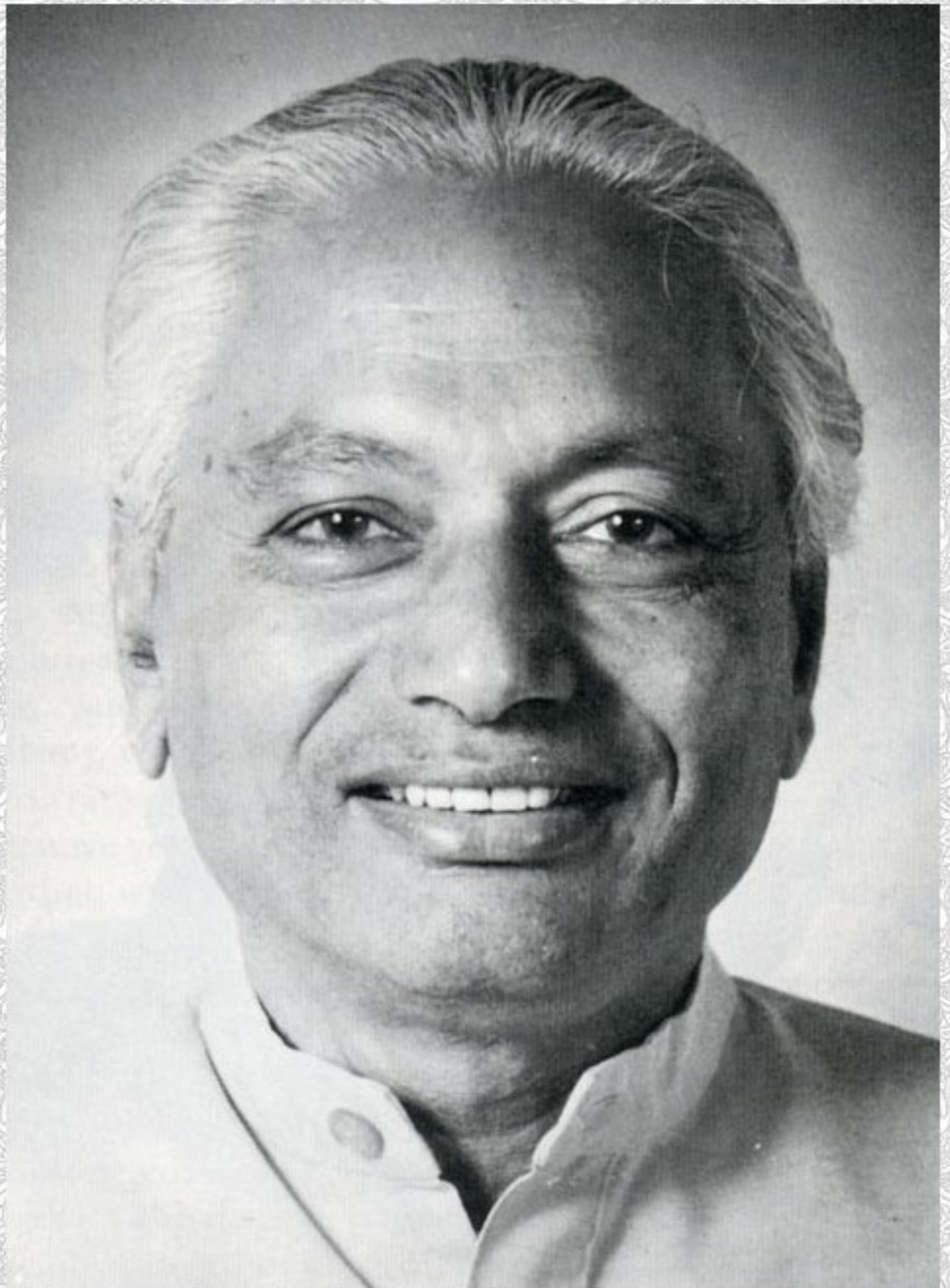




Yoga is Self-Discovery

Swami Venkatesananda



talks given at a Yoga Seminar held by the German Yoga Federation
Bad Sachsa
August 1973.

Published by Chiltern Yoga Trust,
P.O. Elgin,
Cape Province
South Africa.

Chapter One.

We tell ourselves that we practise yoga, we think that we practise yoga - but without ever trying to understand or discover what the meaning of yoga is. We do not understand and yet practise it - the result is a misunderstanding.

'Yoga' comes from a sanscrit word, similar to the English word 'yoke'. A yoke is something which joins. Think about the act of joining - what is it that one joins? Something which is broken - not two things which are different in nature. Can we join, mix, two things which are totally different? Take a cup of water in each hand and pour them both into another container. The water joins - and this is true joining. Water and honey are more or less liquid. If one pours honey into water and stirs, they join - but not completely because, if you heat this mixture the water evaporates and the honey remains. It is good to remember this. Next, take a small piece of rock and place it in a tumbler of water. What happens? Nothing. They can never join, stone can never mix with water. Two totally different things cannot join - to join, things must be of the same nature.

If we do not understand this, we may practice yoga for one thousand years and nothing will happen. Just as the stone and the water mixture - the stone remains stone and the water remains water - they can never mix.

This is the meaning of the beautiful expression in the Bible. Jesus is supposed to have said, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in Heavens perfect." If I am not as perfect as the Father in Heaven is perfect, then there is no union between me and God. If we persevere in the practise of yoga, Integral Yoga, then the Indwelling Perfection will gradually manifest and there will be union with God.

If you had met some yoga students in India, they might have asked, "Do you practise Hatha Yoga or Raja Yoga? Do you practise Bhakti Yoga or Jnana Yoga?" There is nothing strange here - we have never treated human beings as human beings! Is that quite clear? Here, if a man sees me walking along the road, he may think "Oh, he must be an Indian." To him I am not an human being, I am an Indian. However, if I went to India and took a walk along a road in Delhi, then somebody might look at me and think to themselves, "Oh yes, this man must be a swami." To him I am not an Indian, not an human being.

There is one common factor - that which is one, that which unifies us - but this does not suit our minds at all. Where there is unity the mind likes to create disunity. This seems terrible but it is true. Today even, we are all gathered together because we are students of yoga and yet our minds still create disunity and we think of this man as a Zen yogi, we think of that man

as a hatha yogi - it tells us she is a bhakti yogini. But if yoga means joining - what is this division? How is it that one is seen as separate parts, broken parts? Only if we clearly understand this, will yoga practice help us.

What is one does not become many - though one may be seen as many, as diverse. When he and I eat the same food and we breathe the same air - how is it that there is so much difference in appearance? If we had eaten the same food from early childhood, we would still appear different and even if we had been twin brothers, born of the same parents, there is still a difference. What causes this? One man says maya, and the scientist says chromosomes, and somebody else says it is the holy ghost. In English the word 'geist' means ghost and yet the real meaning of 'geist' is 'mind'. The holy ghost is nothing but mind. Let me repeat that - the holy ghost is nothing but mind. It is the mind which interferes, it is this mind which makes the division - otherwise; where is the difference. He and I have been eating bread and butter and jam, what is this difference between us? It is only in our minds - in the holy ghost.

'There is an interesting custom which the British have - that of making the sign of the cross and saying the words - "Father, Son and Holy Ghost." I am not criticising this custom which has various meanings. Now, think for a moment - what is it that stand between the Father and the Son? Only the Holy Ghost. The Father and the Son are on one line - what divides them? It is the mind. The mind makes the one seem many - it is the mind which interferes. It is necessary to see this quite clearly. It is the mind which divides the Father and the Son. This is what we call maya.

I hope this does not make you think that the mind has created a true division, a real division? Mental division is not real division, it is not a reality. Let us take the example of the dream. We know that that which we see in a dream is not real, though it seems to be real whilst you are dreaming. It seems very real but it is not really real. One more step and you will understand even better. Someone who is sick may dream that a tiger is about to jump on him. This is called a nightmare. In his dream the tiger does jump on him and he screams, his body is covered with perspiration. His wife awakens him asking what is wrong. He asks: "Where is the tiger?" But in the room there is no tiger, there is only his wife. Though the tiger was not real, his screams were real, the perspiration was real. So we see that an unreal cause may produce real results.

Similarly the division between you and me is not real but an unreal cause can create real trouble. It is important to remember this. If you start saying that, since the mind is there, and since you feel different from me, this division has become real - then you are caught. We have now accepted this division as real, and there is no way out of it. But if we can remember that this division has only been created by the mind - then we seek the oneness. This oneness has

not been destroyed, it remains the same always. Similarly I do not have to, or need to, create something divine in me, in order to become one with the divine. I do not need to become perfect in that way - the perfection is there already. It always was there and will always be there.

So, yoga is the art of self-discovery, the science of uncovering. Even in what is called hatha yoga it is only a matter of removing the cover - it is not a matter of importing health. All that is necessary is the removal of the toxic substance and the health appears. How this is done will be discussed in the following lectures.

Chapter Two

Union or direct realisation of existing oneness is yoga. This is not something which can be brought about, and it is not something which could be created. When there is a cloud, the sun is obscured and there is a veil between my eyes and the sun. At night we say that the sun has set but the sun has set but the sun has not set. It is the earth which has turned and we are on the side opposite to the sun. This has nothing to do with the sun rising and setting - that is obvious. But when it comes to this oneness, this unity which we call God, it may not be so obvious. The word God is commonly used to denote this oneness. God is said to be omnipresent, which means everywhere - but there is problem. The sun is not everywhere, I am not everywhere - so I see that something can come between me and the sun - it may be a cloud, it may be the whole earth . But, God is everywhere - so what can come between me and God?

The question seems to be simple but the answer is not at all simple. God is everywhere - and yet, between me and God there is something. Take a big blackboard - the whole of it is black and so we may say that the blackness is omnipresent. Take a piece of white chalk and write the word "me" on it. Now there is blackness everywhere except for the word 'me'. Underneath the chalk, under the 'me', the blackboard is still there. The 'me' is written on it but, the blackboard is still there. What stands between the word 'me' and the blackness of the blackboard ? Nothing at all. What must I do to realise the omnipresence of the blackness? Nothing, for as soon as this 'me' is erased, that board is again a black board. Nothing ever happened to that blackness. Similarly, what stands between me and this omnipresent God? Me. That is a bit difficult for most of us to understand because it is not yet a realisation. When it is not a realisation, what is it? An idea!

We see God as an idea. We use 'me' as an idea, we use 'you' as an idea. All these are ideas. We do not know the truth. It is interesting to try to understand this. If you look at this person sitting in front of you, what do you see? You see a 'swami'. How do you know? Because someone told you that this is a swami. So you are only seeing your own idea - you are not seeing me! Even so 'me' and 'God' are just ideas in your mind. Only this stands between me and God.

All yoga practice has only one aim and that is self-purification. Exactly like the blackboard. You do not have to create that blackness; you simply wipe the board clean. When the board is purified, when the 'me' is removed, then the oneness which always existed is realised. That impurity is called 'avidya'.

What is avidya? It is an idea. This ignorance is not like the ignorance of something I do not know - as I might say I do not know one of the

Scandinavian languages. No, it is not that type of ignorance. This is a peculiar kind of ignorance - and here we must watch very carefully . In yoga philosophy, when we speak of avidya or ignorance, it is not as if I am saying that I am ignorant 'of' something, that I am ignorant of the omnipresence of God, as I am ignorant of one of the Scandinavian languages. No. This ignorance is ignorance of the truth concerning 'me'. In this ignorance the 'me' appears to be real. If I do not know the language that is a small thing - but if I am ignorant of myself, then I think that this 'me' I is real. This is upside down and shows us that all knowledge we think we have is ignorance.

When I am ignorant of the nature of my self, I feel that I am Mr. So-and-so. This is ignorance of my self is the first and rather difficult concept of yoga philosophy. In other words, this ignorance of the non-existence of myself, creates the idea of 'me'.

How do you know that there is ignorance of the non-existence of myself? Because God is omnipresent. You say there is oneness - and yet in this oneness there is diversity - he, you, I and so on. How did this come about? There is only one. In that oneness there is an idea of 'me', there is an idea of 'you', there is an idea of 'he'. These are merely ideas - but how did these ideas arise in the first place? Because I am ignorant of the self - I am ignorant of the fact that I do not exist separate from you. Along with this ignorance, this idea of 'me', the ego, also comes up.

Chapter Three

The philosophy of yoga is not something which can be intellectually understood. We can immediately see why this is so - the intellect is my intellect, it is born of me, I, the ego. Ich, which means I in the German language, sounds very much like 'ego' - the same word. When we are trying to discover the existence or non-existence of the ego, the intellect is of no use to us. When there is ignorance of the Omnipresence of God - as something which is the other side of this ignorance, the ego is born - and this ego is then taken for granted. The intellect is the product of this ego, the thinking of the ego is the intellect. Thus your intellect is the grandchild of ignorance - not only yours, but also that of the greatest philosophers the world has ever known.

As you are listening to these words being spoken, try to see the truth. In Sanskrit there is no word which actually represents the dictionary or verbal meaning of the word 'meaning'. For instance, take the word 'candle'. If you look up this word in the dictionary you will find the following description: 'A candle is a thing made of wax with a wick in it'. This is what is called the 'meaning' of candle. In Sanskrit however the word for meaning is artha - which means substance. When the word candle is spoken, you could immediately point to this candle - this is artha, the substance of the word candle. This is the real meaning of the word candle and not just the words found in the dictionary. Thus, when we speak of the ego, what do we mean? This is candle - what is ego? Now we do not want the dictionary meaning - but neither can you point to it and say, "This is the ego!"

Commentator: Then in that case you must say that it does not exist.

This is true, this is a fact, The ego does not exist. But it is not enough for us to say so - it must be discovered.

