



The Undivided Self

talks on the Patanjali Yoga Sutras
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[I]

What is called raja yoga is really called yoga by the author of the Yoga Sutras. Somewhere I read a rather interesting suggestion that it is called raja yoga because this is the yoga to be practised only by the rajas, or by the kings, by the princely ones. It may also be that someone wanted to exalt it above all and so called it raja yoga.

A similar expression occurs in the Bhagavad Gita:

rajavidya rajaguhyam pavitram idam uttamam

pratyaksavagamam dharmyam ausukhornkartum avyayam (IX.2)

This is the kingly science, the kingly secret, the supreme purifier, realisable by direct intuitional knowledge, according to righteousness, very easy to perform and imperishable.

Instead of raja yoga, Krishna calls it raja vidya. Giving his reason why his teaching deserved that self proclaimed title of raja vidya, he says it is pure, supreme, and you do not have to depend upon someone else's description for what it is all about - you can experience it. "Pratyaksavagamam" is a bit more complicated than experience. You can see it, it is something that will stand in front of you and say here it is, this is what you have been looking for - dharmyam, and it is not contrary to dharma. What is dharma? One's nature, fundamental nature. Dharma is not adhering to a set of doctrines, dogmas or principles, as it is often translated to mean, but it is being what one is by nature. By this is mean: if the grass is green, it preserves its dharma, it adheres to its dharma; if a human being is human, he is established in his dharma. "Susukham". In the practice of this yoga there is no pain and therefore there is no gain either. You are just what you are! What do you want to gain? "Kartum avyayam". It is an inexhaustible infinite path. The last bit is important to remember.

When the question arises in the mind, "Why do I practise yoga?", the obvious answer is that that mind is immature, that that mind is still seeking something outside itself, and therefore it will never look within. Such a mind is immature and such a mind will probably not comprehend what yoga is about. You can pick up this little text and if you wish to, you may interpret some of the sutras as suggesting a goal. The 'goal' is always distant and you pursue the goal. The goal behaves like any of us. When you pursue me with a gun in your hand, I run away from you. The goal does exactly the same thing. The hotter you run in pursuit of the goal, the faster it runs away from you. Happiness one of those things. You try harder and harder with all your might and sweat to gain that happiness; it seems to be just beyond your reach.

The sutras themselves do not suggest any goal at all. For one who is interested in a goal there are other things. You can practise hatha yoga, yoga asanas , pranayama - I am not saying they are useless. Goal oriented practices suggest a goal which you pursue, till one day you realise that the goal is not exactly what you sought or what you thought was good. One has to arrive at even this by oneself, not because someone else says a goal is useless. In Hindi goal means a circle, and that is precisely what happens to people who seek a goal. They run round in circles.

The danger in running after or pursuing a goal is twofold. One, immediately you are asking for frustration. If I do not reach that goal, I am frustrated. Take for instance light and sounds which people experience in meditation.

She goes into samadhi and says, "Ah, I saw a brilliant light." You do not see anything. Then what do you do? Either you get frustrated, or which is worse, you 'think' you see something. Thought being a thing, it itself creates the hallucination that you are also seeing some kind of a light. I am not saying that the lights are dangerous, that the experiences are non-existent, but then one imagines within oneself that one is also seeing that, and that is the danger.

Raja yoga also has a whole chapter devoted to these psychic experiences, and at the end of that chapter at last the author says these are all distractions - better avoid them. These are not suggested as goals but as wayside experiences which may not even be a signpost or encouraging signs, but may just be distractions. A wise man in India was once asked a question by a member of the audience he was addressing. "What is the goal of life?" He simply shrugged his shoulders and said "death". He was Mr. Rajagopalachari, a very wise man and also a political leader. What is the goal of life? Everybody is going in the same direction, towards the grove. One who understands this inexorable law, this inevitable sequence of life does not entertain desires for attainments and achievements here - they seem to be meaningless, useless, silly. When death stares what we call life in the face, material possessions, psychic achievements and spiritual goals seem to be absolutely, totally meaningless. And so, the wise sage, when he was asked the question, "What is the goal, why must I practise yoga?", suggested something very smart. Instead of slapping the question back on you, saying, "Nonsense, drop that question", he says, "The goal of yoga is self-knowledge." Self-knowledge. What is self-knowledge? He merely said, "Self-knowledge, know thy self, know thy self and be free." Free from what? Free from the self or goals.

Our master used to sing, "Inquire who am I, know the self and be free. Free from what he did not say. Freedom is ... a third word is not necessary - freedom 'is'. It is not freedom from something or freedom to do something.

Freedom is. Immediately you realise that freedom is freedom from a goal, freedom from seeking anything else. That is self knowledge. Know the self. But unfortunately, once again having committed ourselves to a thing called a goal, we tend to make even the self an object of the self and say, "I am meditating upon the self."

What do I mean when I say, "I am meditating upon myself"? If that is not understood, it leads to all sorts of other complications. You have heard this - a selfish man is one who loves himself. I love myself, or I hate myself, or I pity myself, or I destroy myself. Which one is me? When I hate myself, is the hater the me or the hated the me? What do I mean by saying, "I hate myself", "I know myself." "Which one is me, which one is the real me in that? Am I one or two or multiples like a beehive? So all that confusion arises when I think I know how to meditate upon myself. Having created this split within myself, within that one self, this dichotomy is then spread to all departments of my life. Everything is chopped up, and in this vivisection we try to find a whole. So when the sage said, "Inquire, know thy self and be free - it is not know 'thy' self. It is not as though he has a self and I have an other self.

What happens when there is a goal which is necessarily external to the self, an object? If I am going to pursue that goal, either I get frustrated or go mad - mad in the sense that I create the goal and, having created the goal, I experience it. Hallucination, Or cannabilisation. You know what cannibalism is I think. You produce your own experience, you conjure up your own vision and start chewing it! "Ah, I have attained enlightenment." That is pure and simple cannibalisation, hallucination. Probably you have heard that both of these are dangerous. Once again, if I look at the inevitability of death, I refuse to believe that these things are dangerous; hallucination is not dangerous, frustration is net dangerous, anxiety is net dangerous, schizophrenia is not dangerous, madness is not dangerous, nothing is dangerous. When death is ready to put an end to all these, what is dangerous? So please do not let us worry ourselves too much about the dangers of yoga, the dangers of pranayama, the dangers of kundalini getting awakened. All the danger will pass. The only thing that can be said is it is a waste of time and we need not regret it. As we waste our time in so many other ways, wasting a little more time in so-called spiritual practices is no danger at all.

Whatever I may do, whether I practise hatha yoga, raja yoga, jnana yoga, bhakti yoga or karma yoga, the self is still there in all that, serving as the bed for all these desires and cravings to come up, and serving at the same time as the fulfillment of those cravings and desires. It is a lovely game that goes on inside me all the time, whether I am a business man or a swami, or a yogi, or a jnani, or whatever I may wish to call myself. The whole time this thing goes on, the desires or cravings seem to arise, and they seem to be painful at times. And then the mind invents its own fields of satisfaction and the craving seems

to flow towards that satisfaction, so that a satisfaction is also imagined. We go round and round and round. In all that the self is there unaffected, totally unaffected, whether we play the game of a yogi, or a bhogi or a rogi, whether you are a yogi - you know what a yogi means I hope, or a bhogi, that is one who thinks he enjoys life - it is not "eat, drink and be merry", but it is "eat, drink and be sorry" - or a rogi, a sick man.

Is that self knowable? Which means, is it an object of my knowledge? No, And yet since the mind keeps functioning, it treats even self as an object of knowledge. It's a mystery, it's a puzzle, or it's a paradox - paradox in the literal sense of the word, something which is beyond the teaching, but something which may arise in oneself as a possible result of a teaching. The self is there all the time, it is the self that thinks it is a yogi, it is the self that thinks it is a bhogi, it is the self that thinks it is a rogi. It does not matter what the condition is. Swami Sivananda sang beautifully: "In all conditions I am knowledge, bliss absolute." If it is the absolute, how can it say "I am the absolute", as if it is different. That is the puzzle, that is the paradox which each one has to unravel within himself. Something that is beyond words. When words are used, a sort of dichotomy is apparently created, not really created.

Self-knowledge implies the self that 'is' knowledge, not as a goal. The self itself is knowledge, the self knows its self. Why is it so? Because the self is knowledge. The self is the experiencer of all experiences. However, in that experience, in that experiencer - there is no division. "I am experiencing 'this'", and therefore holy men, yogis have resorted to deep sleep as the aptest illustration. You can neither begin to sleep, nor wake yourself out of sleep when you want. You have to have an alarm clock or something else, or wait till sleep leaves you. You cannot even say during sleep, "Oh, I am fast asleep, do not disturb me." If you say so, you are not sleeping. You do not even know during sleep, "Oh, it is quite marvelous." Once again it becomes clear that the inner division arises when there is a desire to experience whatever be the condition in which I am. If I become totally one with that condition, the experience is lost. The experiencer is born and the experience, as a division, arises when there is desire for the experience, for the conscious experience. So that, vaguely, I am sleeping or I am sleep - there is no difference between me, the sleeping person and the sleep itself as an experience. We are one, totally one.

One can imagine a process like this: I experience the peace. I am one with that peace. I am one with that great inner quiet and silence. There is great joy, great delight. Ah, it's so nice, it's so beautiful, I wish I could experience this, I wish I could experience this peace, I wish I could become conscious of this joy. When this desire arises, you wake up, and the peace is gone, the happiness is gone, the joy is gone. All the worries are also awakened in you.

So it is actually the desire to experience even peace that creates the division and the confusion. So, the self is knowledge, the self is pure experiencing.

The pain that is experienced before falling asleep is also absorbed in that unity of sleep. What happened to the pain otherwise? I had a toothache but then I fell asleep, not because I take sleeping pills. Sleeping pills are pills that sleep; if you take sleeping pills, the pills sleep and you are left wide awake and so you wake up fatigued and worn out. During sleep, the sleep took me over along with the pain. And in that homogeneity there is no division at all, and therefore there is no experience of the pain nor the experience of pleasure. However, in sleep there is ignorance. The self is 'knowledge' in which there is no division at all. And that self is now whatever we call ourselves, whether we call ourselves yogis, bhogis or yogis. Yet this self does not undergo any of those experiences as a subject-object relationship. The self does not suffer illness, the self does not enjoy the pleasures, and the self is not involved in all your yoga practice. The self is the self all the time as pure uncontaminated knowledge and therefore it is not the object of anybody's quest nor a goal to be reached.

Hence, if you search for the goals of yoga in the Yoga Sutras, you will find that they are non-existent. The Yoga sutras do not suggest any goal at all.

tado drastuh svarupe 'vasthanam

It merely means: you are yourself all the time. When all the goals drop away, then I am myself. I was myself even when the goals were there. It is just like whether you wear these clothes or those clothes, these robes or those robes. Whatever you wear, your body is still the same, exactly the same. So, whether you call yourself a yogi, whether you call yourself a bhogi, whether you call yourself a rogi, the self is totally uncontaminated by any of these - it is ever the same. At one time the mind thinks it is miserable and therefore it is miserable. At another time the mind thinks it is happy and therefore it seems to be happy.

When I am pursuing happiness there is an unacknowledged unhappiness which alone is true, and therefore I am experiencing unhappiness created by myself; and I am pursuing happiness which is ever beyond my reach and therefore I am miserable all the time. There is a quotation from the Yoga Sutras:

eva sarvah vivekinah (II.15)

I am unhappy all the time because I am pursuing something, I am pursuing a goal which is fleeting, impermanent, What is permanent? The pursuer of all this, the pursuer of all these goals, the experiencer of all these experiences,

the knowledge that forever knows remains as knowledge. It does not pursue any goals thereafter, it is ever there, not static, not asleep but awake, wide awake, undivided, uncontaminated.

Hence it is not a goal. Yoga has no goal at all. The pursuit of the goal is the root cause of all our troubles and difficulties. When the goal is dropped, then life flows on smoothly, life seems to know which way to flow, how to flow - and in that flow there is no problem, there is no bother, there is no worry, there is no anxiety, there is no mental distress, there is no unhappiness. But the avoidance of unhappiness is not necessarily the goal of yoga. When the self remains the self without pursuing a goal outside itself, without pursuing an object created by itself, there 'is' bliss - bliss is not the goal. Once the bliss is taken to be a goal outside the self, the division is made and trouble starts. Can we practice yoga, can we understand yoga, can we assimilate yoga, can we live in the spirit of yoga without creating a goal, constantly inquiring, looking within? That

is the object, or rather the non-object of yoga. When the object is outside, consciousness seems to flow in a stream, externally. When the quest is for self knowledge, there is the flow of consciousness, the flow of attention within oneself. That's all, nothing more can really be said. The flow of consciousness, your awareness, seems to be within, What do we mean by this, from where did it arise? We do not know. It is everywhere. The only thing that can be said is that there is no pursuit of an object.

We will see if we can study the Yoga Sutras in that spirit: without making anything a goal, without suggesting to ourselves that because we practise yoga we are going to be happy. If I am telling myself by practising yoga I am going to be happy, I am merely asserting that I am not happy now. Can we drop all this and merely look at yoga as if it is without psychological pollution?

[II]

I heard a remark last night that some friend felt that what was referred to as the self was not quite clear. I can appreciate the difficulty for the simple reason that we have accustomed ourselves to consider only that clear which shines as an object in front of us. It is quite reasonable, understandable and natural that the self is not clear. The self is not an object, it is the subject. And it is the very framer of that question. That which threw up that question is the self, that which asks that question is the self. What is the self? It does not become clear because of the constant endeavour to objectify the self. It can never be made an object. The self is the self, the self is ... We should divest ourselves of this bad habit of considering only that as knowledge in which there is awareness of an object. When this has dropped away it is possible that what is called self-knowledge or self which is knowledge, or knowledge which is self, becomes clear in its own way - not in the way in which I see you, not in the manner in which you hear me, but in another completely different type of knowledge. That knowledge which enables you and me, without verification, to know that "I am alive". Isn't that marvelous. If someone says, "Oh, Swami, you are dead", it does not mean a thing. And if someone asks: "Are you sure you are alive?", the question is meaningless. How do I know I am alive? In Sanskrit they call it "svatasiddha" - self-existent, self-evident. I hope you are also listening to the word 'self' being repeated all the time. Self-evident, self-luminous. When it is considered an object of knowledge, it is destroyed; and hence one of the greatest sages of the Upanishads Yajnavalkya poses this question while instructing his wife Maitreyi, "How do you know the knower?" This quest for an object which is the goal must be dropped at the very first step, at the door. Not merely your hats, and your shoes, but that which is inside your skull also has to go. That which you call your soul must be exposed like the sales are exposed if the shoes are taken off.

Let us turn to the sutras themselves. We will take a few sutras each day for examination; and if you have a translation at home, please do have a look.

atha yoga 'anusasanam (I.1)

This is the first Sutra. We have no commandments here, there are no do's and don'ts. "Let us consider what this yoga means". "Sasanam" means an edict, a commandment; "anusasanam" is advice. Advice is something very easy to give. When advice is very easily given, it merely adds vice. It makes no sense at all. Here I am not advising you, for I would only be adding to the vices that you may already have. What is being said must be immediately relevant to the me, to the self, to myself. If it is not so relevant, if the brain is always busy creating more concepts, we shall be drawing further away from the centre and the self.

We are merely discussing what this yoga may be about. "Anusasanam" may mean a discussion, an inquiry.

The second Sutra is the most concise definition of yoga:

yogas citta vrtti nirodhah (I.2.)

The literal translation is "yoga is nirodhah of the vrtti in the citta". That is no translation at all, is it! If we get hooked onto this idea that "nirodhah" means suppression, it leads to difficulties, and then we imagine that all thoughts must be suppressed. How do you suppress something which you do not even see? I am not quarreling with that idea or concept of suppression at all. If you must translate this Sutra into "yoga is suppression of mental modifications", then look at your own mental modifications and then suppress them. Can you look at them, are they clear to you, are they as clear to you as this scarf is? I can touch this scarf. But how do I touch my mind - where is it? In any case we will all reach the same point. But I suggest it may not mean suppression of thought. For, if you discover that to suppress the thoughts is a difficult task, what do you do? You think that the yogis were very clever - they took hashish and the thoughts were suppressed. So the whole line of approach of suppressing thoughts, or suppressing mental modifications is erroneous in the first place, and inevitably leads to unpleasant consequences such as drugs and all kinds of depravity. So we leave that word "nirodhah" as it is, and we will see if we can become aware of the meaning.

There are two other words - "citta" and "vrtti". What is "citta"? That which is able to generate vrttis. What are vrttis? Vrttis are those things which are generated by the citta. If that is not clear let us go onto the roof of some building and look at a garden. What do you see? A garden. What is a garden? Well, I see many trees. Now do you see many trees or do you see one garden? How is it possible for you to see many trees and one garden at the same time? Are they the same or different? You can play this trick: you look at it, you see one garden and you blink a couple of times - many trees. You may even use the expression 'there are many trees in that one garden'. But that is absurd. There are many tablets in this one container, but the container is not a tablet. When all these tablets have been taken away, the container is empty and I throw it away. In a similar manner, get hold of a garden. There are many trees in this garden. Cut down the trees. Do I still have the garden? No. So it is not true to say there are many trees in that garden. You are talking about one thing. You blink once you see the garden, you blink once again, you see many trees. Now, you realise that from one point of view it is a garden, and from another point of view it is many trees. From one point of view it is 'one', from another point of view it is 'many'. Is the one true or is the many true. Or perhaps neither is true, and something else is true.

The many in relation to this sutra is the vrttis: the many thoughts, the many concepts, the many notions, the many perceptions that seem to come up in the mind all the time. Is there a mind devoid of that? Perhaps not. I do not know. At one moment it looks as though it is one citta, one mind, and the next moment, from another point of view, it looks as though it is a mere supermarket of innumerable thoughts, innumerable concepts, innumerable notions - the same thing, This is from one point of view, this is from another point of view, and there may be a third point of view - that is called nirodhah. You blink and you see the garden, you blink again and you see the many trees. Which is real? This or that? Maybe neither. The question "what is truth?" is nirodhah.

Now is it somewhat clear? It cannot be absolutely clear, because we are using words. My mind is full of thoughts. Is there a mind apart from those thoughts or are there thoughts apart from the mind? If you take the classic example of the ocean and the waves, perhaps it may be clearer. Are there waves apart from the ocean? Can you take those waves away and clear the ocean of all waves? No. Or, is it even reasonable to say that as long as there are waves, there is no ocean, ocean must be without waves? There is no ocean without waves. Can we say then that the ocean has got waves, just as you can say that the swami has got a nice scarf? Is it therefore possible to stand on the beach and look at the ocean: "Ah, they are waves", then to blink again and see that it is all one ocean, just one mass of water. That is one point of view, this is another point of view. But, what is truth? What happens to you when this question arises? That is called nirodhah. It is something inexpressible which goes on. You see the several points of view and you merely question what is the truth?

That is nirodhah. Then it may be relevant to mention here that therefore the yogi does not suppress anything, the yogi is not interested in expressing anything. The yogi does not say that this alone is the truth, that that alone is the truth. Something profound, something tremendous takes place within you. It is some thing inexpressible, but of tremendous importance. It is not possible to make it an object of understanding, but it is something - and that is called yoga.

Without suggesting that the next step is a consequence, a result, or a reward, the author goes on to say:

tada drastuh svarupe 'vasthanam (I. 3)

When yoga happens in that manner, the seer, the observer of all this, the experiencer of all experiences, rests unmodified by points of view. The seer or the experiencer rests as the self without any modification, though these modifications may keep playing. The waves may be breaking on the shore, but

the ocean is not diminished thereby. The waves may be rolling back into the sea, but the ocean is not increased. The ocean remains the ocean, constant. The Sutra does not even say that when yoga happens in this manner, when the nirodhah, which is yoga, happens in this manner, you gain something or you lose something. It does not say that you gain self-knowledge, enlightenment. Nor does it say, as is often suggested here and there, that what is unreal is lost. What does it mean? There is an illusory feeling that I have got half a dozen spiders on my back and you are telling me, "When you get rid of this illusion, the spiders will be gone and your back will remain behind you." There were no spiders in the first place, and the back was behind me all the time. Once again, I am not being critical, but these wise men realised that we are somehow committed to profit and loss business. If a thing is not explained in terms of profit and loss, we are not interested in it. That is why the whole teaching, as you can readily see, is couched in commercial terms: I gain self knowledge, I lose ignorance.

Without mentioning any of these things, Patanjali merely drops the next Sutra:

tada drastuh svarupe 'vasthanam. (I.3)

When yoga happens in this manner, the totality is, and by transcending all points of view, this totality is immediately realised as their substratum. The totality is not one point of view or the other point of view. The totality is neither this nor that - it transcends the whole and therefore blends all points of view into it. That is the beauty of what is called self-knowledge. Self-knowledge is not the absolute negation of any point of view, but the subtle transcendence of all individual points of view so that the total may be realised. That is the beauty, and therefore there is no repression, no suppression, nothing that you and I can discuss. There is nothing that the mind can grasp, and hold. The Self-knowledge is like a fish! When you wish to catch that fish with greasy hands, it slips through your fingers. If it so happens that you are so powerful and you have such huge hands that you can catch that fish and take it out, then it is dead. Either way it is a dead loss. Because it is total, it is cosmic in its dimension. It is the infinite. One has to surrender oneself and not look for any profit or loss in all this. It is not this point of view, it is not that point of view. You are still standing at the seashore on the beach looking at the sea. One moment you see the sea, the next moment you see the waves, and the third moment you are asking what is the truth concerning this.

Now the enquiry begins: what is the truth? Immediately you realise something of extraordinary importance. The self. That point of view was rooted in the self, this point of view was rooted in the self, and the enquiry springs from the self. In all these three conditions the self remained constant.

Let us use the word "I". Do not get worked up over what we mean by this word "I". I saw the waves and I thought it a very limited vision. I saw the ocean which seemed to mean 'minus the waves', which appeared to be absurd, and I enquire into the nature of truth. The "I" seems to be constant, the subject is constant in all this. That is the seer, that is the experiencer of all experiences. That is the seer of all sights. That is, and therefore all else is. It is because it exists that everything else shines. And yet strangely enough, even though that self continues to exist in all these states, and continues to be the substratum for all these points of view, the observer remains for ever unmodified. The self itself does not undergo modification.

When this state of yoga or nirodhah does not prevail - please remember in this yoga text there is neither a temptation nor a threat, but a mere statement of fact - then:

vrtti sarupyam itaratra (I.4)

That is "there seems to be an apparent modification in the citta or in the mind." It is obvious I think. We can see this very clearly in the three major states we experience every day - sleep, dream and waking. If you have ever reflected on these three, it is possible you get confused, it is possible you get demented, it is possible you get enlightened. I sleep without even knowing I sleep, I dream - it is even possible to know during the dream that I dream, creating things within myself, or I do not know what the world is in which I roam during dreams. Then I wake up, I come back to this hall, the shadows, the microphone, the light and so on. The person who was fast asleep possessed no intelligence

at all. He remembered nothing. He could produce neither a single good thought, nor a single bad thought. He was neither a good person nor a vicious person, but completely covered by a blanket of ignorance, darkness, sleep. Is he the same person who sits in front of me now? He seems to be different. And once again in dream! The king dreams that he is a beggar and the beggar dreams that he is a king. Which is true?

For our discussion now, it may be relevant to ask, "Which is me?" Am I the stupid person that I seem to be when I am fast asleep, dreaming now that I am a very clever man. Or, is this personality real? Which one is true? The self itself seems to undergo modification. I seem to undergo modification. Now I think I am a swami. When I am dreaming of a lion or a tiger, I am a frightened man, and when I sleep, I am stupid. How come I can be all these three rolled into one? I am a very clever men, I am a very stupid man, and I am a frightened men, It does not seem to make any sense at all. In other words, experience seems to modify the self or the experiencer. Is that true? In

the same way, when we were small children, we were playing with toys, and now that we are grown up we play with other toys called memories.

Do I also undergo all these changes? And then still more interesting is that it is possible that I was a dog in my previous birth. And in this birth I am so and so. Do I remember that I was a dog, so that now I must congratulate myself that I practise yoga?

vrtti sarupyam itaratra (I.4)

That dog is so completely and totally transformed in accordance with the experience it is undergoing now. Is that true? Is it true therefore that the experience that I am undergoing at the moment brings about a complete and irreversible transformation in the self? Is that so?

There are two types of changes. One is irreversible change. You take some milk and put some culture into it and it becomes yoghurt. You can do what you like, it will never become milk again. The other type of change you see in the case of water. Boil it and it becomes vapour; you condense it and it becomes water again. You put it in the fridge, it becomes ice. There is only an apparent modification here, not a real modification, real transformation. Why is it so? Because the element - the H₂O, is constant. The molecules are constant. When I go to sleep, when I dream, there is not an irreversible change because I wake up. When I wake up, even that does not seem to be an irreversible change, because again I go to sleep and dream. So it seems as though these modifications are not irreversible, which means they are apparent. That is what they mean when they call it illusion, maya. They are not saying that that which is in front of you is unreal. There is something; something has undergone some kind of modification. Your consciousness seems to have undergone some modification. It clings to one little point of view, thinking that that is real. The yogi does not say that it is unreal. He merely says that that is not the totality; it is a mere passing mood, not the totality. So what is regarded as an illusion is the feeling I am angry, I am an adult, I am an old man, I am a young child, I am a dog, I love, I hate. There is illusion in this. Not the hate, the adulthood, the old age - that is not considered illusory, but to regard that as the total reality - that is obviously unreal. It is only a point of view, a small fragment. If you say that that is a fragment, you are absolutely right. If you say, "For the moment I am in a bad mood," that is not

considered illusion at all. Illusion arises when that little fragment is taken to be the total reality. One step more, and this is something marvelous. If all these are fragments, what is the totality? When that question is asked, immediately the distinction, the labels that we have stuck on all these seem to coalesce into truth. What I called love, fear, hate, jealousy, greed, were

nothing but waves arising on the ocean or in the ocean, on top of the ocean, on the bottom of the ocean, we do not know - yet made of this same water of the ocean. What you call love is the same as what you call hate. The labels are different, but the stuff, the reality, the content of these is the same. When that is seen, a tremendous inner transformation takes place. That is worth experiencing. That is called Yoga.

You realise that the content of all these, the content of all concepts, the content of all experiences, is the same. By the same token, pain and pleasure are also the same. By the same token, honour and dishonour are the same, success and failure are the same. Is there something other than the self, is there something other than the mind - citta, we will call it the mind; never mind what your idea of mind is? If the mind did not entertain a notion called greed, would there be greed? No. If the mind did not entertain a notion called charity, would there be charity?

No. You would still do something. And so unfortunately we have been using the word love as being the antithesis of hate, that is I love one and therefore I hate another. I love my children and therefore I hate anybody who threatens the safety of my children. We have unfortunately used it as pairs of opposites. The pairs of opposites drop away in the sense that one sees that the content of all these pairs of opposites is nothing but pure mind-stuff. When these pairs of opposites have dropped, then and then alone true love appears in one's life. The rest is merely a game. One realises that the pairs of opposites are all mode of the same substance. There is an experience which the mind, the vritti, somehow calls pleasure, there is an experience which the vrittis somehow call pain. If these words did not exist, if these labels were all burnt away, experience is experience and expression is expression, whether that expression is called love or hate, like or dislike, greed or charity. It is all the same. In exactly the same way the experiences are all the same, whether the experience is called pain or pleasure, life or death; the whole thing is one. Only the labels are different.

It is still not quite clear to the mind, because the mind loves to label. The Bible says Adam was told to name everything. So you were handed a rubber stamp and you started using it right from there. You can see how labeling and naming can become quite perverse. I do not like meat, but right from my childhood somebody says it is good for you, so that even though my whole being rebels against it, rejects it, or keeps on sticking the word good, it becomes good. It is terrible. We are ruled almost entirely by labels.

Someone may ask, 'Without labels how does one distinguish?' Is a label needed to say fire is hot? Why do you need to describe it? You go near it and it describes you. Fire is hot and ice is cold, and anyone who is not totally paralyzed would recognise it. If you must use that word "distinguish", he

would be able to distinguish that. His system is equipped with sufficient intelligence to deal with all these problems. The psychological labeling of this as a good thing and that as not good, is nothing but total perversion, the distortion of truth. So one merely asks, "What is it that considers it good?" That it is good is merely an idea; that it is not good, is another idea, another point of view. What is the content of this point of view? What is the content of that idea? Nothing but mind again. When this unified field is realised, then a completely different awareness arises; and in that awareness there is pure intelligence, there is pure experiencing. This is pure love, not as the antithesis of hate - but pure awareness, pure intelligence, pure love, undivided and whole.

This intelligence is capable of making all these fine distinctions. You would still know that this is your nose; and if you want to blow your nose, you will not rub your tissue against the ear; that is not the action of an intelligent yogi.

You may ask: "We are conditioned by duality - good and bad - how can we become unconditioned?" That is what all this yoga is about. The realization that I am conditioned is itself the unconditioning process. I can see the conditioning. That which sees this conditioning is obviously not involved in it. What is the seer, what is that which is becoming aware of that limitation, of that conditioning? Is that also limited? No. If that was also limited it would not be aware of anything other than conditioning, and therefore it would not be aware of the conditioning either. That which becomes aware of being conditioned is unconditioned already. As a matter of fact, that is almost the first verse in the Yoga Vasistha: one who feels I am bound and I want to be freed from this is fit for the practice of yoga.

[III]

One important word is "drastuh". The truth that this word denotes we shall leave for later discussion. When one is in a state of yoga, in the "citta vrtti nirodhah" state, the "drastuh" - the seer, or the experiencer, or the expresser or the self remains in its svarupa”:

tada drastuh svarupe 'vasthanam (I.3.)

When this state of yoga does not prevail, then there is a distortion: "vrtti sarupyam". Now, if we can devote a little time to understand this, I think the rest of the discussion will become very simple to understand. On the one hand there is this svarupa which literally means sva: "one's own", rupa "form" - the self in its own form. When the state of yoga does not prevail, then there is confusion, distortion, and in that distorted vision, a vrtti, fragment is mistakenly identified as the self. Even this word svarupa, when it is translated into "its own form" is an error. We do not know what the svarupa of the self means, but if we look at what this distortion could be and if you eliminate that distortion, what remains must be the svarupa.

There is a distortion, and in that distortion, a fragment, an idea, a vrtti that arises is mistaken as the self, to be the self. Watch carefully: now I tell you that I am a swami. Three hours later, when the swami has gone off to deep sleep, there is not even an answer to your question, "who are you?" Since those two responses are contradictions, neither of them is the reality, but merely a fragment. Thirty years ago I would have given you some other answer to the question, "Who are you?" What is the truth? What is the reality? Can we put all these fragments together and form a whole? In other words, can we assemble all the spare parts and call it Swami? Is the totality merely the aggregate of its own different parts?

The river Ganges is supposed to be extremely holy and Sankaracharya sang that if you sip one spoonful of Ganges water, you get moksha straight away. Very good. Having heard this I want to go to the Ganges and take one spoonful of Ganges water so that I may get moksha. I stand on the bank of the river which is pointed out to me as the river Ganges and I ask myself a very simple question: "What is Ganges here?" Is it the bed of the river that is referred to as Ganges? If the river had been diverted, would I still call that Ganges? Is the river bed Ganges, or is the water Ganges? If that water is Ganges, then that gutter water also becomes Ganges a little while later, so why not drink from the gutter before it joins the main stream? Is the aggregate of these things Ganges? It is very difficult to answer that question. So there are these two fragmentary experiences - one of which is called the many, the pieces of the jigsaw puzzle, the other is the supposed whole, which again the mind conceives of as the conglomeration of

the many. The master suggests that both of these are fragments. That which you call many is obviously a fragment, but that which you call one is also fragmentary.

Just to make it a bit more comprehensible one can make use of an illustration. Let us take a nice little golden statue of Krishna. It is Krishna, isn't it? You take it to a jeweller and he says, "Ah, it is not worth very much." Your Krishna is not worth very much to the jeweller. To him it is gold, but not very pure gold. Is it Krishna? It looks like it, but in essence it is gold. "Krishna" is just an idea that is formed in our own mind when we look at that thing made in a funny shape. But still it is gold. Does it mean that in order to remain in a state of yoga I must negate all this and remain in a state of oneness? That is exactly like looking for gold without any form whatsoever. That is not possible. You can melt all the gold ornaments in the world, but it will still have some shape. So the mind that says this is many is caught in one type of vrtti and the mind that says this is oneness is caught in another kind of vrtti. Therefore the yogi adopted a very beautiful attitude of neti-neti. Do not look for the self outside yourself - whether you consider it one, whether you consider it many, whether you consider it infinite, finite, or infinite finite objects put together. None of these things constitutes the self.

yan manasa na manute

yenahur mano matam

tadeva brahma tvam viddhi

nedam yadida mu pasate

"That which cannot be - seen by the eyes , that which cannot be grasped - understood by the mind, but that which thinks through the mind is the reality" - is a tremendously important mantra in the Upanishads. The yogi is not one who suppresses ideas and concepts, and cleans the mind of all those notions and so on. But he endeavours to find the content, the source of those ideas, those notions and those thoughts. It is a completely different effort. What is meant by nirodhah here, and what is meant by svarupa, is neither suppressing nor expressing, neither calling it thought nor calling it non-thought. Just as gold is never without some form, the citta is never without some concept, some percept. When the eyes are open, they see, and that is why we repeat in the universal prayer: "Let us behold thee in all these names and forms. " These names and forms do exist or they are seen, they are experienced, but can they be experienced as thee? A beautiful statement! I do not want them to disappear, but while these appearances appear to exist, can the reality be experienced? While these thoughts and notions do prevail in

what is called the mind, can the self be realised, can the self be made manifest? That is called nirodhah , that is called yoga.

Swami Sivananda often used to say that the yogi is not an unusual, supernatural, subnormal, supernormal being, but that everyone has knowingly or unknowingly experienced this state of "citta vrtti nirodhah", this state of yoga, some time or other - everyone without exception. In the case of most of us, this state of yoga or state of "citta vrtti nirodhah" happens; and we do not taste it, we do not enjoy it and therefore we are not established in it. The yogi consciously and deliberately moves towards it. One must be very careful here. You cannot consciously and deliberately bring on the state of yoga. It has to happen. But you can consciously and deliberately move towards it, so that you have an indirect experience of it in the penultimate state and in the state afterwards, when you return to what is called normal consciousness. In other words - when you want to fall asleep, you arrange the pillows properly, you switch off the lights, you lie down and you observe yourself falling asleep. As long as you are observing, you are not going to sleep. When you have fallen asleep, you stop observing; a couple of minutes before you are destined to sleep, the observation is switched off. But having deliberately moved towards that sleep, you remember, "This is what I wanted. I wanted to sleep." And when you wake up in the morning, once again, you say, "Oh , that was beautiful." So if you have learned to enjoy that state of sleep, to enjoy that state of yoga, to enjoy that state of meditation, then you cherish it, you value it, and then it is possible for you to be established in it. Otherwise, this state may slip through your fingers and go away.

