



Swami Venkatesananda



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Foreword

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Foreword

In this exposition of the Yoga Sutra of Patanjali, Swami Venkatesananda demonstrates again that He is not only a master of the spiritual life, but also a profound scholar in the tradition of Sivananda, Vivekananda, and Sankaracarya.

The Vedantic tradition has for too long been regarded in the West as something that belongs only to the past, as meaningful only to scholars in their book-lined studies. And at the same time scholars have for too long ignored the living application of the tradition in the lives of the contemporary saints who are its practitioners.

The physical practice of yoga grows out of a complex pattern of Hindu philosophy and action. There are many today who grasp, and teach, only those aspects of yogic practice which are easily assimilable within the structures of Western thought. This is not without value, but a more profound understanding must be grounded in less familiar systems of knowledge. Swami Venkatesananda lays out in a deceptively simple way the immediate relevance of this ancient knowledge for the present day.

Dr Marian Aueling
Swami Anand Haridas

I

In the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali we are given an aid - a teacher's aid. That is what sutra means. It is neither a textbook, a philosophical tome nor an elaborate thesis, but a sutra - an aphorism. The style is of notes preserved either by the teacher or by the student. It is very difficult for a student to help himself to it, though a teacher can use it in expounding and explaining raja yoga.

I think before printing was invented and before even proper writing materials were evolved, two methods of preserving a teaching were used. One was instantaneous memorising, which is very much in evidence in the teachings of the Buddha. They are also called sutras though they are in the form of complete descriptions. If you happen to come across one of these sutras of Buddha's teachings the first thing that will strike you as extraordinary or even bothersome, is the endless repetition of the same phrases, each paragraph changing but one word. The idea is that in that way the doctrine is nailed into you. If you merely remember this formulation and the list, you remember the whole sermon - it becomes absolutely indelible in your memory. This is the way Buddha explained his doctrine. In the Vedas (the basic Indian scripture) they also evolved a system of repetition and the repetition is so powerful that once you have done it that way it is never forgotten. Let us say that there is a verse of four words "I will come here". They jumble it and tumble it - 1234, 1243, 2431 etc., so that at the end of it you will never forget this sentence, "I will come here". This is the Hindu method.

The other way is to absorb the teaching, to grasp the teaching, to listen to it with all one's being. When I was with Swami Sivananda I used to try this just for fun. He used to talk, and I listened with total absorption. At the same time somebody else in the ashram tape-recorded the whole talk. When you listen like that both the ears must be receivers - not one a receiver and one a transmitter - then it is lost. Both the ears must be receivers, both the eyes must be receivers, every pore of your skin must be receptive to it. After listening I would go straight into my room, sit at the typewriter and type out what was heard - then take it to the tape-recorder and check it. You would be amazed how much is lost even then!

So, having listened in total receptivity, yet still sceptical about their ability to retain the whole thing, the teachers or the students kept some notes as an aid to memory. Because the language is incomplete, the sutras are a bit difficult to understand unaided. I will give you the example of the first sutra.

atha yoga 'nusasanam

"Well, yoga instruction". What does "Well, yoga instruction" mean? Are you saying that you are going to give me yoga instruction, or do you want yoga instruction from me, or are you suggesting that yoga instruction is there somewhere on the roof of the house? Because it is printed as the first of the sutras, you have the feeling that it is the introduction to what follows. I pick up this book only when I want instruction in yoga. The preliminaries are all assumed and when all these preliminary qualifications have been acquired and I become an eligible student, it is then that I pick up this little book called the Yoga Sutras, and it merely acts as an aid to memory, helping me in our discussion. The sutras were not meant for private study, there had to be a mutual encounter - maybe between teacher and student, or fellow pilgrims - it doesn't matter what you call yourself. It needed an interaction, a mutual encounter between two people to whom the basic framework had already become meaningful. Yoga is not to be practised by someone who wants to go to heaven. For that you can go to the church or to the temple or do some charity.

There is one sutra which says "One can avert unhappiness that has not yet reached one" - heyam duhkham anogatam - 11.16). That is the only promise - and in this context it is almost a commandment.

If you are an intelligent being and you look around and examine your life, you see that everything is tainted by misery and unhappiness. If you seem to be happy now, even that is tainted by unhappiness, because there is a recognition (whether at the conscious, unconscious or sub-conscious level) that it is passing away. You and I are together and so I am happy now, which means we may not be together tomorrow - there is already unhappiness. Time is passing, everything is changing. I get bored with the same happiness repeated often, so there is unhappiness there - which means that either the external world changes, or 'I' changes - change being inevitable. Happiness also undergoes this change and therefore must come to an end.

Patanjali says - "Examine life and you see that everything is tainted by misery and unhappiness. Therefore brace yourself up and defeat it." How? Heyam duhkham anogatam - Whatever unhappiness has not come to you, avoid it. How do I do that? Practise yoga!

Another interesting characteristic of the opening sutra is that it is called anusasanam, instruction. Not a commandment, not 'thou shalt' and 'thou shalt not', even though many yoga teachers in India have come to regard certain preliminary disciplines known as yama and niyama as ten commandments, but they are not commandments as such - only disciplines. There is no compulsion nor coercion here, possibly because of the realisation that when there is coercion there is no action at all. If you compel me to be very loving, I smile. That is not love. Can you compel me to speak the truth?

When you tell me that hereafter I should never bluff you, I say "Of course I won't". That is the first lie already, because I don't mean it. If you tell me that if I lie hereafter you will dismiss me, I say, "no sir, I won't tell any lies hereafter". Up to my chin I am lying, and from there to the mouth, I am promising. That is already a lie, within me. If you tell me not to be greedy, I can agree, but I'll invent methods of fulfilling my greed without calling it greedy. For instance I say, "I do not want anything for myself, it is all for the institution - I am the institution. It is all for sake of God. I am doing all this for His sake". What is the difference? So when there is coercion, compulsion, there is no action, but plenty of hypocrisy.

There are no commandments, no coercion, just a map - if you drive along this way you will go there, and if you drive along that way you will go somewhere else. It is up to you. If you remember this throughout these talks, all the 'way out' teachings contained in the Yoga Sutras become meaningful. For instance, after teaching the student how to meditate, how to enter in to samadhi, the text says: "If you practise this kind of communion on certain physical, astronomical, physiological or psychological phenomena you will get a special type of knowledge. If you meditate upon the moon without the aid of a telescope you will see the whole universe; and if you meditate upon the polestar, you will see how the stars and planets move around the polestar; if you do other things you will develop the ability to understand the language of the birds and beasts; if you do so and so you can read other people's thoughts; if you do that you will be able to become invisible; if you do that you will be able to enter into another person's body". We understand all this only if we bear in mind that the text is a row map, a navigational chart, merely laying out the possibilities.

The fundamental theme of the Yoga Sutras (as also the teachings of Buddha) seems to have been: "Whatever unhappiness has not reached you, avoid it. Get rid of it!" Life is full of sorrow - this is an undeniable fact - but it is possible for me to understand how sorrow reaches me, how I become unhappy. How do I become unhappy? There is a tremendously interesting secret in the next part of the teaching. Unhappiness can (and should) only be avoided, not got rid of. Anything that you do to get rid of the unhappiness that you have already, is going to make you more unhappy. So do not try that, you have tried it long enough. If you are in the soup, drink it quickly - as quickly as you can, with the greatest of relish. Do not try to get out of it. Being in it, look around and be careful - you can see the next one coming- - avoid it. The unhappy situation you are in already is passing, it is not eternal, permanent. When the time comes it will leave you. If you do not take any notice of it, or if you grin and bear it, it will pass away. Let it pass. If you start pushing it you will go along with it for a long time. As long as you are pushing it, you are touching it. Why do you want to touch something which in any case is moving away from you? It came from somewhere, it came towards you, and left to

itself, it will move away from you. Leave it alone. But utilise that opportunity, that situation of unhappiness you may be in, to look within, to see how it is that 'I' was caught in this.

What is unhappiness? Unhappiness is longing for happiness, isn't it? It is terribly easy and simple. I regard a certain experience as unhappiness because I am looking for something else. That longing for what I consider to be happiness, is unhappiness. If that longing for something else is dropped, this itself becomes happiness. Therefore there is a division within oneself between what is and what I think must be. I am in the situation of not wanting this but that - then there is trouble. The mind rejects the situation I am in, and that causes unhappiness; the mind longs for something which is not, and that again is unhappiness. The two put together make me miserable. If I am able to bridge this gulf or abolish this division within me between what 'is' and what 'I wish it were' - the craving for another state of being, there is happiness then and there. We are anticipating.

There is a state of what is, the 'being', but mixed up with that there is also a dissatisfaction with that being and a desire or a craving to become something else. This conflict between 'being' and 'becoming' is what is called unhappiness. That is how simple it is - extremely simple if it is clearly understood. The desire to become is completely absent in sleep and therefore there is no conflict and no unhappiness there. In sleep one does not even wish to wake up. It is only when you wake up at 8 o'clock the next morning that you think "Oh! I should not have slept so long. I should have got up at 4 o'clock". It is that thought (when it arises) that makes you miserable, but while you were asleep there was not even a wish that it were otherwise. It is this conflict between being and becoming that makes us miserable. When that conflict is dropped the 'being' and 'becoming' become one - in other words 'being' alone remains. It is an illusory consecutiveness of the 'being' that becomes a becoming. Yoga is the abolition of the psychological division within oneself between what one is and what one wishes to be - which is the direct result of craving. The craving itself being the direct result of ignorance of one's being.

I am. I am 54. But the same person two years ago said "I am 52". That 'I am' is not involved in this succession of events, years and dates. It is constant. The 'I am' is that being; and yet there is an illusory misunderstanding in that, of involvement in this succession called 'time'. When that involvement is realised as non-existent, there is absolute peace. I am neither 52, 54 nor 75, I am. Period. An illusory division that was there has been abolished.

It is a vitally important principle to remember throughout our study of yoga that there has been no factual division, but that the division is illusory, imaginary. If there has been a factual division, it will never come together.

Once it is separated, it is separated, it can never be put back again. The yogi realises that the true nature of his being is indivisible. Between the man who sat here two years ago and the man who sits here now there is no division. It is one continuous being, which does not become anything other than being, but remains being.

The division is very much like sleep, in which there is ignorance. Because of this ignorance of self, a craving seems to arise in that being. Even the craving is not real, because the craving is born of ignorance. How could something which is born of ignorance be real? In darkness it is possible for someone to mistake a rope for a snake, but have you ever heard that that snake bit someone and he died? No. It may appear to be a snake, but it does not behave like a snake. Similarly the craving that is born of ignorance is ignorance; it is not real, it is only an apparent craving. One has to experience this within oneself. When my whole heart and mind are churned by craving, anxiety, fear, desire or hate, have I undergone any change at all? Have 'I' been destroyed? If it does produce a change in me, I am doomed, finished - I can never come right. You can pour some sugar or salt into this water, but does it really change the water into something else? No. Water as water is unpollutable and it remains water for all time to come. Boil it, purify it in some way or the other and you get the water back.

The fundamental basis of yoga philosophy is that nothing has ever happened to you, to the 'being', and that 'being' is beyond ignorance and therefore beyond the retinue of ignorance - unhappiness, exultation, pleasure, fear or craving. It is the illusory intrusion of this ignorance and craving that produces an illusory division between the being - i.e. what I am and what I want to be; what I am and what I want to have - and when that comes in I am miserable and unhappy.

When this unhappiness is seen at a distance - that is, it has not yet reached me, I see a miraculous and beautiful connection - the unhappiness is connected to the craving. If the craving is dropped, the unhappiness also drops. The craving can be dropped only when you realise that the division that has apparently taken place within you is illusory and due to ignorance. When that knowledge arises the ignorance is gone, and with that the unhappiness also goes.

II

Yoga is practised in order to avoid pain, sorrow or suffering that we have not yet been subjected to. The same idea is very beautifully and poetically put by Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita:

tam vidyad duhhasamyoganiyogam yogasamjnitam (VI.23)

"Yoga is the avoidance of contact with pain" - not getting rid of pain, but avoidance of contact with pain, with sorrow. Sorrow or pain arises when I - whatever the 'I' may mean, is dissatisfied with the present condition and seeks another condition. The rejection of the present is sorrow, pain; and the seeking of the future, or something else other than 'what is', is again an admission of sorrow. The present cannot be abandoned, I cannot tear myself away from the present, and therefore the effort to do so proves painful. The yogi reminds me that I need not tear myself away from the present, for the simple reason that whatever is today will pass away, will change.

Knowing that, can one (from there on expressions are difficult) remain stably rooted, established in one's own being, without trying to kick it and reach out to something else? Can one remain in one's own being, totally integrated, without creating a division within oneself - I am this, I want to become something else; I have this, I want to have something else. Without creating such a division (it does not mean accepting the present nor being satisfied - all that is irrelevant) can one train the mind in such a way that one remains without this inner conflict and division? That is the problem of yoga. That it is possible is suggested by our own experience of deep sleep. You can use many different props or aids to provide an inspiration for meditation and Patanjali suggests as one prop "What is this message of sleep and what is the message of dream? Contemplate that." Contemplation of the message of dream and sleep may also lead you to the discovery of the truth that an undivided awareness is possible, or the undivided awareness is the truth; that it is possible for the totally integrated being to remain very stable and well established in this state of being. The sleeping person is not at all dissatisfied with this state of sleep, nor is there evidence that he is satisfied either. There is no dissatisfaction with that sleep, and no desire to wake up again. We are only looking for a very limited lesson from this state of sleep, so do not stretch it and say then that sleep is the highest state, and let us keep sleeping forever.

The message of sleep is that it is possible for a person to remain totally absorbed, integrated with the state in which one is, without even an effort to get out of it, without a dissatisfaction arising in it, without a desire or craving for a state other than the one in which one is. When that is done there is no pain, there is no suffering. When one is in that integrated state where there is

no conflict within oneself, where there is no division within oneself, then there is no pain.

In sleep I do not experience sleep, I am sleep or 'I' is sleep. In exactly the same way, if I can become completely integrated with the thing called 'pain', it would not be pain any more. That is, I would not disassociate myself, I would not separate myself and then experience it, touch it. Touching means separation, experience means separation, division. Without tearing myself away there can be no contact. Contact pre-supposes division, separation. So if I want to avoid the painful experience, I must not look for a tearing away from the pain.

Sorrow can only be avoided by neither avoiding the situation that sorrow is supposed to create, nor tearing oneself away from it, but becoming aware (in a strange way) of the ground of all these experiences. The ground of all experiences is called the citta. It may become clear if one constantly returns to it, not by listening to these words. Constantly returning to it is not meditation, is not yoga at all. Yoga is the non-arising of the division; but when by past habit born of ignorance we drift away from the center again and again and again, then the yogi or the master suggests, "If you have to go away again and again, return to the centre again and again and again." That is the best thing to do.

yogas citta vrtti nirodhah (I.2)

The citta is the consciousness that is indivisible, undivided. Consciousness being immaterial, is indivisible. It is possible for us vaguely to sense it, and while sensing it we destroy it, we misunderstand it. It is possible for us to sense it - you meet a friend and in your heart there is happiness. While you meet that friend and experience happiness within, is it possible for you (in a manner of speaking) to enjoy that, to feel that, with your own little mental hands to touch that happiness? It is still an object and there is a division. I --- happiness. I am touching this happiness, I am experiencing this happiness. Let it be there. It is a half truth, but let it be there - I am trying to learn a lesson from it. I am in the company of a friend and there is happiness. I experience that happiness, I touch that happiness, and I become aware that that happiness is in me. My mind itself has assumed the form of that happiness, there is nothing else. You can call it spirit, you can call it what you like, but let us be simple and call it mind.

For the time being that mind is happiness. Then you go out of the house to go to town, and as you walk towards the railway station you see the train pulling out. "Oh gosh!" There is disappointment, annoyance, irritation. You sit down on that bench - that's why those benches are provided there. What is it now? Now there is disappointment, frustration, annoyance, irritability, anger at the

train that has just left, anger at the lights that turned red just at the wrong time - the wrong time according to me. Where is this frustration? In me. What is this frustration made of? The mind again. Five or ten minutes ago I was in the presence of my friend and I was happy, I was happiness, I experienced that happiness. What became of that? Has it gone away somewhere, leaving me? Did I drop it at the railroad and pick up frustration from there? What became of it?

Suddenly you realise at one stage, sometime or other, that that which was happiness then, that itself is frustration now. It has not changed as this floor has - it was polished wood before and now a carpet has been put on it and so it has undergone a change. The mind does not undergo that sort of change - that is why it is possible for yoga to be practised. Therefore it is possible to avoid sorrow that has not yet reached me, because the mind does not undergo a permanent change either for the better or for the worse, and therefore great caution is necessary. I cannot say that all my evils have dropped away and now I am sprouting a couple of wings - I am an angel. That angelic mood is a mood which is changing, which might change into something else. The diabolical mood is a mood which is also subject to change. The same mind-stuff which was happiness at one stage (a few minutes ago) has undergone a temporary change which now appears to be frustration.

Now we are getting a little closer to this understanding of the basic principle of yoga. This is the citta: the mind and the apparent modification. Why is it an apparent modification? Because the mind does not become happiness and the mind does not become frustration. The change is merely like those shadows behind you. There are no shadows on the wall. The wall does not take the imprint of those shadows. The shadow is there because I see it and it is not there because I cannot take it away - it is not tangible, it is not a substance which can be handled; whereas if I take some ink and splash it on the wall, the wall itself undergoes some change. When the shadow falls on that wall, the wall does not undergo any change whatsoever. It is there as it was, as it has always been. That is the nature of the mind, on which this shadow-play continues to be seen.

The mind seems to be happiness at one stage, frustration at another, satisfaction at a third. These are the vrittis, the apparent modifications. The correct understanding that the apparent modification does not modify the mind, and therefore the mind - or the intelligence or the awareness or the consciousness - is forever indivisible, is yoga.

When I am frustrated, can I look within and see that the content of the substance of which the frustration is made is also the mind, exactly the same as when there was happiness in the mind? The content of happiness is mind, the content of generosity is mind, the content of love is mind, the content of

hate is mind. When that truth is seen then all else is seen as perverse vision or limitation, fragmentation. The shadow is seen only because I imagine a division in that wall between the place outside the shadow and the place covered by the shadow. The covering being false, the division is also false. When I see the total wall I won't see the shadow at all. The wall that is there is white. The wall where the shadow appears is also white, and therefore there is no division.

In a state of ignorance we limit our understanding, and out of that limited understanding arises a thing called 'me'. The thing called me is already limited understanding, and that picks up a temporary mood which is a small fragment of the total consciousness. We remember, we chew these small bits and pieces of mind. That is why when we are annoyed we tell each other, "I gave him a piece of my mind". You can only deal in pieces of mind.

When the total mind is seen there is peace. Till the total mind is seen we deal in pieces. I give him a piece of my mind, I give her a piece of my mind. A piece of my mind was happy when I met my friend, and then that experience of happiness was registered and later remembered as if it were a totally separate experience, as if it were an entity in itself, as if it were a substance, not a shadow. And so we go on chewing it, remembering it. We commit some other mistake, as for instance one of my friends did. One day I was in his car driving somewhere, and we stopped at the traffic lights. He saw another car stopped at the same traffic lights with a lady at the wheel. As she turned he waved, and quickly she turned her face away. This man was so upset he wouldn't talk to me for a few minutes. Later he said, "I thought it was so and so and it was not". Obviously he was worried about what she would have thought, or what I would have thought of him waving to an unknown woman. There was an error (see the fun here) and that error was registered by the mind as if it was a real affair. We chew over this as if it is something real, as if something tragic had happened. There was nothing at all, it was only an error.

So right knowledge, wrong knowledge and imagination - imagination in the sense of happiness and frustration, which are not real in themselves, are gathered together, registered, accumulated, preserved and remembered, and therefore there is memory. All these fragmentary experiences, experience of fragments (experience itself being fragmentary) are vrittis. Patanjali, the author of the Yoga Sutras, also includes sleep as a vritti, as another of those fragmented experiences, because we regard sleep as only a temporary feature of our life - the rest of the time the sleep experience is contradicted. I am not asleep now and therefore sleep is also a form of limitation. Once the truth concerning the awareness that exists even during sleep is clearly understood, then one realises that there is an unbroken awareness in waking, sleeping and dreaming.

These are the five categories of mental limitation, psychological limitation, and on account of our ignorance we take each one to be the total reality - which means that when I am happy at meeting a friend, I am happy. That's gone and then this frustration comes along. I am frustrated, the whole world is frustration. You are ready to fight with your husband, with your wife, with anyone at that time, because there is frustration, there is experience of frustration. Since you are touching frustration and frustration is touching you, whatever you touch during that period is frustration - you create frustration. That is the reason why some yogis recommended that we cultivate friendliness or love or affection rather than frustration - even though they knew that it is also a fragmentary experience, because once you experience this friendliness and affection in your heart, whatever you touch you will be friendly with. Never mind - yoga or no yoga - you'll be a better person. If you are frustrated in one thing, you spread that frustration everywhere, because that becomes a dominant experience during that period. When that has gone, you become something else, and therefore this 'becoming' continues to change. You change from one to the other, imagining during that period that either the whole world is heaven or the whole world is hell. The mistaking of that partial experience for the totality of your own being is the error.

On the other hand, if the total being is seen or realised intuitively, then one sees that the content of what was regarded temporarily as happiness or frustration, anger or friendship, love or affection or hate, is just one. Pure awareness. It is like the canvas which may have many colors, but behind all those colors is that single canvas of a single color. The only difference is that color is external to it. There is nothing external to the mind. Therefore we have to come back to this shadow play: there is one large shadow, there is a small shadow, there is a long shadow, there is a thin shadow, but whatever be the distinction of the shadows upon the wall, the wall remains single, totally unaffected. It is only when the vision and understanding is limited that we begin to compare - this is small - small means smaller than that; this is large - large means larger than that, and therefore we get into difficulties. That is the root cause of all our problems.

How do I get over this? By an extremely simple technique called meditation. Meditation is neither terribly difficult nor like brushing your teeth in the morning. It is not as superficial as that, nor is it difficult, if one is serious. Meditation involves becoming aware all the time. Becoming aware - please watch the expression here. It is 'becoming aware' and therefore it is not awareness.. But this 'becoming aware' becomes necessary on account of the fact that the consciousness is straying away from the center again and again and again, and therefore as Krishna puts it very beautifully in the Bhagavad Gita:

yato-y ato niscarati manas cancalam asthiram

tatas-tato niyamyai 'tad atmany eva vasam na yet (VI.26)

Why must you practise meditation at all? Only because the mind seems to stray from the center. If the mind does not stray from the center at all, there is no need for meditation. You are in meditation - constant meditation.