The entire philosophy of yoga is meant to lead us to this discovery. Our friend said, "In that case you must say that the ego does not exist" - and yet even this is the work of the intellect! The intellect works, it tries to work! First it gives you the meaning of the word. When this is not satisfactory it says, "Then perhaps it does not exist". But this is only the work of the intellect. However, this is all we have to work with at present; and so we must make the best use we can out of this imperfect instrument - but we must also be most careful in our use of it. Earlier on we saw that the other side of this spiritual ignorance is knowledge. But this is knowledge of a thing which does not exist - it is called avidya. Avidya is just an idea - it is also called maya.

Strangely enough this ignorance of the truth makes the untruth appear to be real. On the one side is ignorance, and on the other is wrong knowledge. The

omnipresence is not realised, it is ignored. and yet this 'I' still comes into being. Ramana Maharishi once said that the first thought is the thought of 'I' and that this thought 'I' itself creates everything else. Do you agree? It is a bit difficult. What would it be like if 'I' did not think at all, if the 'I' did not exist at all? In sleep we see that the 'I' is sleeping - but is there a world at all in sleep? No. Someone says that during sleep the 'I' does not exist; but he only says that because at this moment he is not sleeping! What would happen if I came into your room at midnight and asked you if there was a world? The only answer would be snoring!

The first thought is 'I'. Then this first thought, this 'I' creates thoughts of the world. In the Bible we have the beautiful story of Adam and Eve - the first, romance. If you watch carefully you will see this same truth in that story. God created Adam, and Eve was projected out of Adam. The Bible says that God actually created Adam. He did not take a separate piece of matter and create Eve out of that! The story goes on to say that, having created Adam, God made Adam project Eve out of himself. Before Eve could be created however, Adam was put to sleep! This is symbolic and beautiful. God is omnipresent and even Adam is part of this omnipresence. First of all comes sleep, ignorance, and in that state of ignorance, Adam - ego is born. His ego then projects the world.

First we have ignorance, and on the other side of ignorance we have the ego - the idea of ego, these two are born simultaneously - they are two sides of the same thing. As soon as the ego is born, it creates another polarity - the 'I' and the 'you'. This you is multiplied into a million things - you as my friend and you as my enemy - she as my friend and he as my enemy. This ego, this I is constantly seeking experience, it is constantly seeking expression. Constantly. These are the reasons we are here today - on the speakers part there is expression of the ego, and on the part of the others, there is same ego here looking for experience, looking for knowledge. If in this process I get a good experience, and experience I like, then I am caught. Listen carefully and you will see the mischief here.

He scratches my back and so he is my friend. She says coffee is bad for me and I should not drink it - so I do not like her. Whom do I like and whom do I dislike? Please consider this very carefully. I like my friend - I do not like my enemy. How did he become my friend and how did she become my enemy? I like him and so he is my friend, I do not like her and so she is my enemy. Can you see that this is a vicious circle? I decide that this pleases me and that does not. So the one giving me what pleases me is my friend - and this is where I am caught. At first coffee did not taste too good but when I decided to drink coffee, I enjoyed it. Not everyone giving me coffee is my friend. But what happens if suddenly that drink of coffee makes me sick? My friend becomes my enemy. This is a circular argument and very dangerous. If you watch and

see how the mind plays with these things, you will be quite amazed and shocked. It is a trap and we are caught in it. How do we get out of it?

It is the going round and round of the ego - it is the ego that is confused. There is no logic in all this - there is no solution until we come back to the root of the problem. The root of the problem is - what is this I? I must see that this is all the play of the ego which is seeking expression. The ego wants experience and, in the course of experiencing, it creates a polarity. It says, I like him, he is my friend, or I do not like him, he is my enemy. I try to hold on to my friend, I grab him, keep him and I push away the one who is not my friend.

In all this tremendous activity, I have forgotten the original problem. Since I have forgotten the root problem, I am trying to find a solution to all those far-away problems. This is a common experience - where the solution itself becomes a problem. All our lives we do this. We find a problem and instead of trying to find the source of it, we try to solve it by creating another problem. That solution then becomes a problem and we look for another solution. It is so strange that, in spite of the fact that our lives are full of these problems, nobody wants to die!

Patanjali, in his Yoga Sutras, says this is called abhinivasa. He says this clinging to life is found in everybody - even the wise. He also says he does not know why it is so.

Chapter Four

A favourite saying of my guru, Swami Sivananda, was that there is no world other than likes and dislikes. Do we ever think of anything other than 'I like' or 'I do not like'? You like me, I exist - somebody insulted you, hurt you and he also exists in your mind. The mind holds on to that which it likes and to that which it does not like. The rest does not exist. You may have heard of Mauritius, but unless you have been there and seen it, it does not exist for you. If I ask you where it is, you may answer that you do not - perhaps you like me, are interested in me and where I come from - now you take an interest in the island, it comes into existence in your mind.

On one side we have ignorance, ignorance of the Omnipresence of God, of the oneness of existence, and on the other side we have knowledge, knowledge of 'I', the thought of 'I', thinking of 'I'. Perhaps this is what the Bible calls the apple and which is interpreted as the tree of knowledge. One often wonders why God forbids knowledge - surely knowledge is good? But this knowledge is another type of knowledge, one based on ignorance. When I push aside the idea of the oneness of existence, then a certain type of knowledge arises and that is the thought of 'I am' - I am, as an individual, as an ego, as a small entity, as a broken piece. This broken piece tries to establish relationships based on 'I like you', or 'I do not like you'. I like you because you give me pleasure - now will you please watch very carefully. Most of us have had this experience - I am walking along a road and I see you - I do not know you and you do not know me. Suddenly you smile at me. It is a beautiful smile and, because it gives me pleasure, I fall in love with you. This unknown person becomes not only known, she becomes my wife. Do I love you? I do not know what love is - I told you I love you because you are going to do something for me. It is the same in business when you go into a shop to buy something. The girl gives you a bright smile, you really think she is in love with you; but as soon as the money transaction is over, the 'love' is gone.

It is good to understand this thoroughly. First there is the 'I' thought, the ego-sense which makes a relationship but, because that ego-sense is really a broken piece, a very small broken piece, nothing it ever does will be whole. A broken piece of glass always remains a broken piece of glass, it can never be a complete mirror. In human relationships too - since I am a broken piece I, I will break you too. When I like you, I want you to do something for me - thereby I am breaking you. After this you are afraid, you must be afraid. First I say: "If you love me, I will love you". Then I say: "You love me and so you must do this". I tyrannise you. This is life. If you do not do this, then I hate you - and now you are broken. You are going to sit and think - Do I love this man or not? He says that if I love him I must do all this - but I do not want to do it. This is how our human relationships deteriorate. We are not prepared to see that when you fight with me, dislike me, leave me - or if I am

disappointed in you - I try to find a reason, I want to blame you. This happens in most homes - a wife is fond of her husband, but one day he develops a severe headache and when her husband returns from work she does not give him the usual welcome. If she fails to greet him, kiss him, the husband immediately thinks she does not love him any more. She thinks - If I am his wife, do I not even have the freedom to have a headache one day?

For each of these things we blame the other person. We should rather look within and discover the thought that I am expecting the other person to do something - that is the mischief. Expectation of pleasure, sense gratification, goes with what is called 'like', and pain, disappointment, hurt goes with what is called 'dislike'. I expect you to do something for me and you do it - therefore I like you. But if you hurt me or disappoint me, I dislike you. This is the essence of all our human relationships.

Our world, what we call our world is very small. It consists of only about a hundred people - the rest of the world is imagination. On the television or on the screen we see Africans or Maoris, but to us these are only pictures, they are not real people. If you watch carefully and notice what this world is made of, you will find that it consists only of "I like these people" and "I do not like these people". You are my wife, you gratify all my desires, you do everything to please me, you are an angel to me - but you may be a devil as far as the neighbor is concerned. When you quarrel with her, I say you are right and she is wrong. If I like you, whatever you do is right - so long as it does not hurt me: If you do quarrel with me however, then our friendship is finished. If something I do makes you find fault with me, that means you do not really like me. This is what is called 'ego-identification' in Indian philosophy. When the ego identifies itself completely

with another person, whatever happens, that person is always right. The person you do not like is always wrong. If you doubt, then your likes and dislikes are not very strong.

Questioner: Can one not see these faults and try to understand?

Ah! That is it. In other words, I see your faults are not faults to me because I like you. But if I see these same faults in a person I dislike, then I hate him. Watch the mind, watch how the mind works. Watch, watch.

We are talking about ordinary people, the man in the street. We are not talking about enlightened people. For instance, take my guru, whatever he does is right - there is no question about it at all. Someone may come along and tell me that something my guru did was wrong - but this thought does not arise in my mind. It never occurs to me. But if I dislike someone, then everything he does is, or appears to be, defective, to me.

The person whom you like with your whole heart usually takes charge of you - that is, they become part of you, flesh of your flesh, there is no distinction at all. You become totally and completely one.

For all our problems and difficulties we tend to blame others. Why am I happy? Because he, my friend, did something for me. Why am I unhappy? Because he, my enemy, did something which hurt me. My happiness comes from somebody else, my unhappiness comes from somebody else. We think that someone else is responsible for everything which happens to us. Will anyone of us say, "I am responsible for my unhappiness"? If there is, then he or she is a good student of yoga. I offer this as an interesting thought and not as a criticism of any belief. You have this story in the Holy Bible. Adam and Eve were cast out of paradise and, because of some mistake which they committed, you and I are suffering now. I am not questioning that belief. But we also believe that a Saviour would come from somewhere else and save us. The cause for our suffering is outside ourselves and our redemption is also outside ourselves.

As long as I blame somebody else for my troubles, my problems, I am far away from the center, from the solution. Why? Because my attention is focused on what I believe to be the cause of my happiness or my unhappiness. Then, because my whole life seems to depend upon other people, I am unable to visualise a life independent of them. This is why I cling to life. I may have lost my eyes, my arms, everything is gone, and yet I still want to go on living in this world. In yoga philosophy this is called abhinivesha.

When I do not blame other people for my unhappiness and problems, I have begun to turn within myself. First I see that my unhappiness is directly related to my expectations. Is this quite clear? If I do not expect anything then whatever you do will be all right. If I expect you to smile at me, even if you fail to do this, then I am disappointed; but if you are a stranger, I do not expect you to look at me. So, if you happen to smile at me - it is an unexpected pleasure. Disappointment or unhappiness is in direct proportion to our expectations. What you do to me does not make me unhappy - it is my expectation that makes me unhappy. So, instead of blaming you, or even myself, I merely look within, to see where this expectation springs from.

Now I am beginning to meditate, with open eyes, whilst walking, talking, cooking - all the time I am meditating. One who is trained in this way may become unhappy once in his life; but if he can catch hold of that one time and discover himself, he will never suffer again. Adam and Eve only fell once. Jesus came once. It could be that the second coming of Jesus may be the discovery of this enlightenment.

The solution of the fundamental problem is the discovery of the self. Though I wish it had not happened, I am certain most of us have had this type of experience at some time. Has no one ever hurt your feelings, insulted you? Once this did happen to me - someone said a few ugly words to me and, as I looked at him, I could feel the pain. It was as if someone had stuck a needle into me. This made me curious - he had only spoken a few words to me, he did not stick a knife into me - so I asked myself what this was all about. Can I see it, this pain of the soul, this pain of the heart? Can I see it as clearly as I see this microphone in front of me now? If it is a physical pain, it must be seen, either with the eyes or a microscope. Can you see the pain in my eyes? No, no, no! You are only seeing what you think is pain.

If it is a physical pain, and yet cannot be seen, what does this mean? It means that when there is pain you cannot say it does not exist. That is the difficulty. Here, physical pain is being experienced. I can see this needle sticking into my chest - yet, when I look at it, it is not there. I light a candle and put it in front of me - I keep gazing at it so that I do not fall asleep. Often when you think deeply or meditate, you fall asleep; I gaze at this candle and ask myself what this pain is - what 'is' it? 'What' is it? I am not asking 'why' because, if I do, then naturally I answer myself by saying that he insulted me. Can the vibrations of his words hurt my nervous system? No. She says the reason it hurts is the ego - he says it is because of identification - but I do not know. To me, this is only words. I can put out my hand and feel this carpet we are sitting on - but I cannot feel or see the words 'ego', 'identification', and so on.

This feeling I have 'is' pain and this pain is not a word. These words, these explanations, are merely an escape from the fact of the pain itself. The pain is clearly felt, it is clearly experienced - hence it is a fact - and yet I still cannot see it - so it is not an object. When I look deeply within and when I become aware of the pain without trying to escape from it, I realise I am that pain.

It is then that the pain, as pain, goes and I am left with the I-thought, the ego.

Chapter Five

With regard to physical pain, it may not be quite correct to say that I am the pain, because physical pain is caused partly by the reaction of prana, and partly by the self. For example if I eat very spicy food and have a pain in the stomach, it is not imagination. This spicy food is sitting in my stomach and the prana does not like it. The prana goes to work and tries to throw it out. At the same time it says, "Lookout! Do not send any more stuff like that down here." That work of the prana we call pain. There is that much physical pain there and it has to be dealt with. There is also a lot of imagination and it is here that the mind plays a wonderful part. Perhaps I go to South India, where everyone eats very spicy foods. At mealtimes I sit and ask myself why I should be the only one to suffer. This mental attitude will magnify the pain about a hundred times. In a case of psychological pain this is even more true. For example, you may have lost some money, or been involved in an accident, or perhaps your husband or wife has run away - these are all experiences which have happened to many other people too, but when it happens to me, then I say, "But why does, this happen to me?" And these words multiply the pain a thousand times.