You cannot will yourself into samadhi, you cannot will yourself into the state of yoga. As long as the will is there, the state of yoga is stant. But in this repeated exercising and experiencing of the state of yoga - not in itself, but just before and just after - something within tastes that peace, tastes that bliss. Then, you come out of your meditation room and someone says something that you do not like. You are still in that blissful mood. Something seems to come up, the old habit seems to raise its head, but you do not react now. It is neither an impotent resignation, nor a violent outburst. But you value the inner peace more than anything else. Therefore you are asked to meditate in the morning immediately after getting up from bed, coming out of sleep. It is so beautiful, so blissful , You wake up in the morning and you realise that you have been sleeping for six or seven hours at night. The world went on without you. Probably it went on better, without your meddling. Even the body was alive, functioning. So once again, just like the tortoise withdraws its limbs into its shell, you bring yourself back into it and try to taste that peace. 'Taste' that peace this time.

You spend half an hour or an hour in meditation; then you get up and come out, making sure every now and then that that peace is still there, that you

have not dropped it anywhere. If I do not drop that which I have in my pocket, it is bound to be there. I have not dropped that peace that I enjoyed in meditation, therefore it is bound to be there. When in this fashion, you constantly repeat that taste, that experience of the inner peace, then you are established in it. Then the yogis tell us that at that time there is a sort of double, consciousness - that expression is very dangerous so please take it very carefully, which is hinted at in the universal prayer: "Let us behold thee in all these names and forms." One becomes aware within oneself of a consciousness, an intelligence that is essentially indivisible. But it is not like shapeless gold, not a dull nothingness, not a dull void, but it is the content of all the thought, of all the concepts, of all the notions, of all the emotions, of all the feelings that arise, of all the experiences that arise.

The yogi is tremendously alert. In the Yoga Vasistha there is even a specific instruction that a yogi should live as if he were an ordinary human being, weeping with the sorrowful, and laughing with the joyous. In everything he is exactly the same as we are. But he knows that whether those experiences seem to be pleasant or unpleasant, happy or unhappy, the content of those experiences is the same pure experiencing that arises in one undivided, indivisible intelligence. Krishna specifically mentions this in the Bhagavad Gita:

saktah karmany avidvamso yatha kurvanti bharata

kuryad vidvams tatha 'saktas cikirsur lokasamgraham (III.25)

As the ignorant men act from attachment to action, O Arjuna, so should the wise act without attachment, wishing the welfare of the world.

nai 'va kimcit karomi 'ti yukto manyeta tattvavit

pasyan srnvan sprsan jighrann asnan gacchan svapan svasan (V.8)

"I do nothing at all", thus would the harmonised knower of Truth think - seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, going, sleeping, breathing.

The yogi behaves in exactly the same way as you and I do - seeing, touching, hearing, smelling, tasting, etc. But he knows that all these actions or expressions of his own senses, of the mind, of the intellect arise in that intelligence, and the content of these expressions is nothing but that pure intelligence which is in itself indivisible. That is the self. And the svarupa of the self is distorted by that little sentence, "That is the self", the moment you express that, the moment you describe that and say, "Oh, I see it is there." That intelligence is undivided, indivisible.

yo vai bhuma

tat sukham

na alpe sukhamasti

"The awareness of this indivisibility is bliss. Do not look for any happiness in that which is fragmented, whether you call it a finite being or a finite experience, or whether you call it the infinite." That is important to remember. I am meditating upon what I call the form of my guru, or the form of Krishna or the form of Buddha, and I am meditating upon what I call the infinite. The meditator is the infinite.

Can all these not be eliminated? This is another trick. The Buddhists often talk of what they call sunya. Sunya is a grossly misunderstood concept.

Sunya means void, nothingness. It is not void in the sense of the "formless" gold. But it is void in the sense that is void of an observer, I, of the subject that throws everything out as the object. These two, the subject and the object, are words. That which is beyond all this is the content of all this. That which is beyond all this, not in the sense that all these things must disappear, that all my thoughts and all my notions must be destroyed, is the content of all these at all times - it is the self. The content of all that we have so far called the object is also the self. The self is therefore indivisible intelligence. Again, that is what we repeat in the universal prayer: "You are omnipresent, omniscient". The you that is omnipresent is also the self, the very self of the me, the very self of all these. That is the svarupam of the self, which cannot be grasped by the mind - so let us never attempt it. But what can be realised, what can be seen by the buddhi or the awakened intelligence, is that elsewhere, where this yoga does not prevail, where this 'citta vrtti nirodhah" does not prevail, vrttis prevail.

There is limitation. For instance, thirty years ago you thought, "I am a young boy"; now the same person says, "I am a middle-aged man." Even that limitation need not necessarily be the cause of unhappiness; but when that limitation is considered in itself to be real and therefore permanent, then unhappiness arises. In other words, when that limitation is mistaken to be the sole reality, then there is confusion. If I am able to enquire into the nature of that fragmentary experience, and I discover that the content of that fragmentary experience is itself the self or the intelligence, then there is no unhappiness at all.

Would you like your life to be completely free from pain? Any doctor could administer some type of drug into your spine and paralyze the whole of your being. In a state of paralysis you do not feel any pain at all. One does not want

that. But a painful experience is still an experience. What is the content of that experience? Life, intelligence. So, essentially what is called a painful experience is experienced, "painful" being an interpretation of a mind that hates that experience, that longs for a different experience. What is the content of that experience? It is pure experiencing, it is an operation of pure intelligence. Is it possible to see that? Then one is constantly established in the self. When this does not happen, one identifies oneself with this pain, one feels that this pain is reality, that a thought is the total thing. I am not aware of the substratum of the whole thing which is pure intelligence. I experience each little bit as if it were the whole world. Patanjali very beautifully and scientifically declares that your entire life and all the experiences that you undergo in life, whether you call them painful or you call them not painful, can all be included in these five groups. What are they?

pramana viparyaya vikalpa nidra smrtaya (I.6)

"Pramana" - absolutely intelligent, logical, reasonable, correct. This is the correct view, this is right knowledge, truthful, honest, all that. "Viparyaya" is false knowledge, wrong knowledge. "Vikalpa" - imagination. "Smrti" - memory. "Nidra" - sleep. These are the five types of mental modifications which are all subject and these are the facts, whether they are regarded as painful or not painful.

Pramana is what you and I call right knowledge, but please do not forget one very important factor that all these are vrttis, fragments - and the fragment is not the total truth. What is fragmentary is false - false, not in the sense that these do not exist. You cannot say that the true ocean is waveless ocean. Something is there, but the mind says it is a wave apart from the ocean - that is the mistake. So all these five are vrttis or fragmentary experiences, and are not the truth or the svarupa or self. But it is possible, just for the sake of understanding, to classify them into these five categories.

First there is right knowledge; we are all familiar with this. When we say that this is right and that is wrong, what we actually mean is, "I think it is right", or if I do not want to appear so arrogant, I say, "Oh, no, what I think is right is not my opinion at all - it is the opinion of my guru, the founder of my cult. He is my authority and what he has laid down is right, and therefore I am humbly following him." Very good. But then you ask me one more question, "How does he become your authority?" I say, "I like him and so I have appointed him as my authority. I have chosen him to be my authority and therefore I am following him." That is called right knowledge. Most of our right knowledge can be easily brought into this category. What is truth and what is right, without raising any doubt within you, is that which is unconditioned. That is right and there is no question about it. But that is not included here. When we use the word pramana or right knowledge in the context of yoga or vedanta, it

is the right knowledge according to tradition, according to custom, according to one's own belief and so on.

Then we have wrong knowledge. An example of wrong knowledge can be given, where a description does not tally with any existent substance: the son-in-law of a barren woman. Another example of wrong knowledge which you may be able to understand more easily is an expression I often hear when I fly over seas. When they demonstrate the life jacket exercise, they use a formula which always intrigues me: "In the unlikely event of the plane landing on the sea ..." I almost want to yell at them: "It cannot land, there is no land on the sea!" This is wrong knowledge, knowledge that suggests that there is some land on the sea. It is more academic than truth.

The third one is imagination. We are all ruled by imagination because we live in this one single cosmic nation - imagination. Right? Imagination as imagination is alright. For instance, if I am sitting in what is called a meditation exercise, I may visualize, I may imagine a figure of Buddha, or Swami Sivananda or Krishna - that's alright. I know that it is imagination, that it is an object of my imagination. But when I imagine something and then go about as if that imaginary object itself is real, then I am caught, trapped. This happens to us all the time. I think he is my friend, but this is only my imagination. Then I give this imagination more value than the imagination need have, more reality than the imagination need have. I think he is my enemy, so I carry a gun around all the time. That is what the imagination does when the imagination ceases to be regarded as mere imagination, and is given the value of truth .

Smrti is memory. We are used to thinking that memory is the non-abandonment of a past experience but there is one statement in the Yoga Vasistha which I am merely transmitting to you: the guru says that memory can even be related to a non-experienced experience and you imagine having passed through that experience. It is a confusion between imagination and memory and that imagination forms an impression on the mind, so that later you regard this imaginary experience as if it were a real experience.

Then another fragmentary experience, which is also a mental modification, is sleep.

These are the five forms of the vrtti state within us. All these are vrttis and the proper content of all these vrttis is pure intelligence, indivisible and undivided. When that pure intelligence is ignored and these vrttis begin to rule and you are ruled by the vrttis, there is no state of yoga.'

[IV]

The author of the text we are looking into, known as the Yoga Sutras, suggests that yoga is that in which there is nirodhah, a kind of restraint of vrttis or forms of mental activity in the citta, which is the undivided intelligence - that alone is true. The term vrtti is often translated as "mental modifications" or "thought ripples." on the surface of the mind-lake. All these are well meant but inadequate expressions of an inexpressible truth. It is nobody's fault. Man has never really and truly endeavoured to express the truth and make it popular. This is how language is born: first you conceive of something and find that it is beautiful and good; then you find a name for it, an expression for it, with the help of which it is possible for you to describe what you have experienced or discovered; then you want to make it popular and so you coin a word or a phrase for it. In the absence of these two, there is no need for a word, there is no need for an expression; more often than not, those who were enlightened found that experience, if one may call it so, inexpressible. While they are in it, they are completely lost to what is called the outer world. Even when they emerged from that experience, the enlightened ones saw light everywhere, so that there was no darkness to be dispelled. It is only a fool who lives in a fool's paradise, because he thinks all the others around him are fools. By the same token, the enlightened person finds no darkness anywhere, like the light of a little candle. You cannot possibly convince this little candle that there is such a thing as darkness. If you can talk to this candle, please try to tell it that it is dark in the next room. Take the candle into the next room and it will ask, "Where is the darkness?" Even so with the enlightened person. Therefore a proper expression for what these wonderful sages have tried to express has never been found. All expressions are inadequate and all expressions are dualistic. Unity cannot be expressed. When you utter the word "one", you have divided that one into two; one mouth has become two lips! That is the difficulty.

Language is dualistic. Communication - the word commune means "like one", somehow gets distorted.

What is this citta or indivisible intelligence? Can it be known? Perhaps it can be experienced in the sense in which you and I experience the fact or truth that "I am alive". This does not need clinical evidence or explanation. It is an experience which is beyond words. This indivisible intelligence which alone is the truth, being non-dual and expressible, all descriptions of experience concerning it and all forms of expression that arise in it are vrttis. Therefore all forms of expression, all forms of description of any experience, are vrttis. I have an idea - in that there are four vrttis. When I formulate, express, utter the sentence "I have an idea", there are at least four vrttis: "I" is the first, "have" or the sense of possession is the second, "an" or one or not many is the third, and "idea" is the fourth. Everything concerning anything that you

express or any experience that you wish to describe , is a vrtti. I hope it is vaguely clear - sorry for the contradictory expression. It should not be too vague and it should not be too clear. If it is too clear, it is another vrtti. When I am tempted to say that it is very clear, it is another vrtti. When you use the expression that "God is one", it is another vrtti - and hence the sages even invented an expression called "vrtti of the infinite" - brahmakara vrtti. The infinite is not a vrtti. But then, one who is in the infinite consciousness does not even say those words, just as one who is really and truly fast asleep does not say, "I am sleeping". The man who says, "I am sleeping, do not disturb me", only hopes to sleep and probably he is unable to sleep. In exactly the same way, one who says, "God is infinite," knows nothing. For one who is in it, no expression is possible.

Since all this communication, all this dialogue, all this conversation, all this thinking implies the play of vrttis, the author of the Yoga sutras suggests that these vrttis can all be classified into the five categories we discussed yesterday. Some you call right knowledge, whenever you are tempted to say,

"That is right", that is also a vrtti, which is as good or as bad as another statement which you are tempted to characterise as wrong. They are two sides of the same coin. I have been taught to regard something as right knowledge and I cling to it; or I have decided to call something right and I continue to call it right for as long as it suits me. If it does not suit me, I change it. What is right knowledge?

pratyaksa numana gamah pramanani (I.7)

"Pratyakso" is what seems to be obvious. What seems to be obvious keeps changing all the time, in your own mind, in your own thoughts. You look at somebody and you think it is obvious that he is a good man; but a few days later you yourself change your opinion and say, "Well, I thought he was a good man, but it is obvious he is not so good; he was very clever." What is obvious is obvious, only because you think it is obvious for the time being. It is a mere play of words, which has no sense at all. You have decided that this shall be called the truth, that this shall be called right, whatever it is - righteousness, non-righteousness, good, not so good, wonderful, not so wonderful.

"Anumana" is inference. I think I am clever and therefore from 'A' I infer 'B', and because I have already decided that A is right, B must also be right.

This is what newspaper reporters do. They say, "We learn from reliable sources." How do you know that they are reliable? "Because we know that they are reliable and therefore we get this news from them, and because we get this from them, we rely upon them. We regard them as correct." That is

called anumana. Then you have scriptural testimony. I am sure some of you have come across these kind of polemics. I hold a copy of the Bible, he holds a copy of the Bhagavad Gita, and he holds a copy of the Koran. I say this is true, he says that is true and he says that is true. I quote my scripture, he quotes his scripture, and he quotes his scripture; they are all at variance. As far as he is concerned, both of us are devils quoting scripture, and as far as I am concerned both of them are devils quoting scripture. This game goes on.

Anything that does not fit into this "right knowledge" is called wrong. Why? Because I consider it wrong knowledge - viparyaya. Then there is vikalpa - imagination, pure imagination; but then please remember you do not regard it as imagination. You think it is true, real. Then memory. Then sleep. It is very interesting that even sleep is considered to be an isolated activity of the mind based on the same intelligence; it is an extraordinarily admirable statement by the yogi. You think that during sleep mental activity has ceased or been suspended. He says, "It is the mind that thinks it does not think."

abhava pratyaya lambana vrttir nidra

"Sleep is the holding onto of one single vritti, and that vritti is I do not think."

You are awake now and you think we also are awake and that we are all assembled in this school hall. We think we are seeing each other and we think there is some talking going on, that we are all listening to these words. This is one state of mind. It is possible that this child is about to fall asleep, lying here in his mother's lap. It is possible that he will start dreaming that he is a helicopter pilot hovering over Johannesburg, looking down on all of us. After a little while even that comes to an end. He sleeps, apparently thinking that he is not thinking, seeing that he is not seeing, experiencing nothing. This is the trick: it is not non-experience, but it is experiencing a thing called nothing. Normally you think, "Now I am wide awake, and when I am tired I go to bed, I dream, and then I sleep, without even dreaming, without seeing anything, without thinking of anything, except thinking. "I do not think." Normally we are taught that these three are distinct and different states, one following the other; that is, when the waking state comes to an end, dreaming starts and when dreaming ends, sleep starts and when sleep comes to an end, dream starts again. But there is a commentary written on the Mandukya Upanishad where the author makes a very innocent and terribly interesting statement. He says that these three exist all the time, at all times. When you think you are awake, you are already dreaming and sleeping at the same time, and when you are dreaming, you are also awake in a thing called dream - only the objects seen are different, only the experiences experienced are different, but the thing is the same. Similarly, when you are fast asleep, you are also in another world, in a third world called the sleep world, where you are experiencing another type of experience comparable to the dream state and to

the experience of the waking. It is a beautiful thought. When that becomes a realisation, you are free. When that becomes a realisation, that is what is called enlightenment, samadhi, satori, etc. All these words denote but one thing: a direct awareness of this simple and fundamental truth, that there is no division between what is called waking and dream, and between these two and sleep. How does one arrive at this understanding - not realisation - merely understanding? If you have been listening fairly attentively for the past ten minutes, you will have temporarily forgotten that you are in this school, in this building, and that there is a carpet under you. Therefore you have been asleep to those factors. You do not pay attention to the fact that you are sitting here, that your wife, or your husband or your child, or your friend, or your enemy or whoever it is, is sitting next to you or behind you. You have forgotten all that, for the time being. It is as if you have been asleep to all those around you. That seems to be fairly clear.

Then, in what way have I also been dreaming? Every word that you heard stirred up an image within you. As you are listening, as these words enter your ear, the mind is also displaying its own pictures. That is already a dream. You are dreaming all the time. So, right now there are the three worlds: the world of ignorance, the world of dream and the world of the waking state. The three together is the reality. In and through all these, there is something which remains undivided and indivisible - that is the reality, that is the truth. I suppose you have all seen the earth and that on that bit of earth there is a mountain, then a valley, and then the ocean-bed under the sea. Is that mountain placed on the earth as a foreign body? Is that mountain not also the earth? That which you call the mountain that rises above the ground is also the ground. That which you call the ocean-bed that seems to be below the ground, is also the ground, the earth. You give different names, you stick different labels on all these. But there is just one earth. This earth seems to rise somewhere, dip somewhere else and collect some water somewhere else. The surface of the earth is one, indivisible, undivided. It is not possible to divide it.

In studying this phenomenon called oneness, the mind often creates division, because mental activity is incapable of arriving at the realisation of the totality, at the realisation of the infinite. In whatever we have done, we have always resorted to mental activity, to thought, to feeling, in order to experience this world, and even to forget this world. When we apply thought processes to the experience of the world, we get this diversity in which we find ourselves think this is right, we think that is wrong, we think this is pleasant, we think that is unpleasant, we think this is success, we think that is failure, we think this is happiness, we think that is unhappiness. How do I know this is unhappiness? Because I think it is unhappiness, I am unhappy in that state. Why am I unhappy in that state? Because I am subjected to unhappiness. It is a circular argument with no sense in it. How do I know that I am happy?

Because I think I am happy. What makes me think I am happy? Because I am happy. It goes round and round and round. Therefore this whole world is nothing but the crystallisation of such mental activity. Sometimes it hurts, and when it hurts you begin to wonder what is meant by hurt. When you begin to analyse the mind with the help of the mind itself, that is when you create all these famous categories - this is right knowledge, this is wrong knowledge, this is memory, this is imagination, this is sleep. How do I know all these to be true? This enquiry can lead me nowhere! Why? Because the fundamental mischief-maker in this equation is "I". It has not been looked into at all. Analysing this mental activity in life or keeping this "I" or the ego-sense unexamined, untouched, leads us nowhere at all.

With what shall I examine the ego-sense; with what shall I examine the ego-sense? Once again you are trapped. The yogi suggests a very simple approach to this and that is called nirodhah. This does not mean merely thinking about thinking about thinking, nor merely suppressing all thoughts - either with the help of some yoga practices, or drugs, or hypnosis or self hypnosis. Neither of these really produces nirodhah or enlightenment. There must be another way and that is called direct observation. Again it is possible that in this direct observation one uses the mind to study the mind. I may use the mind to study the mind and while studying the mind in that manner it is possible for the observing intelligence, which is also part of the mind, for the observer, for the observing intelligence, for the subject to identify a thought arising. One thought arises. I have considered that to be a fact, but I am still looking within, I am still trying to see what the truth is. When I have slapped down that thought, I realise that that which slaps the other thought down is also mental conditioning. An other thought jumps up and says that according to Keno Upanishad, truth cannot be intellectualised. This is a piece of memory. Though it pretends to be aware of the truth, it is nothing but memory. The observing intelligence can recognise this game that the yogis play. That observing intelligence, if it is alert, can recognise that this is right knowledge, knowledge which I have considered to be right because of prejudice; it can recognise that this is wrong knowledge, which again is born of a reaction to prejudice; and it can recognise that this is pure and simple memory, a revival of some memory. Then there is imagination. Or, I can consider that mind cannot study mind, that it is a hopeless task. This is called giving up, which is equated with sleep, a kind of spiritual sleep. It is too hard and so I give up, I live in accordance with God's Will and imagine everything will come right.

These are the five states we are aware of, and the observing intelligence keeps observing all these. It is possible - until one day the observing intelligence begins to question: I have a sense of what is right and what is not right. I have a sense of "I remember this", "I imagined something else!" All these

come in a sort of procession, like waking, dream and sleep? For instance, take love, anger, anxiety, or fear. There is a young couple. They wake up in the morning, they look at each other and their hearts are singing the song of love. A little later they suddenly remember they still have to go to work. With that heart full of love they get out of bed, press a wrong switch and find that the kettle does not work. Now there are flying saucers in the kitchen! "You did that", and "You did this." With all this they are getting more and more delayed in going to work. Suddenly there is anxiety, fear. Now, did all these happen one after the other? That is, when love came to an end, did anger start? When that came to an end, did fear start? Is that so, or were all those there together in the same personality? If they were all there together, am I a kind of supermarket of emotions? So I pull out this one, and then I pull out that one. I realise or discover that it is not possible for me to get angry now, at this moment, however hard I try. Try now. Can you yell at me? It is not there. Now there is a kind of peaceful joy.

Therefore the yogi or the observing intelligence looks directly within to see what this is, not merely labelling it: "This is good emotion, this is bad emotion, this is right action, this is wrong action, this is memory, this is imagination." The observing intelligence goes directly to the root of the matter: "What is it?" Whether you call it love, whether you call it anger, fear, or anything else - because you are not labeling it, you are not anxious either to keep it or to throw it out. If you call it love, you are going to hug it and then forget all about it. If you call it anger, you are going to look away. If you call it fear, you are going to pretend it is not there. But you do not call it anything at all, and so you see it as an experience. You look straight at it, straight into it. What happens at that moment is called nirodhah. What happens at that moment is called yoga.

[V]

Please let us remember that words can only indicate the truth. Words are not truth and when words are regarded as descriptions, they are veils which, if not destructive of truth, are at least distracting the attention from the truth. Words can merely indicate, and so it is the attention that follows these words that discovers the truth. One of these invocatory verses, with which these talks are commenced, indicates a marvelous truth:

isvaro gururatmeti murtibheda vibhagine

vyomavd vyaptadehaya sri daksnamurtaye namah

A seeker (I) goes to the enlightened guru, seeking instruction concerning God. But what is the truth? Is there a division between the guru and God? This (I) is a word, and that (guru) is a word and that (God) is word - each one is a concept, "I", "guru" and "God". The author of the Guru Gita says that it is almost like this: You have a little jar in this room in space - the jar is small, the room is big, and the room is small, space is big. But is there a real division of space into the space enclosed by the jar, the space enclosed by the room, and the space enclosed by what is called "outside"? Space is indivisible and yet we describe space as if it were divisible. If even space is indivisible, when consciousness or intelligence is even more so, if one can use such expressions as more perfect than perfect, more truthful than truth, more divine than God. Space can be comprehended (in a manner of speaking) by the mind. If even that is indivisible, that which comprehends space, the intelligence is even more so.

Just as we speak of the space enclosed in a jar, of the space which constitutes the room and of the space outside, we speak of the vrttis, we speak of awaking consciousness, or we speak of a world that you and I perceive now, we speak of the world of the dream and we speak of the state called sleep. These are illusory phenomenon; not illusory in the sense that they are not real, not illusory in the sense that you are perceiving something which does not exist, but illusory in a different sense. That which is, is constant, is undivided; you may keep a hundred jars in this hall but the space is not divided into one hundred. You can have thousands of buildings here but the space is not divided, it is indivisible. And yet there is a description of a division who creates this division? He who describes the division. That which describes the division creates the division.

Consciousness or intelligence or citta is indivisible and therefore undivided. In that undivided intelligence something imagines now, "I am seeing all of you".

A little later when I am dreaming in the room in Jyotsnamata's house, I "see" all of you. You are not there; but how do I know you are not there? You are there so far as I am concerned! But we say that factually the world of the dream is within me. How do I know that this physical world is not also within me? The difference is arbitrary. Now there is a thought, a vritti, a concept, or a notion that these objects that are perceived, are outside. In a manner of speaking, in dream, the same objects are perceived as if inside. They are also "outside" my consciousness in dream. Even so, all these may be within my consciousness even now. And then there comes another state called sleep when that which is awake dreams the single dream, "I am sleeping". These three states are found all the time. Why is it so? Because the intelligence is indivisible. That indivisible intelligence is called self, or atma, or, turya, or wherever you wish to call it. Therefore - now comes the crunch - it is not as though you and I have to cancel one or other of these states in order to become enlightened. You are already enlightened - the light is there, shining constantly. At this moment that light seems to be spread out and there is perception of the so-called outside world. In dream the same "wakefulness" continues, but the wakefulness is on a different level, or so we think. In sleep the same wakefulness continues, the same dream continues, but the dream is different. When this understanding arises, there is a tremendous inner change or transformation. Nothing really needs to be transformed, but something which misunderstood these to be separate states disappears. The notion that one is different from the other disappears. That's all.

It is because that state of ignorance or sleep prevails now that we are thinking that the world is outside of me, that I am the subject, and you are all the object. When that ignorance, or spiritual sleep or self-ignorance disappears, nothing goes away. The reality can never be erased. The self or the truth can never, never be canceled out, can never, never "not be". What disappears - in the ignorant man's language, upon reaching enlightenment, is what did not exist in the first place. Only the ignorance that was never there, went. In darkness you do not see the city, you do not see your own house, you do not see your room, you do not see the furniture in your room, but when the sun rises, all those things which were not visible become visible. The truth is seen, the reality is seen, but nothing whatsoever went away. What went away was the darkness that was not there. That is not a loss, but a gain. But then something went away; the darkness that was not there in the first place went away. You 'thought' it was dark.

Since there is this notion that this darkness exists in some indescribable manner, there is this self-ignorance which is terribly upsetting. Some of the greatest saints and sages of India have consistently and constantly declared that this self ignorance exists so long as you continue to affirm it. So long as you go on saying, "I am ignorant, I am ignorant," for so long you go on being ignorant. Somehow there seems to be this self-ignorance in which the true

nature of the self is forgotten. Whatever knowledge, whatever mental activity takes place in the shadow of that self-ignorance is called vritti. Nidra, this sleep state, this ignorant state, continues throughout our life even when the mind functioning in this darkness of ignorance affirms it to be real; this is a book and this is a tape recorder - that, of course, is correct. This is the Bhagavad Gita, a very holy scripture - we think this is also right knowledge. Someone else says that it is wrong knowledge, it is the teaching of the devil! At the very moment you call something right knowledge, the mind is at the same time rejecting something else as wrong knowledge. So these three co-exist: sleep or self-ignorance, plus what is called right knowledge and the other side of the same coin which is wrong knowledge. How do you know that this is right and that is wrong? How do you know that this is virtue and that is vice? Because the memory is revived - that I read so in a book, or I remember somebody telling me so. It is the memory that jumps up all the time - deciding, defining, describing. This memory is inextricably bound up with imagination, for it is hardly ever pure memory. By pure memory I am referring to the tape recorder. If you are convinced, as soon as this session is over go away and write down what you heard. You will be amazed to find that the tape recorder is a much better student than any of us. Our memory is not pure, our memory is never uncontaminated by imagination - never. When we recall the past, it is never as it really was, but always twisted.

So what was described as the five-fold vrittis operates constantly. All of these vrittis are activities of the mind in the shadow of self-ignorance. All empirical knowledge is ignorance, all knowledge that you and I possess is sheer ignorance. As a matter of fact, this statement occurs in two marvellous scriptures, the Yoga Vasitha and the Mandukya Karika, where the authors say, "How can you accept that as truth which is pronounced to be true by that which is itself untrue?" You have not examined the source of your own facts. So how can you accept them as fact? The truth of the source or the wisdom of the source of the statement has not been proved, but we are ready to accept the statements that issue from that source to be true. It is absurd. We often base our opinions, judgments and conclusions on what we call scriptures and texts. If you have been involved in any form of printing or publicity work, you would appreciate what I am saying. One little error, such as the word 'now' typed as 'not' can change the entire meaning. "Immortality" is a beautiful word and if someone makes the slightest error, it becomes "immorality". If one such printing or typing error creeps in to a book, it goes from there to eternity as the authority.

Therefore, without rejecting scriptures and teaching, one has to investigate the source, the source of understanding itself. When that is not there, in that shadow of ignorance, the designator arises. When I do not know the truth, when I do not know the reality, I need to identify. When I do not see the surface of the earth, I begin to see something and I call it a mountain, and I

call this a valley. I wonder if you have ever bothered to inquire at what exact point does the earth come to an end and a mountain spring up? At what exact point does a valley begin? It is like the seasons; at what exact moment does winter end and spring begin? The seasons creep into one another, just like the growth of our bodies. It is something constant and yet the mind that is ignorant of this truth creates a division, and simultaneously the division brings about a subject-object relationship. The first division that is made is "I" and "you". As soon as the subject "I" arises, the object arises; or it may also be the other way round, as soon as the object arises, the subject arises.

And so this old Adam began to distinguish, to describe, to divide and to label. It is the I, the ego-principle, that divides the single earth into plains and mountains. If I have pure vision, that division does not arise. Your eyes do not divide. It is a marvelous lesson that one can learn from one's own anatomy: two eyes see one person. You are not even aware that you have two eyes because there is no division in the so-called objects that are perceived by the eyes. It is something else that divides. It is the mind that divides or, to put it bluntly, it is the self-ignorance that divides and, having created this division, starts labeling and identifying. The subject does not remain satisfied with identifying things and so begins to form a relationship with the object. All these are mentioned in the Yoga Sutras:

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

These five are bugbears throughout your life. There is this ignorance - avidya, which projects the subject and object, asmita, the "I am". How do I know I am? Because I see you, I think there must be "I" to see you. Because I am, you are also there. If I do not exist, you won't exist. In sleep I don't exist; therefore you also don't exist. When I wake up, you also wakes up.

Not content with having labeled that as Mary and this as so and so, the activity of the mind begins to distinguish, "This is beautiful, this is not so beautiful, this is true, this is false, this is pleasant, this is unpleasant." If you watch this activity of the mind, you will realise it is fantastic. There is just one mass, one ingot of gold and in that is created all manner of things; one little gold piece carved in a certain way is called a god, another gold piece carved in a certain way is called a devil. The thing is the same. Also I love this, I like this. Why do I like this? Because it gives me pleasure. How do I know it gives me pleasure? Because I like it. It is a vicious circle, constantly torturing us on this rack, stretching and pulling in two directions at the same time, without ever revealing the truth that all this is nothing but mind, activity of the mind.

Then there is this lovely expression "blind faith". Blind faith is no faith at all, it is only blindness. Whether that blind faith is called positive and therefore devotion, or whether it is called negative and therefore prejudice, blind faith

is pure blindness, with no faith in it at all. Likes and dislikes are just blindness. One becomes so insecure, so uncertain about life, that one madly clings to what one thinks one possesses, to what one thinks provides security. There is blindness of ignorance, avidya. In that shadow of ignorance the I-you relationship continues to play, and in this mad dance of the I-you relationship we begin to like somebody and dislike somebody else, thereby getting into miserable situations. Both these can cause misery. You have seen this in your own lives. When you do not like something and that something comes into view, you are unhappy. When you like something and you lose that something or you are afraid of losing it, you are also unhappy. However, since I am caught up in this limitation and because of this dreadful ignorance, I am unaware of the totality of whatever is. I am frightened to lose the misery that I cling to - that is a terrible thing. Even an old man of ninety-five years old still wants to continue to live in his miserable old body. He will spend a fortune trying to prolong life for another three days. Why is it so? Nobody knows. Even the author of the Yoga Sutras says it is indeed a mystery. This love for one's limited life seems to carry on under its own steam.

One more consideration is what is called samskara. As I go on living such an ignorant, stupid and conditioned existence, every action that proceeds from me and every experience that is experienced by me creates an impression in what I have come to regard as "my mind" - a nice little space in the jar with which I have identified myself. Every action that proceeds from me and every experience that flows toward me leaves a mark there. This is the yogi's bug

bear, this samskara. It is a Sanskrit word which means what it sounds like to English-speaking people: "some scar". Samskara only means some scar left by all your actions and all your experiences, nothing more. Do not get terribly frightened. Some scar, a little scar is left by what you did or experienced and that scar begins to itch now and then. You enjoyed something very nice two years ago and it has left a scar in your mind and that scar begins to itch; therefore you ask for a repetition of that enjoyment now. As long as the scar remains, the desire for the past enjoyment or the desire to avoid the past pain will also continue. By repetition the same scar becomes a tendency. What does that word "tendency" mean? Where is it? Why is a tendency or a habit so hard to overcome? If you examine and see where the tendency lies, you might discover that there is a difficulty here. The tendency is not in your mind, the tendency is not in your heart or the emotional part of your personality, but it is what your "tendons see". This tendency is built into every muscle of your body, every joint of your body, wherever there are tendons. That is why you find it so difficult to change a bad habit. The tendon has to see that the habit is bad and then it drops it. On account of these samskaras or mental impressions produced by the expressions and the experiences of the so-called individual, life continues to run along its limited, miserable, dreadful groove;

because of ignorance, since a state other than this conditioned existence is not known, one clings madly to it.

These are the five-fold sources of unhappiness that we love so intensely. The yogi merely points them out. Drop this conditioning and you are immediately happy, here and now, not later when you go to heaven. Even in India there are these ascetics who caution that you must torture yourself and that if you do all this for the next twenty or thirty years, you will go to heaven and enjoy bliss for ever and ever. It is a good bargain! You suffer for ten years in exchange for happiness for ever and ever. But it may not be very truthful. I often wonder that if I torture myself, if I become accustomed to suffering here for so many years and then suddenly you take me to heaven, in the midst of heavenly enjoyment, I may find myself miserable there. I may wonder, "Where has all my self-torture gone?" The person who regards that self-torture as pleasure may not find heaven so palatable. Therefore I am not so fond of a heaven that is promised at the end of a period of self-torture and suffering, Yoga points out that if you get rid of this mental conditioning here and now, "here and now" you are free from sorrow.