As and when the mind strays from the center, bring it back to it; as and when the mind suggests 'I am happy' or

'I am unhappy', 'I am jealous', 'I am angry', bring it back - throw it back upon itself and ask, "What is anger? Am I temporarily possessed by a demon called anger, or am I temporarily deranged mentally?" What does it mean? I am trying to look at it, to become aware of it, to become aware of the content of anger. What is it made of?

One may start this practise of meditation right then and there, sitting on the railway station bench. You do not need to go to a cave or a monastery or an ashram. Sitting on the bench, I am frustrated because the train went away - the train went away in any case. First I need some amount of help to turn the mind upon itself and one may have to use logic - vitarka, or a form of psychological dialogue, mental dialogue:

vitarka vicara 'nanda 'smita

'nugamat samprajnatah (I.17)

Patanjali says, argue within yourself, but do it cleverly, nicely, so that the argumentation naturally leads to the next step. So, what is the argumentation here? The train is gone - and you tell yourself: "The train has gone my friend, do not get worked up. You are not going to bring it back." "The lights should not have turned red." "That is perfectly true but unfortunately you did not have the switch in your hands. That is also finished, also the past. The light turned red, you had no control over it so you were delayed, you came here, you saw the train pull out. Whatever you do now nothing is going to be remedied." Now, by means of this internal dialogue or argumentation, you have reached the dead end. That is, it is a waste of time worrying over this.

Without succumbing to despair or giving up, now you quickly turn onto the next step. Vichara is not analysis;

'chara' in sanskrit is 'to move'. The prefix 'vi' very often means dexterous, clever, adept. So let the mind move, but well directed, with great attention and concentration. How does it move? The frustration is still there, I have prevented that frustration from flowing towards the traffic lights, I have

prevented it from running behind the running train, and therefore where is the frustration now? In me. I am still frustrated. I have not suppressed this frustration at all. It is still there.

Now begins vichara. Vichara is merely to become aware of it, merely to observe it. Observe this frustration with one intention: If that is the shadow, what is the substance on which the shadow falls? If that frustration is like the shadow, what does it fall on? What sustains this shadow, what supports this shadow, what is behind this shadow? I am sure you realise the words 'behind', 'above', 'below', are nonsense, because that shadow is not

on the wall, and the wall is not behind the shadow. Their relationship has to be understood by each one of us, if we can. You can try this when you go home. Stand facing the wall, look at the shadow and try to figure out for yourself whether the shadow is on the wall or in the wall or under the wall, whether the wall is behind the shadow or in front of the shadow. Decide that. I do not think I can explain it. The relationship between this frustration and the mind is exactly the same as that.

I merely want to see what is the substance of this frustration, what is it made of, where is it experienced - not who experiences it. So, if I focus my attention upon that shadow, it is possible that I see on what it falls. That is vichara. Whatever be the mind fragment that is thus studied, whether it be one of happiness or frustration or disappointment or anger, once the mind is thus gathered together, concentrated and turned upon itself, one experiences a certain joy. The distraction as a distraction has gone, and you are enjoying the hobby of looking at yourself. This is interesting. Observing one's own mind invariably leads to joy. It does not matter what the provocation was. It is possible you were angry at someone else, but the moment you turn your gaze within and try to observe that anger, the division is getting narrower and narrower, and there is great joy. Now you - we are still not quite certain what 'you' is - and that shadow are locked in intense confrontation. You are looking at the mind now in deadly confrontation - the mind which looked like frustration a few minutes ago, which looked like anger a few minutes ago - but still it is mind. Then there is no anger, there is no frustration. Perhaps there is not even a mind. Good Lord, it is me! Step by step, from internal dialogue or argumentation, to observation, and to an enjoyment within oneself, and suddenly you smile - "Good Lord. It is me". You are left with that 'me', with just that pure sense of 'I am-ness'. Vitarka vicara 'nanda 'smita 'nugamat samprajnatah.

This is the whole process of meditation. You can take any emotion for this or any experience for this and reach the same spot, where the pure 'I am-ness' is seen. 'I am'. All the other tails and suffixes drop away, and you are left with

just 'I am'. Possibly, even if there was a death during that period, one might still say, "Hah, I am dead. 'I am'". I am dead, but 'I am'. So what?

This is one course of meditation which is suggested in the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, where the diverse emotional experiences are all reduced to the one, which is mind. And the observer of this mind is the 'I Am' - pure I am.

III

Yoga is the avoidance of all contact with pain, and sorrow.

When does contact become inevitable? What is the precondition for contact? Separation. There is no union when there is no separation. One of the famous sayings of that wonder ful sage, Ramana Maharshi which cannot be translated literally, is "Yoga is union. Only when there is separation is there the possibility of union; as long as there is union, there is possibility of separation; and as long as there is separation, there is desire for union."

Yoga teaches us a method by which the separation itself is avoided, so that I neither pull myself away from an experience called pain, nor run after an experience called pleasure. I do not pull away from a situation in which I find myself, because I do not want to experience ... full stop - there is no need to say unhappiness. I do not want experience at all, because it is the craving for experience that creates the division. In a very vague and non-specific manner we can say that in sleep there is great joy, great peace, but if I say so on waking up, she challenges me, "Did you experience it?" Obviously not! Then, while I am awake, I try to chew the cud of past experience and I realise something fantastic. The whole of yesterday, from morning till night, I was looking for some happiness and peace. Whatever I did with the intention of making myself happy and gaining that peace made me more restless and unhappy. Then I went to bed, did nothing at all, and there was the happiness, there was the peace. I realise that it was the desire to experience happiness and peace that woke me up.

Firstly, in sleep there is whatever there is - plus an ignorance of whatever there is. The purest of experiencing and of happiness itself were there; but in that state of sleep even that experience was not experienced. An experience is experienced when there is a division within that experience. The sun does not know it is shining because there is nothing to compare it with, there is no division in it. An iceblock does not shiver, it is. Even the expression 'it is cold' is meaningless to the iceblock itself, because there is not that division and contact. Contact must presuppose division; without division there is no contact, and in division there is trouble. So, for an experience to be experienced, there must be a division within the experience itself - this is the second stage. This information is contained in the second chapter of the Yoga Sutras.

avidya asmita raga dveshai abhinivesha klesha (II.3)

"These five are the disturbing elements in your life", says Patanjali. First there is ignorance. The pure experiencing which alone is truth, is somehow veiled by ignorance. How this happens one does not know. When I am awake, I am

awake; when I am asleep, I am awake, otherwise it is finished. If I was not awake when I was asleep that would be called death. It is because I am awake while you think I am asleep that I am able to wake up the next morning and keep calling myself Swami - otherwise I would be dead and call myself something else! So when you thought I was asleep, I was awake. Mysteriously, in that sleeping person who is intelligent, who is aware - you tickle his toes and he pulls the leg away, along with that awareness and intelligence there is an unconsciousness. While every cell of that body was pulsating with life and intelligence, at the same time there was an unconsciousness. Do you see the mystery of it? Every cell is active. If there is some illness or some problem with the physical body, that problem is attended to. All the builders, destroyers, architects, policemen and soldiers are tremendously busy at night, carrying out their work, charging the battery, digesting your dinner, keeping the whole circulation going, the nerves active. Everything is active, full of intelligence and energy. Side by side with that there is an unconsciousness that is called 'avidya'. The word does not matter at all. I have a rather flippant way of translating it, as 'I have no idea'.

Just for your entertainment - I have tried this once, put a lighted candle in front of you and keep looking at it, at night, and try to figure out what sleep is and how it enters. Can you examine yourself inwardly and make sure there is no sleep hidden in you? No? Watch. Cover yourself from head to foot with a thin bridal veil and watch. 12 o'clock, 1 o'clock - I don't sleep, I am still watching. How does this thing called sleep enter? What does it look like? Does it come like a bird, or a dog, an owl, or creeping like a snake? Nothing happens. I am still watching ...

I slept! Still I have not found out from where this sleep comes. How is it that such an intelligent man with such tremendous will power sleeps like this? One does not know at all, and therefore it is called 'avidya'. The word is not important, do not make an image of it. It is the truth that is important.

In retrospect we realise that that which I was looking and struggling for throughout the day, and which eluded my grasp, was found when I was asleep. I must get it. As soon as I wake up, something else wakes up and I have lost it. The desire to experience itself is the divider.

drg darshana shahtyor ekatmateva 'smita (II.6)

Here the yogi says that experiencing is natural, it is there everywhere. The eyes are closed and as soon as the lids are parted, seeing happens. When the ears are open and the sound waves enter, hearing happens. What is it that hears? Hearing itself hears. The sense of sight sees. That is why it is called sight seeing tour - you do not have to be there at all! When the power of sight and the scene come together, something jumps up and says, "I see him". Why

does this something spring up and say, "I see him"? This is something that has to be assimilated very carefully without either thinking about it, juggling with it, or intellectualising it. There is the power of sight, and the power of sight looks at the scene. There is no ego sense at all and there is that same peace and joy, just as in sleep. In this, the purest of encounters, there is no division at all. The sense of sight merging in the scene - there is no divided experiencing.

Something is stirring. "It is beautiful, I love it." So, wanting to experience that experience, the 'I' springs up. Left

alone, the same delight and the same peace will be there; but somehow from somewhere something springs up to experience this experience. Therefore that experience is treated as an object, and the 'I' rises up as the subject, to experience it. The power of sight gives rise to an ego sense 'I see you' - 'I recognise him' - you know what a brilliant man I am! When this 'I see you' concept rises, it doesn't stop there. "You look like so and so". "You are more beautiful than so and so". "You are a lot uglier than the swamis I have seen elsewhere". The whole lot - I like this, I don't like this, this is beauty, this is ugliness, this is good, this is evil etc., springs up.

The moment the division has arisen in this pure experiencing, there is a desire to experience. The division is brought about by the desire to experience rising in it. That desire to experience creates the ego sense, or is itself the ego sense. You may say that the desire to experience creates the ego sense, or the desire to experience itself is the ego sense. If the desire to experience is not there at all, there is no ego sense. Pure experiencing remains - as beautiful, as peaceful, as blissful as sleep. In that there is no division, and since there is no division there is no contact. That is the reason why there is no pain at all in sleep.

In sleep, sleep alone exists, and therefore in sleep you are not aware that 'I am' - otherwise you are awake! Medical theory is that one part of the brain is chemically cut loose and the autonomous and parasympathetic nervous system take over, so that in sleep it is sleep alone that functions. You are not able to tell me during that sleep, "Swami, my brain is asleep now, and it is the parasympathetic and the sympathetic nerves that are talking to you." You are the sleep, you have become one with sleep, non different from sleep, and therefore there is pure joy and happiness. But unfortunately you do not know that, and when you struggle to know it, you have created a division, and then you go running after it.

We were discussing the three gunas - satva, rajas and tamas. That is also part of this philosophy. When a sage called Vasishta explained this to a disciple, the disciple said, "Oh, that's marvelous. Let's all go to sleep! Is that the state

of enlightenment?" Vasishta said, "No". This carpet, which has no idea at all to experience its carpetness, the inert stones, rocks and mountains are not enlightened, because in all of them this consciousness is asleep - just as in a sleeping person the desire to experience is latent, hidden; and therefore sleep is not a state of liberation or enlightenment. Therefore, *tamas* - inertia, which may easily and superficially look like liberation, is not so. They are quite different.

Tamas must be overcome by whipping yourself up. Most yoga teachers and masters recommend *hatha yoga* in order to drive inertia away. If meditation is losing myself, going off, getting high, why should I whip myself up like this? So I may not go down. Zen teachers also recommend that you do not sit for too long, otherwise you become lethargic. Wake yourself up, put yourself to sleep; wake yourself up, put yourself to sleep. Why? So that one day you will know how to enter into sleep without sleeping. When I was asleep there was still the desire to experience and that was also asleep. It was not non-existent, but hidden. It was that desire to experience that woke me up later on. Now I am looking for experience, for pleasure, for happiness, and that looking seems to push peace and happiness further and further away from me.

From inertia I wake up into activity, the expression of energy, and if I can so examine life during the course of this expression of energy, it is possible for me to guide it in such a way that I can discover the trick of allowing pure experiencing to take place without the desire to experience interfering with it. This is a delicate and rather tricky doctrine, and if it is misunderstood it can either lead to one extreme or the other - either complete asceticism - or suppression of oneself, or to licence.

The doctrine is that one does not have to go round looking for pleasure. Pleasure is inherent in life. That is a cool sea breeze - let it touch your body, your face. Do not try to experience it, do not desire it - you do not have to, it is there. It blows on your face and the face itself responds to it. That is enough. Put a piece of food into your mouth - the taste buds spring into activity and there is an experience of pleasure or whatever it is. If you try to experience it, your ego springs up and says, "Oh, it was nice, let me have more and more". One more - and then the third helping of the same dessert puts you to bed for three days! It becomes disgusting.

All over the world there is delight in everything - every experience has its own delight. While being in this world, all I need do is to see where the desire to experience arises, knowing that whatever happens in life is already full of pleasure, full of joy, full of delight. Let it come, let it go. 'Let it come, let it go' already suggests that you have the choice not to let it go. Sun rises, sun sets - that is the truth. You are looking at the sunrise, it is delightful. Period. You are looking at the sunset, it is delight full period. There is no desire to catch hold

of the sunrise and keep it there. Then there is an egoless experiencing which is pure awareness itself, in which there is no division. When that training is acquired, then the natural thing is that when you enter into sleep then also there is pure experiencing. I don't even want to experience what is called sleep. There is oneness in sleep, there is oneness in all - whatever happens.

This is what is called surrender. So in the Yoga Sutras, Patanjali also mentions:

isvara pranidhanad va (I.23)

Isvara is God, but not the kind of god we associate with that found in temples, churches and mosques. Isa and Isvara are synonymous terms in Sanskrit, and Isa is whatever is - not what you think is, not whatever appears to you to be, but what is. What is? Pure experiencing is. Not as 'I see you' - that is my thought, and that is my desire to experience; not that 'this face is beautiful and that is not beautiful' - that is my opinion; not that 'this is good and that is not good' - that again is opinion. What 'is' is pure experiencing, and pure experiencing is God.

The ego is nothing but an imposter, a craving for experiencing something which is natural, and which does not depend upon your craving. This is the most important part of it - pleasure is natural, happiness is natural, delight is natural, I do not have to crave for it. Without the 'I' there is no craving, and without the craving there is no 'I'. They are exactly identical. The craving becomes the I, and 'I' becomes the craving. It is when the craving to experience, sustain and repeat, that experience arises, that the 'I' - the ego - arises. The delight, the joy, is independent of this craving. If this craving is offered in sacrifice to God, Isa, Isvara, what 'is', that is when the ego is offered in surrender, in self sacrifice to God.

God is de light, God is bliss. When the expression 'God is bliss' is uttered, we often get all kinds of romantic ideas -

e.g. 'I must abandon this body - I must take off all my clothes and surrender myself to the God who is in heaven, then I am going to bliss!' Bliss is here - in the very touch of the carpet, in the touch of the breeze, in the smile of a child, in the sunrise, in the sunset, in the way the gum trees sway in the wind.

Can that be ... the sentence is complete. Can that be - without a desire or a craving arising to experience that, as though it was something different from me? Can that be? Can that be? If it is, that is surrender, self sacrifice.

Thus yoga is not something which is confined to morning or evening meditation, but something which 'is', all the time.

IV

The theme of the Yoga Sutras is avoidance of sorrow that has not yet reached me - how to live free from the experience of sorrow, the experience of suffering, the experience of pain. Pain, suffering or sorrow is obviously a universal experience, it comes to all. Religious people all over the world have tried to rationalise it - meaning they have provided a reason for it, a logic. They say, "God made it so; you cannot question God" or "It is Karma; you did something in your previous birth which you can neither accept nor deny now. You are to grin and bear it." "It is God's will" or "the nature of the world." There are many number of theories concerning this, all of them being good rationalisations. I am worried about it, I do not know, and since I do not know what pain and suffering is all about, I have to find some reasons why it is there. I call it karma, Of I think that all my pain and suffering comes from you, so if I can effectively get rid of you, then I am free from suffering. Then someone else comes so along so I will deal with that person also in the same way. My life becomes a life-long battlefield!

Perhaps it is only the Yoga Sutras which tell you to avoid whatever pain has not reached you so far, instead of merely glorifying pain and saying that it is something ennobling. The whole of Buddhist and Christian philosophy is built on the glorification of pain, suffering, death and martyrdom. Buddha examined the problem of sorrow, and suggested ways and means of avoiding it in the future. But the Yoga Sutras say, "Avoid it now". You take one step in the right direction, and the right direction is avoidance of pain that has not reached you yet. In the understanding of that itself is the remedy for the pain that has already reached you. How? You are using the pain that exists now to discover not the rationalisation of pain, but the meaning of it. e.g. Why do I experience anything at all? What is the meaning of experience?

In order that we may not dissect life into pleasurable experiences and painful experiences, the Yoga Sutras bundled the whole of them and put them in one basket. The whole lot is pain.

sarvam dukkham vive hinah (II.15)

How can passing pleasure be considered pleasure? It tickles you for a few minutes and leaves you miserable for the rest of your lifetime. That is no good, that is also pain. So examine pain, look at it, become aware of it by understanding the dynamics of experience itself. Why do I experience anything at all? How does the 'I' experience arise? Why does it not arise in sleep?

svapna nidra jnana 'lambanam va (I.38)

Look at sleep and look at dream. The 'I' experience does not exist in sleep - that is: the sleeping person does not say "I sleep". The dream experience teaches me (if I wish to learn) that time, space and substantiality are not imaginary, but 'dreaminary' - something like 'what happens in dream'. Time, space, and substantiality are not as real as we take them to be. At midnight you were asleep in your room, dreaming that the sun rose, and in a couple of minutes the sun set; you won the Perth Cup - you held \$100,000 in your hands. As soon as the dream was over the hands were empty, so that substantiality was absent.

Sleep and dream teach us not to take things at their face value, but to examine. Why is there experience at all? What does it need? It needs a resolute turning of the mind upon itself Another sutra says

abhyasa vairagyabhyam tan nirodhah. (I.12)

By these two means you may be able to restrain the wandering mind, the wandering attention. Abhyasa means practise, persistent practise. Vairagya means turning the mind upon itself. Vairagya has also been translated as dispassion or absence of passion. If you have Vairagya, the ability to turn the mind upon itself, then this -according to Patanjali, is possible:

manasali sthiti nibandhani (I.35)

It is a beautiful sutra which has been rightly and wrongly interpreted. I know how to turn the mind upon itself, I have practised it - abhyasa, I have vairagya, in the sense that the mind does not seek to externalise itself, but its attention is capable of being directed to its own source. Then I get hold of any objective experience, any straightforward sensual experience, and see within myself what is the substance or the content of that experience. I pick up a piece of chocolate and put it into my mouth and think it is sweet. What exactly is the distinction between sweet and sour? Both make your mouth water - perhaps sour makes your mouth water more profusely. Both excite your taste buds, both have some taste, but whereas the piece of chocolate may excite taste buds and nerves, what is it that gives it the designation 'sweet'? What is it that gives the designation 'sour', and where do I come into contact with this experience? If you are bold enough, courageous enough, you can try that. It takes tremendous courage and willpower, otherwise you get lost in the chocolate. You thought you'd examine the phenomenon of experience with the help of a bar of chocolate, but the bar of chocolate begins to experience you. You know the famous saying, "The man took the first drink, and that drink took another, and the drink took the man later."

We were also given certain meditation exercises which were meant not to enable us to develop psychic powers and faculties - they are irrelevant in this

world, but again to become intensely aware of the phenomenon called 'experience'. If you saw God Almighty standing in front of you with four arms and all the paraphenalia, instead of admiring God and going into a sort of proud ecstasy, thinking, "Oh I have seen God", you would begin to wonder, "Who is seeing this?" What does the experience of seeing God mean? It is still an experience - I see God. What is the content, the nature of this experience? If this experience is still in the realm of dualism, 'I' experience, it is misery, unhappiness, because God is going to vanish now and I am going to lose my experience, and for the rest of my life I am going to knock my head on stone walls.

What is this 'I' experience? If this division of the 'I' and the experience is correctly understood and eliminated, then there is a total avoidance of pain - as in sleep - throughout our life. That is what the Yoga philosophy exhorts us - I do not want to say, 'to achieve,' because it is not an achievement.

What is needed here is a total dedication. What must I do? Patanjali says:

ksetrihavat (IV.3)

Do not do anything. You do not achieve or attain this, you merely remove the obstacle - like a farmer or a gardener. The gardener does not make the tree grow nor bring about the fruition. He merely removes the obstacles. From the moment you enter the field, the farm, or the garden, all that you are doing constantly - if you are a good gardener, is to remove the obstacles, the obstructions. Water flows down. You do not have to do anything but merely remove the obstructions and the water flows. Remove the obstructions and plant the seed - the seed bursts, and the sprout comes up. Remove the obstructions in the form of weeds so that they do not choke the young plant. And from then on remove obstructions, remove obstructions.

In the same way this homogeneity was there in sleep, where there was no experience at all, which meant non-duality. When sleep came to an end, all the obstructions sprang up. Now it is my job merely to remove all those obstructions. Two gross obstructions are 'I like', and 'I don't like'. Like and dislike. But there is a big list given by Patanjali which is very interesting to look at.

vyadhi styana samsaya pramada

'lasya 'virati bhranti darsana

'labdha bhumihatva 'navasthitatvani

citta viksepas te 'ntarayah (I.30)

First illness, which is undesired by the yogi - not because he has any illusions about physical immortality or physical incorruptibility, but because it distracts your mind, your attention. Take it the other way around - anything that distracts your attention is a sickness, even if it be intense affection or love for your wife. It is a sickness, a mental distraction.

Another important obstacle he gives here is samshaya - doubt. "Oh well all this sounds very good, very nice, but ..." I'll tell you a joke - we have a mantra for all kinds of deities:

'Om Namah Shivayah' for Siva,

'Om Namo Narayanaya' for Narayana,

'Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevayah' for Krishna.