I am sure you know the famous story about Buddha. It concerns the time when he was in a village teaching people about dharma, right living and nirvana and so on. One young widow had lost her only son, she was very angry with God - this happens to all of us sometimes, does it not - she brought the body to Lord Buddha and said to him, "You speak of dharma, first make this child live and then I will accept dharma". Buddha listened calmly to her words and then replied, "It is easy to do that, but I shall need some mustard seed. Ordinary mustard seed will not do however, the seed must come from a house where no one has died." The widow thought this would be easy, she ran to the village and knocked on the door of the first house she came to and asked that lady for some mustard seed. The lady said she would gladly give her some seed. Then the widow asked her, "Before giving it to me tell me whether any member of your family has died?" The reply came quickly, "Oh yes, my grandfather died last year." The widow went on to the next house and then to the next and the next - but in each home some relative had died. Suddenly she stopped running and began to laugh - she turned round and ran back to Buddha. Buddha saw immediately that the medicine had worked and the widows words confirmed this. She said: "Lord, I do not want any mustard seed, I do not want the boy back. Give me knowledge, Lord."

Pain is painful only as long as I think I am the only one who is suffering. As soon as I can see that everyone has the same problem, then I can see that it is all part of living and my own problem seems to be imagination. It is then that I see that I am the pain. It is then I see that this imaginary pain is born of myself - that I am that pain. I see that there is no pain apart from my own

mind. This not like the pain I had in the stomach, it is much worse. Why is it worse? For the reason that it is an imaginary pain. Have you heard of phantom pain? The first time I saw it I could not believe it. In Australia there was a man who had lost one of his legs during the war and now used a wooden leg. He said to me: "Oh, Swami, that foot is terrible, it really hurts. What yoga asana will remove the pain? He was quite serious but to cure that type of pain is difficult. The foot is not there, the pain is not there, I created the pain in my own mind. It is a thought in my mind, it is me. However, by the Grace of God, it is possible to get hold of that pain, that experience, and through it to gain enlightenment.

The yogis believe that the whole world has been created in order that we may learn to express ourselves and undergo all kinds of experiences which may, eventually, lead us to enlightenment. My guru used to say, time and again, that the world is a school and I must learn certain lessons. If I fail to do so, then I stay in the same class for some more time. To suffer this psychological pain once is normal; if I suffer it again, I am dull; and if I suffer it a third time, I am a fool. Most of us belong to the third category and we pass through the same experience again and again. Why does this happen? For the reason that we blame somebody else, or we blame God or karma and so try to escape from it. Another type of escape is by drinking or taking drugs or we may resort to religion as an escape. Until one reaches enlightenment or self-knowledge suffering is inevitable.

It is possible for the mind to be trained so that it does not see the pain, does not see the suffering. It is possible for cruel people to be calm - the conscience does not worry them at all. It is like wearing stiletto-heel shoes - at the beginning they hurt like mad but then you get used to them. In the same way we become immune to suffering. Observe life, realise that everything is changing all the time and you will see that this too is suffering. For example, I am healthy today but I know that old age is just around the next corner. I may be happy today - tomorrow I may be run over by a motor car and land up in hospital.

Buddha did not suffer. He was happy, he was a glorious prince, surrounded by luxury - yet he saw that life 'is' suffering. Life is subject to change, to likes and dislikes. "I love you", "I hate you" - these expressions are often in our minds, escape often from our lips. If I love you and you are near me, then I am happy; but we cannot be together all the time, we have to separate and then I am unhappy. If I hate you and you go away, I am happy, but I may worry in case you return. As long as I think like this, of these likes and dislikes, then unhappiness is unavoidable. As long as individuality is there, then likes and dislikes are inevitable - and as long as I do not reach Cosmic Consciousness, the sensation of individuality is unavoidable. As long as this continues to exist, I cannot avoid being unhappy. Take any experience, maybe something I

have seen or experienced. _If I become sensitive then my heart will suffer. Then I suffer or see someone else suffer, I look at it and wonder what it is. This should lead me on to truth, to enlightenment, to samadhi.

Patanjali shows us a series of steps which we may follow in order to arrive at this samadhi. This is called vitarka - tarka meaning logic or reasoning. We can use the word tarka but vitarka is better - it means good reasoning, good logic, it does not mean perverse or wrong reasoning. One can use the same logic, either to construct or to destroy. A few days ago somebody heard me say that all the world is one - she turned to me saying: "Ah, then it is not so bad that the Americans bombed Vietnam!" This was her reaction - strange logic. True logic should help us to have greater understanding. For example if the world is one and we hear that there is great poverty in Africa somewhere, we should do all we can to send them help. This is the correct use of logic, and it is through this right logic, this right reasoning, that I understand suffering and realise that this experience is not uniquely mine. Everyone is suffering, not I alone - this is what right reasoning will teach us. It also says that as long as there is this division in my mind then suffering is inevitable. As long as I like one person and dislike another person, suffering is unavoidable.

Next one enters a state of vichara - and this vichara means enquiry - one might ask what the nature of this suffering is. Then I see that this suffering is in the mind, that it is non-different from the mind. Vichara is beyond the mind, intellect, reasoning. The only thing that reasoning can teach me is that suffering is universal, that everybody suffers as long as they have likes and dislikes. Then reasoning comes to an end - now I have to see what this suffering is and that is vichara - enquiry - it is an investigation. This is what I must study, what I must investigate. '

As you enter the state of vichara, the attention is turned within and you are watching inwardly. Is this clear? When suffering is experienced, there is a movement of the consciousness outside oneself. When I think that he hurt me, he insulted me, took something away from me - these are all externalisations.

In vichara, the whole movement of consciousness is towards the self, towards the center. Then you come face to face with this truth - that suffering is only imaginary. What happens is that 'I' creates a thought and it is thought which suffers. I expect to be happy and therefore I am unhappy. If I did not expect to be happy, I should not be unhappy at all.

When you clearly see that "I am not unhappy, but that which sought happiness is unhappy", then there is great joy, and expectation drops away because likes and dislikes drop away. All that remains is the feeling, "I am happy", sa-ananda. But even here there is still danger. I am happy implies

that I was not happy yesterday and I may become unhappy again tomorrow. As long as this feeling of ego is there, there is fear.

When the meditation pursues the source of this experience of happiness, which is also the source of the fear of losing it, you arrive at the ego-sense. You see that happiness and fear are directly related to likes and dislikes, but not to you, necessarily! Now you pursue the source of the ego-sense, you enter the sa-asmita.

In the sa-asmita state, fear is not there because all the likes and dislikes have dropped away, all the pairs of opposites have dropped away. In this state of experience the seed is still there - nothing more, only the seed. There is no world, no tree, no love, no hatred, no likes, no dislikes - nothing at all. And, because all these are absent, there is a feeling of happiness. All this is true, but the seed is still there, the tree will grow again.

That seed is the I-consciousness. That seed is the experience of happiness. This 'I' may even experience a feeling of happiness, of Cosmic consciousness, it may 'see' God. The tree represents the various expansions of the 'I' - such as 'I am seeing God standing in front of me' or 'I am separate from God'. This 'I' cannot be there unless there is a trace of spiritual ignorance. Remember that, although these experiences may be wonderful, the seed, the I-consciousness, is still there.

Chapter Six

We began by saying, 'I am the pain but it can also be pleasure. Any experience can be used to begin this enquiry. But, if you are enjoying a pleasant experience, it is not so easy to begin making these enquiries. Pleasure makes you to go to sleep, but a headache does not. Then again, if the pain is too great, if the suffering is too great, it is not good to make the enquiry. This is because, when the mind is so disturbed, so distracted, it will be unable to focus on the experience. If you understand this, then perhaps you will also understand why some people use tantric practices in their enquiry - they drink wine, eat well, have a girl friend and have sexual intercourse with her. Then they ask, "Well what is happening to me?" It seems difficult to understand but most pleasures are outside the practice of enquiry. This is the reason other yogis became ascetics at the beginning of these enquiries.

Let us return to our enquiry. I am the pain. This means the pain is experienced by me, the ego. It is not distinct from me, different from me. If there is physical pain, it is not exceptional - if there is physical loss, it is not an exception in my case - it happens to others too. If there is physical pain, the mind argues with itself, saying it is the prana itself working to restore the balance in the body. If during this enquiry your mind is concentrated, it is a form of samadhi, called savitarka samadhi. Until this stage is reached, there is thinking and counter-thinking. From here onwards there is no thinking. What do these words, "I am the pain" really mean? Where is this pain - I am looking within - I am not thinking, not repeating the mantra. What is the pain and where is it - this is thinking.

Beyond this thinking there is only looking, observing. It is vichara, enquiry, investigation, looking within. For this, what do we need? We do not need great intellectual capacity, perhaps we are better off without knowledge, even of the yoga scriptures. How is this true? Because the moment I ask myself where the pain is, and what it is - an answer from a book will flash into my mind. This is the result of ignorance. Now, what do we know about ignorance? What do we know about the ego? We use the word ego like we use the word shoe - but I can see the shoe but I cannot see the ego as clearly. Merely by looking, by observing where the pain is, the suffering is, I suddenly discover that it is the ego that thinks it suffers. It thinks 'I am suffering' and therefore I am suffering. If this is only an intellectual process, it is useless. In sleep I do not feel the suffering - Why not? Because I am not thinking. I am there, I am sleeping - but the mind is not thinking. When I wake up, I begin to think that I am in pain and therefore 'I am' pain. This is the process of vichara, watching, and this is when thought comes to an end, pain comes to an end.

The next step is difficult. What happens when the pain goes? There is joy and in this joy one of two things will happen. The first is that just as I think the pain has gone, the mind begins to function again and the pain returns - this is because we are thinking about it. Or, secondly in that joy I am liable to lose that complete concentration, I may forget to watch myself and again return to that painful state. In either case I doubt if the pain has really gone and I am distracted by this inner pleasure, this inner happiness and I lose the trend. If the meditation is real and these two distractions are avoided, then psychological suffering goes for ever and the physical pain is slight. It is self-pity that makes the pain terrible, that makes it seem worse and that prevents us from seeing it as just physical pain.

Whatever the pain is, if one is able to meditate, let us say, on the heart, then it is possible to minimise the tooth ache or headache. You know, there is something marvellous about these pains which may be pulsating or rhythmic sensations - when I have this type of pain, I lie down and close my eyes, I think about kirtan -singing, Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare - Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare. I synchronise this with the rhythm of the pain - it is amazing to see the pain disappear! The pain disappears because I am not trying to push it away. This is only possible within a certain range - it is not possible in extreme suffering, nor is it possible in extreme happiness.

The mind does not think, "I am suffering" - the suffering has ceased and there is only happiness. 'I' is still there - do not divide it into two parts, the deeper and the more superficial ones - because it is the mind that is watching the mind, the "I" that is watching the mind. With what do I watch the mind? Two things seem to be necessary - one is to watch the mind with great calmness. If that calmness is not there the picture trembles and there is no observation. The other thing you need is some Grace - whether you believe in God or not, without Grace it is difficult to go beyond this stage. Some people say they are able to break the ego and go beyond - but, if you ever tried this yourself, you will realise that this person is able to do this only because he already has God's Grace. It is only God who can say, "I do not need God".

The mind is still and whole - there is no division between thought and pain - there is no pain, there is no suffering. Then, what is this "I"? It is because that problem has not been solved that the seed of the trouble, the "I", is still there and comes out again to trouble us. It may assume new forms, the same old problems may reappear in new garb. For example, before I took up meditation I had friends and enemies, now I practise meditation, I think I am an enlightened person and so I now have 'spiritual' friends and 'spiritual' enemies.

Do you see the difficulty? Until this I is realised to be completely non-existent, the problem is still there. Here we must be extremely careful. When one talks about the existence or not-existence, of the 'I', it is not as though nothing in the world exists - I exists, but not as an individual, not as 'I' as opposed to 'you', not as 'I' as opposed to 'him'.

This 'I' is the little personality. The word personality means mask, so what we call 'I' is nothing but a mask. We have to be able to break this mask. Then we see that which is behind, the eternal "I", the infinite "I". However, this is only an assumption to us at present. To cross this valley of vichara, of enquiry, we have to have God's Grace.

Chapter Seven

We see how the ego, in a state of ignorance and though non-existent, functions as though it is real. Now the question is whether or not we have free will. But who is it that asks this question? The ego! This question only arises through the ego, through the 'I'. 'I' is asking the question - whether 'I' has free will or not - the question shows that I think I have free will. The 'I' always thinks it has free will. Be very careful.

In the Bible, the first 'I', the first ego, is represented by Adam. Adam thought he had free will, he thought he had a free will and sought a way to express it. Now, watch carefully! As if to sanction his free will, God tells him he may do what he likes but he may not eat from one particular tree. How does Adam exercise his free will? By disobeying. The exercise of free will by the ego is contrary to Divine Will, although on the surface this does not seem to be so.

Now we come to the life of Jesus. His teaching is very clear. He says not even a sparrow will fall to the ground unless it is the will of God. Nothing can happen without God's Will! Jesus said so. The gospel also says that, on the night Jesus was arrested, he was on the Mount of Olives, praying. Watch this carefully, without getting involved in the thought, "I am a Christian", or, "I am not a Christian". He prayed: "O Father, if it be thy will, take this cup from me." He was asking God to take away his suffering. We see that when the ego exercises its will, it is always guided by pleasure, profit and prestige. Thus we ask to be saved from the pain and ask for that which is pleasurable. Jesus went on to say: "Yet not my will but thine be done." What is thy will? It is always the other side of the coin called pleasure, profit, prestige. Really and truly, it is God's will alone that is done.

Let us come back to the story of Adam. God gave him free will and, in an indirect way, Adam exercised God's will by denying God's will! God created Adam in his own image and then indicated that he was free to choose what he wished to do. By disobeying God's words he demonstrated that he had free will - yet this apparent disobedience was still God's will! Nothing ever happens contrary to God's will - but as long as the I is there, as long as the ignorance is there, it has free will.

Why does the I think it has free will? Because its vision is limited. My vision is limited and so, as I drive along the road, I see that the road forks and I am confused. Shall I take this road or that road? I drive on until I reach the fork and I must decide now which road to take. I choose the right road - do I really have a choice? Can I drive along both roads at the same time? No. I have to choose one of the roads. If, instead of worrying about this earlier, I had driven calmly along the road I was on, I would know exactly which road to choose at

the fork. It is only because of this ignorance, because the ego is functioning, that I think there is a choice.