[VI]

The statement that the unconditioned is bliss, and the conditioned existence is sorrow, is found in one of the Upanishads. Even there it is merely a statement, with no demand that we should therefore seek the unconditioned. The unconditioned must be understood. In the Sutras it is even more beautifully stated. The unconditioned is yoga, the unconditioned is citta vrtti nirodhah and therefore, when this nirodhah or self-understanding or self-knowledge is absent, there is vrtti sarupyam, that is - when you identify your self with fragments of existence, though that is not wrong in itself, and when that fragment is mistaken for the whole. To see a wave as a wave is truth; to see one thought as one thought is alright; to see one concept as one concept is alright, to realise that "this is my opinion" is again right. But when this vrtti, when this opinion, when this concept, when this thought is accorded the value and the dignity of the total truth, then there is trouble.

To understand an opinion to be an opinion, that is the business of living, But our error consists in giving that opinion the value, the glory and the dignity of the whole truth. This is vrtti, and the vrtti nirodhah is when that is dismissed and the truth remains truth, uncontaminated by the opinions being called the total truth. Even this is not a goal; we are not trying to be happy by doing this. Bliss is not a product, the subject is not a product, the unconditioned state of being is not a product. In order to make her happy, in order to make her smile, I cannot stretch her mouth, but if I tickle the foot, the mouth smiles. I do not know if you have thought about this. When I tickle her foot, it should not even be my goal or my desire that her mouth should smile; my whole attention should be in tickling her foot. Otherwise I may be scratching the chair, not her foot. More often than not we do this in life. Instead of being attentive to what I am supposed to be doing now, I am looking to see if the result is happening there or not; the result will not happen because I am "tickling the wrong spot". That is the danger of having a goal. Krishna points it out in the Gita very simply and bluntly: "Do your job, the results will take care of themselves."

So, happiness is not even the goal of yoga. Yoga has no goal whatsoever. When the goal is suggested, your attention is already diverted. Where is attention, where is meditation, if I am not paying attention to what I am doing now? Otherwise, we create a thing called the unconditioned, we create a thing called God-consciousness. There is another beautiful expression that is not found in the Yoga Sutras but in some other texts; in English it is translated as "witness consciousness" - saksi-caitanya. I have heard the most ludicrous interpretations of this by very well-meaning people - "Oh , you know, I am not involved in all this, I am beyond all this, I am merely a witness of all these." That is still the ego speaking: "I am beyond all this." My guru, Swami Sivananda used to say when somebody pretended to be established in

this witness consciousness, "Take a bunch of nettles and rub him and see if he can remain a witness to that stinging pain!" That witness consciousness is the truth, is the subject, is the unconditioned being and saksi-caitanya suggests that consciousness is not involved in anyone of these concepts. Be very careful here. That unconditioned being, that infinite being, that consciousness is not confined to anyone of these concepts. The content of each one of these concepts, of each one of these opinions, of each one of these thoughts, of each one of these emotions, of each one of these experiences, no doubt is consciousness, but that infinite, that subject, that unconditioned being is not limited, is not contained and is not confined to anyone of these. If you want a figure of speech, the yogis said that the citta or the unconditioned witness consciousness is like the total ocean, and these ripples and waves are merely being witnessed by it. But to pretend that I have understood that is to throw it out of its place and create an object, a vrtti, called witness consciousness.

How does one arrive at this unconditioned state? I hope the absurdity of the question at least becomes clear. How can the subject be known? The schools and colleges create this confusion. You go there and study many "subjects", but they should be called "objects ". Nobody studies a "subject" by going to the school or university. The book is an object! You come to the school of yoga in order to study the subject, the self! Can this subject be known? Can this subject be seen? Can one arrive at a knowledge of the self? For that is nirodhah. The words are imperfect, the words are inadequate, but that is nirodhah.

abhyasa vairagyabhyam tan nirodhah (I.12)

Keep on trying - that is abhyasa.

tatra sthitau yatno 'bhyasah (I.13)

I am sure most of you who practice meditation, most of you who have experienced moments of deep love, have for one split second glimpsed this state. It is not that the unconditioned state is foreign, or strange, or something which belongs to a certain special type of being. Everyone has had a glimpse of it. But it goes away. When does it go away? When you want to possess it. Is it possible for you - watch the formulation of the question - is it possible for you to stay with it, to remain established in it, without holding onto it? Obviously there is only one way of achieving this. In the case of all other experiences of pleasure you want to grasp it, hold it and preserve it. That is why you get into trouble; when it slips through your fingers, you will never get it back. Now realising that it is not possible to hold onto the bliss-experience, you still yearn to be established in it without holding onto it. There is only one way and that is to surrender yourself, to let yourself go and not even ask for a repetition of that experience; then it is there and you see

something remarkable happening within yourself. That momentary experience of delight is so marvelous that the ego comes up again, "I wish it could last forever". It is gone before you finish the wish. The wish is the relationship to that experience, and so that experience is already turned into an object, a limited experience, an opinion. If the "I" did not arise at all, the truth would continue to be truth, to be the unconditioned. But it seems a pity that nobody is there to experience this wonderful state. It is not so important that I should experience God! What is so tremendously important about me that Swami Venkatesananda should attain self-realisation? So when this wish or craving, or whatever you wish to call it, arises, it is recognised. Please remember carefully that it is not "I recognise" - there is a recognition, there is an attention, there is an observation, without an observer. You are meditating and there is this ... You remain there without an observer, steady, without disturbing it, without wanting to hold it, without the wish arising to continue it. If and when the two arise together, "I" and "the experience of bliss", the observing consciousness looks and questions: "What is I? Where is the desire, where is the craving to hold onto it?" The following answer may occur: "Why should one hold onto something which is eternal, which is infinite?" If the whole world were made of chocolates, nobody would want chocolate, because you are also made of chocolate. -

When that experience is infinite, why do you want to hold onto it? The observing consciousness that is called witness consciousness or transcendental experience, which has no observer, which has no subject, and therefore no object, becomes alert at once and realises that the desire to hold onto that experience is the action of the ego, is the ego. The desire for repetition of it is the ego, and when this powerful searchlight turns to that formation of the ego - if one may call it so, it is at once dissipated. That is called abhyasah.

tatra sthitau yatno 'bhyasah (I.13)

It looks like an effort, but it is not an effort. It looks like an attempt, but it is not an attempt. This is practice, and it may take time, or it may not take time.

Why does it take time? You remember that we discussed the problem of samskras. A very beautiful story is told in the Yoga Vasistha. Someone was praying to God for an alchemical substance with the help of which he could turn all stone into gold. Within a few weeks an angel stood in front of him and gave him the stone. He wondered: "Is that the thing I want? I have heard that it might take ten thousand years of meditation and I have it within two weeks! Perhaps it is some kind of a devil coming to cheat me. He threw it away and once again started meditating. After five thousand years he picked up a piece of glass and walked away, rubbing it everywhere but nothing happened. The

poor fellow had it in the first place after two weeks, but on account of these samskaras he was doubtful.

Some of you must have had this experience. You sit down to meditate or do japa and you have heard it said that if you are totally merged in your mantra, you will not hear external noises. Now you are sitting with closed eyes, deeply contemplating the mantra. Of course you do not listen to any of the external noises, but after ten minutes or so, a question arises within you, "Have I really been concentrating deeply or was there no truck passing along the road for the past ten minutes? Probably there was no sound for me to hear. Immediately you hear the noises. Your meditation is ruined. Never mind about all that. If you want peace and quiet, go ahead.

tatra sthitau yatna ' bhyasah (I.13)

The yatna or the repeated practice becomes necessary when the practice is interrupted by samskaras, the tendencies, doubts, physical and psychological habits. When they come and interfere, there seems to be a need for repeating the exercise all over again, otherwise there is no need.

If one is very careful , the true meaning becomes very clear. Patanjali says one becomes well established in it when one is devoted to this truth, to this unconditioned state, to this infinite consciousness, over a long period of time.

sa tu dirgha kala nairantarya satkara 'sevito drdhabhumih (I. 14)

He does not say that it can manifest itself only after a long period of time. Many have criticised this and said that if yoga is a process which can be perfected only over a long period of time, it is useless, because you are going on acquiring new samskaras, new doubts and new obstacles as you go along. Then some body else comes along and says, "Yoga only promises you infinite consciousness after a long period of time. Join our cult and you will have instant samadhi." Yoga also promises instant samadhi! But here is a statement which has to be very carefully understood. "You are well established in it if you have been able to sustain this consciousness, this unconditioned consciousness for a long period of time." That is obvious, isn't it? Or are you going to say, "Come and join our school and we will give you instant samadhi which will instantly come to an end."

In the Yoga Sutras the master says that you can enter into samadhi, you can enter into this unconditioned state instantly, but you may not really be established in it until you can prove that you have been in it for a long time. Otherwise it is another of those momentary experiences which leaves a bad taste in your mouth.

The taste was good for those few moments; but then the memory that survives that good taste has a bad taste. Patanjali merely suggests that you have this delight and remain in it, totally devoted to it, with your heart and soul completely surrendered to it for a long period of time, without losing it. Then you are firmly established in it, and it is not possible to disturb it.

sa tu dirgha kala nairantarya satkara 'sevito drdhabhumih (I.14)

This is only half the story - or it is the full story, depending upon which way you look at it, because the earlier sutra (I.12) suggested that nirodhah is attained, or meditation is obtained, or self knowledge is gained - all these expressions are inadequate, with the help of two things: the one is abhyasa - practice, the other is vairagya.

Vairagya has also been tremendously misunderstood. Vairagya has usually been translated as dispassion and expanded into a dislike for pleasure. It is usually explained as a rejection of the world, as running away. Such a rejection is usually counter-productive. A story is often told of a sick man who had consulted all the doctors in the world and eventually went to a medicine man who just gave him a glass of water, pronounced some blessing on it and said, "Take it home, drink it first thing tomorrow morning and you will be alright! That's easy, but there is one restriction. When you put the glass to your lips, you should not think of a monkey. If you think of a monkey it will be totally ineffective." Saying that spoiled it. Whatever I am told I should not remember is exactly what I remember! We have the same problem. If I am to avoid passion, either I must go to the root of it or I must turn my complete attention to something totally different. That was the method my guru Swami Sivananda suggested. Do not battle with your problem. For instance, if you have a craving for a cigarette, do not keep on saying, "I should not smoke, it is bad," then you are smoking all the time, only that kind of smoke is not seen! Apply your energy, your attention, to something else, perhaps totally unrelated to this problem. When your attention is totally directed to something else, when the energy flows in one full stream towards some constructive activity, the cigarette just drops away, or rather it is not even picked up.

This is one method. Another - if you want a bit more zest, is to turn the attention within and see what it is that gives this habit a value, a value that it does not possess. It is worth 20 cents, nothing more, whether you smoke it thinking, "It is a pleasure," or throw it in the dustbin thinking, "It is terrible, it is dangerous, it will cause lung cancer." It has no such value. It gives you neither pleasure nor displeasure - it is worth twenty cents, that's all. What is it that gives this thing a psychological value, that it is a pleasure or that it is a danger?

drsta 'nusravika visaya vitrsnasya vasikara samjna varagyam (I.15)

I heard somebody say it is pleasure and it is that hearsay that has so colored the mind, that the mind looks upon that as pleasure. Otherwise there is no pleasure; it does not have pleasure in itself - neither smoking, nor drinking, nor any habit you may have. It is the mind that has been conditioned by what has been heard or seen in the movies or on television. You hear and from what you hear and from what you see, the brain or the mind is colored. Your consciousness or intelligence looks through that colored glass and from there on regards that as pleasure.

Now, if you can dramatize the whole thing within yourself, your consciousness or intelligence is here and you are looking at that object, thinking "That is a beautiful thing, that is pleasure," so that the whole attention seems to be moving outwards from this intelligence towards the object. The master of yoga merely suggests one thing: as your attention is flowing outwards, outside yourself, can you ask yourself a very simple question: what is it in me that bestows this value upon this object, that makes this value judgment? When you do that, what happens? The attention that was flowing out, suddenly begins to reverse. Immediately the direction of the flow of that attention is changed. Now it begins to flow towards yourself. That is called vasikara. Vasikara means that it comes under your control. Once again, this is a very tricky thing to understand; it is not as though I am looking at this thing and I say, "No, I won't look." That is not control. Nor, "I am looking outside", pretending I am not looking outside." No. Without any pretension whatsoever, can I ask myself, "Where does this feeling arise that this is an object of pleasure or that it is an object of pain, or that it is something which threatens my very life?" At that very moment the attention that was flowing externally, suddenly turns upon itself. That is control of a very different kind. There is neither an expression nor a suppression. There is not even an attempt to do either of these, but there is intense self-awareness. In the light of that self-awareness, the mental coloring is seen. You suddenly realise, "This is merely an advertisement, brain-contamination." Do not use the word brain washing in this context. Brain-washing is good, just as washing your clothes every day is good. It should be called brain-contamination, brain-pollution. You suddenly become aware that the brain has been polluted by what you see and what you hear. In that moment this contamination is washed away.

Life goes on. In the Bhagavatam and also in the Yoga Vasistha, the masters have said something very simple and beautiful. Life is full of joy; there are very sweet things in life and you can enjoy yourself. You do not run after them and you do not run into disappointment. But natural enjoyments of life will still continue and they will be pure, fresh and uncontaminated by hopes and fears. We should not go to the other extreme of asceticism. That is not what

was meant, because such an attitude first of all might mean pure suppression, which might lead to some kind of reaction, and even more than that, at the same time, might give a tremendous boost to the ego. That is not yoga, because you are getting so dreadfully committed to this vritti called control. Yoga has slipped through your fingers.

The control that is called vairagya is of a quite different nature, where there is constant study, discipline - in the sense of study, and self-study. The craving arises because of a value judgment and the value arose because the mind was colored by what was heard or seen. The object is seen not to have that value, and simultaneously the craving disappears. What is most wonderful in this practice is that self-awareness is inherent. Therefore abhyasa and vairagya are not seen as two completely different endeavours, but one is connected with the other. If I am constantly aware of the play of the mind and the ego, then there is no craving, craving does not arise. And if I constantly observe every moment that this craving arises and observe the craving, self-awareness also increases.

[VII]

The words "yoga" and "nirodhah" may both mean what the word "meditation" really means, not in the sense of an exercise, but as something that is constant and not restricted to one day of the week or one hour a day. Therefore meditation cannot even be considered a state; nirodhah is not a state, yoga is not a state. It is not a mood; it is not something that has a beginning and therefore an end, it is not something that can be described and therefore limited, defined and therefore finite; it is not something that the mind can conceive of and is therefore conditioned. The master suggests that this can be attained - the words are defective, with the help of abhyasa and vairagya.

abhyasa vairagyabhyam tan nirodhah (I.12)

The vrtti can be understood in a certain inner stillness, in a certain inner light which is called meditation, which is called yoga, which is called nirodhah.

Abhyasa means practice and practice implies a certain repetition. Why must a thing be repeated? After having one piece of toast for breakfast, why do I have another piece of toast? Because the first piece was not adequate, was not satisfying. If that first piece of toast was adequate, I do not have to repeat it. In a manner of speaking, abhyasa means both repetition and not repetition. My hunger is not satisfied with the first piece of toast, but only the third piece of toast really satisfies my hunger. You may say, with sufficient reasoning and logic, that it was because the first two lay in the stomach that the third one was satisfying. But you can see that there may be at least two points of view to this argument. Does abhyasa mean that every time I attempt to meditate I am making some progress, or does it mean that no progress is made until actual progress is made? If you want to jump over a well ten feet in diameter, the ability to jump six feet and the ability to jump eight are of precisely the same value. Anything less than ten is useless.

That is one way of looking at it. There are others who say that, as you go on with your abhyasa, with your practice, you are gradually rubbing out the impurities little by little, as long as you refrain from adding further impurities to those that existed already. Very often you apply grease to protect something from other impurities; but the grease remains. This is also true of the human personality. I go on shedding all my weaknesses: I stop smoking, I stop drinking, I stop eating meat, I renounce my family and I give up my wealth. For everyone of these, a little more grease is being added up. This thing called "I" has replaced all the other impurities that you have been trying to get rid of. So one can look at this phenomenon called abhyasa or practice from different sides. But abhyasa does imply repeated practice.

The other word used was “vairagya” - which has two essential meanings, one being the absence of all attraction, the absence of passion, the absence of infatuation, the other being the absence of mental coloring, which inevitably goes with attraction. First the mind considers something as pleasure and that object or experience is thence forward colored with that evaluation; then you go on seeking, looking. The absence of such coloring is vairagya. I remember what a very holy man in the Himalayas once said when some of us went to have his darshan. Somehow this abhyasa and vairagya was mentioned in his presence. He did not want to waste words! He said: "Abhyasa and vairagya. It is very simple. Abhyasa means to remain established in God. Vairagya means never to let the thought of the world arise in your mind. Marvelous isn't it? Try it and if you succeed, I will worship you every morning!"

There is another interesting feature. It looks as though abhyasa is one thing and vairagya another. In the original text of the Yoga Sutras, the dual number is used - abhyasavairagyabhyam, and so it is usual to consider these two as independent factors. Based on this concept, there are many great teachers of yoga who insist that you must first acquire vairagya and then come to abhyasa or the practice of yoga. My guru used to say, "If you want to be firmly established in vairagya before beginning to practise yoga, you can postpone it for at least the next three lifetimes! Gurudev used to add, "Try both these side by side."

It is possible to see, in spite of the fact that the dual number is used in the sutras, that abhyasa and vairagya are one and not two. In spiritual, religious or yoga literature, there are often descriptions which suggest dualism - good and evil, the real and the unreal, right and wrong, virtue and vice. I am not suggesting that these things are not correct; but it is possible to look at them afresh and maybe have a glimpse of the truth concerning all this. Scriptural descriptions of duality were perhaps intended to bring us onto the right track. You and I are not functioning in a mental world of only two objects. We are not functioning in a dualistic world, we are functioning in a pluralistic world, within ourselves and out side ourselves. You do not only have what is good and what is not good, but you have a hundred other things in between. In order to lead us on to the understanding of the essential truth, the yogis wanted to cut through the whole thing to see if you can become aware of these two fundamentals: something you can call good, something you can call evil; something you can call right, something you can call wrong. As the Zen masters would say, there are a million things and slowly you get rid of those million things and come to a few and from those few, perhaps three and from those three, perhaps one. This way they are focusing our attention in ever decreasing concentric circles. Again we find a statement in the Bhagavad Gita - I have not come across such a bold declaration in any other scripture. Krishna says:

amrtam cai f va mrtyus ca sad asac ham arjuna (IX.19)

I am immortality and also death, existence and non-existence, O Arjuna.

It's thrilling, fantastic. Krishna also says:

mattah smrtir jnanam apohanam ca (XV.15)

from Me are memory, knowledge, as well as their absence.

The supreme wisdom, the supreme knowledge, as also its absence and its veiling come from God.. Nothing exists in the universe apart from God. That is a very bold statement.

Now we come to the two sides of the coin. Eventually we are told good and evil, right and wrong etc. are all two sides of the same coin. We always use the word coin and I think this coin can teach us something. First is the tossing of the coin, where we say. "Heads I win, tails I lose." That is an important lesson to learn from this silly little coin: one side spells gain, the other side spells loss. For apparently no valid reason but by sheer tradition, we have come to divide life into two - good and evil, right and wrong, success and failure. Having divided it, we have labeled them ourselves: this shall be called success, that shall be called failure; this shall be called pain, that shall be called pleasure. Why, I do not know. Because it is tradition we do not question it at all.

That is how life goes on, whether you believe it or not. This wonderful philosophy can be a terrible thing if you contemplate all its ramifications. However, to be generous to the yogis, they probably suggested all this in order to eliminate the plurality of our thinking, and narrow it down to just the two sides of the coin. One day you will look at this with a little greater attention, with a more awakened attention, and see, "My god, I look at this from this side, what is this?" Silver. "I look at it from the other side; it is silver again," Why did you call one side good and the other side evil? Whichever way you look at it, the stuff is the same. So whether I call it abhyasa, striving, practice or I call it vairagya, dispassion, the content is the same. Suddenly you realise that in this universe there is nothing that is opposed to anything else. There are no true opposites in this world. Heat is one thing, cold is another. Right is one thing, left is another. In life and in work there is nothing that is the opposite of the other. Pain is one thing, and pleasure is another. Honor is one thing, dishonor is another. Hatred is one thing, love is another. One does not oppose the other, one does not cancel the other.

When one has zeroed in on this truth, after having examined the duality, abhyasa and vairagya, you get a little closer and realise that they are

complementary. There is nothing contradictory in this world. Life or death, night or day, are not contradictory, but complementary, because the content is one.

tat param purusakhyater guna vaitrsnyam (I.16)

When that truth is seen, it is called para vairagya. Para vairagya, para abhyasa, supreme jnana, supreme renunciation, supreme delight are all the same - they all merge in the absolute. Then you are looking at the truth of what was previously seen as two sides of the coin; the two sides blend into the one substance of the coin. What were seen as opposites have become complementary, have blended into a whole. One does not exist without the other, simply because there is no other. Then there is supreme non-attraction and there is supreme non-hate; there is love which is not the antithesis of hate, but which is indescribable, a mere "experience-expression-put-together" of oneness. All experiences blend and there is nothing called pleasure and there is nothing called pain. There is pure experiencing, the experiencing consciousness being the same - it is "I" that feels tickled, it is "I" that feels pinched. When the body is subjected to what is called a pleasurable experience, the nerves twitch; when the body is subjected to a painful experience the nerves also twitch - the twitching of the nerves being the common factor. When there is anger, the facial muscles react; when there is love or happiness, the facial muscles react. It is all the same movement of energy.

How does one sustain this? Is there a method by which this supreme dispassion can be reached? The next Sutra gives a few steps to make this possible:

vitarka vicara 'nanda smita hugamat samprajnatah (I.17)

If you take those few steps, it is possible for you to turn all experiences into the one pure experiencing in which this duality of pain and pleasure can be totally avoided. The yogi is not against pain, the yogi is not against pleasure, but he is not content with calling them pleasure and pain. The yogi seeks to find the truth of pleasure, to find the truth of pain. That's all. If you get into this net of avoiding pleasure, you are going to love pain, thereby converting that pain into pleasure. That is not a serious loss or gain. If you get used to eating bitter food, it becomes sweet to your taste and you like it; that is of no great spiritual advantage. The yogi on the other hand merely wants to examine the truth concerning pleasure and pain, without labelling them and without being interested in running after one and avoiding the other.

Again this is specifically pointed out by Patanjali. What makes pleasure pleasurable? When the mind runs after something, it becomes pleasure -

pleasure makes the mind run after it. How do I know it is pleasure? Because I am running after it. Now watch very carefully here. You are merely a witness, standing on a balcony and watching me on the road below running after somebody. You think, "Ah, he likes him, so he is running after him." Somebody else is watching me from the other side, and thinks, "My God, this man is chasing him, perhaps to rob him!" My action was exactly the same, only the interpretation is different.

When something chases after something, sometimes it is called pleasure, sometimes it is called pain. Therefore the yogi is not interested in all that. Instead of calling one pain and the other pleasure, he asks, "What is the truth?" Suddenly he realises that both are merely nerve experiences; some nerves are tickled here, some nerves are tickled there. Why do we call this pleasure and call that pain? These are the two things that torment us throughout our life. Pleasure torments us in its own way and pain torments us in its own way. This torment goes on until the truth concerning the two is realised.

When you ask the yogi, "You know, I have heard all this, now what must I do?" He says, "Come on, I will tell you what to do. You have to begin somewhere."

vitarka vicara 'nanda 'smita 'nugamat samprajnatah (I.17)

Sit down; you can close your eyes or you can keep them open. With closed eyes you are seeing another world, with open eyes you are seeing this world. It is all the same. It is possible that you are now being subjected to a physical or psychological experience of pleasure or pain. Or it is possible that you are being subjected to a more subtle experience called memory or imagination, which is also a psychological experience.

First there is reasoning, mental activity. It is of course true that mental activity is not going to take you to the truth, but mental activity is there. That is where you begin. The first thought that arises is, "I see him." It is a thought. I close my eyes: I see Krishna or I see Buddha. I open my eyes, that Buddha is not there. I close my eyes, I see the Buddha again. I open my eyes, I see you. If "this" is true, perhaps "that" is also true; if "that" is false, maybe "this" is also false. Now I have more or less come to the end of logic. That is what is called "logical conclusion" - when I reach the conclusion of logic. Just two steps or you may have to take a few more, if your mind is a bit more complicated. I come to the logical conclusion that what I am seeing, what I am experiencing, may be as real, or as unreal, as something else that I can imagine. How do I see? The eyes may see something, the eyes see, but the eyes do not proclaim, "We are seeing Mr. So and so." The eyes do not say, "I am seeing Buddha."

The eyes merely see. Where is Mr. So and so? Where is Buddha? When I ask that question, logic comes to its conclusion - logical conclusion.

Then another movement in consciousness begins. It is not mental activity, but it is pure attention. It is not a movement in consciousness which proceeds from what is called "me" towards the other. It is a movement in consciousness which seems to flow towards its own centre and that is called vicara. We use the word "enquiry". It is not mental activity, it is not thought, it is not reasoning. It is inquiry, something that turns within in a kind of quest which is a direct looking within, a direct observation within. What is within? What is without? We do not know. For the present it looks like within. Why? Because a moment ago "that" looked like without. Otherwise there is no within, there is no without. When the inquiry starts, there is a feeling that the attention is moving within towards the center. Otherwise these words have no meaning.

Then I continue this and there is a feeling of pleasure. What is this pleasure? I am now in the second state where this is pure observation - vicara. In that pure observation, the observation itself discovers the true nature of experience. "Discover" is meant in its most literal sense. I had covered the mind, I had covered that pure experiencing with a big label called pleasure; and when this light of observation shines on it, it discovers or peels that label off. That is discovery - "uncovery". Then immediately pain ceases to be pain, pleasure ceases to be pleasure. Pain ceases to be tormenting, pleasure ceases to be tantalising - and therefore there is an experience of "ananda" - a sort of happiness which is not the absence of unhappiness. There is a peaceful and blissful experience - ananda. "Ah, it is marvellous, it is wonderful," and when I say so, I am still looking within. The attention still asks, "Who is experiencing this?" There is just a vague "feeling", "I am experiencing this peace, this ananda". You may like to refer to a scripture called the Yoga Vasistha, where this process is inimitably described. The Supreme Yoga - translated by Swami Venkatesananda, section 5; Chapters 80-81; pages for October 28th and 29th.

[VIII]

Yoga is equated to meditation and meditation to what was described as nirodhah. Nirodhah is that awareness, is that state of consciousness - unfortunately we have to use the word "state", in which the totality is aware of itself, without necessarily wishing to change anything. The totality becomes aware of itself; it is not "I become aware of the infinite" or "I realise God" or "I realise the self." It is the self that realises itself, without even a wish arising, "Oh, I wish it were otherwise." That is nirodhah, that is meditation, that is yoga.

Here we are in a very tight corner; how does one bring this about? Of course, it is not something which can be brought about. It is the truth, it is the reality. However, that awareness is not there now. The awareness is now conditioned, the awareness is now limited, the awareness is now whirling around the center-piece known as "I". Examining this "I" is not going to take you anywhere. Analysing this conditioned state of mind might make you an expert psychologist, but not a yogi. For the moment it may appear as though the "I", the ego, is accepted as a reality, but is it there or not? Do not assume that "ultimately it is not there" - that is dangerous. Then you are ignoring what is right under your nose and your vision is not 'on' the problem. That is the danger of assuming the existence of a goal - you are completely ignoring what is right under your nose and thinking of something else which is not right in front of you, so that the reality is ignored. I wanted to say the imagination that becomes real. It does not become real at all; imagination continues to be imagination. There is a lovely Sanskrit couplet that says that he who runs after the ephemeral or the passing phenomenon, ignoring the reality, loses both. The reality is lost because you deliberately ignored it and you are not going to get what is unreal anyway.

The yogi becomes aware of whatever he is at the moment; and when the light of this awareness is turned on, it is capable of revealing the truth. That is what you heard from the reading of the Yoga Vasistha the other day. Vichara is translated into English as "enquiry", but it is a lot more than enquiry, or rather a lot less than enquiry. There is no mental activity there at all, though it may be preceded by mental activity. It is just looking straight in. Therefore Vasistha says that to one who is engaged in vichara, there is absolutely no obstacle. If there is an obstacle, that vichara is going to look at it. Only if you are looking at the fifth floor where your office or your goal is, will you find the steps an obstruction. You are not looking in front, you are looking at the fifth floor and therefore you knock your foot against the steps. The steps are not obstacles at all, but they are meant to take you up to the fifth floor. To the yogi who is engaged in vichara, in meditation, there are no obstacles, no difficulties. Swami Sivananda used to say that nothing is difficult to one who

has not joined this unfortunate cult - "Diffi-cult". Once you allow the mind to say, "This is difficult", it is going to say "difficult" to anything.

There are no obstacles at all as long as one does not become trapped in reasoning. We do this quite often: "I know smoking is a bad habit, but my father used to spank me and I used to become nervous, so my mother used to give me a cigarette." The blame is always thrown on somebody else, so that I am not responsible for it. It is a very immature way of looking at oneself. The yogi does not do that. As long as I do that, there is no yoga, there is no meditation possible and I find life full of obstacles, full of difficulties, full of pain and sorrow. But if one treads the path of vichara or direct observation of that which is causing the problem, then there are no obstructions, there are no difficulties. If I am bothered by some habit, I am going to look at it, without calling it good, bad or indifferent, I am merely looking at it enquiring "What are you?" If I call some habits bad and I cannot get rid of them, I rationalise them. If I call some habits very good however much I like them, I am not able to cultivate them. Calling a habit good is not going to make it comeback to me. Calling a habit bad is not going to drive it away from me. So why waste time on all this?

Abhyasa and vairagya are one, the two sides of the one coin. There is a mental coloring which suggests something is pleasant and something else is unpleasant. When one looks deeply within oneself to see what the coloring is, to see what the source of this distraction is, then meditation happens. All the exercises and tricks that we may have learned concerning concentration and meditation are merely aids to this direct inner self-observation. The exercises in themselves are of no use, but as aids to direct self-observation they are very good. But there is a problem here: who is it that is observing, who is it that is engaging in meditation? Me. If you observe very carefully, already something suggests within, "Ah, this is it, previously I was a vicious person and now I am holy, holy. Previously I used to run after one thing and now I am running after some thing else." The "running after" is the common factor. Krishna warns in the Bhagavad Gita:

visaya vinivartante niraharasya dehinah rasavarjam raso 'py asya param
drstva nivartate (II.59)

The objects of the senses turn away from the abstinent man, leaving the longing behind; but this longing also turns away on seeing the Supreme.

You try with all the means in your power to abstain from the enjoyment of pleasure, but the taste is left. Patanjali also echoes this teaching:

tat param purusakhyater guna vaitrsnyam (I.16)

This vairagya becomes supreme, only when the purusa is seen, the ultimate experiencer is seen. Who is the ultimate experiencer in me? In order to find this experiencer, one is given a few steps:

vitarka vicara nanda smita 'nugamat samprajnatah (I.17)

I use my mind for a little while, the mental faculties, to reason out why I call this pleasure. It is just because I was taught that this is pleasure. 'Why do I call this good and desirable? Because I was taught that this is good and desirable. If it had not been so, probably I would never have bothered about it. Suddenly, it hits me like a bullet. I see that that goodness is fake, that goodness is a shadow. When virtue has been put there by somebody else and I am being virtuous because I dare not be vicious, there is no virtue. Also when I am thus being virtuous, I am looking at him, not at me! I am not looking where the thought arises, where the feelings arise, where the self is. So this true vairagya, true dispassion, true uncolouredness of the mind, truly unconditioned consciousness is possible only when the inner attention or awareness is constantly observing the self. Until then be careful, be vigilant.

After having described these four or five steps to meditation, Patanjali goes on to the next step:

varama pratyaya ' bhyasa purvah samskara seso nyah (I.18)

Every time an experience or a feeling or a mental disturbance, or distress arises, it can trigger inner observation or meditation, whether it is painful or pleasurable. So why do the yogis lay so much stress upon not seeking pleasure?

Because pleasure distracts your attention more than pain and prevents the attention from seeking the source. One has to be extremely careful to ensure that pleasure does not draw the mind out, the attention out, the awareness out. But if one is alert and vigilant, all experiences, whether they are called pleasure or pain, can be used to trigger self-observation or meditation. The stream of awareness that flows externally, as it were, begins to flow inwardly, as it were. These are not real; so let us not build images out of all this. The attention which was flowing out, turns upon itself. The rays of the mind which were flowing away from the centre, seem to turn upon their own source. During that process there is a stillness and there is a dropping of effort: varama pratyaya bhyasa (I.18). The mind is still there, the awareness is still there, the attention is still there and there is this sudden movement which is no movement but which is an intense vibration - again for want of a better word, vibration does not mean that something is fluttering, there are no butterflies. There is a tremendous stillness which is dynamic; it is comparable to the flame of the candle which is steady, although we know that every

moment millions of sparks flow along that flame. Krishna compares the yogi's heart, or attention, or consciousness, to the flame of a lamp in a windless room. In that stillness there is very clear observation, clear awareness of observation itself, without an observer. It is not as though I am meditating upon myself, or I am able to see myself, or I see that I am clear, enlightened. That is self-bluff, which is a very interesting pastime but a waste of time. There is a tremendous inner stillness, peace. You may call it bliss, God, or consciousness - whatever you wish. It is pure observation, without an observer, an absolute stillness which is not static, a total peace which is not dull.

In that observation is also seen samskara seso nyah (I.18). You have been battling with this mental colouring or conditioning, these samskaras. The other day I think I said to think of them as "some scars". I do not know how to translate this word samskara - maybe latent tendencies, maybe past impressions.

All these seem to suggest that some sort of gross substance within yourself receives all these imprints. It may not be; please work on it yourself, for only then will you understand it. When somebody insults me, what is it that responds with annoyance, with anger? When somebody praises me, what is it that responds with pleasure? One has to find the answers to these questions oneself. When the mind is absolutely still and when there is clear observation of the self without an observer, then the colouring is seen, the play of the mind is seen, the latent predispositions are seen. They are samskaras. They have been handed down, if you do not believe in reincarnation - from father to son, if you believe in reincarnation - from birth to birth: samskara seso 'nyah (I.18). And in this there is no effort: virama pratyaya 'bhyasa purvah (I:18) The effort ceases because the moment you make an effort, the effort becomes the doer, and you say, "I practise meditation." In the state where there is no effort, there is not even the feeling that I am practising meditation.