I do not know what the disciples of Satan use, but I think there is a real and beautiful mantra which invokes Satan immediately, and that is the word 'but'. "Oh yes, Swami it is marvelous, but ..." Immediately the devil comes, "Yes, at your service." "All this is beautiful, but ..." is called samshaya - doubt.

I experience this doubt when there is absence of urgency. We always bring this doubt or 'but' in when there is no urgency. When there is real urgency we do not use the word 'but' at all. I have rather oversimplified advice which is given to all. When you are on the horns of doubt, 'but', leave that alone, whatever it be you are not keen on doing it. Get going with your routine life. Somehow or other some pressure builds up and then one day you are forced to do it. Then do it. It applies to getting married and getting divorced and starting a new business and all that sort of thing. Do it, if you are going to do it, with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul and with all your being. If something says 'but ...', leave it alone till the other pressure builds up to such an extent that you do it in spite of yourself; and then there is no regret. Your whole being did it.

I was asked, "Does such urgency characterise all of our wishes and desires to do and not to do in this world?" Yes. Exactly like going to the toilet. Next time you want to go to the toilet, if you delay it at one stage, you do not know where you are, you do not know how you got up, and how you got down! That's it. Because in most cases in our life we do not experience this urgency, and we do most of what we do half-heartedly, we are always full of regrets and remorse. No-one regrets going to the toilet, no-one regrets falling asleep. If there is not that urgency, there is always this doubt: "I think this is right, I think that is right, but ..." Go to sleep. You will never say 'but' for that.

This one obstacle of doubt or samshaya is more or less the basis of all the rest of it.

alabdha bhumiikatva (I.30)

People say, "Swami, I have been meditating, searching, seeking enlightenment. I have been searching for the light." But every time they saw the light they said 'but' and turned it off!

Occasionally we step on to this blissful non-experience, and then wonder, "But I did not experience it." That was the point, wasn't it? This happens sometimes, for instance when mothers fondle their babies; when boyfriends and girlfriends are with each other. One moment you think "That was good, but I did not experience it." You can go looking for it throughout your life but you will never get it. It is in the non-experience that there was bliss. The 'but' comes around again - "but I want to experience it." OK. That is the end of your experience. So this 'but', this doubt, flows through all our life, corrupting everything that it touches.

Sleep is something uncontradictable: I cannot say, "I am sleeping, I am experiencing sleep" - sleep slept! It is a defective expression to say, "I slept". If you did not even know that you slept, why do you want to say I slept? Sleep slept. Then with the same intensity you will be able to say "God exists". Not "I know God exists", but "God exists". Not "I realised God", but "God is real". On account of this desire for objective experience - desire for experience is objective experience, the mind also creates its own psychic phenomena and experiences it. All these are obstacles. Remove them.

The next sutra answers another question. "How do I know that there are obstacles and how do I recognise them?"

duhkha daurmanasya 'ngam ejayatva

svasa prasvasa viksepa saha bluvah. (I.31)

These are the concomitant factors with the obstacles. If you are experiencing sorrow, there is an unremoved obstacle which can be moved. It is your job to remove all your obstacles. So if there is unhappiness or sorrow, do not wallow in it, get rid of it. Examine it, and see where the sorrow exists and what it is made of. If it is some kind of physical or mental pain it passes away as you are looking at it. The presence of sorrow or pain or psychological suffering in you shows that there is an obstruction in the vision of yourself, that the vision is not clear, and therefore there is no clairvoyance. Clairvoyance does not mean that when you lose your key somebody clairvoyant can find out where it is. Clairvoyance only means that the sight is

clear, there is clear vision. Psychological distress or sorrow is an obstruction to this clairvoyance. When there is pain, your mind is attracted to the pain and not to that which is beyond - not to the self. Duhkha daurmanasya means a kind of distracted mind - the mind that is full of groans and grumbles, ill will, evil thoughts.

Anagam ejayatva means when the body is itchy and restless. If you are scratching, it is difficult to focus your attention intensely upon the phenomenon of experience and understand it. Where there is shaking of the limbs - svasa prasvasa, they prescribe asanas. The yoga asanas that you practice are meant to enable you to regain that steadiness of posture, that steadiness of the body; so that without that distraction, the attention may be focussed upon the phenomenon of experience. What yoga postures you do you must eventually be able to make them comfortable and steady - even if it looks like a torture. sthira sukham asanam (II.46) You must be able to hold that posture steadily while you are in meditation.

svasa prasvasa viksepa salta bhuvah (I.31)

Uneven inhalation and exhalation is also indicative of a distracted mind. Why do we need to breathe at all? For instance, there is ventilation in this room. Look closely at the walls - do they heave up and down? No. Nothing happens. They are firm, fixed, and yet there is proper ventilation of this room. If mere ventilation of the lungs was the object of this breathing in and breathing out, it was an unnecessary clumsy thing to do. We say God is omniscient. An omniscient God could not dispense with this clumsy in out, in out? Some architect could do much better. Poke a hole in the front of the chest, poke a hole in the back and there would be cross ventilation. The nostrils could be clogged like mad, but you are free! Patanjali says that inhalation-exhalation was not meant to ventilate your lungs, but to indicate the state of distraction of the mind. If you pay attention to your breathing, you will come to know the degree of distractedness of the mind. The less distracted it is, the calmer the breathing is; the more distracted, the more violent it is.

Based on that there is a fairly tough sutra. If you want to avoid all these obstacles and avoid mental distraction and develop concentration.

pracchardana vidharanabhyam va pranasya (I.34)

Throw out all your breath and hold it. There is no ambiguity here at all - it is not inhale and hold your breath, it is exhale and hold your breath, hold the lungs empty. If you try to practise this for maybe five or ten seconds, you will realise quite a number of great philosophical truths. One is that during that period you think of nothing, except your breath. It is not possible to think of anything else at all. Close your eyes - three seconds seems like half an hour.

You can try that even more effectively in the swimming pool. Exhale and then dive under water and stay there for sometime. You will go down like a piece of lead. Twenty seconds down there will appear like six hours. Suddenly you realise that time is not real at all, it depends upon the mental mood. If you want to know what total absorption of the mind is, exhale and suspend the breathing. The Hatha Yogis explanation of this, is that it is the breath - or the movement of prana, that enables your mind to think. So you suspend that. The mind has lost its fuel, and so it is quiet.

Then one is asked to become intensely aware of the phenomenon of experience.

yatha' bhimata dhyanad va (I.39)

Choose any object of experience you like: seeing, listening, imagining, reviving a memory, tasting, touching, but be totally centred on that experience. Become totally aware of this phenomenon called experience - though not in order to experience it, because then you are distracted. If you do it with a wish to experience it - then you are lost.

Become aware of the phenomenon of experience itself, till the only truth you are left with is 'I experience.' It is never just 'I experience', it is either 'I see' or 'I know' or 'I think' or 'I taste' or 'I hear' etc. Go on till only that remains as the truth. Then you wonder. Where is the experience? In me. What is the distance between me and the experience? What is the relationship between me and the experience? Is there an experience apart from me or is the experience inseparable from me? If the experience is in me, how do I touch it? How do I come into contact with it? If the experience is inseparable from me, how do I come into contact with it at all?

This is perhaps the last occasion when we will discuss the basic philosophy of the Yoga Sutras - philosophy in the sense of darshan. Darshan is not an intellectual speculation but direct observation of the truth.

The main theme of the Yoga Sutras, as we have endeavoured to approach it, is "Stop that sorrow before it gets you." That is I think an extremely oversimplified way of putting it. The sorrow that has already manifested, you do not have to push - just keep quiet. The direct observation of the phenomenon of sorrow itself leads you to its avoidance, as well as its elimination.

It does not mean that we should welcome sorrow, that we should accept or bear it - all these are irrelevant to our discussion. We should try to eliminate sorrow, but without effort.

How do I eliminate sorrow without effort? By keeping quiet and examining the whole dynamics of suffering, of pain. I directly observe pain - which is a completely and totally different thing from analysis. If you analyse pain, it becomes multiplied. Without analysis, without intellectualising, without conceptualising and creating an image of misery, if I directly observe this phenomenon of sorrow, I see it is an experience. An experience pre-supposes a division into a subject and an object. I am the subject of experience, the other is the object of experience - whether that object is material or another person, sentient or insentient, or a psychological phenomenon. It is the existence or the arising of this division that causes experience, whether it is considered pleasant or unpleasant. The only way of stopping the sorrow before it gets you is not to allow this division to take place in the first place. That is samadhi, meditation, nirvana, liberation, mohsha, or whatever you want to call it.

During the past few weeks we discussed a few techniques or methods. One of them is called the Ashtanga Yoga. In the Yoga Sutras themselves there is a sutra which refers to the seven steps, the last being samadhi. The word Ashtanga also occurs in Buddha's teachings - the noble 8-fold path is referred to as the Arya Ashtanga Marga.

Ashtanga means eight limbs - anga is limb. It is not unusual even for great masters and teachers of yoga to use another terminology - the eight steps. When you look upon these as the eight steps, it can give rise to a slight misunderstanding which is later condensed into a doctrine. When you climb a flight of steps, you climb them one by one, so the teaching - from that point of view, is that here also there are these eight steps up which you go one by one - yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana and samadhi.

However, if you look upon this method as composed of eight limbs, you see that one limb alone is incomplete, insufficient, inadequate, imperfect, and eight imperfections put together cannot lead to one perfection. A human person or a baby is not an assembly of eight limbs - it is a person, the total being. Approached from that angle, it suggests that on the very first day you are exposed to yoga, or you practise anything concerning yoga, you ensure that all these eight limbs are all intact together. This is the essential difference between the two approaches. One teacher says that these are eight steps and, unless you are fully established on the first two steps, you are going to break your neck; and the other teacher says that, unless you get together all the eight limbs at the same time, whatever you do is going to be imperfect.

I think most of you know what the eight limbs are; so I will skim over the whole thing, merely indicating how this fits into the total philosophy of 'stopping the pain and sorrow before it gets you'. Yama strangely - or not so strangely, has quite a number of meanings. One is restraint - self-restraint, and possibly restraint of others also. Yama is regarded as the proper name for the angel presiding over the event called death. What does this death do to me? It says, "My friend, thus far and no further. You have done enough. Start again and see if you can get somewhere else." The force, or the power, or the shahti, of the intelligence, or the being that restrains, is Yama.

Five subdivisions of this Yama are given to us: ahimsa, satyam, setya, brahmacarya, parigraha yama (II.30) - non-violence, truth, non-stealing, purity, and non-covetousness.

What truth means, it is up to you to figure out. What is this restraint called truth? It is not merely saying what you want to say. For instance, if someone says, "What do you think of me?" and you reply, "I think you are ugly, you are an idiot," you may think you are being very truthful, but you are insulting and rude. That is not truth. Truth means to be straight in all things, looking for the truth, looking for fact, recognising the distinction between fact and fiction, truth and opinion.

How can I recognise the truth? Is what I recognise the truth, or is it also picked by my own opinion? I have a number of standards already stored within me, and I go looking for confirmation of those standards. You are good or bad. Who is the judge? My standard. Who put the standard there? Myself, or my grandfather. That again is a tradition, an opinion which is totally unrelated to truth - and therefore the concept of truth may have to undergo drastic revolutionary change within us before we can even attempt to decide what truth is.

What is it that enables me to recognise truth? The truth in me. And the rediscovery of the truth in me is meditation. Without meditation I cannot

know what truth is, without meditation I cannot know what non-aggression means.

The fourth of the yamas - asteyam, means non hoarding. The fifth is brahmacharya, which means not only celibacy, continence or chastity, but that the mind is constantly moving in the infinite, towards the infinite, the absolute - Brahman. That itself is meditation again. To say that I must be established in all these before I can even start practising an asana, is to put the cart before the horse and run far ahead of it. One who is not mindful, practising meditation and contemplation, who has not learned to observe himself in action, in silence, in seclusion and in company, cannot decide what non-aggression means, what truth means, what brahmacharya means, what non-acquisition means, what non-holding means. These five constitute yama.

Niyamas are much simpler, perhaps.

sauca santosa tapah svadhyaye

svara pranidhanani niyamah. (II.32)

They are purity, contentment, austerity or simplicity, study and total surrender to God. Niyama means not restraint, but discipline. Let us call it virtue. Why is a virtuous life considered important? Why are restraints considered important? Why should I not live a life of sense-indulgence and practise yoga - whatever yoga means, and hope to attain samadhi?

In order to understand this, we have to go back once again to the dynamics of experience. Experience means division. I want to transcend experience, I want to abolish the division created by experience. What is it that perpetuates this division? How can I abolish it? The observation of these great yogis is that craving for pleasure creates this experience and sustains it. Pleasure is a kind of double-edged sword which cuts both ways. Craving for pleasure creates the experience and sustains it, creates the division and sustains it. And what is pleasure? That which I desire. That which I desire becomes desirable. Why do I consider this desirable? Because I desire it. I desire the desirable and that immediately forms a vicious circle and I do not know how to get out of it. When there is an experience and the mind calls it pleasure (watch carefully here) there is a movement in your mind towards that experience - suhham ragah, and you cannot move towards the experience without moving away from something else. That is called pain. When I see that, immediately sorrow disappears. It is the pursuit of pleasure that creates pain.

There is plenty of experience in life. It is suggested in another scripture called the Bhagavatam that your own body, with the life force bubbling in it, comes into contact with its own counterpart in what is called the world, and this

contact, even without your designating it so, gives rise to experiencing. We are using this word in a very special sense - experiencing in the sense of sleeping. In sleeping there is no experience of sleep, there is pure sleeping. When you are sleeping you do not turn around to your wife and say, "Oh, keep quiet, I am sleeping." If you are saying so, you are not sleeping! Even so, in life there is this pure experiencing which happens all the time. When I touch this seat-cover, the nerve endings on the palm respond to the touch of the wool; when the same hand is laid on a hot plate, the nerve endings respond to the hot plate. Left alone, the nerve endings know what to do. They rest a little bit on the wool, and on the hot plate the hand is immediately pulled away. This is beautifully described in the Bhagavad Gita:

indriyasye 'ndriyasya 'rthe ragadvesau vyavasthitau

Attachment and aversion for the objects of the senses abide in the senses.

The body and senses respond to their counterparts in the world, creating from moment to moment what is pure experiencing. In that there is neither pleasure nor pain. When you are asleep, if I come and prick your foot with a pin, you do not feel pain, but the foot is drawn away. There is pure experiencing. It is not called pain, it is not experienced as pain, because there is no experiencer, there is no division in this pure experiencing.

The mind moves towards that experience when it finds pleasure in it, and when the mind moves towards pleasure, it justifies that movement, calling this experience 'desirable' experience - I love it. When the mind moves towards the desirable, what it moves away from is called the undesirable, and the approach of this undesirable is called pain. It is so simple. The movement towards pleasure is also pain because, as you move forward, the pleasure also moves forward. You keep chasing it. So that is pain, and the avoidance of this undesirable thing is pain. So we are constantly in pain, suffering, sorrow. Knowing that that which the mind craves for is called pleasure - and it becomes desirable and therefore desired, the yogis suggest not that you must avoid pleasure, but that you do not pursue pleasure.

When you see that it is the mind that designates some experience as pleasure, and then pursues it, you are a yogi. There is just a little bit of distinction there, and there lies the entire trick, the entire truth. I am saying this because I have seen some wonderful swamis and yogis who are in great demand and very highly esteemed in India, who do not only torture themselves in various ways - pricking themselves with pins and all sorts of things - but when it comes to food, they have an extra-ordinary self-discipline. If they come to your house and you give them some curry and rice, they take it to the nearest stream, pour water on it, rinse it and drain it until it becomes completely washed. They say that, because the sense of taste should not be pampered, the food

must be made completely tasteless. But it is the hunger that makes anything taste good. If you are really hungry, that food will taste like nectar. Anyhow, that is their artificial self discipline - that the body must be prevented from coming into contact with anything that produces pleasure. The pleasure is not there!

Pure experiencing is something totally different. It is neither pleasure nor pain, but part of life, part of living. When the mind designates certain pure experiencing as 'this is pleasure', it starts pursuing it, and it is in that pursuit of pleasure - that this polarisation or the inner dichotomy is sustained and perpetuated. Therefore they recommend and encourage virtue. Virtuous behavior is when there is no pursuit of pleasure, and that is the essence of yama and niyama.

Those two limbs alone are not the total yoga, nor is it possible for you to practise virtue or be established in virtue if you do not know how to observe yourself. Even while accepting on some occasions that yama and niyama may be the first two steps of yoga, my Guru Swami Sivananda had something very interesting to say. Often someone or other would raise this topic: "Should I not be established in yama and niyama before I even learn to practise asana and pranayama?". Swami Sivananda would say; "If you wait until you are fully established in all these ten virtues and self-disciplines, you may just as soon wait for another four or five lifetimes".

When can you be certain that you are fully established in non-aggression, non-violence? When can you be certain that you are fully established in truth? It is absurd. When all these are practised together, however imperfectly, in however small a way, it is possible for us to grow.

I think the last time we saw how Patanjali points out that a restless body is indicative of a restless mind - *angam ejayatva* (I.31). If your body is constantly restless, it also means that your mind is restless. In order to ensure that the mind is steady, the body is trained to be steady - *sthiram suhham asanam* (II.46). When the body is steadily held, you discover the dichotomy of experience which takes place within you. If the body is allowed to be unsteady, the mind is not steady, the observation is not steady and therefore the inner division or dichotomy is not even noticed. You are not even aware of it.

In the same way, in pranayama I must come face to face with the movement of energy in the mind, in my consciousness, in order that the movement in consciousness is noticed. How does a thought arise? When a thought arises, the pure experiencing is apparently polarised into the subject and the object, the experiencer and the experience. Then arises, "I like that experience" and "I do not like that experience". This becomes pleasure and that becomes pain;

I pursue pleasure and incur pain. Simple logic - 1, 2, 3, 4. And so they said to practise pranayama and observe this.

Practising pranayama does not mean expansion of the chest, getting rid of asthma and tuberculosis, increasing life and all that sort of things - all these benefits are incidental to the practise of pranayama. Pracchardana vidharanabhyam va pranasya (I.34). Throw out all your breath and suspend breathing - you find electric activity within yourself and then you know what prana, energy and kundalini mean.

Ramana Maharshi recommended that you observe the movement of prana by observing the breath. While you keep observing the movement of breath, becoming totally mindful and aware of it, the keenness of observation itself will regulate the breath - it is a beautiful thing to experience. When you listen to your own breathing with tremendous keenness and sincerity, something in you feels even the sound of noiseless breathing as a disturbance, and the breath is completely suspended. That is what is called kevala kumbhaka - just mere suspension of breath. May be there is a little movement, but that is not your business.

When that happens, when thus even the inhalation and exhalation are almost completely suspended, then there is no movement in the mind at all - and the senses are also suspended because they function when there is externalised movement of the mind. When that is stopped, these senses also stop. Dharana - complete focusing of the mind upon itself, is taken for granted in Patanjali's Yoga Sutras. The inner self-discovery begins only there.

Dharana is steady self-watchfulness. Here the mantra may be of tremendous use. Patanjali gives one little mantra - Om. It is the mind that repeats the mantra, and as it does the mind itself becomes the mantra. Now the only thing that is happening is that you can still hear yourself repeating the mantra. 'I can hear myself repeating the mantra.' What does it mean? Someone was discussing self-pity yesterday. 'I pity myself.' What does it mean, am I one or two? If I am only one, how can I pity myself? Am I the pitied thing or the pitier? The pitier being a very holy, wonderful person, the superior person, and the pitied being the poor little thing. Am I the poor little thing or the superior holy person?

In order to solve that problem, I create a problem within myself. In meditation I hear the mantra. How can I hear the mantra? Here I am creating an experience in order that I may observe it and come to terms with this phenomenon of experience quite dearly. I hear the mantra, the hearing being the experience - I on one side, the mantra on the other side. Who am I? This or that? Am I the one that is repeating the mantra, or am I the one that is hearing the mantra? I cannot be two. How can I discover this? By being

totally devoted and dedicated to the mantra, surrendering myself to this mantra. When this is done, that is meditation - dhyana. Here we have to say 'By the Grace of God', because whatever 'I' does, this problem cannot be solved or understood. Whatever I does will only perpetuate this division, this dichotomy.

When this intense observation continues, then by the Grace of God the division disappears. When thus the division created by me - which is the division between the hearer and the repeater of the mantra, has been understood clearly - there is citta vrtti nirodhah. The citta is the consciousness, and the vrtti is

the mantra which created a duality, a dichotomy - "I hear the mantra". When that collapses, there is pure citta vrtti nirodhah. That is yoga.

If that faculty is acquired - I hope you get the meaning and not the words, then that becomes the mantra of my whole life. I have learned how to avoid creating a division between the experience and the experiencer, and thereby getting caught up in this vicious circle of pain and pleasure.

If one is not able to sustain the attention of the mantra - if it seems to go out of focus, one has to invent some method of sustaining it. There are quite a number of ways of doing this. Mentally you can shout, or the mantra can be written on a piece of paper and put in front of you and you keep watching it. The attention may still wander, but never mind, keep at it. That is where all the other minor disciplines acquire some significance or meaning.

You must be regular - set apart an hour or so every morning or every evening for this practice. Do a few minutes of asanas, a little pranayama, and then sit and repeat your mantra. Instead of mechanically repeating the mantras as though that were a sort of religion, the only thing that is suggested is to watch what happens within when you repeat the mantra, and if while doing so the attention wanders away, keep your eyes open, looking at the paper with the mantra written on it. It may be necessary to close one's eyes practising meditation in a group, but it is not necessary when you are alone, when you can prevent added distraction. If there are too many things in front of you, you can close your eyes, but the best thing is to face a blank wall and if you want, you can keep a handwritten poster of your mantra there. If the eyes open, at least you know when the attention is wandering away.

Q. Does it matter if you do not know the meaning of your mantra?

A. The meaning of the mantra is not the dictionary meaning or a paraphrase. This sound Ommm ... is the meaning of the mantra Om. I do not know what the meaning is, but when this sound is heard within myself, what is that

sound made of, what is the substance of the sound, who is uttering the sound and who is listening to the sound? The answer to this question is the meaning of the mantra. When people say "Om is the name of the Absolute", and you say "Oh, I see", you see nothing!