In this state of ignorance the ego has no choice but to be anxious, to worry, to fear, to think that there is a choice. Do you see the joke? The ego has to do God's will but it also has no choice except to keep worrying, until this ignorance is dropped. Because we think we have a choice, the religious teachers tell us to choose what is unselfish, what is good. If you study this carefully you will see that what they describe as good, is against pleasure, profit, prestige. Religious practices seem to be against pleasure. In India it is said, that if you fulfill your religious duties, you do not earn merit but, if you neglect them, you will go to hell. By imposing these disciplines, the teachers are awakening the ego. Later on, by God's Grace, you will realise that this ego - and therefore your free will, existed only in ignorance. As long as you have a sense of free will, use it the right way and at the same time, by inquiring deeper and deeper into the nature of the ego, you will realise that the ego does not exist and that therefore there is no free will. This cannot be grasped by the intellect, it has to be 'seen'.

In yoga philosophy God is called Ishwara. In the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali there is a definition which says, 'Ishwara purusha visheshah'. The Ishwara or God is a special or unique Purusha - Purusha in the sense of the being behind the mask and not the person. Literally it means one who presides over a city - in Sanscrit literature, the body is described as a city with nine gates - the nine gates being the openings of the body. This city has millions of inhabitants - the body has millions of cells. The intelligence presiding over this body, this nine-gated city, is Purusha.

God or Ishwara is a special Purusha , "one who is not limited by time". Some time ago I was a small boy, now I am a middle-aged man and later on I shall be dead. I am conditioned by time. The Yoga Sutras tell us to look within, to see if there is someone there, inside, who is not conditioned by time. If you do this, you will find that there is an intelligence - the light within us, which is not affected by our ignorance, not limited by time and which, therefore, is not the ego. If I take a knife and cut my hand, does that wound heal because I want it to, or because I want it not to - or does that wound respond to an intelligence which is not mine? Even the body obeys that intelligence within us.

In pranayama it is said that you must hold your breath until you see with your inner vision, that which makes you breathe. You must come to the border between life and death, where these two meet - that is yoga, that is the door where inside meets outside. This is one of the reasons why we meditate at sunrise and sunset - the time when day and night meet. It is not day, it is not night and so it is easy to forget the world. You are not asleep and you are not

awake, that is the border. I must reach this point, I must knock at this door and the Ishwara will open the door. I cannot open it, it must be opened for me. When these two come together, there is enlightenment. Then I see that what I had considered was the ego, was only a shadow. This shadow does not exist except in the light - only because there was light, was the shadow seen. I was looking at the shadow and not at the light. Once the light is seen, the shadow is gone and I am free. Then I realise I never had a free will! Why? Because I did not exist! That is called Ishwara pranidana' - surrender to God.

Surrender to God is a very important doctrine of yoga philosophy. This God is not 'my' God or 'your' God, a Hindu God or a Christian God - but God. If you think Jesus Christ is God, good, carry on. Somebody else may say that God is some thing unnamed, unseen, that is alright too - but this God is not a product of thought, not a creature of the mind and so it is futile to speculate about God. Even Patanjali declares the existence of Ishwara, to reassure the yogi, to give him the hope of liberation. The sage promised us the ending of this condition of ignorance and ego-suffering, when he said to us: "Yes, there is something beyond this door, this door within you, which is ignorance - and that is God, Ishwara.

First you use the method of good reasoning and then you enter into vichara, enquiry. As a result of vichara the suffering goes and there is happiness. What remains is pure ego sense. Now you will ask what this ego is - it is like knocking on the door of ignorance - and the first answer will be that I do not know. There is no choice but to go on and then suddenly, somehow, somebody opens the door - that is God. As soon as the door is opened, there is light. Ignorance, ego, is gone.

Does that yogi know he has reached enlightenment? No. But at that moment his confusion, his doubts, his selfishness, his craving for pleasure, all those things disappear. He does not say he is enlightened, he may not know he is enlightened, because this enlightenment is not an object of thought - but in his mind all confusion is at rest and in that heart there is no selfishness. That is God's Grace.

Chapter Eight

In the previous chapter we discussed the phenomenon of surrender to God, worship of God, devotion to God. What is God? I do not know. But I know that a great yogi, my guru, said that on the other side of the unknown is God - on the other side of this door is God. God is not a reality to me now, what is real is the thought 'I am'. We have tried to turn our attention within, in fruitful enquiry, reasoning, and investigation and our sufferings have dropped away. There is great joy and the feeling of 'I am'. It is this feeling of 'I am' that is real but, when I ask what this ego is, or what this 'I am' is, there is no answer. Why? Because it is the 'I' which is asking. Since it is 'I' that asks "Who am I?", the answer can only be, "I do not know!" And that feeling that I do not know is ignorance. This is real to me; but God is not real to me at this moment. I am taking the existence of God on faith; but that which is not real to me, will not work. I can only work with things I know and see. The only thing I see now is that there is this feeling of ego and that this ego is unable to know what it is. This is where I am caught.

In such a condition what is the state of the mind? Lord Buddha describes it beautifully, "Live in this world as you would live with a cobra in your room." If you are asleep in a room with only one door and you hear a sound, you open your eyes and see a cobra sitting in the doorway. What do you do? You know there is no escape - the whole mind is concentrated on the cobra. When you went to sleep you were tired - suddenly all the tiredness has gone - nothing exists but the cobra. This is the condition of the person who feels the ego-sense, but who does not know what it is and who is caught in it.

In this state there is no fear, no anxiety, nothing - you are helpless. The example of the cobra is defective because then you may be afraid - but here, when the ego is facing this ignorance, there is no fear, there is nothing at all. It is absolutely essential to know that it is useless to imagine all this, to imagine that one sees the ego and the source of this ignorance - and to pretend that this ignorance and ego have gone away. An imaginary cobra in an imaginary doorway does not help you in realisation, for they are not real. The problem is not real so there can be no realisation. Even concentration is not real, is not intense.

In this state there is no fear, no anxiety, nothing - I am helpless. If, on the other hand, in meditation, I see all this clearly, if I take it step by step, then there is not only no anxiety but there is positive enthusiasm. It is then that you really enquire, enquire, enquire. It is then that you come face to face with the ego-sense. Then you see that it is the ego-sense which asks "Who am I?". Since the ego-sense asks the question, the answer can only be "I do not know". This is knocking on the door, because the ego-sense has to admit that it does not know the answer. This is surrender. Then, when the ego-sense

collapses, the ignorance also collapses - then the Light of God, call it what you will, shines.

To become aware of the ego-sense , to enter the state of meditation, one needs a calm mind. One cannot do vichara, enquiry, investigation, without a calm mind. What should we do to calm the mind? The yogis have given us a method, it is called Ashtanga Yoga. This Yoga has eight limbs or parts, as its name implies.

The first two limbs are yama and niyama. Yama is the cultivation of good qualities and niyama is how to live a well-regulated life. We are told by the yoga teachers that unless we acquire these virtues, we shall go no farther - but my guru used to say that if we wait for that, then we may wait for ever. Yama means to be established in perfect truthfulness, never to hurt anybody in thought, word or deed and also being pure in thought word and deed. Watch carefully - you will see that, when you do not tell lies, you become more short-tempered and, when you try to become pure in thought, word and deed, then you become more egoistic, vain and proud!

So, if I have to wait until I am perfectly pure and holy before I can go onto the next stage - then it may not happen at all. My guru said, "Take all these steps, practise a little of each of them." This is in accord with the teachings of this Ashtanga Yoga. When a child is born, it has all its limbs intact, but undeveloped. And God teaches us this in yoga too; but we say we will do only physical yoga now, and later on - when I am almost dead - I shall do mental and spiritual yoga! It is better to do what we can, as perfectly as we can, now.

If, every day, I worship God in mind, body and spirit then I am sure that one day I shall become perfect. This is yoga.

Chapter Nine.

The first limb of Ashtanga Yoga is yama. Yama means virtue - truthfulness, non-violence, brahmacharya, and non-stealing - not wanting to take something away from somebody else. Do I know what virtue is? Virtue is order and I must reach this state of order within myself. Neither a scripture nor a teacher can tell me how to be virtuous, unless I see the disorder within myself, unless I see that this disorder is causing all my unhappiness. I want happiness and yet I cannot see that it is order that brings happiness. With one part of my being I may pay homage to virtue but with another part I love the opposite. This is the business of yoga - to bring these two parts together.

At the present stage we are no longer truly wicked - 'when I do some mischief part of me tells me not to do it! We have all done some mischief at some time or another, can you honestly say you enjoyed doing it, with all your being? No. Something within you was saying, "No". We are extra-ordinary beings, neither totally good nor totally bad.

Think about animals and birds. The swans in the lake are gentle - from head to foot they are gentle - or think about a tiger, when it pounces, it does so with its whole being. The swans and the tigers are better yogis than we are! Why? Because we are not aware of this need for order, for virtue, within ourselves.

If you read the Bible or the Yoga Sutras, you learn that you should not kill, you should not steal, you should not tell lies. Who is it that is reading this? You! One part of you accepts what you are reading and one part rejects it. Intellectually I may appreciate that it may happen, but my feelings tell me something else. When the doctor tells me that smoking will kill me, I understand what he says but I still enjoy smoking. That is the point! Both the heart and the mind, together, read the Bible. When it says, "Thou shalt not kill", the mind says that is alright. But supposing someone wants to kill my wife, then what must I do? There is a conspiracy between the mind and the heart - and we build a new philosophy, to suit ourselves. This states that normally you should not kill unless it is in self-defence, in defence of the family, the country, the nation, or for another person's good. This will not work .

How do the Yoga Sutras determine what virtue is? There was a great saint, a great yogi. His disciples watched his behaviour and found that he was a man of peace - he never harmed anyone, he was truthful and pure, and his mind was always resting in God. The disciples wrote down everything the master did; but eventually, these notes became a series of 'thou shalt' and 'thou shalt not'. These great saints arrived at this stage of virtue, by examining themselves, by examining the mind and its nature. They found that a personality split into different compartments promotes internal and external

conflict. Thus they said that when you remove all conflict, you will find order. In that order is virtue.

If I start reading the scriptures and decide that I shall do the things they mention, it will not work. This is especially true of what is called brahmacharya. Brahmacharya is to live, move and have one's being in God. The sages assert that one who is completely absorbed in the divine, is not attracted by worldly things. We look at all these worldly pleasures and think to ourselves that, if we live in God, these pleasures will not attract us - but I have forgotten that I want a nice house, good food, clothes, a good job, money, sex, going to the pictures and things like that. Thus one goes on trying to eliminate these things one by one - but meanwhile saying to ourselves that we cannot live without this or that! One might say that sex is the most difficult thing to control - but who said this? Anger, violence, is the most difficult thing to control - but the moment I declare that violence is the first thing to be controlled, there is a problem! Suppose you are my disciple and you disobey, I cannot even shout at you because you will remind me about 'non violence'.

Other vices were not included in this prohibition and yet they prevail, in one form or another, for one reason or another. The holy ones chose sex as the most powerful drive and then they prohibited it. This has led to various perversions. If we can remember the original meaning of brahmacharya, we will discover that, when the mind moves naturally in the spiritual realm, all these things drop away of themselves. The problem drops away, but the hunger is still there - thirst is there, but not for beer necessarily, the body is still there but it does not worry any more. In marriage, sex forms a natural expression of the body and the mind remains in the spiritual realm. There is nothing wrong in this.

Instead of approaching it from the end, let us approach it from the beginning. When sex, chastity, becomes a problem, I must see what it is that wants sex, what it is that rejects sex. I must see why there is this conflict in me. When I am really hungry, I want to eat. There is no problem here. So, when it comes to sex, to chastity, why does it become a problem? It becomes a problem because there is disorder in the mind and that disorder is non-virtue. If you solve the problem of this disorder then you will see that virtue becomes natural. I do not know what that virtue will be, but I do know that the mind and the heart, the personality, in which there is no inner conflict, is virtuous.

Chapter Ten

We speak of cultivating virtuous qualities - but can we say that it is possible to cultivate virtue, or that it is not possible to cultivate virtue? How does one cultivate virtue? Not merely by thinking about it! I may think to myself that I have been bad today but that from tomorrow on I will be good - this is open to suspicion! It is like the man who boasts that he has given up smoking for twenty years - but he may take it up again tomorrow! If virtue is acquired, if it is imported from outside, it may also be exported. If you can pick it up, so too you may drop it again. Thus I see that, unless my whole being becomes virtuous, I am not safe. Unless I know what my entire being is, I shall not see what is virtuous - that is the reason why I, unless I learn to meditate, I cannot become virtue. So, we go on observing ourselves, and sooner or later virtue happens - perhaps this virtue is more permanent. If my whole being is virtuous, then all my actions are virtuous. It is not possible for a virtuous person to do something wicked - just as it is not possible to take anything out of a jar of honey, except honey.

Only when my whole being is virtuous does spontaneous action take place; then all actions are good actions. There are other types of reactions - reflex actions impulsive actions, mechanical actions. We may say this is primitive behaviour, that it is instinct, that the lower animal nature acts impulsively, that the instinct for self-preservation is mechanical. We may say that these are not spontaneous actions and that people who act this way are primitive people. We may say that we are enlightened people, civilised and cultured people - but how do we act? Someone comes along and slaps my face. What reaction is there to that? If I am primitive, if my reaction is mechanical, I shall probably slap him back. He hits me and I hit him back. It is finished and we are at peace. This is why in animal society and in the society of small children, there is peace. There is a mechanical give and take, but there is no grudge, no feeling of enmity.

However, when we are cultured people, what do we do? When she hits me on the face, I look at her and I look at all of you, I hesitate, I calculate. If, in that moment of calculation I am able to stop for a moment and say, "Shanti Shanti Shanti", I can pretend to be unaffected, thus earning your admiration. I calculate that it is better to have your admiration than to hit her back. If I feel that you will only respect me if I hit her back, then I shall hit her. So we go along, always we are calculating - if I do this, that will happen, and if I do that, then this will happen. Ninety per cent of the time the calculation fails and I am ready to give up, to declare that that is enough, when something happens and the calculation suddenly proves to be correct. Our hopes are revived and we go on, blundering along from day to day.

