I have reached that point where the discomfort has provoked the inner intelligence to spring into action, the will completely surrenders itself to the divine intelligence. The discomfort disappears immediately and you realise that this definition "stira sukham asanam" ... that the posture must be steady, comfortable, and pleasant, applies to headstand, halasana and all the asanas. You can get into that posture, working through a little bit of discomfort, and then surrender yourself to that inner intelligence. Immediately there is peace and beauty within.

Another question:

“Please would you talk about ‘what is the self’ because, if we have to get rid of it, the first step would be to define it.”

The self cannot be got rid of by the self. You know why? You cannot get rid of your own shadow. The shadow is not real, it is not a substance, a nose, nor a tumour that you just take, chop off and throw away; it is something which is non-existent. And therefore, like the phantom pain, is difficult to get rid of. Is everybody aware of what phantom pain is? When a leg or a limb has been amputated, sometimes the person feels pain in the non-existent limb. The problems created by the self are created by a non-existent, unreal shadow.

When do I see the shadow? When I have turned away from the light. What must I do to get rid of that shadow? Turn towards the light. Not by pushing the self away, but by resolutely turning towards the light. How do I turn towards the light? By raising this spirit of enquiry. "What is this self? What am I?"

What is “I”? These are my nose, my ears, my mouth - give me your “I”. What on earth do we call this ego? The enquiry itself is the light.

Questioner:

"Sometimes you meet a second guru after a few years and he gives you another mantra. What happens?"

Answer:

What happens? You said what happens. You said, “A second guru has come and has given a mantra,” That is all that happened. There are two schools of thought in one tradition. One school insists that one should have and adhere to only one guru. The other equally insists that one guru is not enough and that one should seek many gurus. But both of them assume that the guru is a person and that the relationship is person to person communication. This is completely different from what we were discussing earlier on. Here it is a person to person relationship. A yogi appears in my village, and I go to him. "Sir, please bless me." And he says, "God bless you. Repeat 'Om'. You will be alright." What is it that takes him as a guru? The guru experience has not taken place at all in me. I was just curious. I go on repeating 'Om Om Om' but nothing happens, nothing happens to this 'Om'. Do you know why nothing happens when I go on repeating 'Om'. Because my jaws are not made of wood. If my jaws were made of wood, they would break and at least something would happen! So, I go on mechanically repeating 'Om Om Om.'

Then someone else comes along. He is in trance. He goes into deep meditation and into samadhi. I go to him. What is this? He says, "You know, there is this great yogi. He has come straight from the Himalayas. He did not even come by plane, he levitated and materialised here. He taught me this special type of meditation. Again there is curiosity. There is no aspiration; neither before, nor now. Again curiosity drives me to this master. And he says, "Initiation? Come here and sit on my left side. I will whisper something into your right ear. Listen carefully, it is a great secret." What is it that is listening to this man? Again the same curiosity, again the same darkness, again the same dull, dead mind. If we go on doing this, we can acquire as many gurus as we like. I am not criticising this. Nothing has happened because there was no fire within. That's it. ' He who makes this happen becomes the guru.

So there is the other theory that one should not be content with one guru, but must go on acquiring a museum of gurus. I suppose, again the protagonists of this theory hoped that one day, somehow, by the Grace of God, the right switch would be pressed and some thing might happen.

Question:

"Please explain the concept of killing. You said, and I do not know if I understood you correctly - that man through thought assassinates his original true being and thus commits suicide. That is surely the original sin of man? But could you explain the concept of killing in relation to something simple - the age old problem of diet, vegetarianism and meat eating. Is that not really of any importance here?"

Answer.

The moment we divide the issue as a primary issue and a secondary issue, we are sanctioning violence. For instance, the Bible says, "Thou shalt not kill." If then I enter into this whole concept of life and living and decide upon the priorities, then I am sanctioning violence in one form or another. It is an interminable road. Instead, the suggestion is: can I look within myself to see what this self is that indulges in violence? It does not matter whether it is eating non-vegetarian food, or beating my wife, or being cruel to my children, or sanctioning wars, or engaging my self in wars. What is this self that seems to sanction this violence? The violence is in the self and not outside. I do not know if you have seen a lion in one of these National Parks? I once saw one just before nightfall, when it was ready to kill some animal and eat. We were about two meters away from the lion and the lion turned round to look at us. It smacked its lips. I tell you, I haven't seen a more magnificently peaceful face. We may not kill each other, we may be merely angry with each other; but when you look at our face, my God, it is miserable. So, violence is not in nature, but it is in the "self". If someone here gets up and points a pistol at me

and shoots me, first of all he is not shooting 'me', he is shooting the body. He is doing nothing, nothing that is not in nature. Please, follow this a bit carefully, otherwise you may misunderstand again. He gets up, pumps a couple of bullets into this body. First of all, I am not killed, the body is killed. Is that unnatural? Death is inevitable to the body. Perhaps my time had come, the body's time had come to drop. But, something else has happened. That shadow of the concept of a self, the idea of a self, in "that", meaning 'he', had become violent, angry, and indulged in the most absurd and foolish act of pumping a couple of bullets into this body, thinking that thereby I have been killed. It is ignorance and foolishness, isn't it? There is nothing non-natural here - death is inevitable, today or tomorrow. If this wonderful gentleman had not done this, maybe a virus would have done the job. So perhaps from my point of view it is a great honor. Instead of being destroyed by a little virus, a big being did the job. There is nothing unnatural in all this except for the fact that the self is accepted as a reality, and into that self, into that personality there are poured feelings of violence. That personality becomes more and more violent and a violence habit is formed. That is perhaps the reason why people often quote this from the Bible: "Thy Will be done on earth." Jesus is said to have said: "Thy Will be done on earth." And also that even a dry leaf would not fall, even a sparrow would not fall unless it is Thy will. Therefore it is not that if we are non-violent, we move towards God, if we are violent we move towards something else. Nothing, nobody can flout the Divine Will.

So there is no gradation, there is no priority here? but the resolute, persistent and determined enquiry into the nature of the self. When that self drops, violence has gone. What happens from there on is not done by man, is not done by the personality, it is done by God.

Thank you.

Om