The "I" does not die, but it is still there as a bed of samskaras. To the question, "When I am insulted, who responds" there are two answers. First the samskaras respond. I was brought up to respond in this manner - from childhood, I was told that to be called an idiot is a terrible dishonour, and I must respond in a certain way. When I am doing something good, who is doing it? It is this samskara that does good; it is this samskara that reacts in an adverse way. When it is no longer theory, one can see it quite clearly. This is one answer. The other answer to the question, "Who is getting annoyed?" is that I am getting annoyed or "I" is getting annoyed. Who is pleased about it? "I" is pleased about it. Who is doing all this wonderful good work? The "I" that wants to go to heaven. There is basically no difference between these samskaras or latent tendencies or predispositions and what is known as the ego, or the "I". They are the same.

This means something which may not be apparent: the ego is nothing but a composite non-creation of these samskaras, of these tendencies! Right from birth, the mind has been filled with these ideas which have formed some impression upon this mind. Someone told me, "You are a boy", that is: different from a girl; someone told me, "You are a brahmin", which is different from a non-brahmin; someone told me, "You are an Indian", which is different from some body else, and so on. All these put together have formed the thing called "me" and this "me" jumps off the diving board called the mind. You must have seen this at swimming pools when you take off from the diving board - the diving board is also agitated. Every time this ego takes off from there, it leaves a deeper impression. So every time I get angry, the anger samskara becomes stronger and deeper; every time I become passionate, the passion samskara becomes stronger and deeper; and every time I am agitated, I am hateful, it makes a deeper and deeper groove. All these grooves put together is "me".

bhava pratyayo videha prakrtilayanam (I.19)

And so you have learned to observe the self which is the bed of samskaras, of all these tendencies, of all these predispositions put together. Is that moksha? Is that freedom? Is that liberation? Patanjali says no. Because, for a very simple reason, if there is a sweet aroma in this room and you pass through the room, you do not take the aroma with you, but it is left behind. But when these samskaras are formed in the mind, what is it that claims, "I experience this. I am a good man, I am a bad man, I am a brahmin, I am a non-brahmin, I am an Indian, I am a non-Indian"? If these impressions are formed in the mind, why does one say that these impressions belong to "me", or that "I have these bad habits?" There seems to be a cohesive force that keeps all these latent tendencies together. That is the conditioning, that is the limitation, so that - if you are very attentive probably you will get one little glimpse of it, this infinite consciousness seems some how to think, "These belong to me; I am made up of these," That thought is the kingpin for the whole lot. That single thought that all these ideas and ideologies, all these notions and concepts, all these samskaras and vasanas and what-have-you form part of me, belong to me and I belong to them, is another conditioning. Heaven knows how this conditioning arises in the same infinite consciousness. As long as that lasts, you push all these together.

When the body drops, it is said that this mass of conditioning, this mass of ego-sense travels from one embodiment to another - it may not be right; then and there it creates its own new body. If this body is dropped here and now, the same mass of latent tendencies thinks - for want of a better word, "I am something else, I am a bird", and creates its own space, its own wings and flies in its own world. What determines that? The nature of this conditioning

at the time this embodiment is dropped. So it goes on and on until the conditioning is completely abandoned. How long does it go on? However many millions of years it takes, however many seconds it takes, it is anybody's guess. You may ask for how long you should practise. Maybe you can do it in half an hour's time. Go on practising. Maybe it takes a thousand years. But this is it: we have no choice, for as long as this conditioning lasts every time this body falls - videha, and the components are re-absorbed into nature - prakrtilayanam, there is an inner change; a new notion or a new concept is formed. Your soul, or your jiva, or your ego or your internal personality does not have all these as limbs. The inner soul, the inner self has no shape, no form; its form is its own desire, its own concept of itself, its own notion concerning itself. Therefore you have been thinking for a long time that you are a man, so you took on the body of a man. You go on thinking, "From now on I am not a man, I am a bird," and if this thought is held until it saturates your inner being, your inner consciousness, when these elements of which the present body is composed are returned to nature, whatever be the condition in which that consciousness which thinks it is limited to this body, finds itself, determines the next embodiment and the next world. That world is created here and now, here in this very place. There is no space in that. The space is your mental activity and now at the moment when the body is dropped, it creates its own space, it creates its own world, and it becomes what the nature of that consciousness deserved to become at that moment.

Until all the coloring has dropped away and consciousness has become completely unconditioned and cleared of the various notions and concepts that we have fed into it, including even the notions "I am" and "This is my mind, this is my consciousness", then there is freedom. Patanjali even suggests in the next Sutra that it is possible that some are ardent in their devotion to yoga and may be able to reach this soon. Some are not so ardent and so they may take a little more time. Some are a little bit dull; but never mind, even they will eventually reach this point.

tivra samveganam asannah (I.21)

When one's zeal is intense, total, that total intensity brings this unconditioned state of being here and now.

[IX]

When the master of yoga speaks of samskaras, that is: latent tendencies, latent predispositions, or karma. Karma is nothing more than the extension of an action which had already commenced in the past. He is not dogmatic and he is also not interested in finding an excuse for his present behavior. Unfortunately we are using these wonderful concepts or truths - whichever way you look at it, as an excuse for certain behavior. We often say that these samskaras govern our present conduct, but this may not be true. When we use the word 'karma', we tend to imply that it is something which is fixed, inflexible, inexorable, and that it somehow involves my present behavior. Then we look around for an easy way to bring about a change in our behavior. It is not possible, for if my samskaras, which are the impressions left in "my mind" - these two words are terribly important, by my own past behavior, are going to govern my present behavior, there is no escape. If my past karma be such that it has already predetermined the course of my life, nothing can be done - so forget it.

Yet man is dissatisfied with his present life and he seeks some way to bring about some change. Then we invent all sorts of remarkable theories and doctrines, one of which is "God's Grace." Do not bring that in. This has its own application in its own place, but not here. When I have misused the doctrine of samskara, or the doctrine of karma, I have no business to bring in God's Grace here. That comes later. The doctrine of grace has a valid application in another sphere, that is: where one egotistically assumes that enlightenment or God-realisation is a matter of sheer brutal self-effort. I go on doing my yoga asanas for eight hours a day and pranayama for the next four hours, then repeat the whole process again for another twelve hours, thinking this will lead me to God-realisation. That is a fallacy. In order to counteract this egotistic notion, the yogis suggest that self-realisation is not a matter of self-effort while the self is still alive and vigorous, but self-realisation is a matter of God's Grace. This is the correct application. Self-realisation is not the logical sequence of some kind of self effort; but it 'is' when there is self-surrender. That is grace. And that grace manifests in one's life as love. Love flows from such a person and from the other direction flows grace. There is love from me and there is a flow of grace towards me.

God's Grace has its own place and application, but not when I am stuck in my own samskaras, or accept them as inevitable. It is important to remember that I accept my samskaras as inviolable, inevitable, ineradicable, and then I call upon God's Grace! I am committed to this thing called karma and I believe that what is going to happen to me is going to happen to me, and the way in which I react is also inflexibly fixed. Then I am far away from grace. I continue to be brutal, I continue to be selfish, I continue to be vicious, I continue to be greedy: then there is no God's Grace. We say in the universal

prayer, "Free us from lust, anger, greed and egoism." That means that first of all I must be aware of the presence of all these. The awareness of the presence of these samskaras is itself a tremendous liberating force. When the yogi uses the word samskaras or karma, he merely suggests their presence. It is not meant in a fatalistic sense, suggesting that they are the governing factors in our behavior, but it merely suggests a sort of springboard for all our behavioral patterns which is not to be accepted as inevitable.

When the process of meditation that we have been discussing is applied to these samskaras or psychological predispositions, there is a serious curiosity. What does it mean? Why do I behave in this manner? Why is it that someone else behaves in a different way? What is it that predisposes me to this conduct, whether that conduct is socially acceptable or unacceptable?

In the same way, when the yogi talks of karma, which is supposed to bring pleasure and pain, he is once again inquiring into the nature of all this. If it is merely a continuation of what I have been doing before, the fruition of my own sowing, what is it in me that characterises one as pain and the other as pleasure? That is what I want to know. I am not interested in philosophy, I want to know the truth. When that is directly observed, you are directly observing not only the samskaras, but also the bed of the samskaras, the fountain source of these samskaras, the field in which these samskaras grow, as it were. On just one piece of ground, several different types of vegetable might grow; the ground is still the same, the soil is still the same. And perhaps the elements that constitute the vegetables may also be the same, with a little difference in their molecular structure. So the yogi looks at the field with some sort of wonder. He looks at the thoughts, the feelings and the emotions, and he suddenly realises that they are all composed of one substance. What is the content of any of your thoughts? Thought!

Later our society decided that this thought is a good thought and that thought is a bad thought. What is a thought? What is a good thought and a bad thought? One has to learn to look through these labels and see the content. Something 'is'. One cannot completely and totally deny the existence of what is, as distinct from what appears to be. The content of a thought appears to be good, the content of another thought appears to be not so good. These labels change, depending upon who you are, what your background is, what your religious belief is, what your culture is. So can I be totally free of these labels, can I observe the content of this thought? When I do so, I am looking through these samskaras, I am looking through these experiences and, in effect, I am looking through behavior itself, instead of merely juggling with them, calling one set of behavior patterns saintly and another set of behavior patterns sinful. It does not mean that these divisions and distinctions have no value; they have psychological value or sociological value. May God bless them! But we are doing something else.

Can this observation, without an observer, which is meditation, see through all this, right down to the bed of the samskaras, down to the content of the thoughts and emotions'? There something 'is'. At that level, the samskaras cease to be samskaras. At that level the thought ceases to be a thought, emotions cease to be emotions, because you have crossed the level of these labels - that is important to remember. It is only so long as the eyes exist that there is beauty and ugliness. It is only so long as the nose exists that there are sweet fragrances and foul smells. Imagine a place where there is nobody present and a bundle of lighted incense sticks falls there. How does it smell? It is not the samskaras in themselves, or the actions in themselves that matter, but it is the experiencer and the doer of action that mysteriously springs up when these samskaras seem to float around.

It is as if that bundle of incense sticks sprouted a nose of its own and started smelling. Such is the mystery of creation - we are not really discussing that, but we are trying to observe even that. What is this ego-sense that arises and immediately associates itself, identifies itself with this bundle of samskaras? Why is it that a person thinks that he thinks some thoughts? I am not quite sure if I am thinking those thoughts.

Why does "I" think that I am thinking these thoughts? That is the yogi's question. It is not the samskaras that are to blame, it is not even the I-sense, the ego-sense that is to blame; that is the mystery. Can I observe it without thinking it is good, without thinking it is bad, without thinking it is natural, without thinking it is unnatural, knowing that all these things are thinking, thinking, thinking? There must be another way of understanding, of coming face to face with this truth. Truth is not a matter of thinking. Perhaps even thoughts are not to blame, but only the thinker who thinks "I think." The Holy Bible says that God created heaven and hell and all sorts of things, and found that they were all good. Only when Adam named this as this and that as that, did trouble start.

Once having named things, we have to add on some adjectives. A man, a woman ... that looks rather-bland and prosaic - so we say "a charming man" and "a lovely woman." Everything has to be qualified, and then the qualification has to be justified; and so then we start some philosophy. It might not be true at all, right from the beginning.

The Indian sages suggest that we are trapped in a twofold creation: one is God's creation, which is always pure and holy and the other is what we do, which is usually unholy. Unholy means unwholesome, not whole and we can only function in a fragmented way.

These teachers suggest that everyone of the fundamental elements created by God are good - earth, water, fire, air , and space. They are all purifying agents. You bury the dirtiest of filth and it is digested by the soil; you throw a dead body into the water and it is digested by the water; you throw a body into the fire and it is digested by the fire, purified by the fire; similarly, air also purifies it. But man's creation does not seem to be so pure. It is this limited mind that creates all sorts of problems. God created the world and saw that it was good. Adam came along and saw good and evil, pleasure and pain. Can I see through this whole drama? In order to do so, it seems to be vital to sacrifice this "Adam." Unfortunately, ever since the day a scapegoat was offered as a sacrifice - scapegoat is the goat that could not escape, we have used the word sacrifice in the sense of cutting somebody's throat, whether it be a human-being or an animal or anything else. But I believe the word sacrifice really means to make something sacred.

Now this observation without an observer is still observing the bed of latent tendencies, the fountain-source of labeling, and in that observation there is the realisation of this simple truth viz, there is an experiencer that arises with every experience. If that experiencer were not there, if the Adam himself were not there to name these, to distinguish these one from the other and then label them, if this Adam were sacrificed, then this vicious drama would come to an end. Sacrificed, not in the sense of destroyed, because what you call your ego-sense cannot be destroyed! When you wish to destroy it, it comes into being. How can you destroy something which does not exist as an independent entity? On the one hand you affirm that god is omnipresent; on the other hand you affirm that there is an undivine force, that there is evil that has to be destroyed. When the desire to destroy evil arises, that is where the evil is born. Why does the consciousness flow in that direction at all? It is the flow of your consciousness in that direction that is evil; there is no other evil. Why must I destroy something that is not? In that effort to destroy arises that same thing that you wish to destroy. Therefore, to sacrifice is not to destroy, but it is to realise the underlying substratum, which is sacred. It is just as simple a solution as that Swami in the Himalayas suggested: close your eyes, see God; open your eyes, see God. God being everywhere, He is within you, He is everywhere around you.

But there is a problem. You say that God is omnipresent and then the moment you open your eyes, you say, "But she, but he ... ". The mind creates and sustains the labeling process. When this observation without an observer - that is meditation, comes face to face with this problem, it becomes aware of this problem of the ego-sense, which in ignorance assumes an independent existence to itself. But the ego-sense is not a problem. Let it be there, this is God's creation. Who is interested in keeping it? Who is interested in destroying it? The ego-sense seems to assume an existence independent of the totality; that is absurd and therefore ignorant. When this observation or

meditation becomes aware of this, there is a tremendous inner trembling; there is no way out of this, this ego-sense cannot be destroyed, and as long as this ego-sense remains and functions as it does, it continues to create the same mischief. What does one do? You have come to the end of your tether. That is when this whole thing freezes, utterly freezes. Life goes on; you cannot suppress life, you cannot destroy life. But there is a total dead end. Then what is called self-surrender happens, as stated in Patanjali's Yoga Sutras:

isvara pranidhanad va (I.23)

How do you attain meditation? How do you attain the state of yoga? How do you realise this undivided consciousness? Isvara is nothing to be frightened of. Isvara is not a god who sits beyond the clouds with a carrot in one hand and a stick in the other, treating all of us like donkeys. Isvara is simply what is, what exists, regardless of what you think of it, regardless of whether you call it good or evil, regardless of whether you call it pleasure or pain, regardless of whether you call it God or Satan. In other words, it is what exists when your thought your ego-sense has stopped labeling - 'that' 'is', undeniably 'is', indestructibly 'is', eternally 'is'. When this ego-sense, which has been the source of all this mischief and misery, faces its own shadow that is ignorance, it is unable to function as it had been functioning before. Neither can this ego-sense commit suicide. And so, when it is frozen in that way, God 'is'. The ego-sense is frozen in the closest embrace possible with its counterpart, ignorance - I do not know who I am, I do not know what I am, I do now know why I am. That's it. Then there is surrender and what remains is Iswara or God.

Isvara pranidhanad va. You can also enter into a state of perpetual meditation - sahaja samadha, meditation which is continuous and unbroken, when the ego is dynamically surrendered in this manner. This is not meant in the sense of "I do not want to do", or "I am going to surrender myself and let God look after everything else." That is a rebellion and that is perhaps the worst form of egotism. In true surrender there is tremendous dynamism. If you want to use the word God, from then on your life is what is known as "God's Will". Perhaps you do not even know that; you are not even going to say, "Oh , I know I am doing God's will." Only one who is in doubt says so. The real saints never say so. We never heard our master, Swami Sivananda say, "I have realised God, I am enlightened, come on, fall at My Feet." If you know you are enlightened, why do you want to announce it? There is no need for all that.

One who has really and truly surrendered does not even know that he has surrendered himself. Perhaps he has totally surrendered himself and his life has been sacrificed - meaning the whole personality - if there is an ego sense in that person, even that has been made sacred. Then you may understand what seems to us to be mysterious behaviour in the saints like Swami

Sivananda. If they had an ego-sense, even that had been made sacred, had been touched by the divine fire. If they were cross with you, that is exactly what God's will was - take it as a blessing! That is total sacrifice, where there is absolutely nothing that is unsacred in that person's personality. That is isvara pranidhana. When this happens, all the labels have dropped away; there is nothing that is called good, there is nothing that is called evil. Krishna hints at this very beautifully in the 15th chapter of the Gita: "These sages are freed from what is commonly known as pain and pleasure". You are merely calling this pain and calling that pleasure, but they have gone right through this and realised the ground which is one pure experience. In what is called pleasure, there is nerve titillation; in what is called pain, there is another type of nerve titillation. That is the exalted state of the yogi.

Who is the isvara?

klesa karma vipako 'sayair aparamrstah purusa visesa isvarah (I.24)

He is a special type of person, a special type of indwelling consciousness - purusa. Who is the ordinary indwelling consciousness, the jiva, the ego-sense, the experiencer who thinks he is subject to pain and pleasure, success and failure? He is the one who is sunk in unhappiness. But beyond this experiencer of experiences, there is a consciousness, there is an inner intelligence which does not so discriminate. That pure experiencing, that consciousness - let's say, in purely anatomical terms, pure brain sensation or neurological sensation, does not discriminate between pain and pleasure. I am putting it crudely! That consciousness, that intelligence that is aware of this pure experiencing, without labeling one pleasure and the other pain, is purusa visesa. That is an extraordinary indwelling consciousness, indwelling awareness, indwelling presence. If you want to call it the over-soul, you are welcome.

That being, that indwelling presence, that God within is not involved in your actions and their consequent reactions and experiences. That which is beyond dualism and which is therefore the undivided intelligence, that is beyond the ordinary personality, is purusa visesa. It is not involved in your karma, it is not involved in your actions and their reactions which are experiences called pain and pleasure. Purusa visesa isvarah. Or there is another meaning of the word visesa; that is, when you have discarded all the unreal clothes of your own personality - the samskaras, the thoughts, the emotions, all of which made you behave in a certain way, when you have seen through them and they don't exist anymore, when they do not seem to matter anymore, when all these have been shed, then there emerges the true purusa, the true self, that which is the substratum, the ground, the 'is'. This 'is' - all else appeared to be, all else came into being and came to an end. I thought this was pleasure; it arose from a certain experience and it came to an end, but the experiencer is

still there. I thought that was painful; it arose, it remained for some time and it vanished, but the experiencer is still there. That which remains when all these have been seen through, that end intelligence, that ground intelligence, that is Isvara.

[X]

It is often made to look as if surrender is a simple thing. Someone comes to hit you and you just put your arms up, wave a white handkerchief and that's it. But surrender to God is not such an easy thing. What do I surrender? Almost always we surrender that which does not belong to us. It is a very easy, lovely pastime. I am a business man and I have made a lot of profit, which means I have already robbed somebody. All that profit is in my pocket; someone comes and points a gun at me and I tell him, "Alright, I will give you everything. It does not even belong to me. It belongs to my customers, you can take it."

There is a very beautiful story in the Yoga Vasistha , where it is said that a king wanted to renounce the worlds Eventually his guru points out: "All that you have so far given up does not even belong to you. The kingdom was there before you were born. The palace, existed before you were born. You were born in the palace." "My" wife may be an imaginary relationship in more ways than one and even so "my" children. "My" money is not my money, just because it is in my pocket for some time. It was not my money a little while ago, and it may not be my money a little while later. All these things do not belong to me; the sages even point to the body and say, "Even that does not belong to you." It came from the groceries and, depending upon what happens to you after the body is abandoned, it belongs to the vultures, or to the worms of the earth, or to the elements, fire or water, not to "me". If it does belong to me, why do I not take it away when I go? We are always ready and eager to surrender or abandon all these. The king asks, "What belongs to me then?" The guru replies , "Nothing but the foolish idea that something belongs to you. Can you give that up?"

What must I surrender? "I". What must I surrender to God who is omnipresent? To surrender myself is a beautiful idea, but tell me what my self is, so that I can surrender it. There is a very beautiful saying by Ramana Maharshi - you can only enquire into the truth concerning the I, the thought or the feeling that arises within you: "I", "I am", Later, because you do not know what "I am", I add something or other to it, such as "I am the body", "I am a man", etc. You may be able to enquire or observe who says "I am", what says "I am" and what this "I am" is. But do not try to think what that "I am" is, says Ramana Maharshi, do not try to think what this God within may be, what this jiva may be, what this atma may be, what this self may be. Do not try to think, because thinking is ignorance. It is when you begin to visualise the self that you are creating what later shines as the ego. Neither the self nor the God within is an object of thought. An object of thought is another thought; it cannot be the reality.

So now we have come to understand that these two basic factors involved in surrender to God are unknown to me. I do not know what the self is, I do not know what God is, and I am supposed to surrender myself to God. Therefore, with my own thought I merely construct a thing called the self and another thing called God and I offer this to that. That is wonderful! You can go on for a long time.

isvara pranidhanad va (I.23)

The persistent and tremendously active observation - it is not a passive thing at all, direct observation of what the self is, is itself surrender. In the light of that observation, the self is known not to exist, the self is seen not to exist. The trick that it performs and the games that it plays are all observed, in pure observation in which there is no observer. This inner light sees the shadow play. Watch carefully. When light sees your own shadow, what happens to it?

That is surrender. This shadow is what frightens me, repels me, attracts me; and when I am asked what it is, I say "I don't know". The shadow that frightens me all my life, the shadow that chases me all my life, the shadow which I chase all my life - how can I live without knowing that? Then I say, "Let me have a better look at it. Bring me a flashlight, let me illumine that shadow." What happens at that moment is what is called self-surrender to God. When it is translated in terms of your own psychological shadow, can this inner shadow, in which the notion of an ego arises, also be illumined by this observation without an observer, by this pure awareness? Can that pure awareness observe this inner shadow that says, "I do not know what I am?" What happens then is self-surrender. One can play with it externally, but it is probably a lot more difficult to do this within oneself.

When this observation without an observer, which is meditation, becomes aware of the shadow-play within that which is called oneself, that shadow is illumined and it merges into the totality of the light. There is absolutely no withdrawal from there. The shadow does not argue with you, the shadow does not fight with you, the shadow does not say, "I won't go." Can that be understood, can such self-surrender be done? It is not the ego that does it. If you look at a shadow, that shadow will never convert itself into a flashlight and jump into your hands saying, "Come on, look at me." In the same way, as long as the ego is functioning, it will never allow you to see isvara, the totality. And yet, side by side with this shadow, or perhaps as its substratum, there is this inner light, even as you see those shadows on the wall - it is an absurd expression, the shadows are not on the wall, the light is on the wall. Where are the shadows? The shadows appear on the wall. It is only an appearance and not the reality. But because we are using the expression "the shadow is on the wall", I have to use another equally absurd expression, and there is a wall behind the shadow. These are all words, inadequate expressions. In a vaguely

similar way, there is this self-ignorance, but as its own substratum underneath it, behind it - use any expression you like, as long as we are able to communicate, it is good, somewhere co-existent with this shadow of self-ignorance is the light that shines constantly, the light that is even aware of this ignorance. When that shines, in the light of that inner light, in the light of that inner observation or meditation, the shadow - I do not want to use the expression "the shadow is dispelled", the shadow is illumined, enlightened. That is self-realisation. That shadow itself is enlightened; that shadow itself is sacrificed, in the sense that it is made sacred - if there is a mind - the mind, if there is an ego - the ego, if there is a body - the body, if there are the senses - the senses, all of them are made sacred, instantly. When you illumine that wall, you do not see anything dying, nothing is destroyed, not even the shadow. The shadow is enlightened, illumined, sacrificed, made sacred. If that can be made clear, that is total self-surrender.

tatra niratisayam sarvajna bijam (I.25)

"Tatra" - there; "niratisayam" - wonderful, super-wonder-full; "sarvajna bijam" - omniscient. The seed of omniscience - it is up to you to interpret this, is either in that surrender itself or in God; it is the same thing. When the surrender has happened, only God remains. So in that there is omniscience, when the self is surrendered, what is omniscience? "I thought I had my purse here; does anyone have the power of omniscience to try to find out where I have lost my purse?" - that is not omniscience. Omniscience is really the all-knowing, the all, as all. Omniscience is not knowledge of the particulars, by an individual. You do not have to practise yoga in order to acquire knowledge of particulars; you go to school or university for that. Knowledge of the all by the all as the all is omniscience. So does the omniscient God or the omniscient being know - watch carefully now - does the omniscient yogi, or God, or whatever it is, know where I lost my purse? The omniscient being, the omniscient yogi, the omniscient consciousness which is ever present at the same time in me, in the purse, in the money that was in the purse, in the person that took the purse, that omniscience which was in all these all the time, perhaps does not have the idea that the purse was stolen. When I take this from one pocket and put it in another pocket of my shirt, I have no idea at all that it has been stolen. Now, if God is omniscient, omnipotent, and if this purse is transferred from this person's pocket to that person's pocket, God does not feel that it has been stolen. He probably thinks - if he thinks at all, that it has simply changed pockets.

Yet in the third chapter of the Yoga Sutras, we are given detailed instructions of how to know certain phenomena. I hope we will not have time to discuss this very much, because it is useless, waste of time. We are supposed to practise dharana, dhyana and samadhi, and then after a lifelong struggle to practise samadhi, to practise meditation, all I am interested in is knowing

what is on the other side of the moon! Patanjali says that if you meditate upon the pole star and enter into samadhi during that period, you will have “tara vyuha jnanam” - (III.27); you will have complete knowledge of astronomy. You can go to the Johannesburg planetarium to learn all this for ten cents. Patanjali himself, after having described all these practices at great length, says these are distractions. Why? Because in all these your individuality is very firmly sustained. You become more and more egotistic, you become more and more confirmed in your foolishness, in your ignorance. He says you can do it, but these are wasteful pastimes.

tatra niratisayam sarvajna bijam (I.25)

When you enter into that God, you surrender yourself to God, to this isvara, who is omnipresent and omniscient, who is unaffected by sin and suffering, and who is totally unconditioned; who knows neither pain nor pleasure, but who is the pure experiencing in pain and pleasure; who knows neither virtue nor vice, but who is the pure energy that acts all the time, everywhere; the omnipotent, the cit-shakti, cosmic energy, consciousness, the life breath in every atom in the universe. Whether the atom is supposed to be a saint or a sinner, that is isvara when one vigilantly, dynamically - meaning not passively, not resignedly, not with a sour face, surrenders to one in whom there is this direct observation of the activities of the self, in the light of which all activities are sacrificed, made sacred, enlightened and surrendered. In that surrender there is omniscience. I wonder why Patanjali had to say this? Perhaps for the simple reason that he is indirectly pointing out what happens in the state of yoga; that is, that there is absolutely no doubt. Delusion is gone, ignorance is gone, vacillation is gone. That state of consciousness in which there is no shadow of doubt is surely omniscient. This is not meant in the sense that I can read your thoughts. It is supposed to be bad manners to read another person's letter and the person who reads your thoughts reads your letter before it is written. How can that be moral and glorious? And why do we always consider it a tremendous yogic achievement if one can suddenly become invisible and then become visible somewhere else? Then what is the difference between a robber and a yogi? A robber has to break in to your house, while the yogi simply goes through the wall without making a big hole there! I do not know if these achievements are even moral, leave alone yogic.

tatra niratisayam sarvajna bijam (I.25)

In that state of consciousness there is not a shadow of doubt concerning the non-existence of the self. That shadow which had been cast and mistaken for a personality with an independent existence, is enlightened. The shadow has not gone, but has been enlightened and therefore surrendered, sacrificed, made sacred. It has become one with the infinite. This is something supremely wonderful; there is no wonder greater than this; and in that

omniscience, not a desire arises, not a craving arises. The Isvasya Upanishad says: "When the oneness is realised, delusion is gone, sorrow is gone." Fear is gone, anxiety is gone, doubt is gone. These are the things that are bothering us; they will all go. In that state of omniscience one sees that these have no existence, apart from the foolish assumption of an individual that "I" am afraid - afraid follows the assertion "I am", and when this "I am" is knocked down, fear has no resting place. I am anxious; anxiety is based on "I am", a falsity that is assumed to be real; and when that "I am" is seen to be non-existent, anxiety ceases to be, because it has no place to rest.

purvesam api guruh kalena 'navacchedat (I.26)

This light that shines in self-surrender, this inner light that shines in total sacrifice of the self, is the enlightening experience - and this enlightening experience itself is the guru. The word "guru" can be easily translated as follows: the word has two syllables, gu-ru; "gu" is nothing more than the gloom of ignorance, self-ignorance; "ru" is nothing other than the remover. That which removes the darkness of ignorance, the shadow of ignorance, is "gu". You can do what you like with that shadow on the wall, but it will not go. You can use your vacuum cleaner, you can wipe it with soap and every type of detergent, you can scrape the plaster off the wall, but the shadow will still be there. The only thing that will remove that shadow is light; even the smallest candle-light will remove it. Therefore the guru is that enlightening experience. This enlightening experience has been the same enlightening experience of the seekers, the students of yoga, from time immemorial - "purvesam api guruh". If you can conceive of one student of yoga one thousand million years ago, even he attained the same enlightening experience. Was there the same guru? You can interpret this Sutra as you like, there is no objection. "Kalena 'navacchedat" - the guru is not conditioned

by time; why is it so? Because this inner light is not a product of thought. Time is a product of thought, time is thought, time is a concept of the mind, and so that which is beyond time is also necessarily beyond thought. That which is beyond thought is timeless. This is true even of your sleep. If you go to bed and sleep, when you wake up you feel that you just went to bed, even though eight hours have passed. When thought is suspended, time is also suspended; when thought ceases to be, time ceases to be; when time ceases to be, thought ceases to be - the two are inter-related. This enlightening experience, being beyond thought, is also beyond time.

purvesam api guruh kalena 'navacchedat (I.26)

Time has no relevance to this enlightening experience which is the guru. And so, if one enters into the spirit of this whole argument, suddenly it becomes clear that guru, God and what was considered self seem to be the same. Each

of these three words: isvara - God, guru and atma - self, apparently have a meaning of its own. However, they all denote the one essential indivisible consciousness, indivisible truth; the apparent diversity indicated by the different words is fictitious. When you go to what is called a human guru, a wise guru, like our master Swami Sivananda, or Ramana Maharshi, He would probably do exactly what these words imply. Perhaps He would simply indicate that what you have so far considered to be yourself and what you have so far considered to be God, are one and the same - and the guru illumines that oneness. He would probably teach you to spell and pronounce the word guru: "Gee, you are you! " G-U-R-U. That's all. It's simple, isn't it?

purvesam api guruh kalena 'navacchedat (I.26)

That same enlightening experience comes down, uninterrupted by time, and therefore beyond time. It is not bound by time, it is not limited by time; it is eternal, even according to the tradition that emphasises the need for a human guru. Even that tradition is emphatic that it is that light which appears to the human eyes as a human person. What was Swami Sivananda? To us He was a radiant personality, who was able to enlighten our intelligence and lighten our burden, who was able to shine the light of His wisdom on the dark corners of our own ignorance and craving, in whose presence we enjoyed peace, happiness, joy and inexpressible delight. All these are the inseparable characteristics of this enlightening experience which appears in front of us, but being human, I super-impose humanness on that enlightening experience. That which is in front of me, that which listens, that which smiles, that which laughs, that which cries, that which walks in front of us, was this enlightening experience. Being human

and endowed with only human faculties, the human vision perceived only the human body, the human ears heard only the human voice. It was my limitation and not his; he was not responsible for that. "Kalena 'navacchedat" - that which is not bound to time or by time, that which is beyond concepts and percepts, that which is beyond description, that is the truth, that is the guru. If he appeared to have taken birth and to have passed on, that is an unreal super-imposition, which on account of my ignorance I super-impose upon this eternal light that appeared to us as Swami Sivananda. That light is unborn and undying, unconcerned about time.

tasya vacakah pranavah (I.27)

This isvara, this God is indicated by "om". This is rather important to understand. That being eternal, that being omnipresent and infinite, it does not need a name; so "om" is not the name of God, even though we can say so. We say "om" is the name of God, we say Siva is the name of God, we say Krishna is the name of God. I am not contradicting that. But it does not need

a name. I do not say that “om” is not the name of God or that Krishna is not the name of God. I am merely suggesting that it does not need a name. Why is it so? Because it is omnipresent and eternal. That which is everywhere does not need to be called anything - it is there already. "Vacakah" is very difficult to translate. It is a kind of verbal indicator. If you have to say what it is, say "om". That is what the Sutra means. This word "om" is extremely interesting. Even now, in certain parts of South India, as also in some parts of Ceylon where Tamil is spoken, the word “om” means just "yes", nothing more. "Om" is used in some of the Upanishads in that sense: yes, assent, affirmation. So what is the name of that omnipresent God? “Yes”. When you say “no”, your ego is born, and

when you say "never", it is well established! That's beautiful. I hope you will go home and think of it. "Om" is the verbal indicator of God. Om means "yes" and that “yes” is the very ‘yes-sence’ of surrender, that "yes" is the very essence of surrender!

[XI]

The last Sutra that we were studying the other day was:

tasya vacakah pravavah (I. 27)

God is not some thing, some object that needs to be labelled and named, God being the omnipresent subject; the omnipresent subject is just referred to or indicated by “Om” when such indication is necessary. It is very important to remember this. It may be unnecessary for us to communicate at all or to question each other about what is infinite, what is God, in which case silence is the greatest and best communication and expression of what is; not only verbal silence, but also mental silence. Hence in the Bhagavad Gita we are told silence or mauna is a discipline more of the mind than of speech.

However, in our social activities we may find it necessary to communicate with one another and during the course of this encounter, it may be necessary to verbally indicate what God may be; or what isvara may be. The word isvara is a lot more than what the English language calls God. Isvara is not just what we call God" , our father which art in heaven; Isvara is not what we might refer to as something divine. Isvara is just is-ness, the

first two letters of the romanised script of the word. Isvara - “is”, the essence of all existence. The yogi reminds us that this may be verbally indicated by the syllable “mm”, and we also saw that this syllable "mm" is often used to stand for assent, for "yes". This "yes" is the essence - yes-sense, of what is . Shall we then say "yes " to everything that goes on? Is this "yes" the opposite of “no”? It is good to clear ourselves of this misunderstanding, who it comes to what one regards as God. It is good to realise that this being the substratum of all, it is not to be restricted to what you and I call the pairs of opposites. In it, there are no opposites, in it ‘yes’ is not the opposite of ‘no’, in it love is not the opposite of hate, in it like is not the opposite of dislike, in it peace is not the opposite of restlessness. It is not as though God exists only in love, only in peace, only in goodness, only in me, only in you. What is is the basis, the truth, the reality that underlies all, but not in the sense of the all being several things put together. Truth and falsehood both become truth. How can falsehood become truth? The mind, the consciousness that conceives of that falsehood is true. So that reality is beyond what you consider true and not true, that love is beyond what you consider love and hatred, that peace is beyond what you consider peace and restlessness, and that yes is beyond what you mean by yes and no. Therefore this yes does not mean that hereafter I will not say no at all. That is not what is meant at all.