If I can see the futility of this behavior, if I see that as long as there is expectation there will be disappointment, that as long as there is pleasure there will be pain, that as long as I am running after happiness, I must be unhappy - only then will I stop wishing for this and that. I may desire happiness - but I do not know for certain that such happiness exists, nor that I shall get it even if it does exist. There is only one fact and that is that I am suffering, and that is why I run after happiness. If, instead of running after this happiness, I face the unhappiness within me, then I realise that unhappiness is unavoidable as long as I am chasing happiness. When this is actually realised, then the desire for happiness disappears, expectation disappears, calculation disappears. When all these have gone, when the roots of wickedness have gone, then all action is pure. Pure action is spontaneous action and this spontaneity is different from the impulsive, mechanical action of a primitive person who has no intelligence. In spontaneous action, it is the intelligence itself that acts. This is the only difference even though externally both actions may appear almost identical.

It is only in this manner that I am able to solve the problem of non-virtue within myself, that I am able to become spontaneously good. Otherwise it is only calculation. It is like saying that honesty is the best policy and never mind what the motive behind it is. Since I see that if I am honest my business prospers, then I am honest - that is all. I remember a tragic story which I shall tell you to illustrate this. When I first went to Rishikesh in 1944, I was working for the Government of India. One of the senior officers heard of my proposed trip and laughed at me. He said, "Going to Rishikesh? What nonsense, a man must work, must do his duty honestly - for that one does not need a god, one does not need religion." I disagreed with him. A few years later this good man became a powerful official in the Government. He was a very good man but he was dismissed for corruption. He had told me he was honest - that was true, but he was not sure why he was honest. Was he honest because his whole being was honest or was his honesty based on fear, on expediency. Was he afraid of his superiors perhaps? Was he seeking the good opinion of his senior? If any of these were his motive then, as soon as reason is knocked away, he will become dishonest. One is truly good only when one's whole being is good.

The Bible contains a beautiful saying of Jesus: "When your eye is single, then your whole being is full of light." This means that the whole being is integrated, harmonised in yoga - and then only does goodness become spontaneous, natural. How does a such person behave in the world? Patanjali gives us a very beautiful description: "Be friendly towards the happy ones, sympathize with the unhappy ones, rejoice with the holy ones, and be indifferent towards the evil ones." put. If you adopt this attitude towards all your human relationships, you will enjoy peace of mind. When you see happy people around you, be friendly towards them; sympathize with those who are

unhappy, but do not look down on them. Sometimes a righteous religious person might be visiting India - they are shocked to see so many poor people, but they look down on them instead of sympathising with them. When he returns to his own country he declares that the Indian Government must solve this problem immediately! Others, living in Delhi, say they are comfortable enough - they have air-conditioning and a couple of cars and so on - but they say that the poor people are so lazy that they must sort out their own problems.

Why should we make any distinction? Here is a human being who is suffering. I am also a human being so I must sympathise with them and do what I can to assist him. If all people would adopt this attitude, the problems of all the poor countries in the world would be solved, in one minute.

Where there is suffering, offer karuna - compassion, and where there is joy, offer friendliness. There are virtuous people, good people, saintly people and when a yoga student is near them, he is happy. These three groups include most of humanity; but there is a fourth group, those who are considered to be wicked. How does a student of yoga behave towards them? He is indifferent. Indifference is not contempt, it is not born of pride - he is just indifferent to the evil - he sees God everywhere. If you should see a human being who does not behave like a human being, what do you do? If you turn away in disgust, it is because there is disgust in your heart, not in his heart. And if you turn away in pride, then there is pride in your heart, not in his heart.

In my contact with people, why should I be full of pride, hate, disgust, contempt? Why is this within me? If I hate the sin or the sinner, where is that hate? It is in me! Why should I bear this burden of hate? Rationalising it and to say that I hate the sin but not the sinner, makes the hate acceptable to me. We have all heard of the Inquisition and of religious wars and so on - these things teach us that once we appoint ourselves as the judge of other human beings, as the custodian of righteousness in the world, we can condemn our enemies as being irreligious - and then burn them at the stake. To remove this hate from one's heart, one must look directly within oneself, and see that hate must breed hate. Once one sees that - hate drops away. If I say that I should no hate the sinner but that I should hate the sin - then hate is still there, it will manifest again.

Until I recognise that this should not be there at all, that this is not human behavior, what should I do? I must admit to myself that I do not understand why the other person does what he does - yet I must not have contempt for him, nor must I copy his example. My whole attitude to these so-called sinful people must be: I do not understand why they do as they do and, I must have no desire to participate in their activities.

Chapter Eleven

In the complete practice of yoga, from what is called yama and niyama, on to samadhi, one has to be cautious. One must not confuse thinking with being. I think I am a good man, a loving man - or I may think that I am right in what I do and, strangely enough most people do think this. Thus we see that yoga is a matter of thinking - I think I am a good man and in this I am sincere - but more often than not, if I think I am a bad man, there is some hypocrisy - perhaps I am saying this to impress you, to make you think how good I am! If I really do think I am a bad man, the viciousness in me will disappear in one minute! If I am wearing a garland of flowers, I am content to let it stay there but if I find it is a snake coiled around my neck, I shall remove it immediately. When I see that I am a not-good man, that not-goodness will drop away in a minute. In the case of developing so-called virtuous qualities, the problem is not one of behaviour, but of thinking.

The third limb of yoga is asana - this is not the postures we practise in the mornings. It means the firm posture in which we can sit comfortably for a long time.

The fourth limb of yoga is pranayama, which is described in considerable detail in Patanjali's Yoga sutras. Pranayama includes inhalation, exhalation and the retention of the breath, both inside the body and outside the body. To understand the mind, association of thoughts, Patanjali seems to suggest only one thing to us - exhale and stop breathing! If you do this pranayama properly, you will notice that, when the lungs are empty and you are holding the breath out, it is impossible to think. This is the secret. If I see this clearly, it is possible for me to understand the basic philosophy of yoga. Most of the hatha yoga descriptions of pranayama include this state of near-consciousness. The word kumbaka means 'to hold the breath as long as possible'. How do you know the limit

has been reached? Because the hand falls, involuntarily, from the nose.

Two unusual types of pranayama are mentioned - one is to inhale and exhale, then hold the breath out, out, out. The other is stop breathing - do not breathe in and do not breathe out! In this state, the breath is suspended. There is considerable effort involved in this. But, with persistent practice, it is possible to suspend the breathing without effort. This process requires three stages: 1. to hold the breath inside, 2. to hold the breath outside, 3. to suspend the breathing altogether. There is a fourth stage too - but it just happens - it is suspension of the breath which happens involuntarily, without the conscious use of the will. This may be seen during meditation when you go deeper and deeper within - eventually even the sound of the breathing becomes jarring, disturbing. This is not a mental effort of any kind, it is something felt by the

innermost being. Thus this disturbance is felt by the innermost being and the breathing stops - you did not will it to stop, you did not think it would stop, it just happened. But the moment you become aware that it has stopped, then you begin to breathe again.

The next limb of yoga is called pratyahara. The simple meaning of this is: to take the river back to its source. The intelligence is the source from which the river of energy flows out through the eyes, the ears, the mouth and so on, out into the world. Can this energy turn in such a way that instead of flowing outward, it flows inward? Yes. it can happen. When? When pranayama is practised seriously and when you hold the lungs empty, then it happens. It also happens when you practise vichara - enquiry. For instance, you see somebody or you hear something - you begin to ask yourself what that sight is, where it happens, what the sound is and where it is heard, then you ask what this 'I' is, which sees and hears all this. Now, suddenly, the river flows towards its source. The hatha yogi does not admit that this happens merely, but sitting and making these enquiries - he says that by doing it this way, you may bluff yourself, you may only think you are withdrawing the mind. Again we have to see that we have a problem. Am I really practising pratyahara, or am I only thinking I am practising pratyahara? Am I really watching the mind, or am I thinking I am watching the mind, the senses? Here, you are the student, the teacher and the examiner - you give yourself a diploma.

The hatha yogi regards all this with suspicion and so he introduces, the idea of meditation on the chakras . He says to us, "Practise Hatha Yoga - take hold of this energy within you, draw it up from center to center and only then will you know definitely whether it has arisen or not." He says that only then will you know for certain that you have withdrawn the energy. However, we are not all yogis of this type. Patanjali admits that total devotion to God is also a method of controlling the mind. If I do not want to give up all my devotional practices, and yet want to adopt this. Hatha Yoga method, then I may combine them. Most of us who follow Swami Sivananda's teachings, combine these practices into what we call Integral Yoga. When I wish to concentrate upon the chakras, I visualise my idea of God in each center. The hatha yogi has his own mantra and at each center he visualises certain forms, gods, goddesses and so on. However there is nothing to stop me visualising my own choice of God's form, in each of the chakras.

However, it is most important to remember that it will not do to say, "I think my mind is concentrated." I must come face to face with the mind and with my problems. Why does the mind wander? We read in the Upanishads that the senses are powerful, but not as powerful as the mind. Then, more powerful than the mind is the buddhi - the discriminating faculty. It is the buddhi which says that this is pleasure and that that is pain, that this is valuable and that that is not valuable. The mind only follows the classification

of the buddhi - how does this buddhi function? How does this intelligence within me function? What is this intelligence which enables me to see the mind?

It is natural to say that I am able to see this man - I have eyesight - but can I also see that my mind is disturbed, that there is desire manifesting in my mind? How do I see this? How is it that I am aware of this total darkness? How am I able to see that I am sitting here, with open eyes, even when it is dark? Surely, this 'eye' which sees, must be luminous? It is in this light that the discriminating faculty, the buddhi, is able to function. This is what I must come face to face with. It is in this light, this insight, that I must see that it is desire that is the trap, and I must see that I do not fall into that trap again. Until I come face to face with the problems that beset my life, I cannot be a good student of yoga. It is not by thinking, that I know this is good - it is a completely different quality, it is a thousand times more powerful than seeing with the eyes. This insight is necessary - it is not enough to think that, 'I am good' or 'I am bad'.

Immediately the river starts flowing towards the source. Concentration and meditation have begun. What do we mean by concentration? In the Yoga Sutras we are given total freedom. We are told to choose any object we like and to visualise this object within ourselves. We may choose a lotus flower and then we visualise it on the right side, in the spiritual heart. Or we may choose the radiant figure of our guru, of Buddha, of Christ, sitting there. We must remain thus, gazing steadily within ourselves. Rationalists often ridicule this idea - they say it is a silly thing to do because there is no lotus there, no Christ and no Buddha.

But why must I think that the body is only composed of flesh and bones and so on? Why should I not accept that the body has infinite energies - each one a god? If a doctor can not see this, maybe his instruments and his eyes are defective. For example; when I was a child, my grandmother said that any terrible disease is suffered from was due to the influence of evil spirits - what our modern friends call a virus! Should you ask them what a virus is, they will tell you that it is something you cannot see. You can see a germ but not a virus. What is the difference between this idea and that of the evil spirits? We just have a new word in place of the old one - so we think we are cleverer than they are! In the same way it is quite possible that what I visualise within myself is real and that the physical anatomy is not real!

If we think deeply about this, our idea of the structure of the body might have to undergo a change - but without forgetting that the liver is there, the spleen there, that we have a pair of lungs and a heart - and so on. This is marvelous but still there is a mystery- and that is the energy which makes all these organs function, which is presided over by a super-wonderful intelligence.

When I close my eyes and look within and ask myself what this 'I' is - what is the sense in saying I do not know? I am here and yet I do not know that I am here! In order to pursue this quest within myself, I need a focal point and this is why I visualise the lotus in my spiritual heart on the right side of the chest. If my rational intellect objects to this, then I give it a counter-suggestion, saying that this is true and the other description of the body may not be true.

I visualise a figure in my heart and then allow my mental energy to flow towards it constantly. I think about this figure I have created within myself and nothing else. If you look inside and watch this for a few minutes, you will see that for a little while the image is clear and then suddenly it is not clear. This means that the focus of my attention has wandered. I see that my attention is focused on this image in the lotus of my heart - I also see that it soon wanders away, thinking of other things. I have to force this wandering attention to return and I must do it again and again. Now I ask myself why this happens. It is easy to look at that person over there, for a longer time, but if I want to keep looking at this image within myself, it is difficult because it soon fades. Next I must ask myself if I am the boss or if someone else is the boss! And this part of the questioning must be done light-heartedly and humorously.

As I continue to observe this, I realise that there is a distinction between thought coming into the field of consciousness and thinking. I see the difference between the thought that 'I' thinks and the thought that arises. I am interested in what I think and I see other thoughts coming along and acting as a kind of temptation. Now, I tell myself, "This is the thought I have chosen to think - not those other thoughts."

An intoxicating drink makes your body toxic, poisoning the body, and yet people drink it. This is how the cells of the body become contaminated.

Do you know how pure the body of a baby is? Have you seen it function? Do you know how easy a baby catches cold? You get worried, thinking the baby's nose is always running, thinking we do not always get colds. Do you know why? Because we have lost the sensitivity they have. You know that if you throw this cloth into water, it immediately becomes wet, and yet, if it is full of grease, it will not become wet.

Our physical body has been so dreadfully mauled, misused, that there no health left in it. In any case, most people have little idea what 'good health' means. There was a wealthy man living in Madagascar who has Parkinson disease. I went to visit him and he sat on one side of the table and I sat on the other. I noticed that every few minutes his legs, only his legs and not his body, shook. I asked him if there was something wrong with his legs - he replied

that there was not. Do you know why he said this? He did not even know his legs were shaking. That is the only reason why, in order to experience what good health is, one has to have it - one has to rid the system of all poison, toxic substances - only then do we know what good health is. Until then we may think that we are healthy if we have not visited the doctor for about six months.