I must come face to face with that which makes the mantra sound within me. What is within me, within the body? That's it! When this enquiry leads you into the direct observation of yourself, there is the meaning of the mantra.

VI

We are usually attracted to the practice of Yoga by one or the other of these two motivations: either we seek some kind of physical slimming or beauty, or we are enthralled by some romantic descriptions of people who can fly in the air and walk on the water, etc. I have also read a lot about that - how the Yogis appear and disappear at will, and how they can take long bounds from one peak to the other. Nobody has told me so far 'I can do it', it is always 'I have seen someone else do it, or I have heard of somebody else doing that.' We are all the time talking of someone else having heard or read somewhere else of someone having given an account of someone else having learned under a master who was able to By the time it reaches you and me, it is, strangely enough, not diluted, but polluted.

These so called supernatural powers are mentioned here and there even in the classic texts, but I have a feeling that when they are mentioned the suggestion is not that they are super natural but that they are natural. So that these supernatural or psychic powers are not something more desirable than what you and I have. These stories of these great supernatural beings are often handed down to us in order to paralyse our scepticism. If I sound a little cynical, please, accept my compliments - you are right. When it comes to the classical yoga itself, these are not suggested at all. If you take one of the best texts on Yoga - the Bhagavad Gita, there is no suggestion at all of anything supernatural there. In the other text called the Yoga Sutras there is a chapter on powers which are possible for the Yogi to acquire, but since the Yoga Sutras were probably compiled as a scientific thesis, they had to be included there. When you are dealing with a subject scientifically, you do not confine your description only to that which appeals to you, but you aim at giving a comprehensive picture of the whole thing. So Patanjali has dealt with this kind of thing also.

Having said all that, Patanjali himself says, "Do not run after these, they are distractions." It is easier for you to understand this than for people in poorer countries, because I think a poor man who is suffering might do anything if he could only touch a stone and turn it into silver or gold. We have some powers, some of us have a healthy body, some of us have money, some of us have intellectual powers. If you observe yourself and if you can remember your own life before you acquired those accomplishments, were you then more or less peaceful than you are now? Were you more peaceful when you were riding a bicycle or now that you have three cars in the garage? There is a vague idea at the back of your mind "Now that I have all this, I do not have to bother any more, I do not have to worry about transport, I can go where I like." But you cannot go where you like! You are worried about traffic, parking, petrol strikes and roster stations. When you were riding a bicycle, you were worried about none of those problems.

So anything that is acquired seems to reduce peace of mind. I am not saying 'and therefore to go around naked in the bush gives supreme peace of mind' - the converse is not suggested. My acquisition of what are considered necessities of life has not produced happiness or peace of mind, which means I have not learned to use these as they need be used, without disturbing my peace of mind and my inner happiness. I can have all these as long as they do not touch the peace or the happiness that there is within me. That is what I might call the right use of anything in life.

If I have not been able to come to terms with the material possessions I have, and therefore to make the right use of them, how do I know what I will do with psychic powers when I acquire them? I will probably start bullying everybody, making more enemies in this world, and thus spend more sleepless nights. If I can acquire some psychic powers so can you. If I can curse you, you can double-curse me. And therefore both of us have missed the right use of this simple thing. Therefore the Yogis do not run after these psychic powers and so on. If they come to you naturally then you do not consider them supernatural, and therefore the chances of you misusing them is remote.

What do the Yoga texts suggest as a legitimate pursuit? I shy away from using the word 'goal'. I do not know if the Yoga practice has a goal as such which one reaches, or achieves. It is not an achievement which I acquire, but the movement of life or attention in the right direction is certainly suggested - what one might call the right attitude. If you are totally mature, very awake and alert, a master or a teacher can give the essence of Yoga to you in probably five words. But if you are not so awakened, and if you are not alert all the time, you may need a certain discipline. I will give you a non-Indian example. There was a Zen master who had gone to China, probably to teach there. He had somehow transcended heat and cold; so he was not bothered about the intense freezing cold of China. He was living in a small hut he had built there. Nobody had ever seen him, and nobody knew who he was. Anyone who peeped through the window only saw him standing or sitting gazing straight at a blank wall. So he had acquired the reputation of a wall-staring-ascetic. But, again the supernatural! How can a man sit like this and stare at a blank wall for days and days on end? Doesn't he eat, doesn't he go to the toilet? Doesn't he get tired? Hey! He has got something! Then someone suggested that this person was a Buddhist and that he had claimed in his interview before the king that he could bring about enlightenment merely by directly looking into you. That's it. Who wants to practice all this yoga, pranayama and meditation when somebody can just stand in front of you and say the word for 'instant enlightenment'? Isn't it nice - instant coffee, instant tea, instant meditation, instant samadhi. Anyone who went to the hut had a very freezing welcome. The door was not opened and the master was seated

inside gazing at the blank wall. One young man went to see the master and was determined not to leave until the door was opened. He stood outside knocking at the door periodically. The master would not open the door, and he would not go. It was freezing outside. It is said that this man was buried in the snow, but still he would not give up. Such is the story. Eventually, after a few days, the master opened the door and saw the young man standing outside. He said, "What do you want?" This young man said "Sir, please destroy my mind. That is what is bothering me."

"Give me your mind and I will destroy it"

"I cannot find it."

"I have destroyed it!"

Isn't that marvelous? - "Please destroy all my suffering and mental agony". "Give me your mental agony and I will destroy it". And at that moment you look within and you cannot find what you have been calling agony, suffering, distress, torture, self-torture, fear, anxiety or craving. The master said "I have taken it away. Go in peace".

Isn't that the biblical formula? "All your sins are forgiven, go in peace". But then, when you open the door to your own house, you find that they are all waiting there. He drove them ahead of you. That's the problem.

If it is possible for me thus to be awakened and to stay awakened, there is no problem at all. That is what is called

'dying to live the eternal life.' A biblical formula again. If it can happen to us with the finality of death, there is no problem. If that dying instantly is possible, then instant enlightenment is had. If that is not possible then we are asked to do what the master asked the young man to do - look within. I am afraid - what is fear? I am restless - what is restless? I am anxious - what is anxious? What is anxiousness? What is anxiety? In this way if we can persistently, constantly and continuously look at what we have come to accept as psychological distress, then the same instant samadhi is had, not constantly, but frequently.

Why is frequent remembrance necessary? Because there is a recurring resurgence of the same problem of forgetfulness. I forget to look within, I forget to observe, because I have taken something else for granted. I have taken for granted that this is pleasure and this is pain; this is success and this is failure; this is me and that is you. Then someone reminds me to look within and see - maybe my assumptions themselves are questionable. When I look within it seems that what someone else called pain I have continued to call

pain, what someone else called pleasure I have continued to call pleasure. I never examined it, analysed it, or looked at it. Therefore, having based the whole thing on non understanding- or ignorance, I have continued along that line. Someone has to give a knock and say "Look within and see what happens".

"What are we calling distress? There is a story of the Buddha. The Buddha was teaching Dharma - "You must lead a very righteous life. You must meditate well, you must do what is good etc. etc."

A young mother was there in utter misery. She rushed towards Buddha and said, "You are talking about the ending of sorrow. I am miserable now. What solution do you have for my sorrow now?"

"What is your problem?" asked the Buddha. She brought a bundle and left it at the feet of Buddha. "This is my only child - I am a widow and my only child is dead and you are talking about sorrow and ending of sorrow. I want this child back."

"That is terribly easy", said the Buddha, "Nirvana, or enlightenment is more difficult. I can bring this child back to life, but I need a prop - a handful of mustard seeds from a house where there has not been a death,"

So she ran into somebody's house - they had plenty of mustard seeds, but there had been a death in the house. She ran from house to house - it was the same wherever she went. In some the father has passed away, in some the grandmother or an aunt, uncle or somebody else passed away, and in quite a number of houses children had passed away. She only did half the village and ran back to Buddha. Seated under the tree, the Buddha saw her coming and he understood that the lady had really come to grips with the facts of life. She said, "I am ready to burn this body and forget all about it! To begin with I thought that only I was suffering. When I went around from house to house, everyone had lost something as precious as I had - I am not the only one. That is the nature of life."

That's it! There arises the maturity. We think, "I am the one chosen for the suffering. God does not choose me, does not punish me only. Now we have come to grips with this basic thing. First I was ignorant of what life means and secondly there was this extraordinary feeling that everyone else is happy, I am the only one who is unhappy. We are not afraid of headache as long as it is in someone else's head. Only when it is in my head it is really troublesome. If she comes to you with a headache you say, "Oh take a cold shower my dear, everything will be alright." When your head aches, it is something different. "Why me? Why not him?" So, out of this ignorance there is a me, and the me does not want to suffer. What is suffering after all? The 'me' considers

something as pleasure and the 'me' does not want itself to be deprived of what it considers pleasure and therefore it is in pain - not because pain is a reality, but because it is not wanted. I do not like this situation in which I am placed, and therefore I am battling with it, and the battle itself becomes pain. What is the cause of that pain? ME. I do not want this, I want something different. I cannot get it - that is painful. I am subjected to this which is painful too. I am not looking at the source of all this. I have come to accept this as inevitable, as the truth, and having accepted it I am looking for palliatives. I feel that as long as I can get rid of this particular difficulty and overcome this little problem, I'll be alright. I am not alright because I still am not examining the source of all this trouble.

Yoga teaches me where to look when there is pain. There is a beautiful verse in the Bhagavad Gita. "You are your own friend and you are your own enemy". If you want, you can exalt yourself. If you want, you can get rid of this suffering, mental distress, psychological distress, or sorrow. If you do not want to, then nobody can pull you out of it. The more sympathy you get, the worse you will become. I do not know if you share this feeling. Some people like sympathy, I do not know why. I do not know if some of you share my predicament. Whenever I am sympathised with, I feel I am being insulted. What are you sympathising with me for? You think I am so weak that I cannot put up with this thing? Why don't you leave me alone, let me look at it and see. You are not the cause of my trouble, nor can you ever be the cause of me overcoming that trouble. It is in me. I have created it for myself, and I must overcome it. Firstly I must see what it is. If I have some pain - even physical pain - you cannot take it away from me, nor share it with me, whoever you are. You can sit and cry, which only means you are going to share my aspirin. Nobody can take another person's pain. If I bump my head against a wall and I have a headache, no amount of breaking that wall is going to help me get rid of my headache. Tell me how I can look at it, how I can come to terms with it, what I can do in order to overcome that headache within me; tell me where to look and how to look, that's useful.

This is especially true when it comes to psychological problems. Psychological sorrow is a very prestigious expression for imaginary troubles. There are no psychological problems! It only means 'imaginary' problems. A psychological headache is at least there - you can feel the thumping of the blood vessels, and there is probably some upset somewhere which can be corrected by doctors or someone else, but the psychological distress is often imaginary problems which only mean 'I think I am unhappy'. And this 'I think I am unhappy' cannot, by any stretch of anybody's imagination, be removed by someone else taking it over. You can guide me, help me come face to face with this thinking mechanism, this imagining mechanism: how does the mind think 'I am unhappy', 'I am afraid', 'I am threatened'?

Yoga enables us to come to grips with ourselves, to see ourselves as we are in truth - not as we imagine ourselves to be, and by doing so remove the fundamental cause of psychological distress.

VII

The practice of yoga has no aim at all. This is difficult to understand until you realise that an aim is itself a disturbance to peace. When you fix a goal you are immediately building an anxiety - 'maybe I cannot reach that goal'. Even when it comes to matters like relaxation, peace of mind and happiness, the very pursuit drives it away. When I make peace or happiness the goal and pursue it, it runs away from me. The acceptance of a goal is the acceptance of frustration; therefore in the Yoga Sutras no goal is mentioned. The suggestion of a goal in any practice defeats the purpose. That is, if you are anxious to sleep, you sleep less. If you forget about it and do something else, you will go to sleep. When you do something totally irrelevant, what is natural happens.

In the Yoga Sutras Patanjali merely says: "This is a state of yoga, that is a state of non yoga." He does not say, "therefore this is good and that is bad". This is another complication we have created in our own life. We have created a thing called evil, and having created it we have created a temptation in the person who does not like us to do exactly that in order to irritate.

Can we approach this yoga without setting up any goal for it? If I do not suggest a so-called goal, I am looking at it without any motivation or desire whatsoever. The gaining of happiness - or the avoidance of sorrow has been suggested, not as a goal, but as a universal fact of life. It is a fact of life that people want happiness and do not want to be unhappy, people want pleasure, not pain. Patanjali declares:

suhha 'nusayi ragah (II.7)

dukha 'nusayi dvesah. (II.8)

"Attraction rests in pleasure, repulsion abides in pain giving".

We have divided the world into 'this I like' and 'this I do not like'. Patanjali merely suggests that we look at this phenomenon. See why we like one thing and not another. What makes you like that thing? Because it gives you physical or psychological pleasure. I may want to torture myself or become a martyr - but even that is pleasure. Sukha 'nusayi ragah. When the mind decides 'this is pleasure', it runs after it and wants a repetition of it. Patanjali does not say that therefore you should seek pleasure, and avoid pain, but "This is a fact - look at it."

The philosophy of yoga is a very clear and precise scientific statement of the facts connected with life, and until I understand life clearly, until I understand the mind clearly, it is useless trying to figure out what I want to do or what I do not want to do. Self-knowledge can only come after a clear

understanding of life, of what life means, of what 'I' am. Only then is it possible for me to even suggest to myself which way I want to go. First get to understand all this, understand yourself, understand the mind - then you will know which way.

The tree knows how to turn itself towards the light and the creeper knows how to twine itself around the tree because in their case there is no identity problem. The tree, as it were, knows itself. Can I also, in a similar way, know myself - completely and thoroughly? We are not aiming at self-knowledge as a goal, but suggesting that the basis of our whole life is self-knowledge. If it is so, then what follows is yoga. If it is not so, what follows is unhappiness, misery. It is quite simple. If you want to be unhappy, forget all about it and go on - 'Ignorance is bliss'. If you do not want that messy life, here is the simplest thing. "Know yourself". Know yourself, not as a goal, but as a basis for your whole life.

The fourth sutra is *vrtti sarapyam itaratra*. "When you are not in a state of yoga, you are ruled by the prevailing mood of the mind." That is what is happening in our life - I like this and so I go on; and I do not like that, so I want to destroy it, regardless of consequences, regardless of what is involved. Why am I making a mess of my life? Because I have not understood what life means, I have not understood myself. There is great non-understanding.

For every vital question that is asked the honest answer is invariably, 'I do not know'. We use the word 'mind'. What is mind? An honest answer is, 'I do not know'. We say my mind. Is there a thing called 'my' mind as distinct from the other minds? I do not know. Who are you? I do not know. What is life? I do not know. What is life-force? I do not know. What is energy? I do not know. How does the brain think? I do not know. You pick any vital question and the honest answer is 'I do not know'. And yet something deep within resists the idea of 'I do not know', and when there is total absence of knowledge of identity, identification comes in. When the identity is not known, you feel frightened - you feel frightened to be nobody. That is why we are all afraid to die - because then we are nobody. Because this nobody frightens me, when I do not know who I am - what the identity is, I want to create an identity - "I am Swami so and so." That makes me sound solid and strong and powerful! "I am a Hindu". That makes me part of an enormous beehive, a group, so that if you come and attack me, all of us will attack you. There is a stupid illusion of strength in identifying with a crowd - a ridiculous feeling of security, of power. There is a stupid feeling that, since I do not know who I am or what I am, as long as I belong to and can identify myself with something, I am safe.

When there is self-ignorance, or ignorance of one's own self, a self is born, created. When I do not know who I am or what I am, that fear and ignorance itself creates a thing called 'I am' and then identifies it - 'I am a man'; 'I am a

Hindu'; 'I am an Indian'; 'I am a swami'. All these are fictitious creations of the mind which is afraid of its own self-ignorance - and therefore creates a thing called personality. The moment it creates a personality it also creates a bunch of identification tags. I have identified myself with Hindus, with maleness, with swaminess, with Indians - none of these being true. What is it that is Indian? My color is different to yours, but peel off the skin, we are both the same.

The mind clings to that with which it identifies, thinking that its security comes from there. "My security comes from there; without that I cannot live happily; without that I cannot live peacefully. My whole life is dependent upon that person, or that movement or that group." Being so thoroughly committed to this notion, you feel happy in that company. Once the feeling of happiness has arisen, the mind seeks that company more. It is a vicious circle - totally irrational - therefore no amount of reasoning is going to get me to an understanding of the truth concerning it.

Why is somebody's company pleasant to me? Because I have decided it is so - there is no other reason. In my own fear of loneliness I have chosen to identify myself with that person, calling that person my wife or husband, my son, or what ever it is. I have created this pleasure sensation within myself - it does not come from outside, it is in me. Unable to face self

ignorance, I have created the relationship and then I cling to it. Then I attribute pleasure to it. When I attribute pleasure to it, the mind flows towards it and the vicious circle is formed. Pleasure and pain and all the relationships based on that are totally irrational and therefore no amount of thinking concerning it can ever solve that.

Is there a way of looking at it without thinking? That is the problem of yoga. Patanjali in his Yoga Sutras points out that these five - avidya, asmita, raga, dvesa and abhinivesah - ignorance, egoism, likes, dislikes and clinging to life, are klesah - sources of psychological distress. Self-ignorance; identification (or the personality formation, which is the direct and immediate result of self-ignorance); 'I like this'; 'I do not like this'; and some kind of crazy fear of being anybody - abhinivesah.

Abhinivesah is often translated as 'blind clinging to life'. Why are we clinging to this life knowing that it is coming to an end? We have all said in our weak moments, "Oh, I do not want to live till I am ninety-five, totally dependent on others. I would be glad to go away like this." If a doctor says, "Now, ready!" I might say, "Alright, I am quite happy to pass on even now", but if she comes up and says "Swami, you want to go - alright I'll help you", it is possible that for about 20 or 30 seconds I would remain immobile, but there may come a time when in spite of myself I would push her away. It seems to be totally

irrational and foolish. We are clinging to this physical body even though it is bound to perish. Patanjali has concisely, precisely and scientifically expounded the facts of life and even he says concerning this:

swarasavahi viduso pi (II.9)

"This blind clinging to life is there, it seems to be self-sustaining, and it is found even in wise people." Even very wise enlightened people are irrationally unwilling to shed the body. Though Patanjali has explained the cause of everything else, when it comes to this blind clinging to life he says, "I do not know". That to me is a great tribute to the Yoga Sutras.

These five - avidya, asmita, raga, dvesa and abhinivesah, are the sources of psychological distress, and self ignorance. There is a nice theory which suggests that 'ignorance is bliss'. Patanjali says "Impossible. As long as you are ignorant, you are helplessly bound to go round this whirlgig. If you experience happiness or pleasure in this life, it is only because you have decided to call it so, for the time being." It is another remarkable exposure. It is not pleasure as such, but you have decided to call it so - and therefore for the time being it gives you pleasure. Because you call it pleasure you want a repetition of it, and wanting the repetition sets up a craving which is pain, and when you cannot have it when you want, it it is painful. The very thought that this pleasure is going to end, is painful. What makes it pleasure temporarily? Only your ignorance of its nature and your ignorance of your own identity.

VIII

We are seeking to understand Yoga as Self-knowledge. This self-knowledge is the self as knowledge, the self as knowledge. It is not a goal, not the self as the knower, nor as knowledge which is the object of the self - e.g. 'I know this', but self as knowledge.

This is a misunderstanding which language created. It is not the fault of the teachers themselves, but the fault of language. Knowledge has come to mean the object of my comprehension. When you say "the object of my comprehension", the 'my' gets swallowed and therefore it looks as though it is an absolutely correct statement of truth. But when you also emphasise the 'my' in it, you find the problem. 'The object of my comprehension is knowledge' means that 'I' is here, and there is some kind of relationship or connection between me and that knowledge, so the knowledge becomes an object. An therefore, based on this misunderstanding, one tends even to create an image of self - 'I know my self'. What is meant by that?

I have never really understood the expression 'I know myself'. The knower is the self - not knower in the sense of 'I am the knower and you are the known', but knowledge. That knowledge itself is the self - not a certain idea or ideal or image comprehended by me, but the knowledge itself. Hence that is not the goal. Only if it is looked upon that way does self-knowledge not become a goal, but an existential fact.

In that statement 'I know myself' only the middle part is the truth - the other two are images. The 'I' and the 'my self' being the same, only the middle part - knowledge - is the truth. That knowledge is self, and that knowledge is self-knowledge. So self-knowledge is not some kind of a blue moon to go in search of but pure knowledge - knowledge which is self. So it is not possible to say that I have self-knowledge, or I know self-knowledge, or I have acquired self-knowledge, or I have obtained self-knowledge, or I have reached self-knowledge - all of these being images which form unnecessary objects. The tragedy is that it is quite unnecessary. The self is there already, it has never ceased to be. And the self is knowledge and therefore it is not a goal at all.

Yoga as self-knowledge is yoga as knowledge, or yoga as self. One triggering agent is pain, sorrow, suffering. Pain and not pleasure is considered the triggering agent for the simple reason that when there is pleasure you get lost in the pleasure, and it does not bring about yoga. That does not mean, therefore, that pain is a desirable thing and that one must inflict pain upon one self in order to trigger this self-knowledge. That does not work either! These may triggering agents but there is no motivation. It is very important to understand this because one gets hung up on such ideas as 'Yoga is the transcendence of all pain'. Then you find a young man who seems to measure

up to your expectations - he does not feel any pain at all, he can sit surrounded by a swarm of mosquitoes and flies and remain unaffected by that. The mind, which has already built an image about what yoga is - the transcendence of pain - sees transcendence of pain in this person and thinks "Ah, he must be a yogi". You have formed an image, and that image gets broken sooner or later when he does something which upsets you.

Yoga 'is' not transcendence of pain, nor running away from pleasure. They may be triggering agents, but they are not the motivation, nor the goal.

tada drashtah swarape avasthnam (I.3)

"In the state of yoga, the natural intelligence remains in its own natural state."

This simple equation leads us to a very simple statement of an extremely obvious fact: 'Yoga is pure natural knowledge, natural intelligence, natural living, natural existence.' There is absolutely no suggestion of an unnatural thing - even if you wish to call it supernatural.