In one's direct observation of this tremendous inner reality, one does not say no, one does not even say yes, but one persistently observes within oneself the rising of distractions. This does not mean fighting them, but by

understanding them, by looking through them, without saying yes, without saying no, by being constantly aware of what is.

That is a different type of yes. That yes has a completely different quality. That 'is', and therefore that is yes. There is an assent, an affirmation, a recognition of what is. However, I am not going to say, "Therefore if I am angry I must say yes to the anger." I am looking into that anger. I am looking through that anger to see, "Yes, that is nothing more than an outflow of energy against the background of awareness." That yes is different. I am not saying yes to the anger as such, but I am saying yes to the anger inasmuch as I am not resisting it, I am not rebelling against it. I am seeing through it, observing it and discovering the 'is' even in that. Even so, the great commandment, "Resist not evil", does not mean co-operate with evil. We have understood only two meanings - either we resist evil - becoming evil, or we co-operate with evil - becoming evil again. If I am wicked, can you do anything about it without yourself becoming wicked?

There is a lovely saying in some of the Indian languages that "if you throw stones into filth, the first person to be splashed is yourself". Therefore you cannot resist evil at all without being tainted by the evil. But should we jump to the opposite extreme, saying, "Since I am told not to resist evil, I must co-operate with evil?" Then again you are tainted. We have never tried this third alternative which is to look through what is called evil or good. In this we have really and truly transcended this evil without being tainted by it. We have become total good because evil is no longer evil; we have become truly good without becoming egotistic about it. That is what is called "yes", what is called "om". This is beautifully described in the Katha Upanishad: that which is beyond all the dualities, that in which all dualities blend - day and night into day, love and hatred into divine love, etc, and which is therefore indescribable, has to be experienced as the "is" or the reality that provides the substratum for all these; that is "om".

taj japas tad artha bhavanah (I.28)

We are asked to repeat this "om", without resisting, without accepting, to be constantly aware of it. Japa does mean repetition and there are some great teachers who say repetition will make you dull; this is one point of view. Another point of view is that repetition is a confession of impotence. Why do you want to repeat something? Because you did not do it properly the first time. If your sword is sharp, just one cut and it is gone. So there are these

points of view. If the first time I say "om", I contemplate its meaning; there is no need to say it again. Japa or repetition becomes necessary or advisable when the first utterance was ineffectual. So then go on, repeat it, repeat it and repeat it, until one day you stumble into it. "Will it do if I go on mechanically

repeating it?" I have heard this argument such a lot! Is it possible for you to repeat something mechanically? Never mind what it is. Is it possible for a living organism, a sentient organism, to do something mechanically again and again, without ever wondering what it is? I am not referring only to this mantra japa. We are indulging in a million mechanically repeated actions every day. I suggest that if you watch yourself in your own life it is not possible for you to go on doing something mechanically forever and ever and ever. One day you begin to wonder, "What am I doing?" That is enough. Until then, keep this process going. It is too easy just to condemn all this. If you observe nature very carefully, you will see that this is precisely what nature does. She goes on creating millions and billions of souls so that one bright soul might enter the body. The other day I was looking at an avocado tree bearing thousands of blossoms; nobody, not even God or whoever created that tree and those blossoms suffered under the illusion that all those blossoms were going to turn into fruits. All these blossoms are created so that some of them may be pollinated, so that some of them may survive as fruits, and so that some of them may be eaten by people, and so that among those people, one of them may be sensible. That is the beauty of nature. Even so I go on repeating this mantra mechanically, semi-mechanically, non-mechanically, so that some time or other the penny may drop and I may see what was meant. Were all the previous repetitions useless? Perhaps yes, perhaps no. If those repetitions had not been there, perhaps I would never have reached this point. Or probably they were a waste of time - never mind. I have wasted my time in a million ways, so a few more minutes does not matter. I waste six or seven hours of my time sleeping, I waste about four hours of my time eating, therefore half an hour more of "Om Namah Shivaya" is not such a dreadful waste.

Instead of getting worked up about it, let us look at it from a different angle. Suddenly I discover that the Sutra did not stop with "taj japas"; it goes on to say "artha bhavanam". The word "artha" in the Sanskrit language has a great number of meanings. When the meaning is not clear to me, I do not accept it; I twist it, turn it to suit my understanding. So in such cases, even though you have a translation of the Sutras, it is better to get hold of a dictionary and read all the meanings of the word in question. You may be shocked to discover that several meanings other than the ones that have been given to you, are possible, Which one is right? I do not know; or I do know which one is right, but it may not be the meaning that appeals to you. Why not find out for yourself; that is the only way to study all this if you want to study at all. "Arth" means - let's take a

way-out meaning: "money" - so now I am studying this Sutra and I see "taj japas" that is, I must repeat "om" and then "tad artha bhovanam" - I must meditate on "money". Why not? You may think it is absurd, but you may do so, and you would still be within the teachings of the Yoga Sutras. Repeat a

mantra and meditate, then probably you will be very relaxed and so you will be able to make more money!

“Artha” has quite a number of other meanings and one of them is the word "meaning". In order to find the meaning of the word "artha", you look it up in a dictionary and the meaning of the word is given there. But it is paraphrasing - paraphrasing means that where there is one word, you use a phrase to explain it. "Artha" also means a thing, an object. There are other meanings, but this is what we want to take: when the word "book" is uttered, its artha is this book I am holding; it is not a paraphrase, using many words to indicate one word, "This is a book", that's it; now I have the artha in my hand. In that sense, what is the artha of om? Ommmm ... I refer to the dictionary and the dictionary says, “It is indicative of Brahman, it is God, it is the supreme being, it is itself the infinite, it represents creator, preserver, and destroyer.” But what is it? Not what does it mean according to the dictionary? I may give you one or two hints, but they will not be exhaustive, merely indicative, because this has to be a personal adventure, your own adventure.

I can see something simple and beautiful. Om is breath, life. Om is a sound, a beautiful, humming sound, a sound that I hear when I listen to the truck outside. That's it, om here, om there, om when the wind blows over the roof. Now I have found something marvelous, that I say "om" and even so the car engine says "om", the wind says, "om", the ocean says "om". This is a sound which is found everywhere. That is the meaning. That is the artha.

Then I am told that japa can be done aloud, or lispings or mentally. At least a minute ago when I was saying "om", I knew there was movement of energy, wind, life-breath etc, but when my mouth is closed, when my throat is silent, I hear ... I hear the sound. Where is this sound produced, by what, and who listens to it? When I say that I am doing japa mentally, what is that sound made of? The answer to that question is the artha or the meaning or the reality of om. That is the real artha and all the rest is word-meaning, one word for another word. The artha eludes my grasp, is not seen, is not experienced. When I thus repeat the om, it may be necessary to repeat this om mentally, but it does not make me dull, because I am watching, I am listening to it keenly, attentively. "Why do I do so? In order to discover for once and maybe for all what that sound is made of, knowing that that is the artha, that that is the meaning of this om. The mind never becomes dull while repeating this om. If the mind is tired or fatigued and I want to go to sleep, I will discover long before sleep that the attention has wandered away from me.

tatah pratyak cetana 'dhigamo 'py antaraya 'bhavas ca (I.29)

What happens when I repeat “om” in this manner? "Pratyak cetana" or the attention, the consciousness, the awareness seems to flow into itself, towards

itself, into itself; the attention that was distracted and externalised suddenly reverses and begins to flow into itself, so that the scattered ignorance called knowledge has begun to fade away and self-knowledge emerges, becoming clearer and clearer. And it also becomes clear that the object as such has never known the subject except as a projection of one's own self. Therefore, in a manner of speaking, prior to this we have been living in ignorance; not only in self-ignorance, but utter ignorance. We only pretended that while I do not know myself, I know what the object is, I know that this is a microphone. Now that the consciousness has begun to flow towards its own center, apparently there is a reversal of the flow of consciousness, with the result that the self seems to be more real, sharper; there is a clarity in regard to oneself. Then based upon that, there is a clarity and better understanding of what were previously regarded as objects, because the projection of ignorant ideas and notions has ceased. Truth is becoming more and more abundantly clear.

It is very difficult to translate these two words "antaraya bhava". It is usual to say that obstacles cease or obstacles are dispelled, but there is a slightly different nuance and that is that "abhava" means non-being, "the obstacles non-being". That is, the obstacles do not exist at all, the obstacles do not arise at all, there are no obstacles - that is a more correct and appropriate meaning. It is not as though the obstacles are dispelled, but they are made non-being. I do not know if it is clear; it is a beautiful sense which is impossible to put into the English language. It does not mean that the obstacles do not arise, it does not mean that the obstacles go away, it means the obstacles attain a state of non-being - "antaraya 'bhava", which means the obstacles are no longer obstacles.

If we take an example, then this will become a bit clearer. I am sitting for my meditation, I repeat "om". Suddenly, I remember that I forgot something. This is an obstacle, an obstruction. "I wish there was a cushion, it hurts sitting on the floor," - that's an obstacle. A distracting thought is an obstacle, a feeling of pain is an obstacle, but Patanjali says that if you repeat om in this manner and contemplate the reality or the truth concerning this om, that obstacle ceases to be an obstacle. Why? Because the attention that is so vigilant and alert, turns towards that obstacle and asks, "Who are you, what are you?" The attention that was contemplating this om suddenly turns upon this obstacle which immediately becomes almost a helper. It is wrong to say that the obstacle did not arise; some distraction arose, some pain arose, but somehow the magic of this om and this contemplation converted it into an aid, and therefore it has ceased to be an obstacle - but does it cease to be an obstacle, or does it cease to be? None of these expressions make any sense at all in the face of the inner experience, That is called "antaraya 'bhava". Then it is true to say that from there on the yogi experiences no obstacles whatsoever. What appeared to be obstacles before he took up the practice of yoga and what appear to be obstacles

in the mind of others, do still arise in him, but he does not regard them as obstacles; to him they are not obstacles - that is the sense.

From there on, whatever happens, whether it is called pleasure or pain, whether it is called happiness or unhappiness, whether it is called honor or dishonor, whether it is called something or not called something, all that is fuel to this beautiful and brilliant flame of self-knowledge.

vyadhi styana samsaya pramada 'lasya 'virati bhranti darsana 'labdha
bhumikatva 'navasthitatvani citta viksepas te 'ntarayay (I.30)

The next Sutra lists nine of these obstacles. Why are they obstacles? Do they prevent me from attaining self-realisation? Do they somehow make the self disappear? The self cannot disappear. No obstruction whatsoever can destroy the self, can hide the self, can veil the self; self is the one that is even aware of the veil, self is the substratum for our lust, greed, anger and so on. How can they become obstacles? They are obstacles only in the sense that they distract your attention; and whereas the self is shining all the time, you are unaware of it - "citta viksepas te 'ntarah". Only to the extent that they cause psychological disturbance are they considered obstacles. This is very important to remember. Anything that causes psychological distraction is an obstacle.

We will just have a brief look at the list. "Vyadhi" - disease, illness. Especially when you think of illness as an obstacle, it is good to remember that it is an obstacle only to the extent that it distracts your attention. When that is understood, we understand the nature of the illness or the disease that afflicted great masters - they did not 'afflict' the great masters. My guru Swami Sivananda had diabetes, had lumbago, had this, had that, in exactly the same way as you have a cadillac, or a lovely big mansion, or a million rand in your bank account - you are not unhappy about it. But even if you have all these, perhaps you still experience unhappiness sometimes. The master never experienced unhappiness, even though He had lumbago, diabetes, etc. To Him they were no different from the shirt that he had or the overcoat that He had. That is it. When that state is reached, disease or no disease is of no consequence to you. What happens to the body is of no consequence to the spirit. The body undergoes its own natural changes; let it. But these changes do not produce psychological disturbance, mental distractions. One has to understand all these in the proper spirit. By saying that the yogi is unconcerned, it does not mean that he does not take any medicine. He is unconcerned in the sense that these things do not produce mental distraction. Please remember that it does not mean that he does not pay any attention to the body. It only means that inwardly he is not distracted, no matter what is happening. We are not used to this; we always take it for granted that I must

react or not react when somebody comes and insults me. According to us there are only these two things, that I must react and pay her back in her own coin or that I must say, "Hari om tat sat, God bless you, my dear." It is possible to do either of these without being mentally distracted and keeping perfect stillness within. Without any reference to what the external behavior may be, the yogi's inner being is undistracted. The body may be subjected to illness and the body may undergo treatment, that is not important. The master was an expert in that. In a certain period of His life He took as much medicine as food, but neither that nor the illness had anything whatsoever to do with His inner joy, inner peace, inner bliss.

"Styana" - dullness; samsaya" - doubt. It is important to remember that doubt is harmful as an obstacle, only to the extent that it disturbs your inner attention - citta viksepas, psychological distraction. So, as your disciple, I may question you, I may even express disagreement, in order to clarify my understanding, my inner vision. But doubt is something different; that is where it produces an inner distraction, The teaching does not seem to be right, and I go somewhere else, to listen to something else. In the same way, though we exalt what is called faith, even that can be distracting. Faith is another form of doubt. When do you have faith? You say, "I really do not know, but still I have faith." "Still I have faith" means that you think you really do not understand what it is all about and you have faith. So what you call faith is exactly fifty per cent doubt, just as a glass is half full or half empty. When you look at the empty part, you call it doubt, when you look at the full part, you call it faith. So faith may be distracting and therefore an obstacle; this is also important. I have faith in you, I come to your yoga classes, I come to your meditation and you say, "Sit in the lotus posture". I sit in the lotus posture. You say, "Look at your nose". I do not know if I can look at my nose completely, but I obey. I do not understand what you are talking about, but I am mechanically doing what you are mechanically saying, and I call it faith; this is a terrible distraction. It effectively prevents me from turning within and understanding the self. Why? Because the attention is still flowing out towards you. So this samsaya can also mean blind faith. Blind faith or blind rejection - which is doubt, are non-different; the common factor in both of these is blindness. There is nothing more in them than blindness. That is samsaya.

"Pramada 'lasya" - carelessness and laziness; these are very simple. The mind still likes to cling onto something outside itself and does not like to turn upon itself. "Bhranti darsana" - I am conditioned to seeing the external world as I have been taught to see, and I continue in all this. Bhranti can also mean delusion, deluded vision, perverted vision. He says, "Swami, when you meditate you should hear the anahata sound." I do not hear any sound and I am ashamed to say so, and so I create my own sound. The sound seems to be terribly important. Whereas, if I merely look at the word anahata, anahata

means a sound produced without two objects striking each other. In Zen terminology, the sound of one hand clapping is anahata sound. Or, I do not even have to do that. If I mentally repeat "om", that sound is also anahata sound, nothing strikes anything else and yet sound is produced. "Labdha bhumikatva" - I am contemplating on this om and trying to discover the meaning. I cannot. Something is missing. Occasionally I seem to stumble upon it and then immediately the attention wanders away, distracted - "navasthitatva". These are obstacles only because they are mental distractions, psychological distractions.

These nine can roughly be accommodated in three categories; one - dullness, two - unsteadiness, and three - ignorance, and if you study the entire yoga literature and look at all the methods that have been suggested to us in the name of yoga - asanas, pranayama, standing upside down, clapping, dancing, jumping up and down and singing, worshipping and so on, you will find that all of them have been evolved by yogis, teachers and masters, in response to these nine obstacles. How do you remove dullness? Jump up and down, and if you do not want to jump up and down, stand upside down. Practise hatha yoga. How do you remove doubt? Have faith, pray to God, and in that prayer, begin to love God. However much I try, I am not able to find a foothold in truth - probably there is an incorrect understanding. Go to a master and learn something more about all these. Then he may be able to help you find this foothold within yourself one of these days. All the yogas and their various practices have been evolved in answer to this Sutra.

Perhaps you think: "You know, I have studied this Sutra, but I do not find any of these defects in me; I am healthy, I have no doubts at all, I have no faith at all, I am perfectly enlightened." Then the master says, "Wait a moment, there seems to be some problem with you." Then comes the next Sutra:

duhkha daurmanasya 'ngam ejayatva svasa prasvasa viksepa saha bhuvah
(I.31)

If you find these you can be sure that the mind is not steady. What are they? "Duhkha"- unhappiness. Unhappiness is not God's wrath upon this poor little human mosquito! Unhappiness may not even be the result of your karma or whatever it is. Unhappiness may be nothing more than unsteadiness of attention. Because if the attention is steady, if there is no psychological distraction, you must be able to look at that so-called unhappiness and find that there is happiness in it. You can never write the word "unhappiness" without writing the word "happiness". Try. Therefore this is the simplest truth, this is simple English. There is no metaphysical philosophy hidden in it... Happiness is always hidden in unhappiness; it is not even hidden, it is quite obvious. So why is it I am not even able to see this obvious truth that

there is happiness in unhappiness? Because the mind is distracted and you are not looking at it at all. Where there is unhappiness the mind is not steady.

"Daurmanasya" - again there is difficulty in terms of translation, but it means "bad mind". "Daur" is bad, "manas" is mind - bad mind, bad emotions, bad thoughts. All this again shows that it is something tremendously beautiful. You do not have to condemn yourself, you do not have to rationalise yourself; you merely have to realise that when the mind is in a bad mood, the attention is distracted. If the attention is not distracted, it should be immediately obvious that whether it is called a good mood or a bad mood, it is still a mood. You call it a good mood or you call it a bad mood because you are looking somewhere else. Look straight within yourself and then whether it is called a good mood or a bad mood, the mood must be removed. When the mood is removed, what remains is exactly what there has always been - the mind.

duhkha daurmanasya 'ngam ejayatva

The mind is still distracted, and in order to remove this "ngam ejayatva" or unnecessary shaking of the body, the yogis prescribe yoga asanas. Obviously your nerves are not in a state of rest and calm. There is tension and that tension builds up with movements and releases itself with movements; and so to steady all that they prescribe hatha yoga. The last is rather interesting - "svasa prasvasa" - inhalation and exhalation. These also indicate the distractedness of your mind. We think deep breathing is so essential, vital to our life and health and all that. Patanjali says it is not so. If God merely wanted to ensure that you have good blood, purification of your cells and elimination of all the wastes and carbon dioxide and so on, this omniscient God could have done a lot better than creating the complicated respiratory mechanisms. Circulation of the air goes on in this room without the walls breathing in and out, and the air can circulate inside the lungs, and blood can get itself purified; but why should this omniscient God fit these two nostrils and make them breathe in and out? It is not in order to enable you to breathe and thus ventilate your lungs, oxygenate your blood, but it is in order to give you an indication of how badly your mind is distracted. Watch your breathing, watch the quality of your breathing and you know exactly what the quality of your mind is. That's it. Nothing more. A great yogi of India once said, "In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna suggests that the yogi should look at the tip of his nose and not elsewhere. It is not because God is sitting on the tip of your nose, but by paying attention to the tip of your nose, you are really watching your breath and that will give you an indication of how badly the mind is distracted."

[XII]

Obstacles to this self-knowledge are obstacles only to the extent that they are mental distractions, psychological distractions. If the attention is not distracted, nothing is an obstacle. Only that which causes distraction need be considered an obstacle and dealt with as such. If the attention is not distracted, any other condition that may arise can even be helpful in self-knowledge. If pain is not a distraction, it can help you; if pleasure is not a distraction, it can help you.

Let us take just one example: once again, “vyadhi” - disease or illness. If there is a headache, you are only thinking of the headache - thinking of the headache is quite different from what we are going to discuss later, and thinking of the ways and means to get rid of it; then your attention is not focused on the very source of this experience of pain. The attention flows out, and to that extent it is a distraction. If, on the other hand, one has a headache - or any problem you like, and if it is possible for the undistracted attention to observe the source of this pain - we will still call it pain just for the sake of our discussion, this is extremely important - without judging, without rationalising, without condemning, without justifying, without calling it this or that, that little pain may be a tremendous aid to self-knowledge. We can apply the whole gamut of the technique of self-observation which we studied a few days ago, using logic and then going beyond logic to direct observation and so on. What is pain?

Whether you want it or not, it is the mind that becomes aware of pain, the thought that becomes aware of pain. Pain is a thought. Most of us, being conditioned to the basic feeling “I am the body” and having learned that pain is something undesirable, become aware of this pain as something undesirable, because it is undesired and undesirable - it is called pain. If it is something desirable, it will not be called pain, such as the boyfriend pinching the girl's cheek - that is not called pain, it is delight. It is a desired experience - experience which is regarded as undesirable becomes pain. I am conditioned to that. However, my guru used to use this expression very often, that pain is a blessing. Pain is an indicator of something having gone wrong somewhere, that you have done something wrong. That pain is an indicator to the remedial measures, not to remedy the pain itself, but to remedy the original cause of that pain and therefore to restore the balance. So if you adopt this view, you are welcoming pain and that which is welcomed ceases to be pain.

That is where we are and we start there. We begin to observe the thing called illness, the thing called pain, and by a few little arguments and counter arguments, we silence the argumentative mind. We are no longer interested in calling it pain, calling it desirable, or calling it undesirable. We are no longer going to discuss the merits and demerits of the stuff, but the question

now is "what is it?" What is pain, what is illness? It is reduced to its own reality, its own content; not the opinion, not the diagnosis, but the truth concerning it, which is pure experience. Whether someone hits you on your back or pats you on your back, the sum and substance of the whole transaction is exactly the same, that is: somebody's hand on your back. Can it be reduced to such a fundamental atomisation of experience, without calling it pain or pleasure, desirable or undesirable? If that is done, then that pain, or illness or whatever you wish to call it, becomes a powerful aid to self-knowledge. There is no distraction at all. All the rest of the distractions can be dealt with in the same way.

duhkha daurmanasya 'ngam ejayatva svaso prasvasa viksepa saha bhuvah
(I.31)

The yogi has given us a few diagnostic yardsticks in order to recognise when the mind is distracted. One is shaking of the limbs, another is mental suffering and distress. Anything that makes you unhappy points to an inner-disharmony, an inner inattentiveness. You are not living in the here and now, not paying attention to what exists now. That is when the mind is disturbed, when there is daurmanasya, despair. Daurmanasya can be translated as schizophrenia, and this schizophrenia shows that you are not paying attention to what is going on within you. It is quite simple. When there is this schizophrenia or dejection, we have a funny word for it - depression. People often speak of the ups and downs of life. What do they mean by the ups and downs of life? Ups and downs are life! It is all the ups and downs that are interesting - when you observe and you are not frightened by them. It is when you are not observing thus that the mind begins to reject what is, and to long for what is not. That is when what you call depression sets in. A yogi is not interested in that. Says Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita:

jneyah sa nityasamnasyi yo na dvesti no kanksati

nirdvandvo hi mahabaho sukham bandhat pramucyate (V.3)

He should be known as a perpetual renunciate who neither hates nor desires. For, free from the pairs of opposites, O Arjuna, he is easily set free from bondage.

Who is asanyasi, who is a swami? One who does not reject what comes to him and does not long for what does not come to him. That is what my guru Swami Sivananda told me once, years ago: "Do not ask, do not refuse." It is the simplest thing in the world, and the most beautiful instruction. When the mind is not elsewhere, it is here, it functions now, it observes whatever there is and that observation makes a radical revolution in one's life, here and now and from now onwards, forever and ever.

Therefore "duhkha" - unhappiness, sorrow, misery, "dourmanaya" - schizophrenia, "angam ejayatva" - unnecessary shaking of the body, whether

it is pathological or habitual, and "svasa prasvasa" - inhalation and exhalation, are the surest indicators of the presence of these distractions. It is a beautiful Sutra. You have diagnosed the problem by the way your body behaves, by the way your mind behaves, by the way your breathing behaves. You have diagnosed that there is a problem, that the attention is not steady and there is a dark veil of ignorance which prevents self-knowledge and which gives rise to mental distraction, in as much as you can only observe the source of what happens to you outside yourself. I am happy because so and so says that I am a nice man. I am unhappy because so and so says that I am a not so nice man. My whole life is totally dependent upon other people, upon circumstances outside myself; therefore I am trying to know the others whom I regard as the sources of my pleasure and pain, and therefore there is no self-knowledge. I pretend that I know them, whereas I have no self-knowledge at all. I do not know myself.

tat pratisedhartham ekatattva 'bhyasah (I.32)

It is a beautiful Sutra. In order to overcome that tragedy, there should be application to one tattva, one fact, one truth. Steady application to one factor or one single truth - that's very interesting. The yogi is not a fanatic, the yogi has no dogmas at all; and yet this Sutra seems to suggest that if you want to attain self-knowledge, pick up one of these methods and be fanatically devoted to it, totally absorbed and dedicated to it. It is not meant in the spirit of fanaticism. For example: I am doing japa, which is one of the methods for the control of these distractions. I am repeating "om" and contemplating its meaning. I have been doing jape for six months, and the mind still wanders and I do not know what to do. Then he comes and says "You do not know the right mantra first of all, and whoever-taught you is not a perfect master. Come, come to me, I have the secret. My master is a perfect master." I listen to all this silly talk. I reflect: "I have been repeating this mantra "om" and trying to contemplate its meaning for six months and I have not found steadiness. I received instructions from somebody - it does not matter who it was, perfect master or non-perfect master, but I have been unable to find steadiness, the attention is still wavering. And now he says that there is another method which is quicker, which is more direct and that seems to be tempting me, that seems to be attracting my attention. Aha, the same problem. I see immediately that it is exactly the same problem that was there years ago. The problem of craving for experience, even if that experience is supposed to be the experience of mental quiescence, peace of mind, it is still a craving. "If I yield to this craving, I have deliberately created another disturbance within the mind. Oh no, I do not want it." That is "ekatattva

'bhyasah'. Pick up anything you like, pick up a straw, you can attain self-realisation; take a pin and prick yourself, you can attain self-realisation through that, if you want to. But if, at the same time, you want something else, then that wanting is like the carrot in front of a donkey and it will take you a long, long way away from your path.

Another funny thing happens which I am sure has been the experience of many of us. You do some hatha yoga; you stand on your head, stand on your shoulders, stand on your feet and do all sorts of things. You feel, "Ah, this is it. This is it," After about six months or so the asanas become easy and there is no kick in practising them anymore. The practice has become routine, your body has become dull, and there is nothing special in it anymore. You also see that she can do better than you; you are not the first. Then somebody comes and says, "You know, there is a thing called isometric exercises, yoga asanas are not the thing. This is something better." You go there and immediately feel, "That's it, I have nearly got it." Why is it so? It is something new, it grips your attention. Please watch very carefully. Why does every new thing seem to be "this is it"? Because it grips your attention. You do these isometric exercises for six months and they become old; then somebody says, "What you are doing is all physical. Chant Sri Ram Sri Ram, and let the mind be absorbed in the celestial music of the mantra". Again you feel, "That's it! Nobody ever brought me such manna 'from heaven, this is it!" So we go from pillar to post. It is strange; there is total lack of sincerity, and yet I pretend and I convince myself that all this is because I am so sincere, because I am really burning with aspiration. I want to; that is all that drives me from one school to the other. But the master says that you could have stayed where you were, that there was nothing wrong with what you were doing in the first instance, except that you were tempted away from it, except that there was a distraction which took you from that to the next one, and you were unaware of that distraction. It was the distraction, a craving for some silly experience, which took you from what you were doing to something else, instead of watching that distraction - there was a golden opportunity to enquire "what is it that is being distracted, and why does the new experience tempt me?" Observing it, finding the mischief there and then, that is ekatattva 'bhyasah, that is total dedication to one thing, one factor. It is not a suggestion of fanaticism, but when the craving for another type of experience arises, watch, see that, look at that and there is your answer. If you have found the dynamics of one distraction, you have found the dynamics of all distractions.

Immediately after this, a few such methods are suggested. Why are there so many methods? There may be two reasons. The first reason which is orthodox and accepted by all masters, is that temperamentally we are all slightly different, one from the other. Our temperaments may be different, our inner equipment may be different, so one picks up whatever method he likes and sticks to it. The second is: maybe the human being especially loves to choose;

that feeds the ego a little bit; but then, if one persists in the practice, it is possible to arrive at the some point. All paths lead to Rome, but if you take to all paths, you continue to roam. We shall quickly look into a few of these methods and it is possible - I am not suggesting it is so, that these few methods have later been expanded into a whole yoga.

The first can be regarded as the essence of karma yoga:

maitri karuna mudito 'peksanam sukha duhkha punya ' punya visayanah bhavanatas citta prasadanah (I.33)

You can attain equanimity of the mind - which is essential in order to keep the attention steady and the observation alert. The mind must be in a state of balance and inner vision must be such that there is equal vision. The main source of distraction is likes and dislikes - "I like this" and "I do not like this", which in their turn create pain and pleasure, success and failure and so on. If there is equal vision and balanced mind, in the words of our universal prayer, then the attention is undistracted; if the citta, or the mind-stuff is steady, then the consciousness or inner intelligence is steady, and therefore the light is steady and bright. What does equal vision mean? Does it mean that the yogi who is endowed with equal vision will behave in exactly the same way towards everybody? Even towards his own body! If somebody gives him an apricot, does a sage of equal vision put it into his ears? The mouth is one hole into the body, the ear is another hole into the body. Is that equal vision? You may call him a mad man but not really a saint. Once again, we see that this thing called equal vision is very difficult to describe; and what is described is not equal vision. Equal vision is impossible to put into words. One has to strive for this equal vision and the behavior of one who has equal vision is extraordinary and divine and only he knows what equal vision means. The man of equal vision is not a mad man; he is an enlightened person. And so again Patanjali gives us just a hint; but even here it would be very foolish of us to take the description for the reality, the truth.

Bhavana is meditation or contemplation, the inner attitude. What is the inner attitude of a yogi who is established in equal vision, whose mind is steady? He has these four basic qualities; maitri , karuna, mudita, upeksa. Sukha, duhkha, punya, apunya, visayagah are the objects towards which these qualities are directed. Whether they are pleasurable, painful, auspicious or inauspicious, he only has these four fundamental qualities. What are they?

“Maitri” - friendliness. Friendliness towards those who are his equals. Does he judge them as equals? No, these are spontaneous expressions of the

inner attitude , these are spontaneous expressions of equal vision, of the equanimity in which he is established. He does not strive to be friendly. One

who strives to be friendly is not friendly. You do not try to be what you are. If you are trying to be kind it means, you are not kind. Whether you want to be kind or not is a controversial issue, a debatable point. When you try to be kind, the one fact that is definite is that you are not kind. Otherwise you do not need to try to be kind. It is possible that you sincerely wish to be kind, in which case, what stops you from being kind? But it is also possible that you do not wish to be kind, but you say that you are trying to be kind in order to mask your unkindness and yet appear to be kind. It is total hypocrisy. The yogi does not try to be friendly - it is a purely spontaneous outpouring of his inner vision and his inner attitude.

"Karuna" - compassion. In regard to people who are unhappy, spontaneous compassion flows from the yogi. Again, he is not trying to be compassionate. In English there are two words: compassion and pity. The one who tries to be compassionate is merely pitying you, with a tremendous superiority attitude towards you. You know that that is not compassion. Compassion is like sympathy, when we are on an equal footing, even though I see that you are suffering and I am not suffering. In Taoist and Zen terminology, they compare this to water. Water spontaneously seeks the lower spot, spontaneously flowing down. It does not want to, it does not condescend to go down, but it descends spontaneously. That is a very beautiful thing and I do not think it can be described; one has to watch it in a great master like my guru Swami Sivananda. Without rationalizing and without thinking, "This is going to make me great", He could spontaneously see "here is suffering". And there the heart flows, just exactly as water flows from a higher to a lower level. Karuna - that is compassion where there is no pity at all, where there is no sense of superiority at all.

"Mudita" - joy. When you see something glorious, something joyous, something auspicious, when you come across somebody who is spiritually advanced, again the heart leaps with joy and happiness towards that person. If the heart can feel happy in the happiness of others, in the prosperity of others, in the spiritual elevation of others, that is another indication of this equal vision and balanced mind.

We have more or less covered the whole of humanity. To those who are equal to us, we are friendly; towards those who are suffering, our compassion flows; towards those who are happy and exalted, our admiration flows - that's finished. But there is one more crowd whom we call "apunya". The text is beautiful; it does not say "vicious", but it simply says "apunya" - that is, "not so virtuous". What is the attitude of the yogi towards them? He is not blind to the fact that a certain person's conduct is not so very good. The yogi - please remember - does recognise this. I think this is a very important Sutra, because we are living in this world and this world is full of these four types of people. What is the attitude of the yogi towards this last group - the drunkards, the

murderers, the thieves and the rogues, whatever be the robe in which the rogue may appear? Does he condemn them? Does he shun them? Does he pity them? Or does he admire them, does he join them? He sees that so and so is a drunkard. Does he become friendly with him and say, "Ah, my friend, my brother-, how are you?" Again, that is hypocrisy. The yogi is totally free of hypocrisy. If there is hypocrisy, it is good to realise that it means, "I am something and I want to appear something else." In that schizophrenia itself, you have completely lost your yoga practice, abhyasa. There is no hypocrisy at all in yoga. You open your eyes and you see that man; he is drunk, he is wicked, anti-social and all that. Does the yogi say, "Ah, I regard you as my brother"? No. Does he pity him? No. Does he say, "You are wicked and I am here to uplift you"? That is a silly superiority complex, totally unworthy of a yogi. Does he admire him, "My God, I can't even drink a glass of water and this man can drink ten bottles of whisky"? No. None of these; there is no hate, there is no dislike, there is no disgust, there is no contempt, nothing at all. The yogi wonders: "Why does he do that?"

Watch carefully. You are a student of yoga and you know that ahimsa is one of the cardinal principles of life; you do not want to hurt anybody, you are full of compassion, you are full of admiration, you are full of love, and you see somebody who spills hatred. What do you do? Will you join that person? No. Will you pity that person? There is no sense in it. It is possible to argue that a yogi might even come down to the other man's level - watch carefully, in order to uplift him. When you come down to the other man's level, he has brought you down. Who is to uplift whom? If you yourself are lost, how are you going to uplift the other person? So there is none of these, for they are all tricks of the same mind that has been tricking us throughout our life. The yogi sees the violence, he sees the wickedness, he sees the aggression and perhaps the question arises, "Why does a human being behave like that?" What is the answer? The honest answer is, "I do not know." That's all. When you say, "I do not know", honestly, faithfully and sincerely, what happens to you? You are looking within yourself, you are looking at that which says, "I do not know." And when the attention is diverted into yourself, into that which says, "I do not know", what happens is upeksa. Unfortunately all these words have to be translated and it has been translated into "indifference". It is not indifference. It is that state of your mind where you are looking at that person - just to make it simple, let's say "wicked person", though that is not a true translation of the text, and asking yourself this question, "Why does he behave like that?" The only honest answer to that question is "I do not know". As that thought arises in you, as you are watching that "I do not know", what happens between you two when that thought arises in you is upeksa. Let's call it "psychological non-contact" - it is not indifference, it is not detachment. I am not the redeemer of the world, not the saviour of humanity. I really do not know why he behaves in this manner -

that is upeksha or psychological non-contact.