What is your experience when you first begin to practice these asanas? Every part of the body says, "Please stop it." All the intoxicants, all the poisons that have been deposited in the joints, in the muscles, say, "Please leave me alone." If you have a good teacher like Mother Kurig, she will say to you, "Come on, do a little more." Gradually you realise that, along with this pain, there is also joy. Have you experienced this? You may be doing a tough yoga posture, perhaps the backward bend, and it hurts - but it is nice to do it. This feeling arises when the poison has been eliminated. All yoga asanas are framed to eliminate poisons from the body. If you have a tub of water and you want to empty it - what do you do? You open the drain and close the tap. On the other hand, when you are trying to fill the tub, the drain goes on draining, the tap goes on running - but it will never become empty.

Most yoga students neglect this. On the one hand they try to eliminate the toxins from the body and then as soon as they feel better, they have some more. They say, "I used to have liver problems because I drank a lot. I went to yoga classes and now the liver is perfect. Then I decided to drink some more." That is our problem. I do not know, but I humbly suggest that this is because even that person has not experienced the joy of health. If you have ever experienced that feeling, 'This is health', then you will realise it is the greatest treasure you have. You will not want to lose it.

It is when the body is freed from poison that the nerves become calm, tranquil. It is then that excitements do not lead you astray. It is then that, according to the yogis, you have control over your emotions. This is quite different from suppressing the emotions. The sages advise that the yogi must control his emotions.

I knew this is ignorance because I have never before questioned the knower of this knowledge. I have taken it for granted that, in order to know something, the 'I' must be there. From then on this consciousness if 'I' has begun and eventually we begin to enquire. "What is this pain, sorrow?" Thus we go along until we reach the stage called samprajnata samadhi, where pain and sorrow drop away and there is an experience of joy, because the experience the joy is still there, the ego-sense is still there.

Then we begin to ask ourselves the question, "I see you but what is this 'I' that sees? If the piano, not I was looking at the table, would I say "I see you" -

no. Yet I say that 'I' see you. I am here but it is the eye that sees you! Should there be no pain in the eye, I experience that pain and the eye has now become the object. Perhaps my mind is able to see the eye - but how do I see the mind? I can see how a thought arising in the mind says that that man is my friend or my enemy - but who is it that is seeing this very thought?

Chapter Twelve

Earlier on we saw that it is the desire for happiness that itself becomes unhappiness. But who is it who observes this? What is this thing that I continue to call 'I'? It is this 'I' that sees, that observes all this. Then we come to the final point of asking, 'What is 'I'? Still I am thinking - then the question itself is a thought, the 'I' is just a thought. How do I know this? In deep sleep there is no thought, there is no 'I' at all!

If this I itself is a thought - if I think I am seeing, then both the observer - I, and the observed - seeing, are one. They both take place in our consciousness, in our mind. It is like one wave looking at another wave - but what is this wave and what is that wave? They are both the ocean. Patanjali used to use this idea in a beautiful sutra which says that the seer is sight. Action takes place and for no reason at all - part of that action calls itself I, and this is when the other part, the object, is born.

This is similar to the phenomenon of polarisation. When you make a magnet, you call one end positive and one end negative. The magnet cannot have only one end - but we should remember that it is one magnet with two poles. When this truth is seen, all problems are solved. The poles are still there, but they have ceased to be the problem, to create problem. How? Because here is the immediate understanding that, although polarisation still exists, we are one in reality. In truth we are one. It is good to see the polarity - but not the division. This is because the division is not truth - it is the polarity which is the truth.

Those events are natural - it is only the sense of division that is not natural. How can we eliminate this division? The 'happening' takes place, seeing happens, only by seeing that 'I' creates the division. There is no 'I' see 'you'. In this new seeing, one end is this and one end is that, but there is no division. Then we realise that experience itself is the reality, seeing is the reality - in this there is no division - and this is yoga.

Tomorrow we shall have a day of silence. We shall be watching ourselves constantly and we shall see where the ego-sense arises, we shall see that it is the ego-sense that divides. Without ego-sense, action takes place - all actions happen spontaneously. It is the ego sense that creates a shadow - likes and dislikes and so on. It is when this shadow falls on the happening that it divided you and me.

Now we must watch where this 'I', this ego-sense, arises. We must try, even for a few moments, to keep the ego-sense away and see actions taking place. This needs tremendous inner tranquility. If you cannot do it here, where

everything is provided for you and where others will not disturb you, then you cannot do it anywhere.

In the morning we will gather at seven and do some surya-namaskara. While the body is twisting and turning - watch it and see if you can tell who is saying the words, "I am doing surya-namaskara". Watch. Where does this feeling of "I am doing this", arise? As we practise the asanas, there is total freedom, no one tells when to start or when to stop. Later, when we sit for meditation, please keep the eyes open - if the eyes should close by themselves they should be re-opened. Keep the mind focussed on the search for the ego-sense. Ask the same questions repeatedly. Noise is heard - but where does that feeling arise that I hear the noise? When we sit for breakfast, eating takes place - who says, "I am eating"?

Can I do this continuously, so that when I turn and see him, seeing happens? When I am able to do this, instead of focussing the attention on the other person, I am turning the attention within myself, seeing where the ego-sense arises. Even if we look by mistake, looking takes place immediately. Then I must stop and ask myself, "What is that and where does this ego-sense arise?" Seeing takes place - let seeing take place. Eating takes place, let eating take place. For example, we may be sitting at table with others - the butter is on the table and, if you are really and truly silent within yourself, you may sense that one of the others needs it. If this feeling does not arise naturally, then keep quiet, let him get it for himself! Sign language is not necessary, because the moment it happens, it disturbs the atmosphere, it distracts the attention. Whilst watching all this going on within myself, I can eat, I can do anything and once you have trained yourself in this awareness, you can talk to somebody -but during the early stage one needs calmness. This is why we eat in silence - this is true silence, not one that is imposed upon us.

This gives us an opportunity to watch ourselves, to study ourselves, and to see if it is possible to detect the arising of the ego-sense. If the weather is good and we decide to take a walk - again there is no argument, no question. If you want to walk, walk - if you want to sit, sit. It may be cold outside and our friend wants to sit inside, his wife wants to go for a walk - what should she do? She looks at him - now, if you have been carefully observing yourself all day, you will notice that the attention jumps from the heart to the mouth. It is then that you will discover one of the greatest truths in yoga - that there is absolutely no disturbance of meditation from outside - it is the reaction to what happens outside that disturbs it. You can see this - he wants to sit here and she wants to go out - he can either sit here and watch her go, or he can pick up his jacket and follow her. See how peaceful the mind and heart are. He was sitting here, he changed his mind, he got up and walked off. It was possible to do all these things peacefully, calmly, without disturbing the mind. Then, suddenly, I realise that it is possible to do all actions peacefully.

All activity, except talking and communicating, will continue normally - we want to see if we can function without inner disharmony, without the churning which the ego-sense promotes. Once we learn this, it is possible to work, even to fight in a war, without the ego-sense arising. This is non-volitional activity.

Chapter Thirteen

Have you ever watched flowers blossom? They blossom in silence. The seed breaks open and the plant comes through the earth - all in silence, utter silence. It is in silence too that the baby, the foetus, grows with in the body of the mother. And when snow falls, you must have noticed the remarkable silence. When you watch the rising of the sun and see the darkness recede, you must have noticed the silence. And when the sun sets and a blanket of darkness covers the earth - so the silence comes too. All good things seem to take place in this silence. In our case, the body too renews itself in silence - during sleep.

Have you noticed that silence is not just a matter of keeping the mouth shut? Even when speech is silent, the mind is busy talking, and you can see the tension building up. Thus we see that silence is rather a quality of the mind than of speech and that, if you refuse to give expression to the chattering of the mind, then the mind tends to be quiet. It works the other way too - when the mind is silent, then the speech is silent too.

If you feel it is unnecessary to give expression to your thoughts, you will find they stop, by themselves - you do not suppress them. If you suppress your thoughts, you will burst but, if you realise that it is almost useless to try to communicate your thoughts, then the thoughts restrain themselves. As you practise this, you will see that your speech becomes minimal, that you waste less energy and that the few words you do speak are meaningful. When the mouth is closed and you are observing the silence, thoughts become visible - you can actually see them coming and going.

Watch your thoughts carefully and you will see that they all relate to the past. Thoughts like "I did this" or, "I did not do that" or, "This is how it happened". Everything going on in the mind relates to the past and even planning the future is based on the past. Based on the past, I project all my hopes for the future - but the past is dead, why must I brood over it? Whatever I have done, whether it was marvelous or whether it was vicious, it is dead. Life goes on 'now'. When I realise this, then both regret over the past and hope for the future disappear.

There is a beautiful saying - "Today is the tomorrow I was worried about yesterday". Yesterday I may have thought that tomorrow is going to be terrible - but as that tomorrow becomes today, I am able to live through it. Yet I still worry about tomorrow! When I realise that all this worry is based upon a misunderstanding, it drops away. I did not speak at all yesterday, so what? Do I think that the world goes on only when I am active? Is everything organised by my ego? Does the sun shine because I want it to shine? These pine trees grow magnificently. They are straight and tall - without my wishing

it or not wishing it. I walk into the pine forest, I see all this - then I suddenly begin to see this fantastic intelligence, called God, Cosmic Consciousness, Christ, Buddha, at work. That Intelligence is able to make the trees grow. It is in every cell of the body - it is everywhere. What is there then, for the ego to do - what is the ego?

One day of silence is too short a time to understand this - because, first of all, I have to stop watching the world outside and getting lost in that. Later, I begin to watch the thoughts arising within myself - this demands an effort. If I am in earnest, then even in one day I may come close to watching the rise and fall of these thoughts. If I am watching all these thoughts - who is I? Is there a thing called 'I', called ego, independent of the accumulation of the past?

Lord Buddha or one of his disciples tells us a beautiful story to illustrate this. The Lord asked: What do you call a cart? Someone pointed and said: That is a cart. Now tell me: What are those round things? Wheels, came the answer. Then Buddha said: Take off those wheels and throw them away. Now tell me what that big piece of wood is? That is the yoke. Good. Take that too and throw it away. Now tell me, what is the main part, made of pieces of wood? The answer came: Oh, that is the body of the cart. Then Buddha said: Throw that away. Now what has happened to your cart? I did not tell you to throw the cart away and yet the cart has gone - where is the cart now? You cannot answer by saying that by putting all those parts together, you will make a cart - no, that will not do. The cart is merely an idea and to give it shape, you take all those parts and put them together - then you call it a cart.

In exactly the same way, in this intelligence, an idea springs up and that idea is 'I'. This idea gathers other things to it - expressions, experiences, and what is called knowledge. This now becomes the ego which, because it is only made of knowledge gained during the past, is unable to think of anything unrelated to the past.

Have you ever been in the situation where you had to leave all you have, all you love - family, home, everything - and go and begin life afresh somewhere else? If this was forced on you, perhaps you will remember feeling a shudder of fear and thinking that you would never live through it. This is because the mind has become completely used to this environment - these ideas from the past - and it cannot live without them, or so it thinks. I have not lived in the future, so how do I know I cannot live in the new situation?

This is the nature of the mind, of the ego, it knows only what it has, which is of the past and it is frightened to face anything different in the future. It is this ego, which is nothing but a collection of past experiences, which we call knowledge.

Chapter Fourteen.

We have not discussed the role of the guru in yoga teaching and practice because it is not the duty of the student to judge the guru, or even to find the guru. The word guru means light. There is light here but, if I close my eyes or cover them, it will be dark - I will not be able to see anything. Light alone is not sufficient for me to see by, I need sight too and my eyes must be open - only then do I know where the light is. There is a scripture called the Katha Upanishad in which the teacher says - First wake up, then keep awake, then go to the masters. If I am wearing an eye mask, it will still be dark - even if my eyes are open I can see nothing.

This is a difficult problem. Without the help of the guru I do not know even that I am in the darkness. If I do not know I am in darkness and if I do not wake up to this fact, I do not find a guru. Swami Sivananda said: "When you get knocks and blows in the daily battle of life, then your mind is turned towards God." Having traveled the world, I begin to wonder if we do even do that. If I am unwell, I go to the doctor - if I am poor, I will rob somebody. But how do I go to God? Do you have an answer to this? How does one wake up? I have to wake up because, unless I am awake, alert, I shall not see the light. The guru is that light.

In the Yoga Sutras, Ishvara - God is called the guru. This inner light is ageless, timeless - and so too is the outer light, the sun. This is why we calculate time in relation to the revolution of the planets around the sun - because this is what gives us day and night. In the sun itself there is no night, no day. In the sun itself there is no darkness and therefore there is no light. When there is one alone - there is no time. This inner light which shines all the time is beyond time. This inner light, this enlightening light or experience is called the guru. When you are spiritually awake, alert, all the time, then you have this enlightening experience which is the guru. This experience might be granted to you through an human or a non-human agency. If it is a human being, that person becomes your guru, although it is the enlightening experience which is the guru. Since this experience comes through an agency, that agency gets the credit for being the guru. For example - you wish to worship Jesus Christ; but, because you associate him with the crucifix, the crucifix - the agency gets all your devotion.

How do we receive the guru's teaching? Can I act upon the guru's teaching? If I do what the guru taught me, or what I heard the guru say, who is acting? For instance - I like to eat chocolate and the guru says I must not eat chocolate. What must I do? Do I give it up; do I stop eating chocolate? Or, he might tell me to drink a glass of milk each morning. This is easy to do so, instead of eating chocolate each morning, I now drink milk. I no longer eat chocolate, I drink milk - but have I given up that chocolate?