What is the natural state? What is nature? You will probably understand it better if the perversion is understood clearly, because when the question arises - 'What is nature?' you are looking, and when you are looking you usually look outside and therefore there is a leading away from nature, from your center. What is the unperverted state? For instance, when I am repeating a mantra mentally and trying to listen to it, a thought, a question arises - strangely enough, even the mantra that is being repeated mentally is also a thought:

"What is the nature or the content of this thought?" What is this thought called a mantra, or an extraneous thought - a thought of home, of work; a desire, a craving; a thought of jealousy, of fear, of anxiety? They are all called thoughts. A thought is made of the same intelligence, which when it expresses itself as a thought, seems to take a form. We are going right to the source of it, the rock bottom. When you go right down to it and get hold of it and say, "Who are you?" you realise it is the same intelligence which has put on some guise for you - intelligence which has a certain shape. Whether you call it thought of courage or of fear, thought is nothing more than a shaped intelligence, intelligence with form.

When you look at the sea, you see the sea, and you see the waves. What is the content of the wave? Water. That is what the sea is! If I can see merely water, that is the state of yoga. It does not mean that you take a big broom and sweep all the waves away, and have only pure sea - that is a ridiculous, wasteful effort. To be able to look there and see it is water, never mind what the shape is - that is yoga.

Here, since this intelligence is infinite, there is not even a separate observer, and therefore there is a spontaneous awareness that every thought is the same intelligence assuming a form. That is called 'vritti'. It is not easy to explain it nor describe it nor understand it by thought, but it is occasionally possible to ... that is it! ... even that cannot be really expressed ... 'know' it? ... 'comprehend' it? ... 'grasp' it? ... 'reach' it ... 'attain' it? One does not know. That is the state of yoga.

In the state of yoga, intelligence functions naturally in its own natural form - or formlessness. When that state of yoga is not there, then a single thought-form arrogates to itself the status of the whole intelligence, and then a set of perversions begins to rule. This one thought-form, this one image made of thought is also basically and fundamentally made of the same intelligence. This must be repeated 1000 times per day. So, in meditation or outside meditation, in life or outside life, there is no attempt to 'get rid' of thought. Getting rid of thought is like sweeping all the waves away from the ocean. And yet they who say, "Do not think" are also right!

A thought arises - there are millions of thoughts, but one such thought assumes to itself the 'observer' status and that becomes the 'I' thought. The 'I' observes the rest, and from there the rest observes the 'I'. That 'I' observes this 'I', this 'I' observes that 'I', so that instantly there is apparent creation of variety, diversity. If that observer-thought abandons the delusion that 'I am the subject,' or 'I is the subject, and all these are objects, then what exists? The ocean and the waves exist. The waves do not go away! So that, when you attain self-realisation, all of us do not vanish from your sight. You are still there, and perhaps you even function in this world of name and form with what was, and is regarded by you and others as your name and form, exactly like other names and forms function in this universe of name and form, but in a completely different light, in a totally different awareness. Ramana Maharshi and Swami Sivananda lived here just like us, Buddha lived here just like us - went round with a begging bowl, did all kinds of wonderful actions - worked, talked, taught, was praised, was insulted, lived, died - and yet there was this vital difference, that in their case thoughts were or thoughts were not, but no thought arrogated to itself the thinker status. In our case there is this problem - the first thought that arises every morning becomes the 'I' thought, the observer, the knower, the doer: 'I'. And this thought later connects itself to, assumes authorship or ownership of the other thoughts. When it is realised that all waves are made of water - including the 'I' wave, water does not want to drink water any more, water never becomes thirsty. That's it! Something disappears, but nothing disappears. What disappears was merely a shadow - it was not there in the first place. That is the mystery of yoga. When this does not happen, the first 'I' thought, simultaneously as it arises, casts behind itself a shadow which is ignorance, and that is the reason

why we never want to enquire into that. 'I am' - and that is taken for granted, nothing shall ever challenge it. All that you and I can challenge is our identification tag: "Are you the person I take you to be or am I the person you take me to be?" We always question and fight over our identification tag, but never touch the identity, the

first thought, the 'I'; because simultaneously on arising, it casts a dense dark shadow of ignorance around itself.

avidya smita raga dvesa bhinivesah klesah (II.3)

First ignorance - avidya arises; then the rest of it follows without difficulty. Only when the initial assumption is challenged, does the whole thing begin to shake. Some people fear to meditate because when they enter into meditation seriously, it looks as though 'I am disintegrating, I am no more.'

When the state of yoga does not prevail,

vrtti sarapyam itaratra (I.4)

You are what you think you are from moment to moment. I suppose you are more familiar than I am with what I call 'weather reports'. When two or three of you talk together and ask: "How are you this morning?" "I am the same as yesterday!" "Oh, I am miserable." "Oh, I am happy" - rarely - two days before Christmas or one day afterwards.

What is this? I thought you were somebody and that somebody was going to be that somebody until the body is dropped, but it is not so. When not in a state of yoga, there is a constant weather report. Today I am happy, tonight I am not so happy. I am angry, I am this, I am that. How many 'I am's' are there? There is only one 'I am'. So that, especially when this ignorance - avidya is dense, one tends to identify oneself with the prevailing mood so thoroughly that nothing else seems to exist. Because of that dense ring of darkness, of ignorance, when one is caught up in that mood of the moment, nothing else seems to exist. I learned this long ago when I was in Madras, in 1942. I was very fond of my colleagues in the office and we worked as one family. It was a war-time office - we created it, we ran it. When I was transferred on promotion to Calcutta, it nearly broke my heart. Then, two years later, I was transferred to headquarters in Delhi. Instead of being happy I was nearly crazy with anguish. I lived in a block of flats, but unlike your apartments, it did not keep me apart from anybody. I knew the whole lot. All the families in the house were extremely friendly and affectionate, so that when I said I was transferred some of them had swollen faces, eyes watering all the time. I myself felt very miserable. How could I live without them and how could they live without me? I went to Delhi, and then once when I

returned to Calcutta on a visit, I found everybody smiling, everybody happy. I looked into the mirror and I was also smiling, also happy. I looked at that fellow in the mirror and said, "Hey. You thought you were indispensable and they were indispensable. What is wrong? What has happened now?" And today I am worried that I am going away to Rishikesh, leaving all these people. Again the same anxiety, worry and sorrow. I talk to the friend in the mirror "That is a joke my friend. And when you drop it, the play is over."

This happens to all of us. The tragedy is that when you leave this condition and go into a new situation, you are so completely wrapped up with that situation that you do not remember what happened here, and so you commit the same blunders and mistakes, and create the same problems for yourself there. One needs to see this only once. You feel unhappy because you have lost a friend. So, were you unhappy when a previous incident took place? You survived that, and a few days later you were happy. Do not you look forward to that happiness again? Why do you want to wallow in this misery. Get out of it.

When you have played around with this kind of thing a few times, you learn to look a little closer. 'What was the content of the thought that thought I was happy? Thought, intelligence, mind. I am unhappy today. What is the content of 'I am unhappy'? Also thought! What is the difference? Trust the spelling. When you look at that word 'unhappiness' you see that there is happiness hidden in it; and you realise also that when it is stretched a little it becomes unhappiness. Add two more letters of the alphabet - stretch it a little more and it becomes unhappiness. Is that all the difference between these two? Yes. If I can look hard and closely without getting wrapped up in it, I can see happiness in unhappiness. I am not merely playing with words. It is true. The content of both being exactly the same - experiencing, knowledge. In the one case it is called happiness, and in the other case it is called unhappiness. Who wants to call it? Without calling they come. That is something interesting about this happiness and unhappiness. Without calling they come.

The yogi is not motivated by happiness or even unhappiness because, if there is a longing or a craving for happiness, that is already unhappiness. That is why he is not interested in that. He is interested merely in the knowledge, the pure experiencing. The pure experiencing being the same in all cases. When this knowledge does not prevail and is somehow veiled by ignorance, one little wave that arises, one little thought that arises, one little image that arises arrogates or assumes to itself the role of the ruler, of God, of the totality.

Five such classes of vrttis are mentioned:

pramana, viparyaya, vikalpa, nidra, smrtaya (I.6)

Whether you call them pleasant or unpleasant all these vrttis could be brought under these five classes or categories.

Pramana is knowledge that is considered right knowledge, the thought that is considered a good thought, a noble thought. Viparyaya is the opposite, what is considered a wrong thought; but what we refuse to see all the time is that both are thoughts.

Vikalpa - imagination. Imagination is an extra ordinary feature. I think this is the prerogative of the human being. I do not think animals ever suffer from imagination. We are the only ones who are supremely capable of doing that. We imagine all kinds of things.

Sleep. Sleep also is a form of mental modification, when the mind thinks that it does not think. It is not true to say that in sleep there is no knowledge. In sleep there is no knowledge of the other, of an object, not even of sleep. That is the state in which

abhava pratyaya 'lambana vrtti nidra (I.10)

This intelligence thinks that nothing exists, that no thing exists. Whatever it is that makes the brain function in a wakeful way is temporarily suspended. The intelligence, the knowledge in itself is still awake - it has not abandoned the body and it has not perished. Therefore even that is a mental modification - a vrtti. Then there is 'smrtayah' - memory. .

These are the five categories of vrttis that follow one after the other, and as each one prevails there is the feeling that that alone is true - that I am only that. 'I know', 'I do not know', 'I think so, - when it comes to imagination, we do not think we are imagining, we think it is the real thing. 'I sleep', 'I remember'.

These constitute our life, and these are mental agitations which cause mental distress. Must they disappear in a state of yoga? Perhaps yes, perhaps no. One has to approach that a bit cautiously. What was regarded as the object - whether the knowledge concerning it was valid or not valid, right or wrong, will continue to exist. You may have good thoughts about me, or bad thoughts about me; when you are spiritually awakened, something happens within you, but I do not disappear. That is it. It is a very tricky game from there. It is not right to say that when there is enlightenment all these vrttis will subside. They will not subside, as such. The waves, as such, do not subside, but your perception of the waves as something different, distinct and separate from the ocean, has gone. What it is, is inexpressible: a vision of the totality without the particulars being destroyed and yet a vision in which there is no division. That is the state of yoga.

IX

Self-knowledge being natural, it is uncreated and uncreatable - it is - and that is the only reality. Therefore it is not an achievement nor a goal, nor something to be created nor brought into being. That is the state of Yoga. However, since you and I find ourselves not in that state of Yoga, there is a confusion and a doubt, and if we formulate any questions at all, we always preface it by 'if'. "If there were a reality ... " which means there is a doubt inside. It is that doubt that is the obstruction and which manifests as the five vrttis. The doubt suggests to itself that self-knowledge means this that is a vrtti.

The statement that God exists has been accepted by millions of people all over the world, and the statement that God does not exist has been accepted by millions of people all over the world. But just because these statements are widely accepted and held, they do not constitute the truth. The truth is inexpressible. These statements are either looked upon as right knowledge or wrong knowledge. Both of them are knowledge as object, and therefore there is a movement away from the center, from self-knowledge, or knowledge-as-self or self-as-knowledge. This is the first obstruction.

If you study the Sutras, you might get all kinds of funny ideas about what right knowledge is. For instance, that this is a wall, is a vrtti, and that is false! It is not all that simple. This, what I call right knowledge, is born of a doubt. For instance, in physics we are told that all things can be reduced to atoms. The first question that arises in your mind is, "If that were so why is the floor different from the pillar?" It is that 'if' that creates a vacuum, the climate for the arising of knowledge-as-an-object. Then you create knowledge - you create a theory called molecules, a theory called cohesion, a theory called substantiality, a theory called 'because this is a substance there is a shadow'. There is a fundamental error, the doubt. Doubt is a synonym for ignorance - avidya. I would not doubt a thing if I were not ignorant. From that avidya - ignorance, even what you call knowledge, theory, or doctrines are born, whether they are accepted as right knowledge or wrong knowledge. A kind of confusion of all this is what is called imagination.

When the mind boggles and you think you cannot solve this problem rationally, you run off irrationally at a tangent, and create a thing called 'cosmic consciousness', and think "I am in cosmic consciousness". It is not "I am in cosmic consciousness". Cosmic consciousness alone is. Even if we say, "Yes I have realised that cosmic consciousness alone is", still it is a thought, an imagination - sound without substance.

Then there is memory. When there is doubt and confusion, you look to authority for the removal of this doubt and confusion, "Someone told me," "I

read somewhere", "I heard somewhere", - all that is stored in the memory bank and you draw upon that in order to drive this doubt away. It does not help, because in that memory bank are stored, not only these ideas, but ideas contrary to that. When you want to join with me, you pick up that; when you want to argue against me, you pick up something else. It does not help. Memory is just past conditioning. When none of these things is possible you go to sleep, whether you call that state sleep or frustration or indifference. These are the five conditions which prove to be obstacles to the free manifestation of self-knowledge.

Yoga as a practise - not Yoga as an unconditioned existence - is merely meant to remove these obstacles. Krishna echoes this point of view in the Bhagavad Gita, Why should I meditate? Atma Suddhaye "For the removal of obstruction". You are not going to create the self, you are not going to create God - it is there already. There is an obstruction between you and that. Remove that obstruction. You might discover that this obstruction that stands between you and God is the 'you'. If you put together these two statements - which all of us seem to accept, "God is omnipresent" and "I want to realise God", what stands between me and God? Wipe that 'me' out - God is omnipresent. For instance if there is a big blackboard and you merely write the word 'me' in the middle, what seems to interfere with the homogeneity of the blackboard? The chalked word 'me'. Wipe it! When it is wiped, there is the revelation that even behind that was the same blackboard. If God is omnipresent and I want to realise God, the obstacle here is me. When the 'me' is dropped, that's it.

The dropping of the 'me' is easy and also difficult - easy because it does not exist, and difficult because it does not exist. It is not difficult for me to drive a cat away from my right shoulder, but it is impossible for me if I am a psychiatric patient and I imagine that a cat is sitting on my right shoulder. If you come and tell me there is no cat on my shoulder, I will call you mad. That is what we all do, all the time. A non-existent thing is easily dropped off and a non-existent thing can never be re moved. That which appears to be real to me, appears to be real to me - which means that I have accepted that it is real. That's all there is to it. This 'me' has been accepted to be real, and it is easy to get rid of it because it is not there, and it is impossible to get rid of it - like phantom pain. It is the 'me', when it assumes rulership to itself, that creates division. East and west do not exist but they do exist - they are not absolutes, but are directly related to me. If I am sitting here, that pillar is west and the wall behind me is east. If I move up there this pillar would suddenly become east. If you blink a couple of times you realise something wonderful here. East and west meet in me; which means that I am the dividing factor, or 'I' is the dividing factor. That which is indivisible space is somehow mysteriously divided the moment 'I' arises. If you look at this whole hall from outside, there is no division there. But the moment I come and sit here, the moment 'I'

arises, this is west and that is east. As long as this thought prevails, whether you call it right knowledge, wrong knowledge, tradition or authority, it is bound to continue. The removal of a merely phantom idea is not necessary. It can still be there, but something takes place in you - the idea that it is an 'I' and it is a dividing agent disappears. The pillar remains a pillar, the hall is still a hall, but somehow the idea that that is west and that is east has gone. The abolition of this division - which is non-existent, is the practise of yoga.

Atma Suddhaye - 'In order to cleanse oneself'. That is all. If there is dirt, it has to be cleansed. You look for this piece of dirt and suddenly realise it is not organic dirt, it is not a substance, an entity which can be got rid of. It is a phantom, a shadow, a mirage. Everyone sees water in a mirage, and yet there is no water. Everyone sees blueness in the sky, and yet there is no blueness. If there is real water in a boat, I can bail it out; but if there is a mirage on the road, how do I pump it out? If there is an obstruction here called tape-recorder, I can take it and throw it away. But if the obstruction is a shadow, how do I remove it? By clear perception. In the light of the inner light the shadow seems to disappear. It does not disappear, because it was not there before! I am not fooled.

In the inner light, that doubt and confusion has gone. This is the whole theme of the Yoga Vasistha.

bhramasya jagatasyasya jatasyakasavarnavat

apunah smaranam manye sadho vismaranam varam

'This world is as real as the blueness of the sky. I consider it better not to think of the world again; better forget it,' You think you see all this. Vasistha does not say this is unreal, but 'this is as real as the blueness of the sky.' If you accept that as real, this is also real. If you accept this as real, that may also be real, who knows? Maybe there is a nice blue dome to cover the earth. Why does it appear to be real? Because I have invested it with reality. How do I remove this, except by self-purification. Self-purification does not merely mean fasting and drinking a lot of water. That would be self-irrigation! In self-purification the attention that seeks and creates an outside reality, is turned within seeking to find the creator of this outside reality. Self-purification is to find the impurity, the veil. This is what most of us shy away from, and therefore we try to cleanse the outside world, including the body. The body is, after all, another one of those outside things. The wall is around the hall, the hall is around the body, the clothes are around the skin, the skin is around the inside, etc. So that, when there is angina pectoris, I see it, it is still outside me. Even the heart muscle is outside me. So I can go on removing all this, cleaning, washing all this and so on - which is good. Just because the body is not the 'me', do not jump to conclusions and say, "Therefore I need

not wash and my beard may pick up a few bits of dirt, I don't care." I don't care' IS 'I don't care! You are dirty, filthy! It is good to keep the body, the clothes and surroundings clean and neat.

Where is the impurity, and how is it removed? How is that veil removed? Through the help of attention. Attention is movement of intelligence. The intelligence normally moves outside its own central core, so that when the eyes are open they look at something outside, and when the ears are open they listen to something outside. With what eye can I look within and see the fountains of my own thoughts and feelings? With the third eye. The third eye in Sanskrit is called 'divaya caksu' - divya caksu means divine eye) or 'jnana caksu'. Jnana is knowledge. It is not the eye of self-knowledge, it is self-knowledge as the eye. With these two eyes I see you, with that self-knowledge the self is seen, or the self is. It is the other end of the stick.

How do I see? When this question arises, the attention which has been flowing away from the center turns to wards the centre. That is all that is needed. For so long the attention has been flowing away from the center towards the periphery - if there is a periphery at all, and as soon as the question arises, "How do I see myself?" the attention 'is' turned within oneself. It is then that I am facing the veil and the inner obstacles.

Those of you who have been seriously practising yoga and meditation might have noticed in yourself or heard from others "I was very peaceful before I took up the practise of yoga - I could go to the theater with my mind totally and completely concentrated. Then I started to practise Yoga, and my God, it completely disturbed my mind" or "My mind was steady, I had perfect concentration till I took up meditation. As soon as I started practising meditation, the mind goes hay-wire." That is when the attention seems to have turned within. Immediately you see the riot that has been going on the whole time. You were not aware of it before, but now you are. Be happy! It is when this attention begins to flow inward towards the center that the obstacles and obstructions are noticed. Patanjali says, "Do not be afraid, carry on!" Your business from then on is merely to remove the obstructions. The yogi is like a farmer, he merely removes the obstructions. Water flows by its own power. When it flows down a canal, if you find there is an obstruction and remove it and the water flows more clearly. If a plant does not get enough sunlight, first remove the obstruction. The light is there. That's it. This is the whole practise of Yoga. That is why, justifiably and wisely, all these great teachers of Yoga have insisted upon self-purification and pure conduct, righteousness, holiness, etc. But when it is imposed there is no urgency, there is no incentive, no sincerity.

Both the enlightened teacher and the traditional teacher are going to tell you that you must be completely non aggressive and non-violent if you want to

practise Yoga. The traditionalist says that this is the preliminary, and if you are not established in non-violence you cannot practise yoga. The enlightened teacher suggests it is the other way round - there is self-knowledge in you already, you don't have to do anything about it. You are neither going to create it nor destroy it. It is there, but the light is not shining without obstruction. Watch yourself very carefully. Every time you give way to violent emotions, that light is shaky and disturbed. If you want that inner light to shine without distraction, don't distract it! Be sensitive to it, watch it, see it for yourself. Then you do not want to be violent, you do not want to be aggressive - not because somebody tells you not to be aggressive so that you can attain self-realisation, but self-knowledge tells you "Leave me alone, don't cause any mental agitation."

The practise of Yoga is just this - turn the attention within yourself and do not create any agitation at all. If you find that there is some agitation, look at it with great steadiness until it disappears. Try to remove the obstructions but without causing further agitation. If, for instance, you are bad-tempered and you start tearing out your hair, your hair will go but your anger will not. So in addition to the bad temper you will only become bald! If it is a teaching imparted to me by someone who says, "A bad-tempered man cannot practise meditation. First control yourself", I am going to tear my hair, creating more bad temper, this time towards myself. People say "Turn the anger upon yourself", but it does not work. I will hit myself, and after sometime if I do not get the results that you promised, the whip will come on your back, sooner or later. It doesn't help. Only when the attention is turned within toward the center and when that attention becomes aware of this, becomes sensitive to this, does one realise that the self is there, and the self is knowledge. That is peace, that is the supreme bliss. Then you realise what agitates the mind and thus veils the truth.

It is orthodox teaching that there are two different types of obstructions - one being the veil, the other being the distractedness - but perhaps these are the same. If you go into the swimming pool, you see that quite clearly. When the surface of the pool is disturbed, that itself acts as a veil. You cannot see the bottom clearly when the surface of the pool is agitated. The inner agitation itself is the veil. When the mind or attention is focused within we immediately notice this tremendous inner agitation. And that agitation has to be ended without agitation. For in stance when the swimming pool is agitated you don't jump in and say "Keep quiet, keep quiet". This happens sometimes in concerts when a child whimpers. In two minutes everyone is saying "Keep quiet". Left alone that child would have probably whimpered for thirty seconds and the mother would have done something to keep it quiet. But everyone says "Ssh, ssh, ssh," - there are about a thousand hissing serpents in the hall! That does not help. Here it is even worse. If you try it in the swimming pool, while

patting all the waves down you create a few more! That is what we do very often in what we call the practise of meditation.

When you repeat your mantra and some other thought enters the mind, let it go. Why are you interested in it? 'But' is merely a euphemism for saying 'I want to think of some thing else'. If you want to think of something else, then why don't you say so? Why do you want to pretend "I am meditating and something else is projecting this other thought into my mind". That does not happen at all. The more you struggle with it, the more you are in contact with it. It is absurd, leave it alone. Don't agitate it by even driving it away.

Whatever the thoughts were they were all the mind. Whether it is called a good thought or a bad thought, good feeling or a bad feeling, it is nothing but thought, nothing but mind, nothing but that basic intelligence. If I recognise that, the attention keeps flowing within and not out side. I am not agitated because there is nothing extraneous, there is nothing coming into me. It is just my own. In that mind-lake a wave arises. What does it matter if a wave arises? Water is still water, whether it is called a calm surface or wavy surface. When that is understood, there is no movement at all generated by me. That is, I do not think a thought.