When these fourfold attitudes are adopted in our daily relationships, all the obstacles that were mentioned earlier are removed and the mind is still - but still in a very different way, still, not in a dull way. Still - but dynamically active. All relationships continue because it is relationships that expose our own weaknesses to ourselves. Relationship brings the distractibility of the mind to the fore. If the relationship was not there, if you were hiding yourself in a cave, you would not have to have any contact at all. There is nobody to whom you can show your compassion, you have no friends except yourself, and your shadow. You do not have to be jealous of anybody, for there is nobody to be jealous of. There is no psychological non-contact or indifference, because you are alone. It is only when we come into contact with other beings that we are severely tested - or to put it differently, we are helped tremendously in this self-knowledge. From this little Sutra, a whole school of thought has sprung, and that is called karma yoga. This is the essence of karma yoga: if you can constantly watch your own mind, to ensure that these are the four attitudes that you have toward all humanity, you are fast progressing towards self-awareness.

The next is a Sutra that suggests hatha yoga:

pracchardana vidharanabhyam va pranasya (I.34)

Though hatha yoga scriptures are full of pranayama techniques, this pranayama seems to be rather strenuous and extraordinary. I will translate the Sutra literally. "Pracchardana" does not mean merely exhaling, though we usually translate it as exhaling. "Vomiting" is the right translation. One does not vomit breath, so we say "exhale". Having vomited all your air, "vidharana" is to hold and "pranasya" is of the prana - vomiting and holding. I hope you understand the meaning, which is to exhale, blow all the air out and hold it. You say, "But I will die!" So what? Because this is tough, many commentators have suggested, "Exhale, and then inhale and hold." The sutra does not say so. You can add to it as you like, that's your business, but the sutra does not suggest "inhale" - it merely says, "Exhale, blow all the air out and hold." Please try it some time, and you will suddenly discover that the mind is absolutely still. Perhaps you are going to die in the next moment, so there is no sense in thinking, no thought is of any use, confronted as you are with death. You may regard that as a joke, but if you try to practise it, you realise that it is the most fantastic pranayama exercise that you have ever done. It has to be done on an empty stomach not because all the food will come out of your nose; but because the purity of this practice can be experienced only if you are able to pull the whole abdomen in and push the diaphragm up to ensure complete and total exhalation. When the lungs are completely empty, to the extent that you are able to make them empty, and

then you hold them empty even for a few seconds, those few seconds are interpreted by your mind to be about 35.000 years. When your lungs are empty, death threatens you. What you experience then is something fantastic. That can also lead to the total absence or avoidance of mental distractions.

visayavati va pravrttir utpanna manasah sthiti nibandhani (I.35)

This is a rather enigmatic Sutra which possibly suggests what is called tantra. Traditionally tantra is regarded, in your language, as the right-handed practice and the left-handed practice. In your language, one is considered to be white magic and the other is considered to be black magic, which is not absolutely correct. This Sutra suggests all that. Although yoga is to be practised in such a way as to come face to face with the self, which necessarily implies the avoidance of being caught in object consciousness, in material consciousness, in physical consciousness - the whole idea is to extricate the mind from the object, from the physical world and from physical phenomena, here is a Sutra that suggests that even through these you can gain self-knowledge. "Visayavati va pravrttir" - when the mind comes into contact with external objects, or objects not external, there is a certain inner experience - pleasure, pain and all that. If you observe that with tremendous attention, once again your mind is still. Possibly the whole tantra arose based upon this teaching.

In tantra there are mandalas and so on. A mandala is something that can be seen and worshipped; and that worship can be done by your hands and feet, by your body. While you are doing that puja and looking at the mandala, you are observing it and the mandala tries to create certain images in your own mind. Observing them, you are proceeding towards self-knowledge. This is one thing. Someone else says: "I do not want any mandala and I do not want any mantra. Let's have a nice glass of wine, let's have nice food and enjoy ourselves," and while that enjoyment goes on, they also say you can watch your mind to see what this experience is. You probably know the tantric practices - anything and everything was allowed, dancing, singing, sex - and while you are indulging in all that, you watch - if you can, God bless you, the inner experiences that are brought about by what appear to be sensual experiences. By observing these inner experiences, you can once again arrive at the same spot, that same self-knowledge, self-knowledge that is the so-called goal of yoga.

We will conclude with the next Sutra:

visoka va jyotismati (I.36)

“Ah, I do not want all this, I do not want to practise hatha yoga, I do not want to practise tantra, but calmly and with an undistracted mind, I observe the

light within myself, the light which is the self, the light that shines even when my eyes are closed, revealing to me my own thoughts, my own feelings and my own memory and imagination.” All that is revealed by an inner light within you. What is that? That inner light which shines, illumining all your thoughts, feelings and experiences, is beyond sorrow, just as the darkness of deep sleep is beyond sorrow. That is something interesting. In sleep there is darkness within you and that darkness is beyond sorrow; you do not experience any sorrow. In the same way, when it

happens when you are not asleep, that is the inner light that is also beyond sorrow. By contemplating that inner light that is beyond sorrow, one overcomes all distractions.

[XIII]

Last time we were discussing the different methods for the cessation of mental distraction, one of them being the fourfold psychological attitude of a yogi in all relationships, which is the basis of karma yoga. These good qualities, the so-called virtuous qualities, like friendliness, compassion, admiration and so on, are not qualities which are acquired, imported and adopted. When we cultivate virtues, I think it is good to remember that they are not virtues; virtues are not qualities that can be super-imposed upon something, upon you, upon the personality. Spiritual growth is something which happens, often imperceptibly. We are not even conscious of our physical growth; it just happens as a result of the assimilation of physical matter. Growth is essentially and always from within, not from outside. To call it subjective may be vague; growth is always centripetal. Something happens deep within the very core of your being and that radiates, bringing about a complete transmutation or transformation of your very substance. When that happens, you are unaware of what has taken place. Those of you who have put on weight during the past ten years will appreciate it. You do not realise it, until it is pointed out by someone else. Then you start looking around or you compare your today's photograph with a picture taken ten years ago. Only then do you begin to suspect it is possible and even then you are only thinking, "It is possible." But there is no awareness or consciousness that I was so and so and I have become so and so. You are growing with it - it is not even growing with you - you are growing with it. You are growing with the spirit; and so it is the spirit that undergoes this transformation deep within the innermost core of your being, that manifests as friendliness etc. Otherwise it leads to hypocrisy, tension and depression.

Then why do we study the scriptures, and why do they say that one should cultivate these virtues, grow in these virtues? Yes, I am told that one who practises yoga grows in these virtues. It is stated as a fact, not as a commandment, but as a fact. If you are a keen and zealous student of yoga, you will grow in these virtues. So every time there is an unfriendly thought, every time there is a jealous thought, every time there is dislike or hate in me, I am observing this distraction. I see that it is a distraction, that it is a mental aberration, a psychological defect. It is born of a serious externalisation of attention, it is born of a judgment and valuation, and once again I am provoked to pay attention to that. That is the only possible reason why we are given these characteristics of yogis. But we cannot pick them up from the yogis and stick them on our own shoulders; it is not possible, We will make ourselves caricatures of yogis. I see that these are the characteristics of developing yogis, and I also see that they are not there in my relationship with you. As soon as you come before me I bristle up; instead of being human by nature, I suddenly become a porcupine. At that moment, my attention is

directed towards you and externalises itself, so that I fool that you are the one who is irritating me.

If I am serious in my own practice of yoga, I immediately detect this problem. He is irritating me. I ask myself the question, "Does he irritate me or am I irritated?" It is a very serious question. Where is the irritation? Not in him, but in me. Though I think, I say, I believe, I proclaim that he is the cause of it, it happens within me. What is it in me that is disturbed? The moment I see it, the moment I ask myself this question or this question arises in me, the course of the current has already changed, the course of attention has changed. All virtues are born of that return of the current to its own source. There is a very significant superstition in India that to bathe in a river at a point where it is flowing in the direction of its source is a great virtue, is very holy. I really do not know if you gain extra merit by merely bathing in a whirlpool, but probably what they really meant was this - that it is good to bathe in that current which flows towards its own source.

There is a lovely mantra in the Katha Upanishad. The first part of the mantra suggests that it is through the fault of the creator himself that the eyes only see external objects, not internal objects, that the ears only hear external sounds, not internal sounds, that the mind seems to be eager to direct its attention externally and not internally. We do not even have to say that it is perhaps natural - all these rationalisations are disasters. If I say it is natural for the senses to behold external forms, I am justifying such externalisation and I will cling to it. I can see it quite simply. When I open my eyes, the first thing I do is to see. I am not interested in asking why it is so, whether this God made it so or the devil made it so. I do not know. I see that this is step one - I open my eyes, I see you. As soon as I see you, I am either attracted by you or repelled by you. There are thousands of people we look at everyday, but we are not influenced by them at all; for instance, we look at people in the airport lounge as though they were wall posters. I am talking about people who matter to us, not those airport crowds. As soon as I open my eyes and turn them in that direction, I see you. Immediately I realise I like you or I dislike you, I love you or I hate you, or I am afraid of you. This I realise as the fact of the moment; I am not rationalising it, I am not justifying it, I am not condemning it. While this game still goes on, I see that the mind is disturbed. As long as the thought that I dislike you or I like you prevails in the mind, the mind is disturbed. I become aware of that, and the question naturally arises, "Why is it so?" That moment the attention begins to turn upon itself.

The Upanishad says that commonly people are extrovert, but a rare hero is he who, wishing to gain self-knowledge, turns the attention upon itself. It is a nice compliment! I do not think you have to be a spiritual hero to do this. Anyone simply wishing to have peace of mind should do that, never mind self-knowledge or God-realisation, liberation and all that. I do not want this inner

peace, this equanimity to be disturbed. Even that may or may not be a serious goal or concern. I may merely be curious. Someone walks past my eyes and I merely look at that someone, but suddenly there is a response from within, "Oh, I hate him, I hate the very sight of these people." That sort of thing. My question and curiosity is, "Why should I thus punish myself?" I do not know if this attitude makes any sense to you - it may even sound self-centred and egocentric. You know, this used to happen a few years ago - boys with long hair and funny appearance, or girls with hot pants and mini skirts used to provoke irritation in me. My simple question to myself, within myself, is: "That girl is wearing hot pants and this boy is wearing dirty long hair; why should I find myself looking like that?" As long as the eyes are open, they have to look. "But why should I punish myself for that?" With that simple question I dismiss the external factor as a provocation of the internal disturbance, and now I am watching, observing the internal disturbance in itself. The attention has turned already. I do not have to be a great spiritual hero in order to do that, but anyone in whom there is a little curiosity concerning himself can do it.

Someone remarked once, "If someone called you an idiot, what would you do? Do you not be upset?" - thus proving that I am an idiot? Why should I be upset? You are the one who is calling "me" an idiot. Why must I be upset concerning an action that belongs to you, not to me? In that situation, why does this mind get disturbed? When you begin to observe it, the river flows towards its own source and to bathe in that river is holy. To bathe in that consciousness is extremely auspicious and a supreme blessing of greatest merit. So all these virtues grow in you, and as you develop this consciousness, you begin to be more and more aware of your self, whatever this self may mean at this moment.

In the same way we studied the other Sutra last time:

visoka va jyotismati (I.36)

One should beware of projecting a so-called light within oneself which is unaffected by sorrow. The master does suggest that if your attention is focused upon this inner light which is free from sorrow, you can be free of mental distraction, but in order to do so I should not create this inner light as if it were an object, and then meditate upon it; this is a useless pastime. Meditating upon any kind of object is a waste of time, it takes you nowhere. It is merely a prop, an external aid for internal vision. What the master does suggest here is that there is an inner light - though not until you discover it, in which there is no sorrow, in which there is no mental distraction. If your attention is focused on it, if your attention flows towards it, then the mental distractions will cease. Why so? Sorrow being a concomitant factor with mental distraction, sorrow being an indicator of distracted attention, if the

attention is made to flow towards that in which there is no sorrow, then the distraction is also avoided, the distraction ceases. Patanjali suggested in a previous Sutra that "dubkha daurmanasya" (I.31) - "sorrow and bad moods" are indicative of mental distraction, psychological distraction. So to us sorrow is not an unwelcome or undesirable psychological state - there is no sense in calling it undesirable, because then you become more and more worried, but it is an indication that your mind is not steady, your attention is not steady, you are not awake, you are not alert. You cannot possibly overcome sorrow by grieving over sorrow: you cannot possibly overcome worry by worrying about worrying.

This may be a digression, but it may be useful. One of the best ways to deal with this situation is to stop worrying about not worrying. You tell me not to worry, but why do you worry if I worry? If I have to worry, let me worry. I get up with worry and I feel that worry is there throughout the day, but I have only got one worry; so do not make it two by telling me, "Please Swamiji, do not worry about this." I was worried about my business and now you have added one more worry - that I should not worry, Leave me alone. If I come to him and ask him, "Sir, can you help me? I have this worry," he will say, "Oh, that's okay, go ahead. What is wrong with worrying a little bit? It is good for the adrenal in discharge." I do not know if you realise it, but all of you are laughing at this remark. That is precisely what happens when you say this to yourself: "What's wrong with worrying? I am worrying about my family or my business!" Immediately you begin to laugh and the worry is gone. So sorrow cannot be attacked by worrying about sorrow, but by something else, that is: by turning the attention completely from this sorrow upon its own source.

What exactly do I mean by sorrow? What is sorrow? I do not want to get rid of it. Why should I get rid of sorrow? Why should I get rid of pain? There is nothing wrong with it, but what is the content of this thing called pain? What is the content of this thing called sorrow? If that word "sorrow" had never been learnt by me - "shoka" in Sanskrit and "shock" in English, both mean the same thing, and I was subjected to a shock, minus that word and its corresponding concept, would it make any sense to me? If that word did not exist in my consciousness, and therefore, if that corresponding concept did not exist in my consciousness, and this particular experience arose as it might in due course, what would that be? That which is aware of that experience, which is nameless and formless, that is the inner light, is the inner consciousness, in which there is no sorrow. The concept does not exist. Is that becoming clear? If from birth I had never been taught what a pin was, or what the concept of pain was, then I would not know that if this pin is stuck into my flesh, it causes a sensation which comes from the pin pain. But I am taught all this right from there and therefore I call it pain, I experience pain, and I experience sorrow. What I am going to say immediately after this is going to disturb your strengthened belief that you have understood this, I do not know

the word sorrow. I have no concept of what sorrow means or what it means. So in my consciousness there is no concept called sorrow, in my dictionary there is no word called sorrow, and you stick that pin in my arm - that's it! I howl and yell, and if you do not hold the arm down, I throw you out of window - but still there is no sorrow, still there is no pain. There the experiencing is pure, the action is absolutely pure. That is the reaction or action of a newborn child. In its heart there is no sorrow, in its action there is no hate, there is no violence. If you are a psychologist, your mind which is already polluted, looks at that baby and when the baby cries you say, "Oh, it is crying out of pain." It does not know what pain means, it has not been taught what pain means - each experiencing is God itself, supreme liberated consciousness, pure consciousness. The baby hit you, but it does not hate you. That action is spontaneous action. That consciousness in which the concept of pain and sorrow does not exist, that is the self. You understand it; don't you?

That which you understand again is a concept, and that which you understand does not touch you in the very least. I am not talking philosophy, I am talking pure and simple architecture. I am standing under the roof and the roof does not touch me at all. That which you understand flows far above you and it makes no impression upon you whatsoever. It has to be 'discovered'. So the yogi, using these experiences called pain and sorrow, discovers their content, their reality, their truth. He discovers in a very simple sense, the pure and literal sense of taking the cover off, the cover being the word, the cover being the concept, the cover being the idea, the cover being the notion of pain and sorrow. 'We are clinging to this cover and we think we know what pain means, what sorrow means, what good means, what evil means; they mean absolutely nothing. We are clinging to these words. But the yogi, though he may use these - pain, sorrow, good, evil, seeks their truth, seeks the content of the experience. There he comes across the self

in which there is no pain, but which is pure experience, in which there is no reaction, but which is pure and spontaneous action.

vita raga visayam va cittam (I. 37)

This Sutra makes it even more abundantly clear. One could contemplate, meditate or observe that citta in which there is no coloring - "vita raga visayam". Raga is attachment, affection, attraction or, in a more general sense, colouring, conditioning, samskara - samskara again in the sense of "some scar"; the past experiences have left some scar and that becomes a samskara. By contemplating, by reflecting that consciousness, that mind, that citta in which these are absent, one can overcome psychological distraction.

The other day I attended a wedding and suddenly I remembered that that is also called a samskara in the Hindu tradition. There are sixteen such

samskaras; according to the Hindu tradition they are very sacred and holy. But each one of these samskaras leaves a scar on you - that is the most important thing in all the ceremonies. For instance, there is a christening samskara. I am born a pure baby, a pure human-being, but suddenly somebody comes and says, "You are named Mr. so and so". That is one scar more; and every time that scar is scratched, it hurts me. It is a funny thing. Before I was given the name Venkatesananda, if two people were talking in the next room, "This Venkatesananda, you know he is a rascal", it would not affect me at all! I do not know who they are talking about. But if they do so now, I prick my ears; that scar is being scratched open again. That is what samskara does to me.

Raga is composed of all these samskaras. The mind gets coloured and coloured, and later on all your experiences, all your expressions and all your actions are so completely distorted that it is virtually impossible for you to decide what was even right action or what was wrong action. Your judgement is warped, your vision is colored, and your actions are all tainted and distorted.

I remember a very interesting incident which happened in the ashram in Rishikesh. One of the Master's senior disciples suggested that a person who was publishing Swami Sivananda's books in Madras, on behalf of the ashram, should not be asked to give up his copyright. The Master had decided to withdraw this publisher's copyright, but this swami thought it was better to leave it, as the man had been doing very well for some time. This was nice business for the ashram and good publicity for Swami Sivananda. Swami Sivananda lifted His glasses and said to him, "When you go to Madras, you stay with him?" The swami said, "Yes, swamiji." The Master did not suggest, "You are fond of him, etc." He explained in just one sentence: "When you move too closely with somebody, your mind becomes colored." At that point you do not even know that this is so - that it is this mental coloring that makes you say what you have been saying. According to you, you are saying what is right, what is ethical, what is moral and even what is profitable, but what is not known at all is that the mind has already been contaminated or colored, and the vision that looks through that contamination or coloring is distorted vision.

It is possible for us to think that we realise what this contamination means, but it is difficult until the observer, that is beyond this contamination, is realised. The self is beyond this contamination. It is the ego, it is the personality that is receiving this contamination, this pollution. How can we say so? Because something existed before this idea was formed, just as the skin comes into being before the scar is formed. There is a body on which scars are formed. In a similar way, there is a mind, there is a consciousness, there is an intelligence, which seems to receive these scars, these samskaras.

Water in which sugar is dissolved, remains water for all time to come and it is possible for the water to be retrieved and the sugar to be discarded.

vita raga visayam va cittam (I.37)

That which is beyond this contamination is that pure mind, the untainted mind, the uncontaminated mind; if you do not want to call it mind, you may call it the self, God, anything you like, it does not matter. When one contemplates that, then once again the mental distraction stops.

This Sutra can also mean some person or some object which is free from the twin forces of attraction and repulsion. In this category you can include the great masters who are free from love and hate, who are free from passion and anger, who are pure crystals. In this category, you can include babies, you can include pictures and statues, of any image of God, anything that suggests the divine presence. You can include any natural phenomena - the sun, the moon, the stars, anything that shines - but is not contaminated by love and hate. Any person, any thing, or your own innermost consciousness, in which this taint of likes and dislikes, attraction and repulsion, love and hate does not exist - that mind, that consciousness which is unconditioned, uncolored - is also worth contemplating. By contemplating these, one's own attention, one's own mind becomes steady and undisturbed.

[XIV]

The master of yoga tells us that the foremost obstacle that a serious student of yoga has to deal with is mental distraction. Only against the basis of mental distraction are the other qualifications relevant. Happiness or unhappiness, pain or pleasure, all these are basically related to this mental distraction. Why is the pursuit of pleasure undesirable? For the simple reason that it distracts the mind. Why does the yogi wish to avoid illness? Because illness is a mental distraction. Anything that causes mental distraction makes self-knowledge more remote. When the attention is distracted, the vision is blurred; when the vision is blurred, confusion arises; when there is confusion, knowledge is perverted. It sounds a bit comical, until you realise that the blueness of the sky is a perversion of knowledge. I look up and I know I see the sky. I know I see something blue, and I know that this is an optical illusion. And so one of the first things that a serious student of yoga endeavours to do is to deal with this mental distraction. When the mind is powerfully drawn away from its center, there is mental distraction. The truth is not realised. What does it mean? The truth temporarily gets veiled, blurred and in its place the blurred vision is assumed to be true, such as the blueness of the sky. The blueness is perceived because of an optical illusion, but that is taken to be the colour of the sky. That is obviously an error. There is no blueness, but it is seen. Why is it seen? Because of an optical illusion. But the mind that is unsteady, that is unable to realise the truth concerning this optical illusion, transfers this color to the reality and therefore the truth is not realised. What seems to be real is untrue.

This is true of our entire life. Truth is one thing, and what is experienced, what appears to be real is quite another. How does this arise? There is an inability to focus one's attention upon the truth concerning one's own experiences and behavior. Something attracts the mind, the attention is pulled away and the energies of the mind flow in a different direction, in a haphazard, distorted and undisciplined way. Then the intelligence in the mind, which is also perverted, gives different labels to this distortion or illusion. At one time it calls it anger, at another time it calls it passion, at another time it calls it greed at another time it calls it jealousy, at another time it calls it fear, but in effect the thing is the same. Whether you look at the sky through this window here or through the other window, whether you look at what appears to be a clear sky or the little patch seen through broken clouds, whether it is the sky seen during the day or during the night, sky is sky and it is forever seen as blue - when you are able to see the sky and not the pollution! Although the night sky looks like one thing and the day sky looks like something else, it is the same sky. Similarly, whether I think that there is a good or a bad quality, "I am affectionate or I am full of compassion one moment and another moment I am full of passion", the real stuff is exactly

the same. I may think I love or I may experience hate, but the underlying thing is the same.

The love that is mentioned here as the antithesis of hate is not the love that is God. This is more a sort of attachment, a sort of infatuation, though we use the word love. I suppose even that little love is good. That love which is regarded as supreme, the love that is God, that is really beyond all these labels.

There is an inner coloring and I am looking at the world, I am even looking at the self, I am looking at all my experiences, I am looking at my own patterns of behavior through that coloring. That coloring has to go. Is there a loss when the coloring is lost? Also, is the coloring itself a reality? In other words, is the blueness of the sky a fact, a truth, a reality? If it is, it is not possible for you to wipe it out. It is the yogi's direct spiritual experience that the coloring is not a reality in itself; it is on appearance. Now this is more or less taken as axiomatic and the yogi says not to waste your time questioning this, but to get going with steadying the mind, turning the attention upon itself. Then you yourself will realise that what you regarded as coloring, what you regarded as a real thing, was all the time appearance and not reality. And that is *citta vr̥tti*.

Citta vr̥tti is a perverse understanding and must somehow be dealt with. Already Patanjali has given us a few methods. You can take to the path of karma yoga and in all your relationships be vigilantly watchful. Do not try to run away from relationships. If you hide yourself in a cave or a forest, you cannot practise karma yoga, because you have lost the opportunity of measuring yourself, you have lost the opportunity of watching yourself in the mirror of relationships. In relationships, while constantly moving with other beings and while not completely ignoring the others, you are watching yourself. In this relationship, what does the mind do, what are the motivations of your actions and how are the experiences received? You are watching, you are watching not selfishly, not in a self-centred way but accepting the relationship, utilising the relationship in order to find the self. You can do that. You can do hatha yoga, you can practise asanas, you can practise pranayama, all the time endeavoring to discover the play of the mind, the tricks of the mind, and the behavior or the action of the self. You can meditate, you can repeat a mantra, you can contemplate a brilliant light within yourself which is beyond sorrow, you can contemplate the form of your guru or a holy person who is beyond conditioned mentality, you can observe your own sensual experiences, whether they are religious or otherwise, and once again try to arrive at the truth concerning the experience itself. In all these there may arise certain problems concerning the reality, or otherwise, of these relationships and these experiences.

And so the author of the Yoga Sutras suggests, "Also please remember the lessons or the wisdom that you gain from dream and sleep.

svapna nidra jnana 'lambanam va (1.38)

This sutra has again been variously interpreted. Some yogis even suggest that if you have a vision during your dream, you can contemplate upon it, you can meditate upon that dream vision. If you have a mantra given to you in your dream, you can repeat that mantra - according to them that is also covered by the Sutra. "Svapna" - dream; "nidra" - sleep; "jnana" - wisdom; "alambanam va" - holding on to. Perhaps a very simple and completely different interpretation is possible. What does dream suggest? Not this other thing - dream analysis, dream interpretation and all that. But what is the wisdom concerning dream? I dream, on waking up I realise I was dreaming - it was a very pleasant dream or a very unpleasant nightmare. You see a nightmare and you suddenly jump out of bed or you scream; you are pouring with sweat; then either you wake up then and there or later on, and you realise that it was unreal. And yet while you were dreaming it was real, otherwise you would not scream, otherwise you would not sweat; it was real. This is a very simple, a ridiculously simple truth which right now, sitting in this hall, we all appreciate and we all seem to understand. It seems to be so obvious that it does not need a swami to come and tell us. But when we are asked if it is possible that your present experience may also be a dream, I say, "No, it is absurd. I see him sitting in front of me with his tape-recorder. Do you think it is a dream?" Yes, maybe. I was so convinced, while the dream was in progress, that whatever was being seen and experienced was absolutely and unshakably real, to such an extent that I screamed.

Those of you who are interested in this are welcome to study a small Upanishad with an enormous commentary called Mandukya Upanishad. This problem is dealt with in very elaborate detail there. Its commentary is called Karika. What is the difference? The difference, people say, is that this waking world is seen outside and that the world seen during the dream was inside. But maybe it was also seen outside. Maybe that which I think I see outside is really seen inside me; it is seen inside my own brain, according to medical science. I have sore eyes, I see two lights there, but what is seen is not necessarily real. I think I see objects which are outside, but the perception really takes place within. It is exactly as in a dream. The time sense is confused, perhaps, but then while I am dreaming, the time scale in relation to that dream is probably very similar to that time scale which I experience here and now. The yogis declared that, despite the fact that there appears to be some difference between the dream and the waking states, they are very similar.

Now comes the shocking piece of wisdom - that it is possible that we are all still dreaming, and that it is time to wake up from this long dream. That is what the wisdom of dreams enables us to see. Then you begin to meditate upon this wonderful piece of wisdom, this wonderful truth, neither accepting it as dogma or inviolable doctrine, nor rejecting it as childish. You find a tremendous change coming over you; we are not so much interested in some kind of a salvation, some kind of a liberation or what-have-you, but this is a liberation now. Somebody comes to fight with you and you are thinking, "Maybe I am just dreaming." You may even scream, why not. You screamed in your dream, but you do not react violently or aggressively and thus promote or perpetuate this conflict. It ends there; you probably shout and wake up from your dream and it is gone. The moment the feeling arises in you, "Maybe it is not real at all, maybe it is just a dream." That very moment your attitude towards life and all its events has undergone a change. Nidra is sleep. Sleep has a beautiful and interesting message for us and once again, this is only one line of thought - there are others. One

can go on talking about dream and sleep for days. If you go on contemplating what sleep means or what it does to you, either you spend sleepless nights or if you are not interested, you go to sleep right now. There is one interesting thought and that is that in sleep I forget the world; the world does not exist in deep sleep, and even the I-am-body-consciousness does not exist. These are the only things that one can really and truly say concerning sleep. There is no awareness of the world outside, nor of the dream world inside and there is no feeling "I am the body." If the state of yoga, the state of meditation or the state of citta vrtti nirodha means only this, then why should I not be liberated, enlightened in sleep? Why should the sleeping person not be regarded as the greatest yogi, or saint or liberated sage? That is a wonderful question, but I wake up! I wish I could sleep forever but even if I could sleep for ever, I would wake up in another body, in another incarnation, in heaven or hell. It does not matter where it is, but eventually I wake up, the consciousness wakes up from that dream, from that sleep, into another day, or another body, or another realm, or another plane of consciousness.

Now the question is, "What is it that kicks you out of sleep in the morning?" It is a tremendously interesting question. Now please listen very carefully: if you are able to ask yourself this question just before waking up, you are enlightened. You cannot? What is it that wakes me up in the morning? I have no alarm clock, nobody knocks at my door, I can sleep as long as I want to. Nobody disturbs my sleep, and yet sometime in the morning I wake up, what is it that wakes me up? How do I find this out? That which wakes me up in the morning is, let's say, "the seed of mischief". Gaudapada, in his commentary on the Mandukya Upanishad, says that sleep is only "bija nidra"; in this sleep, the seed for further mischief is hidden. As soon as the body and the mind are once again in a condition fit for this seed to sprout, it sprouts. In other words,

the previous night the body had been incapacitated for any more mischief, you could not carry on anymore and so you lay down and surrendered yourself to sleep, but the seed is still there, watching just to see when this person is completely recharged: "Hah, get up and start your mischief again!" So what does the yogi suggest here? Find the seed and destroy it, for until then you are not free. This applies even to what is called the practice of meditation. Whatever be the yoga you practise, whatever be the spiritual practice you indulge in, whatever be the religious observances you indulge in, as long as the seed is there, you are in trouble; the trouble is merely asleep. The point is - Am I meditating or am I thinking I am meditating? How do I know, how do I know what meditation means? Only when this seed is completely fried, destroyed beyond resurrection, do I know that meditation has happened, that yoga has happened and that this vritti has completely gone; that is what sleep teaches us.

Here are two lessons which are relevant to our discussion of the Yoga sutras. Sleep tells me to watch out for the seed. If it is not possible for me while I am still asleep, just before I wake up, to be aware of what wakes me up, which is obviously impossible, for most of us at least, what do I do? The yogi suggests that one become intensely aware of every thought - this suggestion occurs later in the Sutras but I am giving it to you now, that one become aware of that particular moment when one thought has subsided and the other has not yet arisen. At that moment the mind is at peace, probably, like the eye of the cyclone, and everything is calm; one part of the cyclone has passed and there is a bit of a calm, which means the next one is coming. Get to know it, taste it; enjoy it; be steady there and watch. Where does the next one arise? That is the seed. Where does the next thought, the next emotion arise? That is the seed. If I am able to get hold of that, then it is possible for me to become more and more clearly aware of the seed, of life itself, of individualised life itself.

After having given us these few hints for meditation, for the steadying of attention and for avoidance of mental distraction, Patanjali says that this is not all.

yatha 'bhimata dhyanad va (I.39)

Do something, he says, anything you like, but do something somehow to come to grips with this mental distraction. What is it that distracts the attention? Not the external disturbance; the external disturbance in itself is no distraction. For instance, if you are interested in what I am saying, the noise that I produce is not a distraction. Also, if you are interested in what I am saying, the noise of that garbage truck is experienced as a distraction, because you wish to avoid it, you wish to fight it, in order to keep this attention alive; that is why it becomes a distraction, otherwise it does not. The distraction is my response to what goes on outside. Watch the mind, watch the attention,

and be attentive within yourself - if that is possible. Even in what you may be practising in the name of meditation it is possible to become aware of these: I am repeating my mantra, a dog barks, a child cries, a car hoots, somebody shouts. Those are not distractions if I am going on with my mantra. And when, for instance, you hear somebody whisper - it is not even a shout, but whisper, your name in the next room, or if you hear a baby whimpering in the next room, if you are very attentive at that moment, it is even possible to see the mind or the attention jump out of your jacket and run away. It is possible to see this. So, by any means whatsoever, whether the orthodox means suggested by the various teachers or something that you invent to suit your own particular needs, somehow try to discover how the mind is distracted, how the attention is distracted, how a vritti arises.

Probably some of us are waiting to hear what happens then. Do I suddenly become God, do I sprout wings or does a horn grow in the middle of my head? This is the next Sutra:

parama 'nu parama mahattvanto 'sya vasikarahah (I.40)

If the attention is thus undistracted and if the inner vision is uncolored, then we go back to where we started, that is, abhyasa and vairagya happen; there is a steady concentration of mind, a concentration of attention. If at the same time the attention is not attracted, not only not distracted, one way or the other coloured one way or the other, then that mind is able to comprehend the smallest and the greatest. That is all that is said in this Sutra, so now you can expand it to suit your taste. No problem is too great, no problem is too small, no truth is too subtle, no truth is too great. That attention, freed from all its limitations, is instantly able to bring towards itself, to bring into itself everything, whatever there is. Freed from all conditioning, that attention becomes one with the entire universe and it sees that what was the substratum of "me", what was in "me", is in all and therefore the "me" is all. There is no limitation, either as individual or as a cosmic whole; there is no feeling that the self is limited only to me, nor that it is only universal. I think there is a slight hint here that should be taken. Such a person therefore is not interested in cranky asceticism, saying, "I am going to cut off a piece of flesh and throw it to the dogs, because I am no longer this body, I am all." But such a person knows, "I am one, I am all, I am this, am that. I am everything, I am nothing." At the same time, you see that what was within me is the self, and that self is not only within me but it is within all.

ksina vratter abhijatasye 'va maner grhitr grahana grahyesu tatsthatad anjanata samapattih (I.41)

This is a beautiful Sutra, though a bit complicated. What is the life of that person. The life of that person is the life of a crystal, purest crystal. In his case

there is neither an expression nor a suppression. He does not say that he will not do this, he does not say that he must do this, or that he wants to do this. He does not restrain himself, he does not let himself go. There is neither an expression nor a suppression. The nature of his life is like the purest crystal - he reflects everything as it is. There is an implication that we do not even see ourselves or the objects outside, as they are. Krishna suggested it in the Gita:

na rupam asye 'ha tatho palabhyate na nto na ca 'dir na ca sampratistha
asvattham enam suvirudhamulam asangasastreya drdhena chittva (VX. 3)

Its form is not perceived here as such, neither its end nor its origin, nor its foundation nor resting place; having cut asunder this firmly rooted peepul tree with the strong axe of non-attachment.