If, with all my mind and all my heart I desire chocolate and do not desire milk - then I am suffering. The doctors and the psychiatrists will tell you that I shall soon develop an allergy for milk. Then I will go around asking the doctors and psychiatrists what is wrong with me - when I drink milk then I develop a rash. Perhaps the doctor might suggest I have a milk allergy and that the only cure for this is to eat chocolate! I have seen this happen in the case of people who eat meat. Somebody eats meat and then somebody else comes along and suggests that they give up eating meat. Immediately that man develops a health problem, goes from doctor to doctor until they get the answer 'that they want'.

I hear the guru's teaching. When I hear the teaching and act on it, what acts? During the last few days we have eaten wonderful food - every year when we come here we eat wonderful food - possibly it is that food, from last year, that is talking to you now. How does this happen? I eat some food which is then digested and assimilated into the body - it becomes the throat, the tongue, the vocal chords and so on, and it is this which talks to you now. I may be a great spiritual man but, without a tongue, I could not speak. On the other hand, if you took all the food that we eat here in fifteen days and put it in a drum, and kept it like that for a year and then brought it back next year and sat in front of it - what would happen? I assure you it would not speak to you. What is the difference? The food that went into the body was assimilated, the food in the drum was not. Assimilated means that it becomes similar to me, it becomes like me. It is no longer bread - the bread has become a swami! Can we treat the teaching of the guru the same way that we treat the bread - can we assimilate it? The Lord's prayer tells us: Give us this day our daily bread - to me this bread is knowledge which I must assimilate so that I may live this day well.

Can this knowledge that we get from the teacher be assimilated by us? Assimilated so that it is no longer I who practise the teaching - but it is the teaching which acts? As long as the teaching is something separate from me, I am only trying to practise it! Therefore no teaching can ever be put into practice - as long as I say that Swami Sivananda told me to do something and that I am trying to practise it - I am, in fact, not practising it. It has not been digested by me, it has not been assimilated by me, it has not become part of me. If it has been assimilated, it is the teaching which acts, not I. This is spontaneous activity and this is what I saw in the life of my guru, Swami Sivananda. This yoga philosophy would have been completely strange to me had it not been for Swami Sivananda, who was a living example of yoga.

People talk about surrender to God. We say, "I surrender to God" - we say it like a formula. But with Swami Sivananda one actually saw it. He hardly ever spoke but you could see it in His life - whatever came, He gladly accepted it,

He never complained or grumbled. Even in the case of His physical illness, He realised that there was this physical body but that God would look after that too.

It is said that we must work for work's sake and yet not have a selfish motive in doing this. We cannot practise this unless this teaching comes naturally to us - otherwise we say, "I know I must not be selfish, so I shall try to be unselfish!" This is not possible. In the case of Swami Sivananda we saw what was meant by these words - 'work for work's sake only'. We could see that He took delight in every little thing, in each piece of work and, whatever He did, He did with all His heart and soul. As soon as the work was done however, He would shrug His shoulders and go away. He never bothered to look and see whether He had succeeded or failed - for Him, success or failure did not exist, only the work existed. Once the work was done, He would forget it. He also loved to worship God - He did not say that since all life is worship, all action is worship, that we do not need to worship God.

In India there are certain rituals which everyone is supposed to perform each day - they are all forms of worship of God. I do not say that everyone still performs this worship, even though as a swami He need not have done it, He still continued to perform the rituals. For example, He did japa, kirtan, study of the scriptures and ritual worship, every day. His attitude was very beautiful, He would say to us: "God is nameless and formless because he is Absolute, Infinite and Omnipresent; but, as long as you have a body, as long as you have name and form, it is better to worship God in and through name and form. His whole life was an example of balance. Every sensible man realises that the body is perishable, that each one of us will die. But, as long as we retain the body, we must treat it as a temple of God. Balance again. Neither saying that as this body is perishable, it does not matter whether we neglect it - nor saying that the body is a beautiful thing and "I must worship it." In this way we indulge neither in extreme indulgence nor in extreme asceticism - there is a middle path and that is practising yoga asanas and pranayama. Both these are necessary for physical and mental health.

Philosophy is not for discussion. Discussion and debate may be useful in politics, when I want to persuade you that my political conviction, philosophy, is better than yours, or that this system is better than that one. In yoga philosophy however, discussion and debate have practically no value, no place. Growth is from within - I do not become a sage by listening to a variety of speakers, but I may, when, in the inner light, I see the need for doing something.

Swami Sivananda's life was a life of living yoga philosophy. When you lived with Him, the first impression you got was that He was a very good man. The second impression you got was that He was very efficient, very clever. Then

you began to see that He was not so clever perhaps, one could see He was easily fooled and that anybody could cheat Him. Later you would see that He was a wise man because He did not lose His peace of mind over a small thing - He merely acted as though He did not know what was happening. We often do this, when somebody overcharges us we go mad, we fight and end up spending twenty marks to get back two marks. We do all these things and yet Swami Sivananda behaved as though He did not even notice it. Living with Swamiji one began to understand the teachings of yoga philosophy. One suddenly realised what was the meaning of the word renunciation.

In India renunciation is a big thing - one must give up one's family and wealth - one should walk around in one piece of cloth, or naked - all these things appeal to the masses. In India there are still swamis who will not look at a woman, will not touch money - they still use money for various things and so they have a couple of secretaries to carry their bags for them! Swami Sivananda on the other hand was a normal human being - He wrote books and had them published, He was the head of an ashram and so He collected and distributed money. How can we reconcile these two attitudes? Suddenly we realise that in

the case of Swami Sivananda, it was supreme, practical renunciation - the money is in your hand and you use it - just as you have a body and use that, without indulgence or excessive asceticism.

Similarly, we can all live together, in harmony and love, without rejecting anything, without running after anything. We learned this from Swami Sivananda - to mix with all without distinguishing yourself as somebody special. Living with a person like this you really learn what yoga means - the teaching enters into you, becomes you. You do not practise the teaching, the teaching has been assimilated and it is that which acts.

Chapter Fifteen.

When I was very young, I began to read books written by my guru, Swami Sivananda. Perhaps you will agree with me when I say that what interests the young most is the impossible. You pick up a book on yoga, the first words you see are, "How can I levitate?" or, "How can I walk on fire." It was in this way that I learned to float on water - it is easy, anybody can do it. Swami Sivananda was a great psychologist, and therefore, in His writings, He gives great importance to mystical things. One booklet had a most inspiring title, 'Samadhi in Six months.' Do you want samadhi in six months? Some people have been practising yoga for twenty or more years and suddenly they see a book which promises them this. I studied this booklet and realised that there was some trick to it - so I went to see Swami Sivananda. He was such a marvelous man that I completely forget my ambitions to fly in the air, to go into samadhi in six months and so on. When you see Him you suddenly realise that the most important thing of all is - how to live.

In India there was a great sage called Ramakrishna and he used to narrate the following story. There was a great sage, a yogi. He was engrossed in meditation, sitting on the banks of a river which was in flood. A young man suddenly approached him and the yogi asked him how he had come, how had he crossed the flooded river? The young man assured him he practised yoga and so was able to walk on water. The old man was shocked and said, "You have studied yoga for all these years, haven't you got even the fare to pay the ferryman to take you across?"

From Swami Sivananda we learned that yoga is life - he taught us how to live in such a way that we do not create any problems. Can I live in such a way that I am not miserable and I do not make other people miserable? In a beautiful scripture called the Bhagavad Gita it says, "One whose heart is not agitated by others and who does not agitate the heart of others, he is a yogi." This seems to be more difficult than all the spectacular feats of the so-called yogis. How to live. How can we live in such a way that there is harmony between us? Yoga means harmony, yoga means love. The yoga we see on the screen is the opposite of hate - what does this mean? Night is opposite to day - what is their relationship? One follows the other every twelve hours. When we say love is the opposite of hate perhaps we imply that one follows the other. This is what happens to movie stars - a few months of love followed by a few months of hate, a few more months of love, again followed by a few months of hate! That is not love. When you turn to your husband or wife or boyfriend, and say, "I love you", there is already some one within you who says, "In a little while I am going to hate you!" It is unfortunate that love is used in this sense.

Yoga is that love which is already within us, the love which the Bible says is God. Yoga is love, yoga is harmony, yoga is union, yoga is God. The first

question which arises in our hearts is, "How can I bring this about?" Please listen carefully to this - I want to live in harmony with you, I want to love you, but when this harmony is not there, what must I do? I may make an excuse by saying that I want to live in harmony with her, but she does not respond. But perhaps it is I who am annoyed with her and try to insist that she does what I want her to do. If she does this, I say there is harmony between us - who is in harmony? Who is in disharmony? When I impose this thing called harmony on you - I am in disharmony. When I demand that you should respond to me, that you should be in harmony with me, there is disharmony within me. Thus, in my relationship with you, I discover that, in the name of harmony, of love, I want to dominate you, dictate to you. When I see this, I know I am not love, not harmony - and this is the first step in yoga.

This first step in yoga teaches me to realise that I am the architect of my own destiny - that no one else is responsible for my life. If I am violent, I am violent - there is no such thing as "because". Have you not heard people say, "Oh yes, I am a gentle person. But when he did that to me I became a violent person - he annoyed me and so I became violent." This is not true - water is water, whatever you do. Just because you stand near the swimming pool and spit into it, the water does not turn into fire! Why is this so? Because water is water. How is it that a good man suddenly became violent when somebody spat on him? To discover the answer to that, is the job of yoga. How do I discover yoga? How do I discover anything? If you want to discover what I am holding in my hand, what would you do? You would see what covers it - then you would know what to do, how to uncover it, 'discover' it - and then you would be able to look inside. So there is this violence, this aggressiveness, inside me - so I look within to see where it is. I do not blame anybody else - I have to discover it inside myself. To do this we need tremendous courage. Most of us are unable to do this because we have a great opinion of ourselves. We may not want to face the fact that there is aggression within us. Perhaps when I do see it, I may bring in some psychological theory that my mother, or father, or grandmother had done something and that this is the reason why I am so aggressive. All this is futile. It is immature and self-destructive. Shifting the blame on to somebody else does not solve the problem - it smothers it.

I have this problem, this aggression - I find it is making my life miserable. To discover the reason for it, I must have the courage to look at the cover, no matter how ugly it may be. Then there is a possibility that I might be able to lift the cover, to look inside and to see what it is that causes it.

Yoga is a system of complete self-discovery - starting from where you are now. Most of you do yoga asanas so you start there. On account of wrong living, wrong eating, every cell is polluted, contaminated. The lungs are dark with tobacco, the liver is loaded with whiskey or other alcohol - sometimes you can almost see a barrel of beer walking in front of a man! I am surprised that

people call them intoxicating and yet still drink them - an intoxicating drink makes your body toxic, it poisons the body and yet, people still drink it! This is how all the cells of the body become contaminated.

Do you know how pure the body of a baby is? Have you seen how it functions? Do you know how easily a baby catches cold - you think the baby's nose is always running and yet you do not always have colds? Do you know why? Because we have lost the sensitivity that they have. You know that if you throw this cloth into water, it immediately becomes wet. But if it is full of grease, it will not become wet.

Our physical body has been so dreadfully misused and mauled that there is no health left in it. Most people have little idea of what 'good health' means. There was a wealthy man who lived in Madagaskar and he suffered from Parkinson's disease. I went to visit him, we sat at the table - he on one side and I on the other. I noticed that every few minutes his legs - only his legs and not his body - shook. I asked him if something was wrong with his legs and he replied that there was not. Do you know why he said this? Because he did not even know his legs were shaking! That is one reason why, to experience what good health is, one has to have good health. One has to rid the system of all poisons, all toxic substances - only then shall we know what good health is. Until then, if we have not visited the doctor for six months, we think we are healthy!

What experience do you have when you first begin to do all these asanas? Every part of the body says, "Please stop it!" All the poisons, the intoxicants, which have been deposited in the joints and muscles say, "Please leave me alone!" If you have a good teacher like Mother Kurig, she will say to you, "Come, do a little more." Gradually you realise that along with this pain there is also joy. Have you experienced this? You may be doing a tough yoga posture, perhaps the backward bend, and it hurts - but it is nice to do it. This feeling arises when the poison has been eliminated and all yoga asanas are framed to eliminate poisons from the body. If you have a tub of water and you want to empty it, what must you do? You open the drain and close the tap. If on the other hand the drain goes on draining whilst you try to fill the tub, it will never become empty!

Most yoga students neglect this - on one hand they try to eliminate the toxins from the body and then, as soon as they feel better, they have some more. I say, "I had liver trouble because I used to drink a lot - I went to yoga classes - now the liver is better and so I decide to drink some more." That is our problem - I do not know, but I humbly submit that this is so because that person has not experienced the joy of health. If you have ever experienced this feeling of health, then you will realise it is the greatest treasure you have and you will not want to lose it.

It is when the body is thus free from poisons that the nerves become calm, tranquil. It is then that excitements do not lead you astray. It is then, according to the yogis, that you have control over the emotions - this is quite different from suppressing the emotions. The sages say that the yogi must control his emotions and not suppress them. When the yogi says this, he means you must discover this, see this. Similarly, if you know what health is, if you have experienced it, then you know that the moment you take alcohol, this poison enters your system and causes it to react. In the same way, if you have experienced inner peace, then you know the very moment that it is disturbed. Your mind may be calm, blissful - suddenly, on the calm surface of that mind, there is a ripple, an irritation, and you stop it there. This is not the right word - you do not 'stop' it, you merely look at it and it will not arise.

When the body is clean and the nerves are calm, when the mind is at peace then - then what? Nothing. Nothing happens in you that can disturb that inner harmony - you are that harmony. At one stage, it is possible that you may become very sensitive - when the body is completely clean, drained of toxic substances - then it reacts instantly and powerfully to any external infection. Similarly, when the nerves are very calm, a very small noise will make you jump. So too, when your heart is pure, you may be terribly hurt if you see violent behavior. This is the second stage - the first is the toxic stage - after the toxic substances have been removed. The whole system has been weakened by this inner struggle and now the body has to be rebuilt, it has to become strong again.