In order to help me I use a mantra - that is the only thought that I think. It does not mean that there are no other thoughts - they can come, they can go - but I am not creating any thoughts other than the mantra, nor generating any ripples in the mind. I am not interested in any of those thoughts - interested in the absolutely literal sense of that word interested - to be in. I am not 'in' that thought. That thought comes and that thought goes, who cares?

When thus the mind is left alone one big and vital distraction ceases. There is tremendous stillness, even though at the same time there may be an awareness of thoughts floating through, or the mind stuff undergoing some changes, like cloud formations in the sky - suddenly you find that due to some kind of atmospheric pressure a cloud forms - it is round, it's flat, it is long, it is like a horse, it's like a pig, it keeps changing and then it is gone, then it comes back again. Nothing happens to the sky, the air or the water vapour. Even so the mantra goes on, the mantra being also a thought in which I am interested. It is there merely to keep me awake, to keep the attention turned in the right direction. If there is curiosity to look into those thoughts, I immediately discover that all thoughts are imaginary. There is no reality to those thoughts at all, except that the substance of all those thoughts is one - is mind, is intelligence.

When this is seen, then judgment of oneself is gone. I do not evaluate this as a good thought, this as a bad thought. There is no disturbance, no beating of the arms and legs, no swimming. I am still. That stillness has got a tremendous power to bring about even that surface stillness. When the surface of the mind

also is stilled in a sense, without the waves being interfered with violently, then there is clarity of vision, clair-voyance. Clair-voyance is not to count the number of chairs from here, but to see clearly who is sitting in front of you. That is enough, I think.

The entire discipline of Yoga is based on "How to remove obstructions to clear vision". The clear vision itself is directed towards the obstructions. When the obstructions are not there the mind becomes transparent. A transparent mind is no mind. It is called the intelligence or cosmic consciousness.

In the Yoga Sutras, what is styled as vrtti has been translated in so many different ways. It is possible to look at it as an obstruction of the vision. The lake itself is water, the ripples and the waves are water, and yet when the waves arise on the surface the clarity of the water is somehow disturbed. You can have your own theories, but the theories do not alter the fact. Theories try to explain a fact - explain in the sense of describe, but the description is still a description, and the fact remains a fact. It may be due to a hundred thousand therefores, but the fact still remains that the water is water, the waves are water, the rest of the lake is water, and yet when the waves form the vision is obstructed, the transparency of the water has been disturbed.

The Yogi asks himself a very simple question: "Clear water being transparent, how does clear water in the form of ripples and waves obstruct or modify the transparency of water?" We do not want explanations here. We are looking directly at the mystery, at the mysterious truth that a thing contains its contradiction in itself, and as such it is not a contradiction. A thing contains what superficially or to an external appearance looks like the opposite, but which in truth is really complimentary. 'Life and death' is one of those combinations. Life without death and death without life is absurd. The two together make it life.

In some Sanscrit literature they have romantic descriptions of how a thing contains its own destructive agent. A common example given is fire and wood. Every piece of wood contains within itself, embraces within itself, lovingly enfolds within itself, what? Fire - which is its own destroyer. They say that in the same way this body also embraces death within itself. When you look at it, without getting misled by explanations and theories and paraphrases, you see directly. You thought they were contradictions but they are not. One is inherent in the other.

You read in the Yoga Vasistha that this creation is inherent in Cosmic Consciousness - it does not vanish when you attain enlightenment. It is like the image reflected in the water. Yet that which arises in it - or seems to - seems again to obstruct the vision, whereas the quality of clear water is transparency. Even that fundamental quality is dramatically altered by the same water appearing as waves on the surface of the same lake. Explanations apart, one must enter into the mystery and the wonder of it. This is what they describe as maya. Maya in one sense is the measuring agent or the spirit of measuring, and therefore the spirit of experience; as also the distortion that every clarity contains in itself. The vrttis as concepts, thought waves and ripples and a hundred other things, are nothing but distortions of its own reality. If you for a moment see self-knowledge - knowledge as self, self as knowledge, as the citta in its pure state - when it is still absolutely

transparent, then the vritti is the distorting principle and nirodhah is doing something with it so that the transparency of the citta is restored - or its clarity is not abandoned. Knowing that waves are an integral part of the lake - that the wave is as much water as the rest of the lake - the mind creates a distinction between the wave and the lake - as if the wave could be removed and put somewhere else! These are verbal fallacies - just as we often refer to 'the skin covering my body' - as if the skin is not my body! The skin is also body. The wave does not cover the surface of the lake, the wave is part of the lake and the whole thing is just water.

Is there some way by which the waterness of the whole thing exists in one's consciousness without the division between the wave and the rest of the lake? And without the vision being obstructed? That exercise is called nirodhah. If that is clear, you have understood yoga. If that is not clear, we will discuss it a little more. Nirodhah is not restraint. One does not go and beat the waves down, one does not sweep all the waves out, collect them and throw them somewhere else. Nirodhah is to see that whatever it is - it is water, and if there is an obstruction

to the vision, even that is inherent in it. When that stage is reached, your vision is not obstructed because the disturbance is not material and therefore not real - the disturbance is merely imaginary. The disturbance takes place in the observer's mind, and consciousness and intelligence being one, the observer and the observed are both the same intelligence. It is one wave looking at the other wave and calling it names, without realizing both are of one substance. When this is realized, then there is no harm in the waves jumping up and down. Let them! There is no problem at all - the inner confusion has been removed. What that means, each one has to discover.

How does one discover this marvelous truth which enables each one to live effectively, fruitfully, peacefully, happily, naturally - without kicking something, without clinging to some thing else? How does one live such a natural life, without subjective distortion? What is that life, what is that knowledge, what is that inner light in which this is made possible - in which this obstruction, this confusion, this doubt, disappears? That is Yoga, the practise of Yoga. Referring to nirodhah, to this whole exercise of dealing with these obstacles, Patanjali says,

abhyasa vairagyabhyam tan nirodhah (I.12)

Tan nirodhah. I hope you realize now that this word 'nirodhah' can never be translated into words. No amount of translation is going to help us. Nirodhah is that mysterious thing which leaves the reality as it is, and by an extremely delicate inner process kindles that light in which the clarity is restored, without making even the minutest change or even wishing to change anything

outside. Nirodhah is the light in which confusion and doubt are gone, but nothing else goes. How does one remove this doubt and confusion which sees perversity where no such perversity exists? The wave is not different from the ocean - what is it that sees the wave as a totally distinct entity? That is what is called a perversion. That perversion is not in the ocean, it is in you. Its removal is nirodhah. Perversion is not a wig or something which I can remove and throw away like a cap. Its removal and self-knowledge are simultaneous - the same thing, two sides of the same coin. Then this inner light begins to shine, that doubt is gone. That whole thing is nirodhah.

Abliyasa vairagyabhiyam tan nirodhah.

How docs one get into this? Patanjali says there are two ways - abhyasa and vairagya. I will give you precisely the traditional meaning and then we will go on to something else. Traditionally the word 'abhyasa' means practice, and it also means repetition - repeated practice which does not become repetitive and dull. That is also quite simple, all these things co-exist. Repeated practice can either augment this inner light or put it out, just like wind - if you blow a spark too hard, it goes out, if you blow very softly, nothing happens to it - but when the wind is rightly applied, it makes the spark glow. The same agent can have two opposite effects.

So abhyasa or repeated practice can either lead to more and more vigilance and more and more alertness, or less and less vigilance and more and more dullness and sleep. This applies to anything, e.g. bhastrika can wake you up, but it can put a person to sleep. If the mind is dull, there is no zeal in it. Such a mind should never have taken up yoga.

The same truth is also emphasised by Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita. "The turbulent mind is subdued and brought under control by abhyasa and vairagya". I believe that Mahatma Gandhi said that hatha yoga asanas, pranayama, study and japa all come under abhyasa. That is the traditional meaning.

Vairagya, a simple word, has got about a page full of meanings, Vairagya is the opposite of raga. Raga means inordinate affection, infatuation. Raga is also a melody, it entertains you, pleases you. Anything that promotes your pleasure instinct, is raga. You see how one thing leads to the other. It also means coloring - nice coloring pleases the eye. What music is to the ear, color is to the eye. Anything that pleases the senses is raga, and its result is also raga. When there is infatuation, or in ordinate, irrational affection that is also raga. Raga means all these and a lot more. Its opposite is vairagya.

How do I acquire this vairagya? Instead of saying that she is beautiful must I go on saying "Ah! she is ugly"? But why must I say this at all? When you are

saying that she is ugly, if you watch yourself as a yogi should watch, you see that you are struggling against yourself, you are just being hypocritical. You say that so and so is ugly because somewhere within you something is jumping up and down saying, "Oh! a beautiful person", and you do not want that. You say "No, a yogi should not do that, a yogi should have vairagya." A little story may illustrate it much better. A young man had an intractable illness, so he went to a doctor - one of those old style medicine men. The doctor gave him a single dose of medicine, saying, "Young man, take this and you'll be cured. I have blessed it, so it will definitely fix you in just one dose. But there is one rule: the medicine will not act if you think of a monkey while drinking it". That fixed it! When the young man picked up the glass, he thought, "What did that man say?" "Do not think of a monkey."

Whatever I am supposed to forget, I remember. So, when you reject something, although verbally or superficially it seems to be rejection, your mind clings to it - otherwise why do you want to reject it? Why do you want to go on saying, "I don't want to smoke"? When you go into a supermarket you will pick up what you want and leave, not worried about what else is there. The very existence of what psychologists might call over compensation shows that something is bothering you, deep within you. These are not vairagya.

Vairagya is to see where there is this inner conditioning that attracts. The mind is attracted by pleasure and by what it has already decided to consider as pleasure. So once again I must go right back to the source to see where the decision has been made that this is called pleasure. Unless it is dealt with there, the vairagya is not going to happen. Merely meddling with it superficially will not do. We may find substitutes. If I have been a heavy smoker and I want to give it up, I start chewing gum - the mouth has to be doing something. Till I go right back to the source of this surge of energy which sets about this craving, the real thing is not had. The traditional teaching is to examine your self, your life and your mind, see what you crave for and deliberately shun it. It's quite possible that it works for some people.

My weakness is that if a doctrine has survived for so many thousands of years, there must be something in it, otherwise it would have been completely exposed and discarded. If it is not the whole thing, it is probably a rule of discipline that ensures peace and harmony in community living - and it is also possible that it helps borderline cases. I will give you a simple example. Several times I have been told by people who were heavy smokers or fond of drinks that they went to such and such an ashram or monastery where all these things are taboo, lived there for three months, and came back as a thoroughly changed person. I am not quite sure about the changingness of the changed person - but if there was an eagerness in him to change, and if the company he associated with had a different influence upon him, then such rules and regulations, do's and don't's, taboos, injunctions and prohibitions

may be of some use to him. So it is possible that even the old interpretation of the word 'vairagya' is valid.

Without condemning that, let us have another look. I met a remarkable old very holy man right in the depths of the Himalayas. I asked him, "Swami, what can you tell me?" He replied, "Abhyasa, vairagya!" I have heard it umpteen times. I asked him, "What do they mean?", and what he said was beautiful. "Abhyasa - or repeated practise is to know that all is One, that God is omnipresent, and to be constantly conscious that God is omnipresent" - constantly in the sense of repeatedly. "Vairagya is never to allow the idea of the world to arise in your mind." This is the essence of abhyasa and vairagya, and this is the essence of the Yoga Vasistha also:

apunah smaranam manye sadho vismaranam varam

The world appearance is like the appearance of the blueness of the sky. Look at the sky and see it is empty. It is your mind that suggests there is something blue there. There is nothing blue there! Close your eyes upon the world and open them and see there is cosmic consciousness. Your battle is over, your struggle is over, all your yoga is over, that's the end. Ah ... but the thought of the world arises again - in which case, again knock it down. This is where the repeated practice of remembering the truth becomes valid.

sa tu dirgha kala nairantary a sathara

sevito drdhabhumig (I.14)

When does it become firmly established? When you continue this repeated practice of reminding yourself that God is omnipresent. Repeatedly, repeatedly. Why must I do it repeatedly? Only because I have never really done it. I do not have to do this repeatedly if it had really and truly been done once, but because it was ineffectual and superficial, it did not go right down and change the whole thing. I am only thinking that I am thinking about God. Even thinking about God is a very difficult thing. Usually I am only thinking that I am thinking about thinking about God. It is all 3 or 4 times removed. So go on repeatedly, till it sinks. You see the lake and you see the wave, you see them as different. You blink. No it is one. Ah! But it's gone! Once again you struggle and struggle and try to reach that point where confusion arises in the mind. This goes on for some time.

Is time involved in this? Is self-knowledge a matter of graded experience or the end product of a series of actions? Is self-knowledge a matter of today or a hundred years later? Is it attained in time? When it is neither an attainment or an achievement - as we have been discussing for the last couple of days, how does time come into this? Precisely, once again, like death. Does one die

instantly or over a long period of time? It depends upon in which sense these words are used. Till I am dead, I am alive; but if you redefine the word 'alive' to mean alive as we are - not as a senile old man who is dying, then dying means a long drawn process. If you accept that, then I have been dying for the past 55 years - the full-stop has not come yet. Right from the day of birth you are dying - as well as living, depending upon how you look at it. The glass is half empty or half-full, depending on whether you are an optimist or a pessimist!

Does time enter into this at all? Possibly yes, possibly no, depending upon how you look at it. You keep on looking at that lake and see the waves, now as one, now as distinct and separate, now again as one, again as separate. If I have once seen it as just water, neither lake nor waves, how is it that a doubt arises in the mind again? Once I have clearly seen the lake as water and the waves as water, theoretically the doubt concerning their identity or identification or names should not arise at all. How does it arise? Why do I still doubt? But I see! ... Ah that's it. That means the vision is not clear. The light was seen, but through a screen. Therefore, there is both light and darkness; both understanding and misunderstanding; both clarity and doubt. When this happens, go on repeating it.

This is where the student of Yoga may appear to be leading a kind of a double life. There is some high degree of intelligence at one stage and then there is something else. Life has not been totally and completely integrated. There are moments of awakening, moments of dullness; moments of wakefulness, moments of sleep; moments of alertness, moments of non-vigilance. By persistent practice, abhyasa, these moments of intelligence stretch further and further and further. And as this happens the other thing is squashed, eliminated. That is called vairagya.

Abhyasa and vairagya therefore are not two completely different things, but one thing. When this self-knowledge becomes well-grounded, the other knowledge is eliminated. When light spreads in the morning, darkness seems to recede. The two are one. It is not as though light penetrates darkness - it cannot. When the light comes, darkness seems to go away. But darkness does not 'go away' - light spreads over the entire surface of the earth. When that happens, the darkness which was not there is seen to be not there. I was told at school that in order to see this book, I need light - either sunlight or moonlight or electric light. One night I opened my eyes and could not see the ceiling. Why not? For instance, she is obviously sitting on a cushion, but I cannot see it because her body is between my sight and the cushion. It is possible then that I do not see the ceiling, not because it has got up and walked away, but because between the ceiling and me there is darkness. So, what am I seeing here? I see the lady, not the cushion. And what am I seeing there? I see the darkness. But my teacher said that there must be light in

order to see. OK, let me see what this darkness is. Put the light on - and the funny thing has gone! If it was there, why should I not see it when the light comes on? Do you see my point? Immediately light falls on an object, it is seen. Immediately light falls on this thing called darkness, it goes - which means it was never there.

Since we have accepted darkness as a solid reality, the doubt arises again and again and again. Therefore this practise of god-consciousness, or self-knowledge or inner light - or what ever it is - is also made necessary again and again and again. I think I have seen it - but then the old doubt also rises up. Once again come back to abhyasa, once again come back to vairagya. As abhyasa becomes well-grounded, vairagya also happens. Neither vairagya nor abhyasa can be practised independently.

What is needed here is zeal, urgency. Very few of us have the urgency. This urgency is something which cannot be learned from somebody, which cannot be taught, which possibly cannot even be caught, but which must develop from within one self.

XI

When you sit down in total vocal silence and observe yourself, you find luminous clouds of thoughts churning around. They keep floating around as cloud formations float in the sky. Sometimes you are able - without identifying the self with anyone of those thought formations, or during moments of what is commonly called intuition, to suddenly feel 'That is all there is to it'. There is sort of movement in consciousness. But then the movement is not inert, it seems to be aware of itself - and something else is even aware of these thought formations.

Vaguely we have these three, but probably they are ultimately reducible to the union of the two - energy and consciousness. That One which apparently has this dual aspect with in itself, is called God. You may call it Atma, Brahman, Isvara, Jesus or anything you like - there is no need to quarrel over descriptions!

Let us go back to the analogy of the ocean. We are told that in the ocean there are several extraordinary phenomena. Somewhere it is warm, somewhere cold, somewhere turbulent, somewhere calm, somewhere swelling, somewhere going down - and yet in spite of all these fluctuations there seems to be a certain basic stability in it. The ocean is indivisible, and yet there are people who are convinced that at a certain point off Capetown, the Atlantic and Indian oceans meet, just as you and I shake hands. They are utterly convinced that there are two distinct and different oceans. The Indian ocean is slightly warm, so that one side of the Cape is warm, while the other side is much colder - which means there is some current moving around in that particular area. We learned all this at school, and we use these expressions without ever considering the incredibility of the whole thing. Water moving within water - what do you mean by it? It is like saying 'This morning my liver is here, maybe tomorrow afternoon it will be in my left shoulder'. The liver does not move because the whole body is one unit and it stays as one unit. And yet in water somehow it is possible for a warm current to flow along a certain course and not elsewhere.

Just a smaller example - if you can visualise, for instance, a big trough in which are immersed a number of test tubes made of slightly different substances. The same water fills all these test-tubes but with a slight difference. Each one seems to have a personality. The test-tubes may even be of different shapes or colors, so there is an apparent diversity - but the content is the same. That word 'content' or the 'reality' is the most vital part of it. Similarly no-one in his senses is going to say that you and I look alike - we are quite dis-similar, but the content is the same. In the test-tubes it is the water that assumes that form there and this form here, and it is the consciousness that assumes that form there and this form here - or, in other

words, apparently assumes that form there and this form here - the content, the reality, being the same.

What is the nature of that reality? I do not know if the question itself is terribly meaningful, but we ask it as if to suggest that it is possible for the nature to be separated from the substance, or the reality. There is a rather devastating statement in the Yoga Vasistha "A man is what his action is". We usually think that man is something, and his behavior is something else. Man is his action, man is his energy.

Whenever there is a motion, seemingly from above, it seems to be full of thought forms, intellectual comprehension, mental activity. Then something rises up from below which seems to be full of energy - what you call emotion. Emotion rises up from apparently the abdominal cavity, and a lot of psychological and mental activity pours down from above. This is the churning that goes on. The heart is caught in between, and that is where most people are churning. If one is able to understand this clearly, it is also possible to defuse before the bomb explodes. You can choke it there, and you can switch it off here - but one must know where the switches are.

Though One, therefore, this One seems to be a composite of two aspects - I think it is good to insist upon the word 'aspects' - they are not two completely different and distinct entities, but two aspects of the same thing. You can photograph John from front and from behind, but the two photographs together constitute one person. That is what is called individual - indivisible dual. It seems to be dual, but it is indivisible. There is an indivisible duality in you - one is called the front side, and one is called the back side. It is only a matter of convention. The energy - which is the nature, and the consciousness - whose nature is energy, seem to be capable of being looked at from two points of view, two aspects. One is the aspect of consciousness, the other is the aspect of energy. The two being indivisible, there is a mere distinction of polarisation. Polarisation is like the two ends of the handkerchief - one thing being called three.

In the analogy of the test tubes, it is the total water in the trough that is capable of being aware of all these. It is the substance that says 'I am so and so there' and 'I am so and so there.' So all of us are the objects - if one could use such a term, of the one thing - which is consciousness, knowledge, God, Allah, Jesus, Brahman, Atma, which is the unutterable Jewish word, call it what you will.

I cannot realise God, it is God who realises I - I being one of those millions of objects that apparently exist in that One. Knowledge itself is the subject, knowledge is the self. That is all. This consciousness is apparently capable of being viewed, in a state of ignorance, in its two aspects - one being pure

consciousness, the other being its energy. First when they pull apart, as it were - please, this 'as it were' is added throughout, even if I do not mention it, polarisation takes place, so that consciousness remains at one level and energy remains at another level - as water may be a bit warm on top and cold at the bottom. Then, when they come together, they form, intertwine, intermingle, creating the manifestation of the combined consciousness-energy. That is called all this - all these people, all these diverse beings. The diverse beings are none other than the mere movement of energy in consciousness. In order that the movement may take place, there must have been an initial dissociation, as it were. A bad word. When you use a bad word, follow it with 'as it were'.

You cannot describe this, and because it is difficult to describe, Hatha Yogis drew diagrams of chakras. Consciousness is supposed to be above, and from there they have taken the body as a sort of universe, because you use your body as the laboratory for unveiling this knowledge - which is the self. That is made possible because the content of this body is the content of the cosmos. Incredible, but it is true. Why is it so? Because God is omnipresent. So the consciousness that is there in the cosmos, individualised itself in the center of the brain not merely the centre of the forehead. Various theories have been offered - that there is a ganglia there, or the brain lobes resemble the ajna chakra etc. They are all explanations - which are marvelous; but the truth still remains the truth. Even if you have been able to analyse water, and come to the tremendous understanding that it is hydrogen and oxygen mixed together in a certain proportion, water still remains water.

That consciousness, just after the polarisation has commenced, enters into space, as it were, and descends. There is a descending triangle at the heart center. Consciousness as polarised energy descends and descends into manifestation - the reason why things can function as if the energy has got a spirit of its own - an apparent duality - as if it is possible for energy to function blindly. We all think in our insaner moments that it is possible for this energy - which somehow assumes individuality, or personality, to function independent of the cosmos, to function independent of the totality. In other words, I to defy God.