You think you are seeing the world outside you, you think you are seeing a microphone here; it is not a microphone, it is a piece of metal. You think you are see a glass here; it is not a glass, it is something else. You think you are seeing water inside, but it may not be water. You think you are seeing a swami, but it may be not be a swami. There may be something else. What you see outside is the projection of your own mind, your own conditioning, your own fancy. You see the world as you like to see it, as you dislike to see it or as you are afraid it may be. The world outside is not seen in its real form by anybody but the yogi. "Ksina vrtter" - when the vrttis are gone, when the mental distractions are gone, when the mental modifications are gone, when your thoughts are not governed by your own moods and fancies, only then, that which is really true, is.

The crystal does nothing, so you cannot say that the yogi is able to see the truth. There is no yogi to see the truth. As long as the "I" exists in order to see the truth, it sees perversion. If I want to see the truth, I will see the truth as I want to see it, which is absurd, which is a vrtti. When the vrtti has gone, there is a crystal, the purest crystal left behind, and that crystal merely reflects, without ever intending to do so. There is no intention at all within the yogi, and therefore there is no tension. Intension is "tension inside." If you drop all your intentions you will never be tense inside yourself. There is no intention at all in the case of the yogi - because all the vrttis have subsided, the mental conditioning has subsided, the mental coloring has ceased. Without the coloring, the yogi exists - even that is a bad word, as a pure crystal. Yet the crystal is not a non-reflecting, dead substance. The crystal is able to reflect whatever color there is around. In the abstract, it is almost impossible to understand this; in the concrete, if you have met a person like Swami Sivananda, it is quite easy to see. For instance, He hardly ever used words like "Thank you" or "Please" until someone of your culture walked in, and then automatically He started saying, "Thank you very much." As soon as someone appeared, without intending to do so, He folded His palms and said

“Namaste” as soon as you walked in. Without intending to do so, there was a change in Him. When a child went to Him, if you observed His face, it was a child-like face; the child was reflected there immediately. If there was an unhappy person, that was reflected in Him immediately, but always without His intending to do so. “Ksina vrtter abhyatasya” - when the vrttis

are gone, then one becomes a clear crystal. “Grhita grahana grahyesu tatsthata anjanata samapattih” - that coloring is taken on, but the crystal is never actually colored. It seems to reflect the color, but the color does not belong to the crystal, the color does not adhere to the crystal and it does not stay with the crystal.

[XV]

The yogi's being shines like a crystal which is able to reflect the truth, the reality concerning the self, the experiencer; the reality concerning the object, the experience, and the reality concerning the predicate, which is experiencing. It is only then that one can even use such expressions as "I love you", "I understand you", "I serve you", or whatever you wish to use. That is when what is "I" becomes clear, that is when what is "you" becomes clear, and that is when the relationship becomes clear, if there is any relationship at all. That is perhaps when the non-dualistic relationship is vaguely understood. And this crystalline purity of the self is not a thing that can be acquired by directly aiming at crystalline purity. That is what most of us do, only to find that our efforts prove futile, or waste of time, frustrating and depressing. We are not even putting the cart before the horse; we do not put the load on the back of the horse, but we put the horse on the load! Nothing happens! We go on either pretending that we are absolutely pure crystal, that our whole personality is absolutely divine, transparent, but then nothing seems to happen. What we generally forget is the beginning of that Sutra: "ksina vrtter - when the vrttis are greatly weakened" - when the vrttis, the thoughts and notions etc. that arise in the mind, are greatly weakened. The mind is not yet absolutely still; there is movement. But that movement is so fine that it has become crystalline. Between us and the road there is still this glass wall; but if it is pure glass, it is transparent and you are able to see through it. It is almost non-existent, which means there is still something, there is still some obstruction there, there is still some difficulty or distraction there, but because the vrttis have become greatly weakened, the obstructions have also become greatly weakened and there is a certain amount of transparency. Therefore, I still say "I love you", because we are still in a dualistic world, but at this moment the "I" is very clearly seen. If there are motives, those motives are also clearly seen. If the love is motivated, whether with good intentions or bad intentions, all those things are very clearly seen and "you" is also clearly seen. That is when the personality is like a crystal.

tatra sabda 'rtha jnana vikalpaih samkirna savitarka samapattih (I.42)

The mind is still working, still trying to rationalise, still trying to understand. When the mind tries to understand, that understanding is necessarily tainted, or the possibility exists of the taint of misunderstanding. As long as the mind functions, as long as logic functions, as long as reason functions, and the mind tries to understand, there is the possibility of misunderstanding, because the mind functions on a dualistic basis. When the mind functions on a dualistic basis, naturally understanding and its correlative - misunderstanding, must both exist. When I use the expression, 'I love you', many things are implied in it. 'I love you' possibly means that I do not love someone else; or maybe it means that I do not hate you - it depends on where

the emphasis is applied. "I love you" may mean that I did not love you before, or that I may not love you later; all these are implied. So this understanding or misunderstanding can also be attributed to a confusion that is inherent in thinking, inherent in reasoning: "sabda 'rtho jnana vikalpaih samkirna" - we use a word and the word unfortunately has a load on it which we call "meaning". The other day we discussed the meaning of the word "meaning" in Sanskrit. It is not a paraphrase using many words to explain one word, but "artha" which means the meaning of "handkerchief" is this, this actual handkerchief. But unfortunately we have come to regard a verbal definition as the meaning. A verbal definition is a load placed on the word - you use a word, I hear it and it is linked with some kind of memory and that memory produces some sort of rational understanding, which is often a misunderstanding of that word, and that I regard as "jnana". It may be far away from what you meant. This is one of the most terrible problems that all teachers have to face. The teacher says something and it is translated by the student into his own idiom.

Translate means "a trance comes late". Something is said and by the time that expression has traveled from there to this mind, already it is too late - "the trance is late". And now I have already placed a load on that word "translate, just as I have put a dreadful load on the word "love". "Do not you love me?" means, "Do not you want to run after me?" - that is chasing, not love. So we have already loaded that word and thus crushed it beyond all recognition.

"Sabda rtha" - when you use an expression, I hear it - "I" being a load in itself, "I" being a collection of vrttis, and as that word is heard, one of the vrttis jumps up and says, "Hah , I understand". That is a misunderstanding. If we do seem to understand one another, usually it is purely accidental. If only we kept a record of all this communication, we might discover that we have misunderstood each other much more often than we have understood each other. And so the inference here is that the understanding was purely coincidental or accidental. So when this rational mind is used, there seems to be an understanding - jnana, and when this understanding or knowledge manifests in the mind, there seems to be a certain state of inner balance - samapattih. Even that has the semblance of knowledge, the semblance of self-knowledge, the semblance of equanimity, the semblance of balance, but it is only a semblance - savitarka samapattih. You can reach so far, says Patanjali. Patanjali's approach to all this is terribly scientific and therefore he does not dismiss even this as worthless. He says that it is there; and you can also reach your own logical conclusion, you can use your own logic and come to its conclusion. Beyond this point, logic is useless. When you have reached that point, again there is an inner quiescence, an inner peace, an inner tranquility - but the tranquility is often short-lived and it is violently disturbed in its reaction that it can also lead us astray, goes without saying.

smrti parisuddhau svarupa sunye 'va 'rthamatra nirbhasa nirvitarka (I.43)

This whole sutra is a lovely expression - "smrti parisuddhau" - what was the thing that created understanding, when the rational mind tried to understand the teaching? "Smrti" is memory, the load, the load on the brain, the load on the personality, the load which I regarded as reason, the load which I regarded as intellect - not intelligence but intellect, the load which is memory - the memory which was confused as knowledge. "Parisuddhau" - clean that, go on cleaning that. How do I clean that? By realising that this is only memory, that this is pure conditioning, that this is junk, a huge garbage dump. Sometimes even garbage dumps can smell nice, if it happens to be near a florist. So, if there is some nice fragrance in the garbage dump, it is only accidental, the rest is foul smelling. So, every time you respond, you realise that the response comes from this garbage dump. There is no sense at all. When rationalisation is thus abandoned, intelligence begins to function, and there is a movement in that intelligence. The intelligence still moves, because it is still trying to respond, it is still trying to observe. You said something and there is a response. Now the rational intellect has been silenced and has reached its own conclusion. I did not suppress it, I did not knock it down, I did not kill it, but it has reached its own conclusion. Intelligence begins to function and intelligence looks directly at the springs of the reaction, at the springs of the response. Only when this state is reached can one be reasonably or "unreasonably" certain of one's responsibility - the ability to respond, without being distorted by reasoning, without being distorted by the rationalising intellect. When one reaches this stage there is intelligent responsibility, not perverted or distorted responsibility. When the rational intellect has reached its own logical conclusion, the intelligence begins to respond and therefore there is intelligent responsibility. It may be wrong to say we have no responsibility towards one another, but it is not right to say that we do have responsibility towards one another. What the ability to respond, what the responsibility does, can only be determined by this inner intelligence which, responding to the challenges of our daily life, is the only true and intelligent responsibility. "Smrti parisuddhau" - there is still a movement, but this time it is towards the center of my being. When this intelligence moves towards its own center, there is - next is a most important word - 'almost' no movement, almost. It is not total cessation of movement, but it looks as if there is no movement at all. "Svarupa sunye 'va" - as if the intelligence does not exist, as if the observer does not exist. Patanjali seems to be so fond of this "svarupa sunya" that it occurs once again in this text. What is meditation? Meditation is when the "I" is "as if absent". When the ego, the "I", the observer is absent, or "as if absent", then meditation happens. When the meditator is "as if absent", when there is no meditator but meditation alone, then there is meditation; otherwise there is simply thinking. As long as "I" is there, I only think I am meditating; that is very good, I can go on as long as I like. "Svarupa sunye 'va 'rthamatra nirbhasa nirvitarka". But now that I

am not interested in using the rational mind it is not "I" that is thinking about it, it is not "I" that is observing it; there is this pure observation. The observer is not completely dead, the observer is still there, but he is in such deep coma that it looks as though he is finished. The mischief-maker is still there, but so fast asleep that he is nearly dead. So you approach this stage as you would approach a lion that is lying down as if dead. You do approach it, but with great caution, to see if it is breathing, to see if there is some movement. In this observation the observer is still observed, so that there is still some duality; but the observer seems to be nearly gone and the object observed seems to fill the entire space. There is a movement in intelligence, but that movement is totally within, that is, the observed, the object of observation. It is then that one becomes clearly aware of the object; whether it is a person, an experience or a relationship, it is at that point that there is no mental activity at all, that there is no rational intellection at all, and that there is this pure and simple observation. The observer is still alive, but only just, and the observation or the observed object is shining radiantly. If this can happen, then there is likely to be understanding and less misunderstanding.

etayai ' va savicara nirvicara ca suksma visay& vyakhyata (I.44)

In the same way you can understand what is known as "savicara". In "savicara" there is a definite and positive movement towards the observed, towards the object. Once again, let's take the phenomenon of fear as an example. In the first stage you are merely thinking about it, rationalising it, rejecting it, accepting it, and so on. Once that has come to an end, you make a positive effort towards this observation. That is what Patanjali calls "savicara" - this is, you are definitely making an effort towards observing this phenomenon called fear, within yourself. I continue to call it fear as long as the mind is active; the mind is trying to understand it, the mind continues to call it fear, and that is how it becomes fear. Then that labeling is gone, the idea of fear is gone, but there is still something, something within, some experience of a strange commotion within. In order to observe this commotion, the intelligence turns upon itself and while turning, there is still this commotion within observing this commotion, that is, the intelligence is also in motion - that is savicara , where you are pushing, pushing this intelligence towards that experience. Then, at the end of that, there is "nirvicara" - without any movement at all - you become aware of the experience and there is pure and simple awareness. At that time, it's definition as fear ceases.

When you just observe something that is extremely subtle within yourself, the fear is no longer the gross fear, the fear is no longer an emotion, the fear is no longer a gross experience. "Suksma visaya" - what is it that is happening in me? I do not want a name, I do not want a definition, I do not want you to say, "Oh , it is some intelligence, it is some movement of prana, or a thought, or an

emotion or a sensation". When I reject all these definitions and descriptions, then I realise it is not tangible, it is not gross. Fear is not the name of a vegetable which I have swallowed, so that it sits there solidly in my stomach, and yet it grips my stomach. I suddenly realise it is something very subtle; it is not even as heavy as a thought, if thought can be weighed. It is even subtler than a thought, and it is subtler than I thought it was. It is then that meditation becomes so beautiful, so very beautiful. It is then that anything that happens to you at any time in your life can become a meditation.

suksma visayatvam ca linga paryavasana (I.45)

You go on observing it keenly, with all your heart and soul and whatever else you have, "Ca linga paryavasana" - the characteristics or the marks with which you identify this disappear. When you observe so keenly, you discover that the palpitation of the heart has ceased. I do not know if you have ever indulged in this beautiful form of meditation. When you are afraid or you are shaken by anger, lust, anxiety and the heart begins to pump very fast, if you observe the fear that produced this and you on doing so, the heart seems to respond in a very beautiful way, in an extremely cooperative way. It seems to think or feel - "This person is meditating and I should not beat so hard that his meditation is distracted." It becomes softer and softer, so that all the characteristic marks with which you associated fear or excitement or anxiety, all the distinguishing marks cease and there is a state which cannot be described, which cannot be defined. "I" is still there observing this, "I" is still there vaguely experiencing this, but all the distinguishing marks have gone.

ta ova sabijah sama dhih (I.46)

That is samadhi, or deep contemplation or total equanimity and equilibrium. But in it there is still the seed of the whole previous commotion. It is like a child, like a baby that seems to be totally free of our defects, weaknesses and prejudices, not because the baby has solved these problems, but because the baby has not yet become awakened to these problems. That is the difference between the baby and the sage. The sage has overcome these problems, the baby has yet to be awakened to them.

nirvicara vaisaradye 'dhyatma prasadah (I.47)

One who goes on practising vicara, that turning the intelligence upon itself without mental activity, has gone beyond the rational intellect, where logic has reached its logical conclusion, and has trained himself in this pure observation. Vicara is not thinking; vicara is not an intellectual pastime. Car is to move, vicara is to move efficiently, one-pointedly, deeply, intensely. Intensely means in a way that there is no tense in it, neither present-tense, past-tense nor future-tense. It does not mean just to avoid past and future,

past memory and future imagination, or even to live in the present. Can you live in the present? Before I say, "Present" it is past. You can only live in the present if someone gives you a present of a caravan, and you live in it! It means you are observing intensely whatever happens within yourself. First you strive for this - there is certainly an effort to begin with. "Nirvicara vaisaradye" - when you become expert in this exercise, then it becomes effortless and there is pure motionless observation of yourself. You become an expert in this, so that you are able to switch on this self-observation without any effort whatsoever, without any strain whatsoever. I do not know if you are following this, and can see the beauty of this exercise. You can only do this when the "I" has been completely and totally surrendered, otherwise it is still going to move - either it moves externally or it moves internally, either it studies you, tries to understand you, or it tries to understand itself. When does that movement come to an end? When it is totally surrendered, when the observer has totally surrendered itself to its own substratum, which is the cosmic intelligence - 'dhyatma prasada'. There is the Grace of God. That is the only sense in which God's Grace, the Grace of the infinite self, can be rightly used. Not when we say, "You know, I got up this morning with a headache, by God's Grace it has gone." Do not make this poor God come and relieve you of your headache. God's Grace is understandable only in this context where the whole being has been surrendered. And it is also important to remember that self-knowledge is not knowledge acquired by "I" of myself. The "I" can never know the self, the "I" being just a vritti, a wave. It cannot know the ocean, the wave does not know the length, breadth and depth of the ocean. It is the ocean that knows itself and it is the ocean that knows all the waves and currents that are flowing in it or on it.

The next is a very important and beautiful Sutra:

rthambhara tatra prajna (I.48)

We have been told by every great teacher that the yogi should be a man of great virtue. One is only filled with virtue when there is total surrender and when there is spontaneous awareness of the content of all experiences and expressions, so that one does not even strive to be good and to do good, but goodness becomes spontaneous. The inner light banishes all shadow and therefore there is no darkness within. In that state there is neither suffering nor sin. The whole of one's consciousness is saturated with "rtam". This word "rtam" is very difficult to understand, very difficult to translate. "Rtam" - possibly the word rhythm comes from that, the rhythm of the universe. The rhythm of the universe, where nothing can be isolated and considered good or bad, where there is neither a thing called relative morality, nor a thing called absolute morality. "Relative morality" means that anything immoral, done by a relative of mine, is alright. If the words "good" and "evil" are abolished, how does the universe function? You may translate "rtam" into "universal law",

but I do not know whether all these laws - mother-in-law, father-in-law etc. exist in the universe - these are all relative. I do not know whether it can be called a universal law - this something that makes goodness good, that is at the root of goodness, that is natural to being, that is naturally good. It is virtue that is inherent in the soul of being, that need not be taught, that need not be imposed, something that is natural to the soul - that goodness is called "rtam". That is natural world order; it is order, but it is natural; not your law and order where you have to post

a thousand policemen to preserve it. But there is a natural order, which is the goodness that is God. It is pure and simple arithmetic. If you subtract God from Good, you realise that there is no difference at all. Good minus God is zero. It is not the goodness that I practise towards you, but the goodness that is non-different from the infinite God. When Divine Grace has manifested in this life because the whole of life has been totally surrendered to the infinite being, what happens is "rtam" - supreme good. We call it "supreme" good only because we have our own definition of 'supreme" good.

sruta 'numana prajna bhyam anya visaya visesa ' rthatvat (I.49)

This "rtam" or natural order has nothing whatsoever to do with what you have heard and what you have inferred to be good. All these are book-virtues that are found in your books and dictionaries. These are no better than the vices that are also found in your books and dictionaries. Love and hate are both composed of letters of the alphabet; one is not necessarily better than the other, until you reach this natural order. When you reach this natural order, the love which manifests in your heart at that point is completely different from what you heard about love, or what you inferred, or what your own mind suggested to you to be love or a desirable virtue. "Visesa rthatvat" can be translated in two or three different words; one, because this virtue has a special meaning in itself, and two, because it can also mean that I have eliminated all the previously learned and loaded definitions of the word virtue, and what remains is pure virtue. I do not consider love as a virtue because she says so, I do not regard that as love which someone suggests is love - all that is gone - love of man, love of God and so on. What remains is love which is beyond any description whatsoever - that is God.

tajjah samskaro 'nya samskara pratibandhi (I.50)

That virtue is something that can eliminate all samskaras from our life. That vision of natural order, that experience of natural order, being natural,

eliminates all disorder, without creating disorder. If there is violence, can you stop that violence without being violent your self? If I cheat, can you put me right without cheating me? Can evil be opposed? Opposition itself is evil, isn't

it? If I am trying to fight with him and you try to restrain me, one is as violent as the other. Can you deal with restlessness, the absence of peace, without losing your own peace of mind? All this is difficult. But when there is this natural order, this natural order being natural, it is able to eliminate all disorder from life without becoming disorderly.

The next and the last Sutra is, as usual, enigmatic - and so I will leave you with just a definition.

tasya pi nirodhe sarva nirodhan nirbijah samadhih (I.51)

When even that has been disposed of and therefore all vrttis have come to an end, what does it mean? Does it mean anything to you at all? I hope not! The self is supposed to have been surrendered already. When the self has been surrendered, nothing but pure virtue exists. There are no vrttis at all, no mental activity. No mental activity - one must be very cautious here; it is not as though the mind must be stilled - floating mental activity may still continue to be. The one thing that is absent is identification of the self with those mental activities. That is also gone. Who makes that go? You all had your dinner before you came here. The food is being digested, but not by "me". I see that I am different from the digester of the food. The digestion also goes on without my prompting the Grace of God. "Not by me" means only "not by me", but what is there that can rid the "me" of a misconception concerning itself? One does not even associate the self with this order, with this natural order. Can I do that, can I pretend that I have understood the basis of this natural order? And can I stand outside it and look at it as if it were an object? The whole thing is absurd. One does not know how this happens. Why? Because one does not know how this happens. The yogis come back to it and say that it is God's Grace. Therefore Patanjali does not say, "Stop this, stop this identification." You cannot do that. You have reached a complete transparent situation, where there is no identification of the "me" which seems to exist in a transparent way. How does that come to an end? How does the seed of all thought, how does the seed of consciousness, how does the seed of experience come to an end? Who crushes that seed? Not "me". The seed cannot crush itself. Who crushes the seed? We do not know. Patanjali says, "tasya 'pi nirodha" - somehow the seed also comes to an end; do not ask me how. When that happens you are in a state of yoga, perfect yoga - not "You are in a state of yoga" - yoga is in a state of perfect yoga. God has realised Himself, the infinite has once again become infinite. Even that is wrong. For if you say the infinite has once again become the infinite, it means that in the meantime it was not infinite, which is absurd. Nothing more than that can be said - nirbijah samadhih - even the seed has come to an end.

[XVI]

The second chapter of the Yoga Sutras starts with a definition of what is called kriya yoga. If what we have so far discussed in our study of the 'first chapter' was clear, then what follows in the second chapter becomes natural and effortless.

I think most of you are familiar with the expression kriya yoga. As usual we will first look at the words and try to see if the words that constitute the expression have a meaning in themselves, in which case perhaps we may derive a more direct understanding of what is implied by kriya yoga. "Kriya" means action - nothing more than that - "kriya" and "karma" are synonyms. People are familiar with what is meant by karma yoga and it has been described as unselfish action. In order to distinguish that from what is going to be described here, perhaps the author uses the word kriya, although there is really no difference. Kriya Yoga means yoga in action or doing. It is, I think, a universal failing that after listening to the exposition of knowledge that is contained in the first chapter, one asks, "So what must I do? I have understood all that, now what must I do?" It is strange that we ask this question only when it comes to the understanding of yoga, or self-knowledge, or God, or religion, etc. Instead, let us place ourselves right in the middle of a busy street and I am telling her, "Look, the traffic-lights are red now; they will turn amber, then green and all the traffic will start pouring into the middle of this road and if a car happens to knock you down, there is every possibility that I won't be able to speak to you any more." When she sees the light turning amber, she does not turn around and say, "Alright, I have understood what you were saying, now what must I do?" She disappears from there! If the understanding has been real, if the understanding has been true, then the understanding itself acts. If one says, "Now what must I do?", that means you have not understood correctly; you have merely heard the words. The word has not become flesh. When the spiritual truth enters the ears, only words, only sounds enter the ear. Perhaps the brain or the mind listens to the word, and when it is assimilated, that is when the word has lost its svarupa, its form; when the word is no longer a word, no longer a vritti, but has become assimilated, that word has become flesh, that truth must act. If it does not, either the words have not even been heard as well as the tape-recorder listens to them, or they have merely been listened to and stored as undigested words. It is only then that there is an anxiety concerning what has thus been swallowed. You have probably had indigestion sometime or another in your life. When the food you have eaten sits there like a stone in your stomach, it creates an anxiety, but not when it is assimilated. Strangely enough, that very food that has been assimilated demands more food. There is a lovely mantra in one of the Upanishads: food is that which eats and that which is eaten. There are so many interpretations of this, but perhaps the simplest is: that which eats now - the body, is itself made up of food eaten previously. In other

words, last year's cabbage eats this year's cabbage. When this food is eaten and assimilated, it is able to function on its own and it demands more food.

Similarly, if this knowledge has been properly listened to and assimilated, then it creates its own hunger and receives more knowledge. It is probably unnecessary for us to go from pillar to post, asking more questions and getting more knowledge. When that little knowledge that we receive is not yet assimilated, when it sticks like solid undigested food, then there is anxiety, "What is going to happen to it? How am I going to put this into practice?" When the truth is assimilated, in the words of the Bible, the word becomes flesh. Your whole being is the word, your whole being is the truth and it knows how to act. So Patanjali goes on to answer the anxious enquiry, "What must I do now?" If you are fairly cautious in studying the second chapter, you might discover that more or less the same truths that were expounded in the first chapter are repeated here in different words. Kriya yoga is the answer to the question: "What must I do?"

Here in the Yoga Sutras, kriya yoga is defined in the following words:

tapah svadhyaye 'svara pranidhanani kriya yogah (II. 1)

Kriya yoga is composed of these three practices. The first is "tapas" - austerity. You will find this described in the seventeenth chapter of the Bhagavad Gita - the right form of tapas, mental discipline, verbal discipline, physical discipline - these are all given there. For us, tapas may mean a very simple life. For us, tapas may mean cultivating greater and greater self-awareness so that if I am insulted, instead of retaliating, I enquire into the nature of this inner hurt. I enquire into the dynamics of this insult and my reaction to it. That is why our master Swami Sivananda said, "Bear insult, bear injury, this is the highest sadhana" - which means that while you are being insulted, something is happening within you, you are doing something, you are observing yourself. Tapas also means burning. You must have heard of other forms of austerities such as sitting in the hot sun surrounded by four fires; this is another form of tapas, but it is only the skin that is burned - the mind does not burn. Any practice, any life-style that results in the burning of the psychological impurities, the samskaras, is tapas. One has to see its relevance in one's own life. Then "svadhyaye" means study, as well as doing japa and enquiring into oneself. Here we are doing something; and while studying scriptures, it is possible for us to discover that sometimes we are on the wrong path. Sometimes we are bluffing ourselves, sometimes we are pretending that we are doing tremendous sadhana. All these illusions are kept away by a regular and systematic study of spiritually uplifting texts, whatever they are. Again it is up to each one of us. "Isvara pranidhana" - as I mentioned some time ago, this dynamic surrender to the omnipresent God is mentioned again and again in the Yoga Sutras. It is mentioned once again here, in order to bring home to

us the message that self-knowledge is not the end-product of a series of actions - actions being actions of the ego, but self-knowledge comes into being when the ego has ceased its activities. Therefore Patanjali does not forget to include "isvara pranidhana" or dynamic surrender to God in this kriya yoga.

samadhi bhavanarthah klesa tanu karanarthas ca (II.2)

Why does one practice this kriya yoga? In order that one may be predisposed to samadhi. These actions in themselves may not produce samadhi. Samadhi is in itself, is itself and is not the end-product of some activities.

These practices also weaken the klesas, not destroy, but weaken them. What are the klesas?

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

In the beginning of this series we mentioned these five categories in passing. What are klesas, what are the sources of our sorrow? Our sorrow does not come from outside, but sorrow is experienced within myself, pain is experienced by me within myself. Nobody in the world, nobody outside this world, no god, demon or stars are responsible for my unhappiness. The unhappiness is within me, it is experienced by me. Then when one looks within oneself for the sources of this psychological distress or sorrow, something is seen. The first answer most of us come up with is, "I do not know". That is what is seen. Once again I see that it is not an event that makes me happy, it is my reaction to it that makes me happy or unhappy. The question is not whether this unhappiness has or has not an external cause - I am not interested in that. I am asking a very simple question, "How is it possible for this personality, this human being, this "me", to experience this unhappiness?" If he sticks a needle in my arm, I cry. If there is a doctor here and he anaesthetises my whole arm, you can prick a dozen more times and I do not wince. That is the point. Why do I respond in that manner? Why do I experience pain, why do I experience suffering, why do I experience psychological sorrow? Not because So and so said or did so and so. What is the answer? The answer is, "I do not know". So the master suggests a fivefold ground for this sorrow, a five-fold ground for this unhappiness.

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

"Avidya" - ignorance, self-ignorance. I am ignorant of my self, I am ignorant of my own true nature. And the discussion that follows now may be a bit tricky to understand; one must stay with it all the time. I do not know what this "I" is that suffers. I do not know why "I" suffer". I do not know why "I" experience unhappiness. While I am in the shadow of that ignorance, this young man comes and says, "Swami, you are such a nice fellow." I am happy.

The happiness is within. But since I do not know the springs of my own inner experience, I attribute that happiness to him; I like him, he is a friend. Why is he a friend? Because he scratches my back. Someone else says, "You are an idiot". I am unhappy - the unhappiness is in me. How is it possible for this human being to experience this unhappiness? I do not know. But I think it comes from him, and that if he whom I call my enemy is eliminated, then the sorrow, the unhappiness will also be eliminated. It is not so. The enemy is in me. You can see the similarity of sound - "enemy" is "in me". This enemy in me expects this man to go on scratching my back and when he stops, I am miserable again. When something that I like to have every day is denied, once again I am unhappy. Hence in one of the Sutras Patanjali says that the whole world is full of sorrow for a man of understanding, until he realises that suffering is experienced by oneself because one does not know what oneself is.

There is this avidya, this ignorance - "I have no idea" is avidya. I, whatever that "I" is, seems to experience suffering, because somehow it responds to the environment by neatly dividing it into two halves, one which I like and one which I do not like. Not knowing a life other than this, not knowing life as it is, not knowing myself, I am afraid to be relieved of the usual suffering that my life seems to be. It is a fantastic thing. I would rather have the agony of cancer prolonged for another six months than die now and perhaps go to heaven. That heaven is doubtful - but this pain is certain. I know this pain, the doctor is still there, and so I cling to what I think I know. Why? Because I do not know who I am. If I know who I am, if I have self-knowledge, I won't care, because then I know that it is this that exists and it is this that will continue to exist, whether the environment is called Johannesburg, New Delhi or heaven or hell. When I do not know who I am, when I do not know what it is that experiences suffering, when I do not know what it is that subjects itself to all this unhappiness, I am frightened, I am frightened to forego even this suffering. I do not want anything else. Maybe what will come is worse, because I still feel that my happiness has its source outside.

With the help of "tapah svadhyaye 'svara pranidhanani", these five sources of psychological sorrow are weakened, but not destroyed. What is this "I" - asmita? I do not know what it is, but I know it "is". Look at this fun - who is I, what is I? Some of you have dissected bodies in the laboratory. Have you ever seen something which could be said to be ego? You have ever dissected the brain and mapped out all sorts of pathways of sensations, of motor nerves - and railway train nerves and airplane nerves, but no-one as yet has said that this is the ego-nerve, and yet we assume it. No-one has ever been able to answer this question, "What is the ego?", but we all assume there is an ego. That assumption is the ego.

drg darsana-saktyor ekatmateva 'smita (II.6)

What is "asmita", "I am"? The eyes are endowed with the faculty of seeing, so that when the eyes are open, they see. Or, when the eyes are open, there is sight, there is vision. This vision is the "darsana-sakti", the power to see, which is inherent in the whole universe; wherever there is light, there is sight.

It is quite possible that even this microphone is endowed with the faculty of sight, that it is still looking at this face and saying, "What a funny face." That I do not know; whether it knows or does not know is my problem, not the problem of the microphone. There is light, and in light there is the faculty of sight, of vision. Eyes being part of this cosmic light system, the eyes are endowed with this vision. When they are open, there is vision; and while this is happening, a particle of light, as it were, suddenly decides to spring up the thought, "I see". You can experiment with this yourself. "I see". Are you sure "I see"? If you are sure, now try this. Keep your eyes open, look steadily in front. You are seeing. Can you drop the sight, can you stop seeing? You cannot do that and therefore, whatever it is that said "I see" - the "I", was unnecessary, It is fictitious. If you are certain of your statement, if you are honest and truthful in your statement - "I see you" - then keep your eyes open and stop seeing. Can you do that? No. That implies that seeing is a natural phenomenon, that seeing is inherent in light; the element of light being cosmic, there is cosmic interchange of vision, "darsana sakti", there is the faculty of seeing everywhere inherent in the cosmic light. But while this seeing happens, one particle of light or heavens knows what, assumes "I see you". So there is nothing called the self here, there is nothing called the "I" here, there is nothing called the ego-sense here; it is merely the sight seeing.

One of the most beautiful expressions which tourists use, and I love most, is sightseeing. I am not seeing at all; sight is seeing.

drg darsana-saktyor ekatmateva 'smita (II.6)

When there is pure sensation, when there is pure and simple experiencing, instead of allowing the experiencing to continue to be experienced, an assumed non-entity arises which claims, "I am experiencing, I am seeing, I am hearing." This "I am seeing, I am hearing" seems to be tame and insipid and therefore thought or the mind develops it into a much more exciting drama: "I am seeing, this is beautiful, this is ugly, this is good, this is evil." The seer immediately divides the whole universe of experience into two - something which I like, something which I do not like. Something which I like I call pleasure, something which I dislike I call pain. I seek pleasure and when I do not get it, as often happens, I am frustrated. I dislike pain, without realising that it has become pain only because I dislike it. And when it seeks me, when it haunts me, I experience pain again. However, Patanjali suggests: never mind the little sorrow that you have already begun to experience, never mind the little worries that you now have in your mind - that is already curing

the worry, never mind the little pain you have - all that will give you more adrenalin for your meditation. But:

heyam duhkham anagatam (II.16)

The unhappiness that has not yet reached you, avoid it. This is a fantastic and beautiful teaching given to us. Do not say that because I am unhappy, because I am involved in all this complicated process, I must go on inviting suffering throughout my life. This very moment I am awake and from this moment onwards I am going to avoid running into trouble. How do I avoid this pain in life, how do I avoid this suffering in life?

drastr 'drsyayah samyoga heya hetuh (II.17)

How do I avoid this suffering? Watch, watch yourself carefully, intensely. In the process of sight seeing, the seer arises, the ego-sense arises and someone jumps up and says, "I see" - and the moment the "I", the subject has arisen in you, that subject is going to create an object. I am looking at this whole hall, then suddenly, "I see him". It is the mind, it is this ego-sense, it is this assumption of an ego that cuts through the pure sensation of seeing, and suggests "I see him." The sight sees. In that I have erected an image, a thought form, and from there springs all mischief. While this experiencing of vision goes on, can this contact be severed, disconnected, can this reaction come an end, can this relationship be arrested, seen to be non-existent and absurd? When will that happen? Drastr 'drsyayah. When I realise that, when the eyes are open, what happens is merely seeing, the eyes being endowed with the faculty of sight. The faculty of sight being universal, as long as there is this light in the universe, there will be sight. It is not necessary for "me" to see "you". When the "me" arises, the "you" also arises - whereas the truth is something in between, In the Yoga Vasistha there is a beautiful expression: "Between this and that, consciousness is between." That is easy to illustrate with the handkerchief. Now all of you can see that this handkerchief has two ends. That is another mystery of the English language which I have never understood, because I always thought that things have a beginning and an end. But this handkerchief is supposed to have two ends and no beginning! This is the left end of the handkerchief and this is the right end of the handkerchief, You can see that; it is very clear. Now, magic! There is only one piece of cloth; what is the right end and what

is the left end? Watch again. Where is that piece of cloth that you call handkerchief? Between these two ends. Between these two ends is the handkerchief. But what is this end? Is it something other than the handkerchief? Is this not also handkerchief? The whole thing is one, is one indivisible piece. The whole thing is called handkerchief. Can we return to that state where what is called "you" and what is called "me" are but the two

supposed ends of a pure, egoless action, something which takes place everywhere?