Once you are strong, you are free. The body is not only pure, it is also strong, it contains no toxins, it is able to withstand infection. The mind too is clean and pure - it is not affected by negative influences - nothing but total harmony prevails. This is health - yoga - wholeness.

Health means to be whole. There is no such thing as only physical health - it is easy to see this - either there is total health, or there is no health. If a man is involved in an accident and he is decapitated we do not say, "Oh, he is still in good health because his body is beautiful, it is unfortunate he has no head!" There is no such thing as physical health - body, mind and spirit must all function together. This I have seen in the life of my guru, Swami Sivananda - how health radiated from His body, even though, according to medical science, the body was sick! He was supposed to have had lumbago and diabetes. If the doctor questioned Him, He might say, "Yes, I have diabetes", just as you might come to me and say, "Yes, I have a Mercedes". This is a very difficult thing for us to understand.

There is an inner attitude of wholeness which is completely different from what you and I would regard as health, where the body, the mind and the soul

are united. It is not as if there is mind over matter - they are one. Body, mind and spirit - all function as one unit, there is no disharmony. When there is no disharmony within, there is no disharmony in me and therefore it is impossible that there is disharmony in my relationship with anyone in this world. Your life becomes yoga - you become kind, gentle, spontaneous and friendly.

In the Bible, Jesus tells us that we must become like little children. How does a small child deal with you? It has neither love nor hate. But if it wants to go to its mother for nursing, nothing you do will make the child respond to you! Here, there is no artificial behavior - this is terribly important - we must be gentle. Sorry, that is the wrong expression. To say that I must be gentle is just as wrong as saying that you must be gentle. If I say you must be loving, then I am not loving, I am violent. When I say you must be non-violent, or I must be non-violent, then I am violent - I am doing violence to myself. Yoga enables me to see this, yoga liberates me - this knowledge instantly frees me. When there is this freedom, then there is no disharmony within me, there is no disharmony in my relationship with anyone in the world.

Question: You said that, if I say to myself that I must be in harmony, I am violent. Please explain this again.

Answer: Naturally. When I say I have to be in harmony - what does it really mean? When I say I must learn the German language, I know what it means, it means I do not know it. When somebody says they must give up smoking, what does it mean? It means they are smoking. So, when I say I must be gentle, I have to get rid of this violence in me - what does it mean? It means the violence is still there, still in me. I cannot bluff myself by saying that it has gone - it has not gone. What must I do? I must become intensely aware of this disharmony, this tension that is within me. I must become intensely aware of the physical, psychological and the physiological poison in me. When I become aware of all these things, then the intelligence that is there in the body, in the mind, in the spirit, knows how to get rid of it. The battle is over.

Harmony is not something you and I are going to create or manufacture - life is not something we create, health is not something we create - they are all there. Just as the sun is always there, although at his time for example this part of the earth turns away from it to a great extent. Or perhaps the sun may be obscured by clouds and we cannot see the sun; but when the clouds blow away, or the earth tilts again towards the sun, then the sun is again visible to us - we see the sun shine.

Harmony is - you are harmony. Have you ever really looked at your own body? If you really look at it, become aware of it. you will see how it functions, how marvelous it is and you will fall in love with it - not in a narcissistic way -

in the way one falls in love with God. If one splinter of glass enters the tip of the finger, do you know what wonders take place? Do you know how the body mobilises itself, deals with the sudden threat? I wish there were more books on health and that, instead of having so many hospitals, we had more yoga schools - or that we could just teach people to stand in front of a mirror and to look at the body and find out what a marvelous thing it is - what a marvelous intelligence created it in the first place. For instance, how would one build knees, or ankles? How to put these two together so that they support our big bodies? I am not making fun of all this - in all this we must remember God.

Do you remember what we are talking about? Do you realise what we are saying here? This body was a baby's body and at that time the ankles only had a tiny strength - then the body grew big - nobody did any calculations and yet ankles, feet, muscles and so on were strengthened. What a marvelous piece

of machinery. Have you ever thought about this? Suppose I have a pen which I lift and drop, lift and drop. Are there any engineering students here, they will know what this involves. What would happen if you built a crane with the power to lift this chair and then wanted it to lift this pen? You would say it could not be done or that it would take six months to make the necessary adjustments. But we see the body do this in no time at all. How is this?

If yoga students fell in love with their bodies, in this way, and through this, with the Creator - then all of us would be great yogis. We have learned that health is already there in the body - harmony is already there within the body - and the peace which we all enjoy in deep sleep. Perhaps God gave us the ability to sleep merely to remind us that we never lost our peace! If you want to keep that peace you can - or, if you deliberately want to throw it away, you can also do that. You are peace already, you are harmony, you are bliss - they do not have to be created - they are there.

Silent meditation

What do we mean by the words 'silent meditation'?

What do we have to do? Even meditation is there already, within us. Our first attempt must be to see what meditation is - and to do that we must turn the attention within. How do we do that? If you do not have any special method, here is a simple method to turn your attention towards yourself. This method, is to watch the breathing, to listen to the breathing, associate the breathing with the mantra. Use the mantra 'Om' - or any other mantra you may choose.

Mentally repeat the mantra with the inhalation and the exhalation. When you repeat the mantra mentally, it means it is a thought in your mind.

Next, if you have your own idea of what God looks like, visualise him - if you have not, then visualise a flower, or the orb of the sun - this too is a thought. This 'form of God' is a thought. It is not God. The mantra is a thought - all these are thoughts which you have deliberately introduced into your mind.

Now, you are going to ask yourself why, when you want to think only one thought other thoughts come in?

Focus the attention on the mantra and the form and ask yourself "What are these?" Then you may come face to face with thought, with mind.

Chapter Sixteen

Usually one says that meditation is the most important part of yoga. But this means nothing because if you ask me what meditation is - I have to say that it is not sitting bolt upright and looking at the tip of the nose. If you think of it in this way, you will see that it divides your life into two parts - a spiritual life and a non-spiritual life - and anything which creates a division in my life is not yoga. Most people meditate for half an hour in the morning and then spend the rest of the day and night in non-yogic activities. Then they wonder why they make no progress. Some things it is easy to master, for example the body - but the mind is more difficult to control.

Saint Augustine said, "When the mind commands the body, the body obeys - but when the mind commands itself, it does not obey." Raise your arm - it is simple to obey that command - but if I say to you, "Now raise your consciousness, raise your thinking level," that is not easy to do. If you devote some time to the practice of the asanas, it is easy to master them. You can do the lotus posture for ten minutes now, you gradually increase it until you can sit that way for one or two hours. But, if you want to concentrate the mind, it requires superhuman effort to do it even for one minute!

To keep the mind on one thought seems to require more than mere practice. Even if you have practised for many years, you are probably still struggling. Somebody who has been practising for fifteen minutes a day, comes along and asks why, after doing this for six months, his mind is still wandering! It makes us all look silly, does it not? Here we are, we have struggled for thirty years and our mind is still running! And here is this man who, after a few months, thinks that the mind should just stop! This cannot happen because we treat yoga as only one part of our life. As long as our life is departmentalised like this, so that only a small part is given to yoga, the mind will not stop wandering. Yoga should not be part of our life - our life should be part of yoga.

The whole of life, past, present and future, must be complete yoga - then the whole of life becomes meditation. When this happens, do we continue to sit in the lotus posture gazing at the tip of the nose? Yes - but only as an exercise. I want to know what the mind is and how it functions, so that I may make use of the power of the mind to study the mind. We know that the mind functions in terms of habits - hundreds and hundreds of habits. In the morning I want to eat breakfast at eight and in the evening I want a martini at five - without thinking of this - and at just that time, the hand moves and the work is done. This is how we learn to drive a car, is it not? Then, once the habit of driving is formed, no further mental effort is required - this effort can now be directed towards something else. Now you can watch the road, steer the car, change the gears and even listen to the car radio if you want.

In the same way the yogi watches and tries to understand the mind and its powers. He tries to utilise his knowledge to study the mind and to create good mental habits. Do try this. If you are in the habit of getting up at seven in the morning and you want to change the habit, set the alarm clock for six in the morning and watch - even as the alarm stops ringing you return to sleep. This goes on for a few days - the ringing disturbs your sleep, that is all - after a short while you may think to yourself, "Oh, the bell is ringing, I may as well get up." This struggle goes on and on during the process of trying to break one habit and to develop another! Eventually, after some months, you find you wake at six o'clock without the alarm! Similarly, as you sit and meditate for a while at, let us say, six in the morning, you form the habit of doing this and even if you are not well, even if you do not have a watch, the mind wakes up at six and wants to meditate! It is a wonderful thing.

Therefore the yogi said that, even though meditation is going to cover your entire life, still you should cultivate the habit of meditation - in a particular place and at a set time. Gradually you will find that the mind is always free of distractions at this time. But this does not mean you can go asleep, oh no! It does not mean that, as soon as you sit in the lotus posture, you will be able to meditate. But it does mean that this habit will take care of certain routine actions and distractions. Once I have formed this habit, my knees no longer ache, my mind is not so dull. This is because the energy I used to form this habit is now available for something else. And so it becomes easier for me to study the functioning of the mind.

In the same way the yogi uses the mind's faculties to study the mind. He uses it, not only to see the thoughts that disturb the mind in meditation, but also to discover what thought is, what the world is - to discover the characteristics of thought and to learn how one experiences the world.

Somebody uses the word 'chair' and immediately the thought of this object springs into the mind. I do not know if one can think at all without using name and form. We do sometimes say that God is nameless - but that nameless is, itself, a name! You cannot think without using name and form. Is it possible to think of the Infinite? People try to do this, but what happens? They think of the sky, but not the whole sky - this is pretending - you think you are thinking of the Infinite! It is not possible for the mind, for thought to function, except in terms of words - name and form. The nameless and formless is realised, but only in a non-mental way. Thus the yogi will recommend the use of name and form, although meditation may eventually become nameless and formless - but this just happens. It does not happen because you want it to happen and it does not happen because you try and make it happen.

When one really meditates upon God, when you touch God as it were, then all your anxiety, all your fears, melt away. Those who practise meditation. will know that this is a fact. When I see a problem in my life - perhaps I am worried, in pain, in distress - what do I do? I repeat my mantra, I visualise the form of God and mentally I bind myself to him. I feel God's divine presence and the problem goes away, or I may know how to solve it. But if I think I am meditating on the Infinite, the Nameless and Formless, I am in trouble and I do not know where to turn for help. If this is what is happening, then I am only thinking I am meditating - it is important to see this.

Thus I realise that I need the name and form of God - even if, in reality God is nameless and formless. This is because my mind functions this way and so I use name and form to hang my mind on - just as I might use a clothes-horse! The yogi uses name, which he calls mantra - such as Om, Soham, or any other mantra. One of the great Indian Maharishis said that "I Am" may be used as a mantra. Sanscrit mantras are said to have special power; but I think you could use a German or English mantra and find it equally powerful. I do not get upset only when I am called a fool in Sanscrit - I also object when you use the word in English. And so we say you may use any mantra, any form. I know a family where they have a large picture of their own father and they perform their religious rituals in front of him. It is possible to do this but it may be better for your meditation if you choose some object which does not excite or distract the mind. It is better to use a name which the mind will naturally associate with God.

There is a risk - I can go on saying "Om, Om, Om", but what is the use? For a time the mind may be nice, happy, pleasant - but then, because it becomes monotonous, it puts me to sleep. There was once an Indian yogi who suggested a beautiful method to overcome drowsiness. You know that in India men wear their hair long. Well, this yogi suggested that, when doing japa for a long time, when one might drop off to sleep, then one should tie the hair to a nail on the wall. As the head begins to nod, the jerk of the hair will awaken you!

What are we doing this for? What is the reason we are sitting here repeating the words, "Om, Om, Om"? If I go on with this, repeating the mantra mechanically, I will become a machine! And if I go on repeating the mantra mechanically for the rest of my life, then in the next life I may be born as a tape recorder! Why am I using this mantra? Because I want to study the mind and come face to face with the mind-stuff. What is sound? When two objects strike against each other, there is sound or, when I speak to you, the air strikes against the vocal chords and sound is produced. But how is that sound produced when you say you are mentally repeating and listening to the mantra? In this case, what is striking against what? Is it possible that, without striking anything, there can be sound? Ask yourself this question and see

what happens. If you ask it, quite seriously, then you are looking at the mind itself.

Similarly let us take a picture of Christ or perhaps a nice statue of Him, which represents God for you. You use this for meditation because it inspires you and elevates your mind. Later you approach the statue, touch it and feel that it is made of stone. In meditation you recall this statue, you can see it within yourself quite clearly - what is it made of? Do not mistake a vague answer for the truth.

Ask yourself what the statue is made of and you will get the answer from somewhere that it is a mental image - but this is too vague. When I look at this shawl I see it is made from wool and that it was made in Kashmir. But now I am visualising the statue of Christ. The shawl is made of wool. What is the

mental image made of? I do not know if there is a verbal answer. As you go on with this enquiry, you come face to face with your mind, you are entering into meditation.

Next, you see the image within yourself - now ask who it is that sees this image. This leads you deeper still until you come face to face with reality. Reality as it really is.

Some time later you finish your meditation, you get up from your seat and leave the room. As you come outside you meet a friend of yours and you greet him. A moment later you go out and you see someone whom you do not like. Suddenly you think about your meditation and you remember that when you concentrated on Jesus Christ, you realised that name and form were nothing but mental images, mind. You remember how you saw Jesus Christ inside your own body and you know that what you saw was your own mind. You look again at this man in front of you and you know that he too is mind.

When this realisation grows in you, you will suddenly find a big change in your life. And only then will you be able to use that beautiful expression which is used in Germany and Austria - the greeting "Gruess Gott". Now you will realise that in and through all these names and forms there is the one reality - that any difference we see is only mental.

Your whole life undergoes a profound change. Now, you may sit for meditation or not - your whole life 'is' meditation. Now you discover that, what the "I" was, so in the same way the whole universe is the same intelligence, the same consciousness.

Hari Om Tat Sat