At this stage it is said to correspond approximately to the solar plexus, the region of the abdomen. I suppose that is where most of our arrogance comes from. When that arrogance has somehow been worked out and there is a little bit of inner awakening, the awakened energy instantly wants to return to its source. At that moment the whole thing turns around, and as it turns, it forms the hexagon in the heart center. It is a beautiful symbolism. The heart center - anahata - is of vital importance to the practise of yoga, because it is here that the divine or the consciousness descends, and where the sublimated energy ascends and meets the divine. This is the meeting point, the center of our

whole being, and therefore they say that it is the center of the living soul - though Hatha Yogis' believe that the soul is on the muladhara, the base. That consciousness which is everywhere and which polarises itself and seeks to descend, as it descends it, condenses into matter. When that same consciousness is re awakened as it were, it begins to ascend, and as it ascends it meets the divine in the heart, so that it can raise itself still further and go onward. This consciousness polarised as energy, as life, as movement away from itself as it were, is awakened to the truth that it has no such power. If there is power, if there is energy - which is motion, the energy is inextricably one with its own boss, with its own source, with consciousness, with knowledge. If 'I' is there as a living entity, and if I' is able to function in this world as if independent, it is only 'as if' independent - the I being an apparent objectification within the subject itself. The I is merely a whirlpool, a little bit of an eddy, or current, in this mighty ocean. It is not so much that the content of the 'I' is the same as the content of the cosmos, but the 'I' itself is a mere figment of the imagination of the totality, the cosmic consciousness.

What is the nature of that consciousness? What is the nature of that personality that is aware of this truth? How would you behave, how would you live, if there was this constant awareness that the 'I' is merely just one ounce of sea-water in the ocean of consciousness, conceptually capable of being isolated, but not really; conceptually distinct from the rest of the ocean, but not really - what would your life and behaviour be? That is called Isvara pranidhana - surrender to God.

Surrender to God should not make God look like some kind of armed policeman and we are all thieves, and when surprised by the policeman we say "I surrender". That is not what is really meant by surrender. This word 'pranidhana' is still more interesting. It does not mean passive surrender, but dynamic surrender. Surrender when the 'I' or ego or you does not even say "Alright, I have surrendered myself to God, let Him look after me, and let Him look after all mine." Oh, no, that little ounce of seawater - if you go back to the ocean and visualise it, does not behave like that. It is one with the sea. And the totality of the sea or the ocean determines what it shall do. It may be on top, the crest of a wave; it may be under your foot; it may be dashed against a rock - anything might happen. It sounds painful only if this ounce of water here still wants to feel "I am independent of the totality, and the totality must answer my prayers." Then there is no surrender. Since that silly thing is a total assumption based on non-knowledge or ignorance, it keeps self-knowledge completely away. Knowledge - which is the self, is veiled by an assumption of the 'me' as an independent entity, and when the light of knowledge shines, that is seen to be non-existent. When the self is understood to be non-existent by itself, the self as energy flows down, the self as knowledge flows up to meet the descending Grace in the heart, and completely and totally surrenders - surrenders in the sense of inwardly

merge, so that there is no longer a will called 'my' will; and - mark this very carefully - there is no longer a will called 'His will' or 'God's will' or 'your will'. The expressions "Thy will be done", "God's will be done", etc. are used only because there is still an expression, someone to say those words, some brain to think those formulas; but in reality even that is not there. If there is no 'my will' there is no 'your will' also.

Only if that is understood in its right spirit can we sort of appreciate - it is still your brain that calculates and does all this - why in some very great saints there occasionally appeared to be a show of vanity . You can pick that out in the New Testament quite a number of times - and you have probably suspected some such attitude on the part of Ramana Maharishi and Swami Sivananda. I have lived with this great man, so I know what it is to be shocked by that. People often say "But isn't he self realised, and hasn't he completely surrendered himself to the will of God? Why does he say that?" At that point there is nothing called 'my will' and there is nothing called 'God's will' either.

There is no division. So if that person uses the word 'I', it is God speaking through that mouth. That is from our point of view - it does not exist in his point of view. That state is not possible to be described. That is isvara pranidhana - where the ego does not say at all "I will" or "I will not".

XII

When Patanjali suggested that self-knowledge, or the total elimination of self-ignorance, can be had by isvara pranidhana - surrender to God, it was not as a technique. Total surrender - the surrender being only of ignorance - does not form a technique. In other words, in order to attain self-knowledge you abandon ignorance. What does this mean? If I knew what ignorance meant, I would know what self-knowledge meant. The two are simultaneous, and therefore one does not lead to the other. Surrender your ignorance and you get self-knowledge; when you attain self-knowledge, ignorance is gone. Therefore, isvara pranidhana - or total complete dynamic and non-mechanical surrender of this ignorance, of this assumed existence of self, is part of Yoga. Contrary to popular belief, Yoga is not antagonistic or hostile to Bhakti, or devotion. It merely underlies the essence of devotion and prevents the devotion from becoming mechanical and meaningless. This is why isvara pranidhana is woven into the other discipline of Yoga known as "astanga" yoga, the eight limbs of yoga. It is one of the vital disciplines. You cannot attain self-knowledge if there is not this constant and dynamic self surrender to the divine - the divine being knowledge. The ignorantly assumed existence of a self must constantly be offered in sacrifice (as it were) to the omnipresence.

Why is such a sacrifice necessary? Because of the assumption of the existence of a self. If it is not there the whole thing is over, the play is finished. Therefore even that is not really a technique for the practice of Yoga.

When the attention observes what goes on within during a period of silence, one discovers that there movement of energy, and the movement takes place within the field of consciousness - knowledge, intelligence, awareness. As this energy moves, some kind of polarization says, "I know this". An apparent division is created - the two ends of the handkerchief. Is it not real, but it is seen, or it is experienced as a temporary reality - energy on the one hand and consciousness on the other. It is not I but the attention which is watching. Whether the attention is different and distinct from the ego, from the self, etc., is for each one of us to decide.

Consciousness gets polarized into energy without losing its characteristic as consciousness. It is important to remember this. When a man becomes a father, he does not cease to be a man; when a woman becomes a mother, she does not cease to be a woman; when consciousness polarizes into energy it is still consciousness, and the energy is also intelligent. It is like our anatomical structure: the brain flows down through the spine, and that is non-different from the brain. In the spine there is the same potentiality of the brain, the same intelligence. It is an extension of the brain. At one end you call it vitality or energy, and at the other end you call it brain, intelligence or consciousness.

A whole system called Hatha Yoga was created on this principle, from this: first to enable us to understand how this takes place, and later how the whole thing can be resolved into the total Oneness or Unity, without abolishing the diversification.

The creation is of the One into the many, without the One ever losing its intrinsic nature as the one consciousness; and at the same time the many also sharing every bit of that consciousness. Consciousness does not become unconsciousness while this creation takes place, and the creation is also full of consciousness. When the whole thing is resolved back into the Oneness, the diversity is not abolished, and yet the Oneness is seen. This total vision is Yoga. The total vision does not mean the abolition of what was previously seen as diversity. The only thing that has disappeared is a division, which in any case did not exist. There is really no division between my nose and the toes in the total body, but at one stage in my ignorance I thought there was. When that ignorance went away, that thought also disappeared. That is all.

This has to be borne in mind while studying hatha yoga and the kundalini phenomenon. It is the One that blossoms into the many, and when it resolves itself back into the One, the many is not really gone. The whole thing is seen as One, without an internal division. However, hatha yoga still recognizes an apparent temporary division - energy on one side and consciousness on the other. The movement of energy in consciousness is all this - life, the personality (good, bad, and indifferent), the cosmos, everything. If there is a problem, it is because of some kind of malfunctioning here between the two, or in either of them. So the yogi said, "Get hold of these and make them function normally". What is normally? Not abnormally. I really do not know what normally means, except vaguely to feel that in a normal life there is no psychological distress. When a psychological distress arises, it means there is some disturbance either in the movement of energy in the personality, or in the understanding in the consciousness part of the personality, or in their interaction. If such a disturbance is noticed, what do we do? Here a little bit of technique is given. When there is disorder in the movement of energy, that disordered movement of energy in this consciousness - which is called personality, creates psychosomatic disorders. This can also be experienced as psychological distress, which has been defined as five-fold - ignorance, I-ness, likes, dislikes, clinging to life or hope.

avidya 'smita raga dvesa 'bhinivesah klesah (II.3)

How do I put right this disturbed movement of energy - or prana as it is called? How do 'I' get hold of this prana and make it function normally? Make it function normally means, as it should - without the interference of an extraneous factor. There is the field of consciousness within the mind and the body, and this energy moves in that field. If it does, it should cause no distress

at all. We learn this by watching sleep. When you are fast asleep, that intelligence is still there in the body and mind, and this movement of prana also takes place in that field of consciousness. Everything goes on nicely without a problem, without creating mental or psychological distress. Something interferes when sleep comes to an end. Can prana be persuaded to function now as it functioned in sleep? I come to terms with it through the technique of pranayama. Patanjali very specifically mentions that inhalation and exhalation are an indication of the states of the mind. Ventilating the lungs etc. are secondary effects - the primary intention of nature endowing man with this breathing apparatus seems to be to serve as an indicator to the state of the mind. If you want to study your own mind to see what does go within, or if you want to study the emotional state of a friend, just watch the breathing for a little while and you will understand everything.

A whole system is based on the polarization and equalization of breath. It is also important to remember that we do not want merely to hold the breath or restrain the breath but to bring about an equalization, so that the internal disturbance and the movement of prana can be corrected. A milder practice has been suggested by Ramana Maharishi, who said: "Prana regulates itself when the intelligence begins to observe it". This is approaching it from the other side. The disturbed movement of prana in the field of intelligence is what disturbs the intelligence also, and if one is held steady, the other is also made steady. The Hatha Yogis approach from the energy end, the Jnana Yogis (like Ramana Maharishi) approach from the consciousness end. Observe how the breathing happens. Do not feel: "I am breathing and I want to change it". The moment you bring the 'I' in there, you are going to make it worse. "I want to hold the breath" - you cannot hold it! When the will is used, panic is created. "Prayatna 'saithilyam" (II.47) is an expression used by Patanjali. How does one acquire steadiness of posture and of pranayama? (Prayatna saithilyam) The less will and the less effort you put into this the better. The more relaxed you are, the better the observation of the breathing itself. Sit down relaxedly, and wait until the breath becomes normal.

The Hatha Yoga approach is a tough exercise - a reason why this practice has earned the criticism of even such a lovely teacher as Vasistha. In the "Yoga Vasistha" there is a whole chapter devoted to the criticism of Hatha Yoga. He says that you must control the mind and the movement of prana, but not by Hatha Yoga. He does not say: "Do not practise Hatha Yoga", but "This should be achieved by intelligent methods and not Hatha Yoga. Hatha Yoga is violent".

pracchardana vidharanabhyam va pranasya (I.34)

You can also overcome self-ignorance by "exhaling and holding the breath" - not merely exhale, but throw out all the air and hold. Many teachers, afraid of

the consequences, have added: "After throwing out the breath, inhale and then hold". The text does not say so! The text very bluntly says: "Throw all your breath out and hold it". I would very much like some of you bold and courageous people to try this. Please do it early in the morning, if possible before breakfast, because after wards it becomes uncomfortable. At least for those few moments when the lungs are empty, it is nearly impossible to think. You may be sitting where you like, you may have a whole host of distracting sights in front of you, but you are not interested in anything. The mind is in a state of blissful suspension. Quite a lot of electric activity takes place in the system. It is extremely important to watch. I have exhaled and I do not want to breath any more. Gasps! Who made me take the next breath? That is God. That is prana. It does not matter what you call it. Like a flash this knowledge arises - "My God, you are there. You won't let me die".

At that moment I think we get one little glimpse of prana, of God. However brief and however limited it may be, you still see it. For instance, if you look at the sky through the window or from the top of a building or merely through a key hole, you are still seeing the sky. It is not the whole sky, no doubt, but once you have seen the sky, you know it is there. When I do pranayama in 'this way - exhale and hold it and watch - I cannot hold the lungs empty any more. It blows! Did I want to breathe? No I did not, I wanted to hold for sometime more, but something said "No". I do not want an explanation, I just want to become aware of this. When I become aware of it, I know that beyond the 'me' - if there is a 'me' at all, there is this prana, this energy, this intelligence, which is in command all the time - even now! Even if I am in a state of ignorance, that power, that intelligence is in command. That intelligence has ordained that I should breathe again, and I am made to breathe. One of these days that intelligence and that energy will decree, "Right my friend. You will breathe out now, and you will hold your breath and you won't breathe again". And so it happens. We call it death.

vyadhi styana samsaya pramada 'lasya 'virati

bhranti darsana 'labdha blumikatva

'navasthitatvani citta vihsepas te 'ntarayah (I.30)

"What are the obstacles? (1) disease, (2) dullness, (3) doubt, (4) carelessness, (5) laziness, (6) inability to turn the attention away (from the obstacles), (7) perverted or distorted vision, (8) inability to find a firm ground for the spiritual investigation, and (9) even when such a ground is found, unsteadiness of mind and attention in the pursuit of the enquiry - these are the obstacles and distractions, for they bring about and constitute the apparent fragmentation of the mind-stuff."

The Yoga Sutras also mention several recognizable obstacles. One is physical or mental illness - the other is doubt, indecision, dullness. For instance, you keep on meditating and practising all this, but there does not seem to be a foothold. Then occasionally you get a foothold, and suddenly you slip. All these are easily recognizable obstacles. How do I overcome them?

Hatha Yoga comes in with a brilliant technique. It suggests that the polarized consciousness descends in a spiralling movement of energy, and as it descends, as it ramifies, as it stretches out, it becomes matter. Consciousness moving becomes energy, and when the movement is slowed down it becomes matter. That is pure physics. As it condenses into matter it forms the various elements, and the difference between one element and the other is a difference in the frequency of the wave length, in the vibratory frequencies.

As it descends you have a space - everything is in space. And when something starts moving in that space, it becomes air. When air moves there is friction and therefore fire, and when the gases collide and fire is generated, water is also generated, and then water condenses into solid substances. One is not entirely and totally different from the other - the difference is merely one of vibratory frequencies. They built a whole lovely system. The theory starts at the base where the final point of descent had been reached. Energy apparently moving away from the centre has become solid, earth. The earth is considered the muladhara. How do I contemplate this? How do I visualize this? How can I focus my attention on this? For that purpose they suggest a physical or physiological counterpart as a focal point of attention. The earth centre is that part of your anatomy which comes into contact with the earth, it is as simple as that! A little above there is the water element, the next subtle element, located where water collects. This center represents both water in its simple form, and also the nectar of immortality. I think the connotation is quite simple and obvious. In your own system the area that collects water is also around the area that is linked with the immortalizing process. We cannot be immortal, so we leave somebody behind to carry on the clan's name. Just a little higher from there is the Manipura, the fire region - even you call it the gastric fire. It is quite simple, plain common sense. Higher still is the heart region which represents air, which is obvious - the lungs and oxygenation. The throat region - a little space in the throat. Then we go on to the mind - the ajna in the forehead.

Each of these has its own mantra. What is a mantra? The name by which the attention is pinned to these centres. "Lam" is for land, "Vam" is for water, "Yam" is for air - even the sounds are similar. Even though they are in Sanskrit and we are speaking English, there seems to be some basic similarity, which suggests that the original framers of the language were also aware of the vibratory frequencies of these basic elements. Perhaps looking at water suggested to them "Vam". Anyhow all this is of only academic interest and we

will not waste our time. What is interesting from our point of view is that each of these five centers is associated with an animal, a God, and a Goddess, in addition to one of the five elements. I think a lot of wonderful truth lies locked up there. If for instance, I am dull, it is perhaps because the energy in one of these centres is not functioning normally. If I am terribly excited it is possible again that the energy or prana in one of these centres is not functioning normally. So that, if I am able somehow to locate this by some kind of differential diagnosis, it is possible by another set of exercises that I may be able to restore order more scientifically. Instead of struggling with the whole prana, I may be able to adjust it where it has gone wrong.

In spite of Vasistha's criticisms of Hatha Yoga, he approves of this. In the Yoga Vasistha there are a few beautiful chapters dealing with psychosomatic illnesses, elaborately dealt with, most scientifically and most beautifully. One does not know how many thousands of years old this scripture is, but in those few chapters you have absolutely the latest theories of psychosomatic illnesses and their treatment. In addition to all the other practices recommended, there he also suggests the Laya Yoga technique - the purificatory Pranayama. In us there are three elements: what is called the baser element - animality, mere instinctual drive; the movement of energy or the Shakti or the female part; and the masculine part, the consciousness. Each one of these elemental qualities like earth, water, fire, air, and space can be instinctual, aggressive and masculine, or yielding, soft and feminine. We must bring about a balance of these different psychological natures. The animal, or instinctual part, cannot be destroyed. If you meddle with the instincts and destroy them, you are destroyed. How to keep a healthy balance between these three: the animal instinctual drive, the masculine aggressive element and the softer gentler female element in it? How to keep all these in a state of perfect balance in relation to the five elements? This, one must study, understand and possibly reveal in one's self. By these methods those obstacles are overcome, and at the same time, ignorance is dispelled. When ignorance goes, knowledge 'is'.

XIII

Knowledge is there all the time, that is the only truth, the only eternal reality. That is the self, that is the see-er, that is the subject in all cases. All that need be done is to remove the obstacles, or dispel the ignorance. Ignorance being a non-entity, it is not so difficult to dispel it. Some of the basic methods - if they can be called so, for the removal of this ignorance, we discussed earlier. The most famous - the eight limbs of Yoga - may be looked into just for a few minutes today. There may be some truth which may have missed your attention - it may be a good idea to take a fresh look at them. The whole thing, which is given from the Sutra twenty-eight of chapter two right through almost to the end of the third chapter, is prefaced by a very important Sutra which we usually neglect to take notice of.

viveka khyatir aviaplava hano payah (II.26)

"This is the way in which the obstacles can be effectively moved." Viveka means wisdom, aviaplava means unbroken. Uninterrupted wisdom, uninterrupted alertness, uninterrupted vigilance is the only way in which the obstacle can be removed. We often behave like the shaving razor. We shave something and imagine the whole problem is solved. It is not solved! Early next morning you wake up and see it is back again. This is a constant problem in our life and our yoga practise. We think the problem is gone but it is not - like the young man of thirteen who tells you, "I can easily give up smoking, I have done so ten times already". Why did he have to give up something ten times? When once it is given up, it is given up. It only means he had never abandoned the bad habit. He thought it had gone: our usual old friend and old enemy, "I thought" - "I thought it had gone", "I thought I had attained wisdom", "I thought I was enlightened" - you can think anything you like, it does not make any difference whatsoever!

A school principal once told me a very lovely joke. A boy who had left the school came back to the reunion day three years later. The headmaster recognised him and said, "Hello Smith, how are you?" "I am very well sir!" "How is the old man, your Dad?" "Oh, he passed away last year sir". "Ah, so sorry to hear that." Then he passed around greeting other people. Next year there was another reunion. The old headmaster greeted him, "Hello Smith, how are you?" "Very well sir." "How is the old man, your father?" "He is still dead sir!" When month after month, year and year you can still say he is dead, then he is really dead!

If we have to give up something more than once, we have never really given it up. So, uninterrupted wisdom and vigilance is necessary, and that wisdom must be unbroken - otherwise it was not even wise to keep the obstruction away. This is our complaint, "I want to do this - but the old habit is so

strong ... ". A candle does not say, "I started to shine but then the old darkness was so terrible that I thought I had better yield to that darkness". What is the truth? The truth is that the light was never there, you thought it was there.

This stupid thing called 'thought' can come and interfere in our life in a million ways - and the next is important: without our being aware of it. Because our being unaware of it is called ignorance, here the common excuse "I did not know" is no excuse. This ignorance is the sin.

viveka khyatir aviplaya hano 'playah (II.26)

Only when this viveka - wisdom or awareness, alertness or vigilance - is uninterrupted can it be said that the obstacles have been removed.

tasya saptadha pranta bhumih prajna (II.27)

This awakening or alertness becomes enlightenment when it pervades all the seven fields, seven spheres, seven aspects of my life.

Saptadha pranta bhumih has been unnecessarily twisted and interpreted in various ways. Some people have brought in philosophies and doctrines which are totally unrelated to the Yoga Sutras themselves, without seeing that the seven immediately follow.

When this vigilance or constant alertness infiltrates all these seven, then enlightenment results - prajna - the same light becomes enlightenment. It is like walking through a dark tunnel - what appears to be a distant glimmer, with the help of which you walk through the tunnel, becomes a light when you are there. It is not as though that speck of light leads you to something called a greater light. You see that speck of light, that light guides you on, you walk guided by that light and you suddenly realise that that is the light, of course in a much grander form.

When this little candle - called constant alertness, constant awareness, or constant vigilance, infiltrates - that is the right word for it, whether you like it or not, all aspects of my life and personality, that itself becomes enlightenment - prajna. The next Surra is:

yoga 'ngan anusthanad asuddhi ksaye

jnanadiptiravivekakhyateh (II.28)

Literally: "By the practice of all the limbs of yoga ... impurities ... eliminated ... light of knowledge ... leading to wisdom". The Sutra writers never complete a sentence. How are you going to complete that sentence? Anything you add to

that is going to create a duality. "The impurities are gone" means they were there! "All knowledge comes into being." Does it mean it was not there? Leave it at that.

The Yoga angas (limbs of Yoga) are yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana, samadhi.

The last step called Samadhi is not considered a step or a limb, it is enlightenment. The seven aspects of one's personality mentioned earlier referred to the other seven.

These are practices which we can indulge in. These seven are not merely a set of Yoga practises which you resort to for one hour a day or on Sundays. It is something which covers your entire life. It is clear that mechanical practise of any type of Yoga has no value except for a physical value. I can stand on my head - probably some hairs will turn black or white, depending on what it was before - and I can practise some of the most intricate, complicated yoga asanas. I gain a lot of admiration and lose some weight, but beyond that it has no spiritual value. Yoga is what your own inner consciousness considers it to be. If you think it is a physical jerk, it is a physical jerk and no more, and the benefit you derive from it will also be physical. I am not saying this is right or wrong, good or evil - that is your business, not mine. The scripture is merely a signpost. It is not the business of the signpost to tell you which way you should go.

These eight limbs of Yoga ought to be characterised by the light of wisdom, the light of wisdom must touch everyone of these aspects of Yoga. Many of these ideas contained in the Yoga Sutras are also voiced by the Buddha. The noble eight fold path also contains more or less the same elements - right living, right thinking, right action, right posture, right trance, right illumination.