The action being sight, this sight itself is the seer. There is no seer apart from sight.

drasta drsimatrah suddho 'pi pratyaya 'nupasyah (II.20)

If that sight is realised to be the sole seer of all sight, in that sight there is no evil - "suddho 'pi" - it is pure, absolutely pure. You all have two eyes, but they see one vision. The two eyes converge and see just one thing, one universe, one sight, one vision, and that sight is pure, with no division in it. The division is created by that which says, "I see". Is the "I" real? No. Is the ego real? No. It is an assumption. The assumption itself is the ego. When that assumption is dismissed, there is a seer; the sight itself is the seer. That is what was suggested early in the first chapter.

tada drastuh svarupe ' vasthanam (I.3)

There the seer or the experiencer remains in his own state of perfection, unmodified by thought, unmodified by vrttis, unmodified by samskaras, unmodified by ego-sense, unmodified by mind. The seer or sight remains. The seer remains as the pure experiencing. In that pure experiencing there is no sorrow. It is only because this is unusual that the mind suggests that it is probably not true. We have not examined the state of sleep. In sleep there is no sorrow, because there is not even a division of the experience of sleep and the experiencer of sleep. No-one who is really and truly fast asleep has proclaimed, "I am fast asleep". You do not sleep - sleep sleeps you, or sleep sleeps sleep. Even the "you" is gone, sleep sleeps itself and you are merely involved in it. You are not taken into account at all. Any experience of a similar nature in which there is no divided experience is pure. In it there is no sin, in it there is no suffering. When the experience is, when the pure experiencing is, there is no sin and there is no suffering. Such is the state of a yogi.

[XVII]

The Sutra we were studying yesterday was:

drasta drsimatrah suddho 'pi pratyaya 'nupasyah (II.20)

There is a puzzle, a riddle here. The seer is pure sight, the act of seeing, without even a subject-object division, and therefore without any motivation. Sight happens without motivation, hearing happens without motivation, smelling happens without motivation, all sensory experiences happen without any motivation. It is the division of this experience into the subject and the object, into the "I" and the "you", into the two ends of the handkerchief, that is obviously absurd, but it somehow happens. This is the riddle here. When the handkerchief is one, how does it happen that it has two ends? You blink once, you see the handkerchief, you blink again, you see the two sides. How are these two possible when there is only one sight and one handkerchief. That is a riddle which no-one can really and truly solve. It is when, instead of the handkerchief, one becomes aware of the two ends, the subject and the object and there is no longer seeing, but "I see you". "I-see-you" seems to be incomplete, and so this "I-see-you" creates a motivation - I see you because you are attractive - attractive may mean both beautiful or ugly, for both these attract attention. So when somebody says you are attractive, do not be flattered. And so there is a motivation provided by the division. Let us constantly remind ourselves that the division is not factual, but seeing or experience we do not know. In that handkerchief there is no division, yet we speak of its two ends. When this apparent division, this illusory division arises, the subject provides itself with a motivation. I see you because you are attractive, you are beautiful, you are ugly, you are charming, I like you, I do not like you, all these things follow the initial - shall we call it - wrong perception. There is only one handkerchief) so how do I see the two ends? Who is going to answer that question? On the answer to that question depends the entire yoga of self-knowledge. When that is absent, all these other mischievous statements follow. I see you because you are attractive. If I like you, I experience pleasure in your presence, if I dislike you, I experience pain in your presence and so on. All these things follow the simplest illusion, or whatever you wish to call it, the perception of the two ends in that which is one and indivisible.

When the division does not happen, the seer is pure, the action is pure, the sensory action is absolutely pure. There is nothing wrong with seeing, there is nothing wrong with sight, there is nothing wrong with things seen, and in the some way, there is absolutely nothing wrong with anything that happens to us, what we call experience. There is nothing wrong with what is called pleasure, there is nothing wrong with what is called pain, as long as you do not call it anything and can just be that, without creating a division. And yet

for no apparent reason, a division arises and one says, "I", so the other naturally becomes "you". It is this division that is the cause of all experience, all contact, and pain is an experience born of contact. There is no experience without a division. I touch you, the finger does not touch itself. Experience means division, experience means contact, contact means division, the three go together. One somehow imagines itself to be divided and, having brought about this imaginary division, comes into contact with itself which it now regards as its own object, and by that contact experiences pain, pleasure, it does not matter which. I suppose you now see that there is no real distinction between pain and pleasure - it is all one.

sva svami saktyah svarupopalabdhi hetuh samyogah (II.23)

It is as if in every square inch there are millions of light particles, sparks of light endowed with consciousness, and therefore the ability to be aware, and this awareness itself takes the form of experiencing; it is not an isolated experience, it is pure experiencing, pure action. This is what is happening here, if you can atomise yourself just for a moment. We are all little particles of light called sight - eyes. Try to abstract yourself just for a minute. "I" does not exist, "you" does not exist, "she" does not exist, "it" does not exist, but only billions of particles of light exist in every square foot. The total is an indivisible whole in which these luminous balls called eyes look, not exactly look at each other, but look - and suddenly a couple of luminous balls say, "Ah, I see, I see you." Still they are just luminous balls, and now suddenly these two luminous balls begin to feel that they have an inherent power of seeing, that they have the power to see. "I" can also see her. I can see a flower over there." "I" has come, "I" wakes up, and "I" extends itself everywhere. This power is hidden in all, in every atom of existence; the power to experience, the power to be, the power to become aware. The eyes as balls of light have no ego at all; they can see, they do see.

Another example, which may be a little unpalatable, may explain it better. Some of you must have lost a tooth at some time or other, and the gum starts

bleeding. That blood has a taste. Where does it come from? It comes from me. It belongs to the same organism as the tongue - be careful here. and the same blood flows in your tongue. Somehow, now that a division has been made between the blood in the tongue and the blood that comes out of the gum, it tastes salty, or whatever the taste is. That is precisely what happens to us. The blood that flows in the tongue still flows and is perhaps even experienced by the tongue, but since there is a total at-one-ment, there is no experience of the taste of the blood, nor the realisation of the inherent faculty of taste in the tongue. But now that blood flows from the gum - or even from a cut in the tongue, and it falls on the tongue, there is a division and then a contact, and there is an experience of the taste of blood, as also an awakening of the shakti

or the faculty of experience. From there on the mischief starts. You can say, "I like it", you can say, "I do not like it", you can say it is good, you can say it is bad, you can say it is

virtue, you can say it is sin, and so on.

tasya hetur- avidya (II. 24)

How does this division happen at all? It is still you. Can you quietly withdraw your consciousness from the mouth where all these things are taking place and sit on the top of your head, as if you are the deity presiding over the brain-orchestra? What do you see there? There is a little deity presiding over the gums and that deity says, "Oh my God, it's painful" and thus the deity presiding over the sense of taste says, "I taste blood. " One brain, one organism, That is precisely what happens in our relationship. We are all one organism and it is because we do not realise it, that when someone suffers, someone else feels happy. It is a terrible thing, but true. So when there is this unity, there is no divided experience, no experience born of contact, and in that oneness, somehow a division is imagined. Once this division is imagined, it is only imaginary. Then there is contact between the two imaginary parts and that contact is called experience. There is no pain, if there is no division. There is no pleasure, if there is no division. When there is no division at all, and therefore neither pleasure nor pain, there is still awareness, awareness being inherent in every atom of existence, in every cell of your body. Awareness is inherent, experiencing is inherent, action or functioning is inherent and that pure experiencing is called bliss, that pure action is called love. That action in which there is no motivation at all, is love. That experiencing in which there is no division at all, is bliss, whether the bliss comes from cancer or from enthronement, because it is beyond both pleasure and pain. That is pure experiencing. All the mischief arises from non-comprehension of this oneness.

Once again we are back to the riddle. What is non-comprehension? How does non-comprehension arise if every atom of existence and every cell of one's being is saturated with awareness? I do not think anybody has the answer. One has to look within and see what is aware of this non-comprehension.

tasyo hetur 'avidya (II.24)

One can only say this - that all this mischief arises from avidya , the avidya being "how is it that in this single handkerchief I see two ends?" I do not know if there is any verbalised or formalised answer to this question; one only sees that non-comprehension of the wholeness creates the two ends, or if you like to put it the other way around, suggestion of the two ends is called non-comprehension of the whole. Only Krishna was bold enough to suggest, in a

fantastic statement, that both knowledge and its veiling come from God. It is very tough, so be careful. If you want to be knowledge, be knowledge; if you want to get under the blanket, go ahead. We are only aware that this division and the consequent contact, the consequent experience of pain, pleasure and all the rest of it, have a common ground, and that is non-comprehension, illusion, imagination.

Now watch carefully - how do I overcome this sequence of psychological distress or trouble which has its origin in non-comprehension? There is only one answer - comprehension, self-knowledge. When you realise that all these arise from self-ignorance, there could be only one solution - self-knowledge. Nothing else is of any use whatsoever. "Hah, then I will sit in the lotus posture and I will look straight at my nose and think that I have seen the light. Can I go to sleep now?" "That knowledge you experience was from me", says God, "and when you go to sleep, the veil you will experience will also be from me." So if you relax your vigilance, at that very moment you lose what you have gained, because light and darkness - not in the physical sense but in the spiritual sense, are floating around everywhere, all the time. Therefore Patanjali warns: "viveka khyatir" (II.26) - get this wisdom, get this self-knowledge; and let it be unbroken. If it is broken, if it is abandoned, whatever be the reason, then immediately you are overcome by self-ignorance again. Unless this is clearly seen, it is almost impossible even to rationalise your famous "original sin".

Why should the son of God - or whatever it is within me, the descendent of God, have forgotten his identity? Because ignorance is also there along with God, along with the infinite. The infinite has infinite potentialities hidden in it all the time. There is, let us call it, an enlightening experience which is beyond the dualistic experience. But in that pure experiencing, the desire to experience it, the desire to taste it, the desire to hold it, also arises, How does that desire arise? It is also inherent in every atom of existence. That which is aware of this is wisdom and when that wisdom is constant and unbroken, there is freedom. When this viveka or wisdom is constant and unremitting, then the division does not arise. When that division does not arise, there is no contact, and when there is no contact, there is no dualistic experience. There is pure experiencing which is bliss, there is pure action which is love.

I said a moment ago that only vigilance, only this uninterrupted light can put an end to this self-ignorance. Another day we will discuss what is called astanga yoga - the asanas, pranayama, dhyana etc. in more detail. Now let us see what their roles are and why we practise them at all. Patanjali takes immense care to warn us that this wisdom must also be their hallmark. The content of all these eight limbs of yoga must be saturated with this wisdom, otherwise you are doing gymnastics. Of course pranayama is mentioned here; if it is done as breathing exercises you will breathe much better, your lungs

will be marvelous, but they will still stop breathing one day. All these practises are wonderful, but they are not yoga unless they are saturated with this wisdom, with this understanding, with this serious spirit of enquiry. Even when they are dealt with in that manner, what do they achieve? When you realise that self-ignorance can only be dispelled or enlightened by self-knowledge, the enlightenment of self-ignorance itself being self-knowledge, what are you trying to do when you jump up and down doing yoga asanas or when you hold your nose? Towards the end of the chapter there is a very beautiful answer.

All your efforts to cultivate virtues and to discipline yourselves by doing asanas, pranayama etc. are like the actions of a good farmer or gardener. What does a gardener do? He does not grow flowers. Flowers do not grow out of his head, vegetables do not grow out of his nose - absolutely not, he can do nothing like that. But he can do something. He removes the obstacles, and that is a big thing. Let us not minimise these activities that go on under the name of yoga. Life is not something which is produced, life is there all the time; the inner light shines unabated and undimmed all the time, but there seems to be an obstruction to their functioning. When the yogi cultivates virtues, eradicates vices and disciplines himself by doing all these asanas and pranayama, etc, he merely removes the obstacles. Water flows and you do not have to help it to flow down; all you can do is make it flow smoothly, by merely removing the obstacles. Then like a good gardener, you have helped, in a way, in this spiritual growth and unfoldment, in the revelation, the self-revelation of the self-luminous light, the inner light that shines all the time. Merely removing the veil or the coverings, enables you to discover the light. The yogi who practises all these - the kriya yogi, does nothing more than remove the obstructions.

"Tapah svadhyaye 'svara pranidhanani" - we have discussed these three practices which are called kriya yoga. By disciplining oneself, nothing more is gained, God is not gained, self-knowledge is not gained. It is there, inherent in your body, in every cell of your being. But the obstructions are removed when you practise tapas, when you study, when you engage yourself in japa or meditation. The distraction of the mind, which is the main obstruction, is removed by concentration, meditation, samadhi. But these are not in any way the causes of self-knowledge or the sources of self-knowledge. On the contrary, self-knowledge must accompany all these practices. It is then that they become truly fruitful and truly the practice of yoga. It is not as though I can attain self-knowledge, for the self is knowledge all the time. Somewhere I get stuck. I know, I see - all this trouble arises from avidya. I have no idea what this is, but I am trying to find out from where the idea "I am" arises. I am trying to see from where the idea "I am" arises. "I see that." But what I have "seen" is another idea! "I see that" is another idea. When one is stuck like this, the yogi suggests that there are only two courses open.

Number one is to continue this practice, or do some other practices such as japa. Those of you who are doing japa of a mantra can indulge in some other nice games. These may appear to be games, but they are valuable spiritual practices if they are adopted wisely. You sit and repeat your mantra. In order to bring home a valuable lesson to us, the yogis said you can verbally repeat "Om Namah Shivaya, Om Namah Shivaya." That is very good; you drive all the devils away! Then they said that if you lisp the mantra, it is a hundred times more powerful than shouting the mantra. It is possible that your mouth will get dry and also your lips will ache. So they said if you do it mentally, it is a thousand times more meritorious. Have you ever asked yourself, "How do I know that I am mentally repeating the mantra? What does it mean?" There is only one answer to that question and that is that I hear it all the time within me. Am I repeating the mantra, or am I listening to it? How does the division arise there? I am repeating it and I am listening to it. I am listening to my own voice now, but obviously the sound vibrations come out of the mouth and enter my ears. They have become the object of my own hearing. But when I am mentally repeating the mantra, I am repeating the mantra within myself. How is it that I am able to hear it? Then suddenly I am beset with a curious doubt - am I this or am I that? Am I saying the mantra and something else listens to it? Or, am I the listener and somebody else repeats the mantra? When you begin to watch this puzzle, then concentration happens, meditation happens, without your asking for it. Why? Suddenly you realise, "I am the handkerchief, the middle - one end is called the listener and the other end is called the repeater of the mantra - I am here in the middle."

When you are here in the middle, the mantra coalesces into this, the mantra becomes one with the whole personality; you become one with the mantra - that's absurd - "I" does not become one with the mantra, but the mantra alone shines. That again is samadhi.

Number two, something else can happen. You go on repeating the mantra. Who is repeating the mantra? When the mind is intensely concentrated, it enters the "concentration camp", it goes to sleep - one has to be careful again. I must listen to the mantra, the mantra must be clearly audible and in that state I must continue to enquire. "What is this mystery, what is this beauty and how is it that while I am supposed to repeat this mantra mentally, I can hear it at the same time?" The answer to that question is again meditation. So by these various means, the yogis have suggested to us a way of overcoming this imaginary division that seems to have happened in us.

At that critical point, where this distance between the one who repeats the mantra and the one who listens to the mantra gets shorter and shorter, who decides when this distance is really and truly abolished? Who decides whether you are going to fall asleep or whether you are going to be enlightened? Is the

question clear? "I" is not there anymore; when the "I" was there, I was standing aside and listening to the mantra. I was standing aside and repeating the mantra. When that I-gap has been narrowed or abolished, the "I" is gone, the ego-sense is gone, the thought of "I am" is gone, the thought of "I am-repeating the mantra", the thought of "I am listening to the-mantra" is gone; the distance between me and the mantra is also gone, and therefore the "me" and the mantra have become one. The mantra is there, the "me" is not there. At that point, who decided whether I fall asleep or fall into the light. Not me. Both of these are possible - Krishna says that both enlightenment and darkness come from God. At that moment, who is going to decide on which side of the fence I fall. Only that God - not in a personal sense or in an impersonal sense, I do not know what it is all about - only that which "is" decides. Hence the third limb of this kriya yoga is dynamic surrender of the ego-sense.

This also happens when, instead of making use of this mantra and other spiritual practices, one takes to the method of direct enquiry. I am not interested in all this. I merely want to enquire "Who am I?", and arrive at this "Who am I, I do not-know." Not "I do not know" in an intellectual sense and not the "I do not know" of the very beginning itself. I have struggled hard and then suddenly when I look at that expression "I do not know" I already see that it is composed of two elements - one is ignorance and the other is "I". That which is ignorance is able to say "I", that which is ignorance at least asserts its own existence without question. If I do not know, then how do I know I do not know? How do I know I exist in order not to know, how do I know I exist in order to be ignorant. When that question arises there is a tremendous shock and stillness. In that stillness this "I" and this "do not know" - which together form this world, crumbles. The infinite which was there continues to be, and that again is God's Grace.

[XVIII]

isvaro gururatmeti murtibhedavibhagine

vyomavat vyapta dehaya daksinamurtaye namah

This verse expresses a great truth, not as a goal to be achieved, but as a fact. Three words are used, three labels are used, all of them signifying one truth, and that single truth is indivisible, like space, for example. Space is indivisible; you can build a house and think that that space has become this room, but it has not. The enclosure is measurable, but space is immeasurable. But just as we may use words that apparently indicate a division which appears to have been created, which is believed to have been created, which is assumed to have been created, even so we may use all sorts of other labels and expressions - Ishwara, Guru, Atma. These three in their turn are indivisible. We have our own ideas of a trinity and, having created this trinity, we try to bring them together. What is the cause of the division? That question itself is a division - there is no other division. That is called avidya, because one cannot answer this question. How was this assumption possible? One cannot answer this question and the only way in which it can be answered is by assuming its existence. Assumption of a division in the indivisible is avidya or ignorance.

The word avidya can be exactly translated into I-have-no-idea, if you say it very quickly. Avidya means ignorance and someone gave an interpretation

of the word avidya as this: "The mind that thinks that what I say is right and what you say or what someone else says is wrong, suffers from avidya." That is a symptom of avidya, of ignorance. How it has arisen I do not know. As Buddha pointed out: when a house is on fire you do not waste your time inquiring into the cause or the chemical composition of fire - that can come later in the laboratory. But the moment the fire is seen, all that you are concerned with is putting out the fire. This avidya is experienced, the experience itself is this avidya. Avidya creates the ignorance, or the assumption of the ignorance apparently creates, not really creates, what appears to be a division in the indivisible. And when there is this division, there is contact and therefore experience. Contact is impossible if there is no division, no concept of unity and all that - we talk of unity without realising that somewhere underneath all this talk of unity there is nothing but a confirmed conviction of diversity - the concept of unity is impossible without the concept of diversity. We are struggling against it - I am not saying it is wrong - we are struggling to get out of it and, more often than not, we fail in our attempts, because we are not looking directly at the divider. What is the divider? The divider is the assumption of an experiencer, the divider is the assumption of the existence of I, the ego. It is terribly easy and simple. What

is east and what is west ? Let's say this in front is east. How far is it east and where does west begin, or where do they meet? Always in "me". Wherever I am standing, to one side is east, to the other side is west. I am the meeting point and I am the dividing point - both are right. I find that "I" is the dividing factor; east and west are divided by the "me". If I become aware of that, in that awareness the division is dissolved, or it does not seem to exist. There seems to be a need for a different approach. You cannot eradicate darkness, you must illumine darkness. I can not eradicate this notion of "I" but I can throw a flood of light on that "I", on that ego, and see what it is.

viveka khyatir aviaplava hano 'payah (II. 26)

There is only one way of overcoming this and that is that this light; this inner light must burn brightly and constantly, uninterruptedly. If there is an interruption so that the shadow comes in again, the ego comes in again. This interruption itself is the shadow, the interruption itself is the ego. Once again the assumption arises, once again the taste for experience arises, once again the desire for experience arises - the desire for experience itself destroys the purity of the experience that is pure delight. It may not have been made so clear in the Yoga Sutras themselves, but in some other scriptures, like the Bhagavatham and the Yoga Vasistha, we are told that the senses are endowed in themselves with the capacity to enjoy. Attraction and repulsion are built into the senses. I may be an imbecile, a born idiot, but still, if I touch something, there is a pure neurological response. In the same way, the hand may touch something hot or something burning cold and the hand automatically withdraws. This is built into the hand; I do not have to tell myself, "Now this is ice, I should not touch it." It's not at all easy to enjoy pain, it is an absurd thing. What you enjoy is not pain. There is a delightful experience which comes along the stream of life. "It's lovely, oh, it's beautiful." What is the next step? "I wish I could have it again and forever." That is where you are caught. Patanjali says, "The unhappiness that has not arisen must be avoided by the avoidance of what is called ignorance". But what about the unhappiness that I am already in? Patanjali implies, "Do not bother about it." Why not? It goes away if you do not bother about it - it is passing, it is already moving. But on the other hand, do not try to push your unhappiness because, when you are pushing it, you are running along with it. If you do not push, there is only a little unhappiness; before you can say "hello", it is gone. No experience is everlasting, whether it is called pleasure or pain. Pleasure is turned into pain by the holding habit. Pain is prolonged by this pushing habit. Leave it alone, it will go away. Again, avoid getting into trouble by being aware. Keep awake all the time, uninterruptedly; then life is free from self-torture, if you let bits and pieces of what you call pain and pleasure come and go. Float along with this life stream and enjoy it when it comes, then let it go; suffer it when it comes, then let it go. Life is fun.

Now we are also going to look at these eight limbs or steps of yoga in a slightly different light. In the text it comes very soon after the Sutra that says to preserve this light uninterruptedly. Coming soon after that, the master seems to suggest that the eight limbs of yoga must also share this basic requisite, that is that there should be this inner light. The inner light must be the content of all these eight limbs. Even then it is good to remember that self-knowledge or the destruction of ignorance is not the product of these practices.

yoga 'ngan anusthanad asuddhi ksaye jnana diptira viveka khyateh (II. 28)

There are two vital truths in this Sutra. One is that they are called limbs and not steps. We are not taking one step after the other. Our Guru Swami Sivananda used to say that if you regard them as steps and tell yourself that you will first get established in yama, then go on to niyama, then asana and then pranayama, you will probably never get anywhere for the rest of your life. So every day, side by side, practise yama-niyama and practise meditation also.

It will obviously not be the meditation described in the Yoga Vasistha, but try. As you go on trying, there is an integral perfection, if all the eight limbs are saturated with this light. This is what Patanjali demands.

Secondly, even if these eight limbs are thus saturated with this light, the raja yoga practices - yama, niyama, pranayama, etc., are merely removers of impurity. The impurities are the samskaras. Samskaras are formed by life's experiences; samskaras are left behind by our own foolishness - mental conditioning, thoughts, ideas and notions, constantly being treated as if they were real. In the Indian tradition, samskara also signifies a few ceremonies performed during one's life-time, such as christening, marriage etc. as I have mentioned before. I was born just a baby; probably for a long time I was not even aware of the difference between a boy and a girl, but right from then there are samskaras - your name is so and so, you are no longer just a baby, you are named. All these ceremonies are samskaras, whether they are necessary or unnecessary, do not think I am making fun of them; they may be necessary for some kind of social and legal affairs, but they are not necessary from the spiritual point of view. Not only these, but other things, such as qualifications, degrees and diplomas are also samskaras. I thought degrees meant what the doctor sees on a thermometer, a fever, but later I discovered that degrees are awarded at the university; they increase your feverishness; each one of these degrees add to your feverishness! Even in Sanskrit they have a very funny word for these titles, degrees and diplomas. They are called upadhi, which means "limiting adjunct", "self-limiting qualifications". These degrees and diplomas you get are also called upadhi, limitations, self-limiting foolish acquisitions. I am a bit scared

of "diplomas" because these doctors use this "o-m-a" as a suffix usually to denote cancer - carcinoma! With all these things we are contracting ourselves more and more, limiting ourselves and adding to the impurities of the self. Therefore at some stage of my life, if I begin to enquire, "What is this I?", I have no idea at all what this "I" is, but I have a host of ideas about what others have told me I am. I am a boy, I am a Brahmin, I am an Indian, I am educated, I am a swami and so on.

If you can practise these eight limbs, you can make these practices your own. What are these eight limbs and how are they to be made our own, without they themselves becoming dirt? I think most of you know the eight limbs:

yama niyama 'sana pranayama pratyahara dharana dhyana samadhayo stav
angani (II.29)

Yama is restraint, self-restraint. It is not even restraint, because it merely points out the activities of the shadow. Avidya is brought into sharp focus. I think it is easy to see in the light that shines within, that action performed or done by us in the darkness of ignorance is mechanical foolish action. So yoga is action which is performed or life that is led in the light of awareness, and if in the light of awareness you begin to see something which hurts, something which is even painful to look at, you begin to see that having to face it within yourself is the best remedy for it. That is what enables you to give up that feeling of pain. That is called yama. One of the factors of yama is ahimsa. Ahimsa is said to be non-violence. What is non-violence? We know only two things: one, if you hit me, I hit you back. Not only an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, but if you even raise your arm and pretend to hit me, I will destroy you - this we know very well - how to retaliate and how to assume violence and indulge in violence. Somehow we have been telling ourselves that by doing that, we are saved - this is common knowledge, that if I can kill or destroy all my enemies, I am saved. But I am not safe, for something else comes along - a little bug, a mosquito comes and destroys me. This is one type of action we know - violence. Two, we say, "Oh no, we shouldn't do that, we should do just the opposite." What did the violent man do when someone picked up a gun? He took up his own and shot him. What must I do now, so that I can be a raja yogi? If he hits me, slaps me on my right cheek, I turn my left, and while doing so, I say something nice, a prayer, "God bless you brother. Why do I say that now? Why didn't I say that two minutes ago? Watch carefully: he and I have been walking along the pavement; I didn't look at him, I didn't bother him, I didn't say, "God bless you", but once he started hitting me, I turned to him and said, "God bless you brother". Why is it so? Isn't that an other way of acknowledging hurt? Isn't that also a way of acknowledging that I am hurt, that you have hurt me? That's why I am telling

you, "God bless you", or "I forgive you", or "May you go to heaven". Whereas if he and I were one, I would not be hurt by him.

There must be another way of looking at it. What is it that is hurt? I am not discussing what you are going to do, or what you are not going to do. Without going into those details at all, when someone does something to me, what is it that is hurt? Buddha said something tremendously important, which is recorded in the Dhammapada: if you even acknowledge that you are hurt by another, you are already aggressive and violent. It doesn't matter what your reaction is; you may bless him, you may curse him, you may take him in your arms or you may put him under your foot, but the moment the feeling has arisen in you that "I am hurt, you are violent", then your mind is disturbed. Can I not only then, but all the time, be so alert and so vigilant that I cannot be hurt? That is non-violence. Krishna says in the Bhagavad Gita:

yasman no dvijate loko lokan no dvijate ca yah

harsamarsabhayodvegair mukto yah sa ca me priyah (XII.15)

He by whom the world is not agitated and who cannot be agitated by the world, and who is freed from joy, envy, fear and anxiety, he is dear to Me.

He who cannot be hurt and he who does not hurt, he is a bhakta, he is a devotee, he is a yogi. If you are unhurt, everything that everyone does, whether they consider it good or evil, only succeeds in turning your attention towards that inner light; all that is good, there is no harm at all. Your action, your reaction may vary - that is not important and need not be, and should not be, predetermined - whether I am going to stand there like a fool and receive all your beatings, or whether I am going to run away from there, or whether I am going to stop you from doing it. Is there a way in which I may never be hurt? Is that clear? Only when the attention is turned within and the light of one's own observation reveals the absence of the "I" which can be hurt.

So right from the yama-niyama, if this inner- light shines and if all these disciplines are adopted as one's own, intelligently, then at every step there is self-realisation, and you are meditating twenty-four- hours of the day, whatever happens. All the other virtues can be viewed in the same way. Brahmacharya is an other interesting factor of yama, which is usually translated as celibacy - that is very easy. There are some people who do all sorts of atrocious things such as taking some drugs and so on, to make themselves completely asexual. But the word "brahmacarya" means: to have one's awareness, one's consciousness move constantly in the infinite. If you do so, then it is probable that you will not be unduly interested in the pursuit of pleasure. What for? Ans even normal pleasure may be experienced as it

comes along, as it floats down the stream of life. This is a lovely expression in the Yoga Vasistha: pravaha patitam karyam. What must I do? Whatever the life stream brings you. If you drop into that stream, what you do is just like that. That is brahmacarya. When the attention flows in one direction, totally in one direction, that is unidirectional movement and in that there is no division at all. Life goes on, life is lived, but there is no division in it. That is brahmacarya.

The best part of niyama is "tapah svadhyaye asvara pranidhana". This is called kriya yoga and we have dealt with it in detail before. It is called a sadhana in itself.

There is something very interesting in regard to the asanas. Patanjali does not mention any asana by name, but he gives a definition of what asana may mean. What are the two characteristics of asana? It enables you to sit firmly. I am sorry, but "sit" is my word, it is not there. It also enables you to sit in the same posture for a long time. And it is "sukham", comfortable. Now it does not prescribe the lotus posture or siddhasana, it does not say sitting posture; it could be a standing posture - I m only suggesting this since this is a yoga school where yoga asanas are taught to students. I wonder if it is possible to apply these two criteria even in regard to the more complicated yoga postures. You stand in the trikonasana and first you start shaking; wait , wait until the body readjusts itself to that posture, then you are firm, and then, once the balance is restored, the posture itself becomes very comfortable. It looks as though that is what was meant here: retain each posture for as much time as is required to restore the balance and the feeling of comfort.

Then pranayama:

tasmin sati svasa prasvasayor gati vicchedah pranayamah (II.49)

Once you have acquired mastery over the asana, then you do your pranayama. If you practise asana every day in the way we have just discussed, then you are freed from what are usually called the pairs of opposites, such as pain and pleasure, success and failure and all that. It is not a mechanical body movement, but it is an inner observation of what the body is all about. The discovery of the intelligence is asana - not merely jumping up and down. Once that has been mastered, you go on to the pranayama, the reversal of the course of prana, the arresting of that is pranayama, in order that prana itself may be discovered. What is prana? What is life? What makes these lungs breathe? I must discover this, then once again I come back to this ego-sense, or the life-force, or the intelligence in the body, or God or whatever you wish to call it.

tatah ksiyate prakasa varanam (II.52)

By the practice of pranayama itself, says Patanjali, the inner darkness is removed, the inner shadow is removed, because pranayama purifies the physical body, the nerves and even the mind.

sva visayasamprayoge citta svarupanukara ive 'ndryanam pratyaharah (II.54)

Pratyahara has been translated into "abstraction of the senses" or "withdrawal of the senses". It may not be so very clear. The nose is endowed with the faculty of smelling; the eyes are endowed with the faculty of seeing; the whole thing is the mind, the whole thing is the intelligence. It is the intelligence that flows, it is the intelligence that operates through these eyes, and then it is called sight. Can I become aware of that without making unreal distinctions - that is beautiful, this is ugly, this is so and so. That is, when the vision becomes pure, when the hearing becomes pure, non-discriminating, without introducing divisions that do not exist, the ears do not recognise good and evil, truth and falsehood. Whether I say something truthful or whether I say something false, your ears still hear. That's it. So can the division between the mind and the senses disappear, so that the senses and the mind function as one undivided unit? That is pratyahara. It is completely different from what we probably understand from the word, By pratyahara it is meant that we must look. I see something, the eyes see something, let them see something, and let the mind also be one with it. The senses and the mind function as one unit without any division. That is pratyahara.

desa bandhas cittasya dharana (III.1)

Then comes dharana - it is a very simple thing. I do not know why it is made so complicated. You are looking at me, or you are listening to this. That is all. You do not allow your mind to be distracted by anything else. That is quite simple, that is dharana. We are practising dharana throughout the day, accountants and businessmen especially. When it comes to profits, you cannot distract that man's attention, just before submitting income tax returns. He is totally absorbed in it; that is called dharana, nothing more.

tatra pratyayai katanata dhyanam (III.2)

Dhyana is when the inner awareness moves just in that limited space, not in a fixed way, but moves in that limited space. That becomes clear, so that nothing else exists, except that which you want to observe. If you are observing what you have been calling your self, the seed-bed of all these virtues and vices, actions, experiences, pain, pleasure, sorrow, happiness, success, failure, and all that, nothing but that little space exists which is called "I". The observation flows in one stream toward the centre of myself and strangely it seems to be that there is a division there within myself. I am

observing myself, I am watching myself, I am observing myself, I see myself strange but still we use these expressions and - at one point these expressions do not seem to be meaningless; there does seem to be a thing called the self, and there is a thing called "I" and "I am seeing myself"!

tad eva' rthamatranirbhasam svarupa sunyam iva samedhih (III.3)

The next state is the same expression that occurs twice in the Sutras. Earlier on when we discussed "nirvitarka" we had exactly the same expression. I am observing the self in which there are all the virtues and all the vices, all the experiences, all the actions, all the motivations, all the feelings and all the thoughts and so on - I am watching those. I am observing myself, the "myself" being all these limitations, all these samskaras. Where do all these arise? I am watching myself; the "I" which is the observer, is watching "myself" which is the observed. I, who is the observer, am watching myself which is the bundle of all these, the observed, and the attention does not wander. Suddenly the observer seems to go away, disappear, merge into the observed. The two ends of the handkerchief have become just one handkerchief - neither this end nor that end. It is as if "I" does not exist, as if the ego does not exist, the observer does not exist, but just the pure observation and in that pure observation there is no avidya. Then this avidya has gone.

tad abhavat samyoga 'bhavo hanam tad drseh kai valyam (II. 25)

Once again this has been interpreted variously, but it seems to be simple and beautiful; where there was assumed to have been a division before, between the observer and the observed, between the personality and its own ground which is the self or consciousness, between the mind and consciousness, between me and God, between God and Guru, now all these are seen as words, as concepts, as notions. They are not wrong, they are not false, they are not evil, but they are seen as mere concepts, as mere notions, as mere bubbles, but the truth is the oneness, which is not the antithesis of duality. This is important. It is not as though the yogi who is there, in that stage, is not aware of the diversity of people, but it is an indescribable state where one alone exists. Alone is a spelling mistake; actually there should be one more "I" - a-l-l-o-n-e, all-one, in which neither the all is canceled, nor the one is canceled. The all as all, as diverse beings, does not cease to exist, has no need to cease to exist. But all does not mean division, but one, all-one, has become alone; this consciousness alone exists as all this. That is, let us say, the end of yoga.