Yama means restraint or death. There must be a 'dying' to the life of ignorance. If I am really and truly aiming at a life of enlightened living, I must be prepared to abandon non-enlightened living, ignorant living. If I am moving towards wisdom, I must be prepared to abandon unwisdom. And if right from the beginning I become aware of the truth that it is the ego that causes all these problems, I must constantly keep in mind the play of the ego, the innumerable ways in which this ego deludes me, and see that I do not deliberately create those situations again. In other words, if I want to give up smoking, I must keep away from cigarettes. If you want to give up smoking and say, "Oh, I will have a cigarette occasionally - just for company" that means you are not serious, not sincere. Then there is no reason for complaining, you just keep going. That is all that Yama means. If you are sincere, earnest and serious about discovering or uncovering the self, in

overcoming this shadow of the self - 'I', 'me', then these restraints will be found in you. It does not say you must practise them. If you are a keen student of Yoga these qualities or yamas will automatically be found in you. I am emphasizing that because it is very difficult for these to be cosmetically cultivated. I cannot just decide that I must apply them. Have I understood what ahimsa means? I look it up in a dictionary: ahimsa means I should not harm anyone, I should not hurt anybody, and I should not insult anybody. Well! I would not do it. I have understood all that, it is quite simple.

If you watch your mind when you do this, about ninety-five percent of your brain is busy cooking up how to seem to do it without doing it. If you are my disciples or followers, I want what is seen by you to be very nice - that is why I call it "cosmetic" discipline. That is what we do most of the time when we interest ourselves in these wonderful virtues described here. They are not virtues that can be acquired. Circus clowns have an extraordinary nose which is picked up and stuck on, but your own nose came from inside, as the end result of assimilation. The food that was eaten became assimilated and the nose grew out of the face. It is not as though you have to eat a nose in order to grow a nose - it does not work that way! So if I want to be truthful, loving, non-violent and non-aggressive, I cannot introduce that non-aggression as an element in my character. It is not possible. You do something else and that blossoms as non-aggression - it may be japa, meditation or something totally unconnected with what your life-style may be. People say. "Oh, I am practising Yoga and ahimsa and therefore I do not eat meat anymore". You may not be eating meat, but you are snapping and biting at your husband or your wife. What is ahimsa there?

Whenever this topic of ahimsa is raised, someone asks, "Swami, you spoke about ahimsa, that you should not injure anyone in thought, word or deed. What about these mosquitoes which come about during my meditation - shall I kill them or not?" The answer often is, "Stop beating your husband first, we will talk about the mosquitoes later". You are cruel to your own children, your neighbors, you have still not stopped eating meat and yet you are terribly concerned about this little mosquito. These are cosmetic, they have no value at all. Until one realises that the self is non-existent and that there is only one life - which are two sides of the same coin, ahimsa is not possible. Both must happen simultaneously. Until that vision arises, true love or ahimsa is not possible. If you suddenly feel tremendous compassion and stop eating meat, I am sure all of the lambs and the cows will be there to promote your spiritual welfare. If you stop eating fish you will add so many souls who pray for your welfare. All that is alright, but true ahimsa or non-injury in thought, word and deed and in truth, is possible only simultaneously with this enlightenment. It is the same with truth. There was a Swami in the ashram twenty years ago who was so rude and scandal-mongering that every time he prefaced whatever he had to say with "You know I am an honest man, I am frank". He

was rude. Just because I vowed to tell the truth can I go on telling everybody what I feel about them? It is cruelty!

The fourth of the restraints is brahmacarya. Brahmacarya literally means 'when the whole inner consciousness flows constantly towards truth, towards what is, towards God, Brahman'. That is difficult! And so some holy ones restricted the meaning. They asked, "What is it that distracts a person's attention most?" The opposite sex. So they interpreted brahmacarya to mean continence, chastity. This is no doubt one of the constituents of brahmacarya; but brahmacarya means much more than that.

When the attention is wholly and totally directed towards enlightenment, continence happens. There is another statement: "If you are able to overcome the craving for tasty food, all the rest is easily controlled." It is said that in ancient days, when the student went to live with the Guru to study, he became part of the family. The teacher's wife, who became his foster mother, instead of serving clarified butter or ghee with the food, would pour on a little bitter oil - which is supposed to be very good for the health. It is said that the student was so fully absorbed in his studies that he did not even notice the difference. This went on until one day ten, twelve or fifteen years later, the boy would look up to the mother and say, "Mother, there is something wrong - why does this ghee taste bitter?" That was the first day he noticed it. She would say, "Sorry", take it away and give him ghee, and go and tell the husband, "It is time for him to go". Once the tongue starts tasting he can no longer be there, because the attention has gone.

In the same way we look at the niyamas or the second limb of Yoga - the ordinary day to day disciplining of one's life-style.

sauca santosa tapah. svadhyaye

svam pranidhanani (II.32)

Sauca - cleanliness of body, mind, environment; santosa - contentment; tapas, austere simple life - these are the things one watches. I do not know whether you appreciate this - I am not trying to cultivate them, but I am watching to see if these qualities are there. If they are there, then I am in the right direction, if they are not there, something is wrong somewhere else, So, something must be done to rectify the cause. Where do the opposites of these qualities arise? I must find it there, not merely manipulate and cover up these evil qualities. A friend of mine wanted to stop smoking but did not, and every time she came to see me she used some kind of inhaler which smelt like cloves - so that when she came and spoke I smelt the tobacco and I smelt the cloves. I told her "You do not have to do that". If I am dirty there is no use applying

some scent on top of it, you will smell both. Instead look for the cause, and when that is rectified, this goes away.

In the same way, if I am greedy it is not because I want to be, and non-greed cannot be introduced into me as in a slide-projector - you push one slide in and the other one goes out. It is not that simple! The greed comes probably out of fear, and the fear comes out of something else and that comes out of some thing else. Eventually everything comes out of this ignorance. So until that ignorance is handled, none of these things will disappear. That is the reason why Patanjali, instead of regarding these eight as steps, characterised them as angas - limbs of one entity. The whole yoga is one, these eight are just limbs. This entity called yoga with these eight limbs must all be given birth to together every day, so that I have no business to say, "I am now practising purity, and after I have practised purity I will come on to contentment, then the yoga postures etc". By then I am dead!

All of them must be simultaneous, though they grow in different proportions. I am sure you have all watched an infant grow into the young child. The infant has got all limbs in tact, but they are disproportionate - according to adult proportions. The legs and arms are fairly short, the head is heavy and so on. Something inside seems to regulate growth as needed. So it is possible that in the beginning you will devote more time to some kind of yoga asana practice and less time to meditation and pranayama. As you go on, it is possible that the proportion varies, but all the eight limbs can be found in the Yogi's daily life. And these qualities are to be found, not introduced nor cultivated. When they are not found, the Yogi merely uses all such manifestations as reveal the absence of these qualities, to trace the source. The source is always self-ignorance. If I am short-tempered and if I watch where the short temper comes from, I discover that it comes from ignorance. If I am jealous I cannot just wipe it out. But if I go right back, tracing the jealousy to its own source, I find the same ignorance. If there is anxiety, make use of it. Make use of the obstacles themselves to reach out to their source - that is what is called dhyana, meditation.

The asana that Patanjali describes in the Yoga Sutras is quite simple. I am saying this; in a moment I will contradict it.

sthira suhham asanam ' (II.46)

That has been translated into one of these classic meditation postures, suhhasana, padmasana, lotus posture or siddhasana etc., where the body is in a state of immobility without discomfort. When the Hatha Yogis evolved a fairly complicated system of other postures, even there the same criterion applies. Your head stand, shoulder stand, plough, etc. must be comfortable to you. Why is sthira sukham asanam prescribed? Because Patanjali had

mentioned in another Sutra, "Unsteadiness of the body or its limbs is an indication of the unsteadiness of the mind." So if you bring about steadiness of the body there are greater chances of your being able to be aware of the movement of energy in the mind.

tato dvandva 'nabhtgatah (II.48)

Once you are steadily seated, when you have mastered this meditation posture, the mind or the attention is flowing in one direction, there is tremendous energy and your attention is not easily distracted and diverted.

The next limb is pranayama. What is the result of that follows pranayama?

tatah ksiyate prakasa varanam (II.52)

dharanasu. ca yogata manasah (II.53)

You are not told here that "If you practise pranayama your lungs will expand, your asthma will go or you will start flying in the air." No. If you practise pranayama efficiently and effectively, the veil of ignorance is removed, the veil that covers the inner light is removed.

dharanasu ca yogata manasah

Then it becomes easy to meditate. It aids contemplation and removes distraction. Again the same thing! Throughout the Yoga Sutras the simplest message is 'Practise Yoga in order that these obstacles may be removed'. When the obstacles are removed, you see yourself - which may mean the non-existence of a self, and life becomes enlightened. That's all! It is quite simple, there are no gimmicks, it is an extremely simple and sane and beautiful definition of Yoga. "When our inner obstacles are removed, contemplation becomes easy."

This suggests the skipping of the next limb, which is called pratyahara. Pratyahara is gathering in of the rays of one's attention. There is a definite suggestion in the Yoga Sutras that though pratyahara is mentioned - for the sake of scientific description of the total structure of Yoga, the effective practice of pranayama itself achieves that. With asana and pranayama one turns the mind within to locate the disturbances, where the impulse to breathe in arises, where the impulse to breathe out arises. What do I mean by holding the breath? And at the end of this retention - kumbhaka, what makes me breathe out? After the exhalation what makes me take the next breath? Paying keen attention to that is itself pratyahara, or drawing one's attention into and within oneself. The last three steps are quite simple if one has gone that far.

XIV

Dharana, dhyana and samadhi seem to be fairly simple in the total context of the Yoga philosophy, but perhaps not what they are made out to be by some commentators who want to exalt and mystify Yoga practise. Do you know what mystify means? When there is a mist you cannot see very clearly - that is called 'mystify' and 'mystic' and 'mistake' are not very far from each other. When you call someone a mystic, it is often a mistake!

My Guru Swami Sivananda often referred to scientists and artists as Raja Yogis, because often in their case what is elaborately described as concentration, meditation and samadhi, become almost involuntary. When you are totally absorbed in something which you are doing, that is called meditation. When you are not totally absorbed in what you are doing, your attention is drawn outwards. Instead, if the attention could be focused on the root of the attention itself with the same intensity and absorption, it is samadhi. That is, if you can watch yourself with the same intensity and absorption with which you are watching a scene outside yourself, that is samadhi. Usually the movement is externalised, the attention is externalised, and therefore it leads away from the centre.

Concentration is described very simply in the beginning of the third chapter

desa bandhas cittasya dharana (III.1)

"If the attention can be prevented from dissipation, it is dharana, concentration". Though ultimately the distinction (or the division or the distance) between the experiencer and the experience has also to be abolished, the yogis insist that you become aware of what you are doing at the moment, though that awareness itself is not meditation. For instance, while you are driving a car become totally aware of everything that you are doing - the feeling of the steering wheel in the hands, the feeling of the back resting on the seat - everything. Then you are there, you are driving and you know exactly what is happening. Why should I do this? If you do not do this, your mind is somewhere else - your heart is some where else, your soul is somewhere else, and the driving takes place automatically, mechanically, blindly.

When the yogi asks you to bring the whole attention back into one beam, one focus, he does not suggest that that is meditation, but the first step, concentration.

"tatra pratyayai katanata dhyanam (III.2)

Once the attention is focused in a single beam, then turn it inward. Instead of seeing what is outside, see its reflection within. Careful - I am not suggesting that that is true. Then begins the question, "Which is the reflection of what? Is that the reality which is reflected within me, or is this the reality which is reflected there? Is that a tape recorder which is reflected in my mind as a tape recorder, or do I have the idea or thought that that is a tape recorder and therefore it is seen as a tape recorder?" In Rishikesh there are wandering cows which can eat anything - your clothes, paper, anything. But the cow does not eat 'your clothes' - it is eating, and what is being eaten is food, so to the cow the clothes are food, not clothes. Which comes first? Does the idea arise in you that that is a tape recorder, and does it come and hit you on your head and say "I am a tape recorder"? The two (if they are two at all) happen almost simultaneously. There is a confusion, and one does not know which is the substance and which is the shadow; which is the reality, and which is the reflection. When this ideation which arises within becomes absolutely clear - for the simple reason that the attention is totally absorbed in it, that is meditation.

First, there is the focusing of attention, in-as-much as the dissipation is prevented. How does one do that? By the practise of pranayama, asana etc. But one mysterious element is really needed and that is love, affection, interest. Probably the ancient Yogis introduced the element of God into it in order to inspire that love. If that love and affection is not there, the focusing of one's attention may not be so easy. You can violently coerce your attention to be focused on it, but then its rearing to go, to jump off at a tangent.

Once the attention is focused in a single beam, one end of the beam of attention is the idea that arises and the other end is considered the object. I do not know what the object is, but is it possible for me to watch the subject, the idea that arises? Is it possible to hold it in sharp focus? Can this single idea be held intensely? Intensely means without the interference of tense - past, future or even present tense. When I look at her and the idea arises "That is Miss so and so", that is past tense isn't it? Someone told me who you are - that's past tense. I remember you might go to Europe next year - that's future tense; I think you are a nice girl - present tense. When all these three tenses are removed, I am intensely watching you - or watching the reality of what is here, the idea of what that is.

What creates these tenses - the present, past and future tense? Thought! So when I dismiss - or when the intense observation itself dismisses, these three tenses, then the attention has gone beyond tension - which is born of the tense, and gone beyond thought. That is where the reality is - beyond thought and beyond the tense. This does not mean that thoughts are bad or thoughts are to be abolished. If thoughts are abolished completely, then who knows what thought is? Keep the thought and look into it; keep the idea and look

into it. First there is the focusing of attention, then the attention is focused on itself, intensely. When that happens:

"tad eva rthamatranirbhasam

svarupa sunyam iva samadhih (III.3)

In that intensity of attention - which is meditation, only that exists which you have chosen to observe, as if even 'I' does not exist. When the object alone exists, it is obviously the subject, isn't it? What do we mean by 'the object alone exists'? It is like the handkerchief again: that end is you, this end is me. When that end is gone and this end alone exists, what exists in reality is the middle, the handkerchief. The 'I' is assimilated in 'you', and 'you' is absorbed in 'me'. What remains is what is - and that is samadhi. It is again simple if one approaches the whole thing without getting bamboozled and dazzled by the word samadhi.

trayam chatra samyamah. (III.4)

These three together are called 'samyamah'. Samyamah means 'thoroughly restrained'.

tasya bhumisu vini yogah (III.6)

Once you have acquired this mastery over samyamah, once the whole matter of attention has been thoroughly disciplined, then that disciplined attention can be directed to anything. As a matter of scientific interest, Patanjali details in the third section of the book a few such fields in which such a disciplined attention can be used. Two or three what Hatha Yoga describes as psychic centers, are mentioned.

nabhi cakre kaya vyuha jnnam (III.29)

If you focus the disciplined attention on the navel center which is the Manipura chakra (the solar plexus), you will acquire a direct and immediate knowledge of the structure of your body - if you want to do it.

hanthakupe ksut pipasa nivrittih (III.30)

If you focus all this attention upon the throat centre - though the text does not mention it as such, it merely says hanthakupe, 'in the throat', you will be free from hunger and thirst.

murdha jyotisi siddha darsanam (III.32)

If you concentrate all this disciplined attention upon the crown of your head, you will be able to behold saints, sages, and yogis of the past, present and future. If you want to. Having said all that, the author also warns: "Do not be carried away by all this, these are distractions". These are considered distractions because, as long as the observer-observed division continues to exist, whether the observed be material object, psychological phenomena or psychic phenomena, this division is capable of leading you astray once again. As long as Adam was alone, there was no fall. When there was a division, there was a fall.

So we come back to the main theme of the Yoga Sutras: How does duality arise? How do I experience pain and pleasure? At the very beginning of the Sutras we were told that in Yoga the observer remains in his own natural state.

tada drastuh svarupe 'vasthanam (I.3)

The 'I' - if that word can be used, remains in a natural state, without the division created by the idea. The ocean remains the ocean - with or without the waves, but without the idea of a wave. The surface of the ocean may be calm, or dotted with millions of ripples and waves, but it is still one ocean - undivided, indivisible. That is Yoga. When that is not there all the other troubles arise - the mind interferes in what is natural to life, and considers some experiences as pleasure and some as pain. Merely disciplining the mind and applying disciplined attention to various objects and learning the truth concerning them is not a valid goal of Yoga. Or, all goals are taboo! A goal being the movement from here to there, it itself creates division! So the Yogi is encouraged to observe the phenomenon of division.

What I observe within is the reality. Where is this image? Where is the reflection of the object formed? You say "I see you within me". It is a lovely expression. I am thinking of you, and when I am thinking of you, I can see you within me. Am I like these cups and saucers which can be pushed into one another? Am I like an onion? So 'I' am that and 'me' is this, and within that 'you' are the third layer of the onion - the outer layer being 'I', the second layer being 'me' and the third layer being 'you'. I do not think I am an onion!

In order to arrive at the same understanding, we use a mantra. I am mentally repeating the mantra - the mantra is heard by me. Am I one or two? Which of these is me? This is a very serious problem because, in finding an answer to this, one is able to find an answer to a million problems that arise in our daily life. e.g. 'I pity myself' - who is the one that pities whom? 'I' pity 'myself', is an expression which I have never understood. I do not mind if you stand in front of a mirror and say, "You are an idiot" - at least you are talking to that image, but how can I pity myself, what does it mean? Another expression is, "I want

to destroy myself". What does it mean? I hate myself, I love myself, I want to destroy myself, I pity myself, I congratulate myself. Which one is me? This is my problem. If you are a healthy person and I am a sick person, and you look at me and say, "Ah! poor thing", you pity me! And if I pity myself, the "I" that pities the self is superior, it is me. Then why do I pity myself? The confusion arises because of the division.

I think one must be thoroughly sceptical concerning these expressions, and realise that these distinctions are first of all verbal: I am one, I cannot be two - I cannot pity myself, I cannot congratulate myself, I cannot pat myself on the back. All that is rubbish - I am one. Where does this division arise? How do I know I am one? When I am sleeping I am completely one, an integrated personality, there is absolutely no division in me. Where does this division arise, how does it arise? It is possible - and perhaps it is wise - to use a catalytic agent like a mantra. You can do it with your own emotions, with your own thoughts, with your own self-pity, your own self-hate and your own self-love. But perhaps because of the emotionalism involved, it is a bit more difficult. So the yogi uses a catalyst, a mantra. While using the mantra he observes the mantra and its sound. How do I know I am repeating the mantra? Because I hear it. What does it mean, "I am repeating the mantra and I am hearing it?" It seems as though 'I', the listener is here, and 'I', the repeater is there. Is this true? When the attention is totally focused on this phenomenon, the two ends of the handkerchief merge in the handkerchief itself. You suddenly realise it is only one. There is a beautiful Sutra -

drasta drsimatrah suddho 'pi

pratyaya 'nupasyah (II.20)

I go on seeing, and in the intensity of that vision suddenly there is an understanding that seeing alone is true, observation alone is true. When this observation and this power of observation wants to identify itself, it says, "I observe, I see". The moment this 'I see' idea has arisen, 'you' has also come into being. The word used is 'drasta' - observer, but it can be replaced by any experience.

Pure experiencing alone is true. And when that pure experiencing wants to identify itself, an ego sense arises. The ego sense arising on one side creates the object on the other. The arising of the subject creates the object on the other end. The handkerchief alone is the truth, the reality. When I call this one end, that becomes the other end. When you see it as the handkerchief, it has no ends at all - no beginning, no end. What is considered the ego is nothing but the pure experiencing, wanting (as it were) to experience its own experience.

Let's put it the other way. You are lying down and sleeping peacefully, blissfully, and that which is peacefully and blissfully asleep (as it were) challenges itself. Now I am asleep. But I do not know I am asleep. I am sleeping peacefully, but I do not experience that peace. I am sleeping happily, but I do not experience any happiness. Let me push that a little away, so that I can have an experience of that peace and that happiness. The desire or the craving for the experience itself is the experience. If that craving or desire drops, there is pure experiencing, pure delight - which is natural. Who is the experiencer here? None but the craving to experience. When that craving to experience arises, it identifies itself as the ego, 'I', or 'me', and utilising the same pure experience, creates the 'you' there. The 'you' may be a person or a psychological phenomenon called pain or pleasure, happiness or unhappiness, order or disorder. If this craving for experience subsides that also has gone, but what remains is this pure experience.

If one is able to resolve all this by intensely observing the arising of this craving for experiencing, can the craving for experiencing drop without interfering with the natural experiencing? Can the eyes remain open and see without a perceiver coming up? Then there is pure vision, clear vision, clairvoyance - unadulterated by my thoughts and by my ideas concerning you. In that there is delight, in that there is love! A vision in which there is no division is love.

There are some Sutras which seem to suggest a kind of sequence, which we have dealt with.

vitarka vicara nanda 'smita

'nugamat samprajnatah (1.17)

First one may have to argue the pros and cons within oneself - vitarka. Vicara is letting the attention move towards the truth, not arguing within oneself, not thinking about that, but letting the attention move towards the roots of thought, the source of thought. Where does this thought arise? The thought arises in 'I', in 'me'. Where does this 'me' arise? The 'me' arises as the craving for experience. If, for instance, the desire to see you is not there in me, will I not see you at all? When the eyes are open, they see. When this craving and the desire to experience disappears

tad drseh kaivalyam (II.25)

experiencing alone exists. When that has been achieved or not achieved, or reached or not reached, attained or not attained - because it is not an achievement, it is not a goal, then experiencing alone exists. The observer, (what shall we say?) does not disappear. For instance, when you see one end

of the handkerchief, you see one end; when you see the other end, you see the other end, but when you see the handkerchief, what happened to the ends? They are there, but as handkerchief. So this pure experiencing alone exists - alone in the sense of all one. This pure experiencing is seen as both object and subject, but without the division of object and subject. Then there is freedom.

It is that freedom that is indicated in the Yoga philosophy. Not freedom from you, not from pain, but total freedom. Freedom from the craving for experience, and therefore liberation of the experiencing as such. Obviously you see immediately that all of our prejudices and so on will vanish, and there is love, harmony, unity and peace. You have stopped sorrow at its very source, before it gets you - the root of sorrow is destroyed.