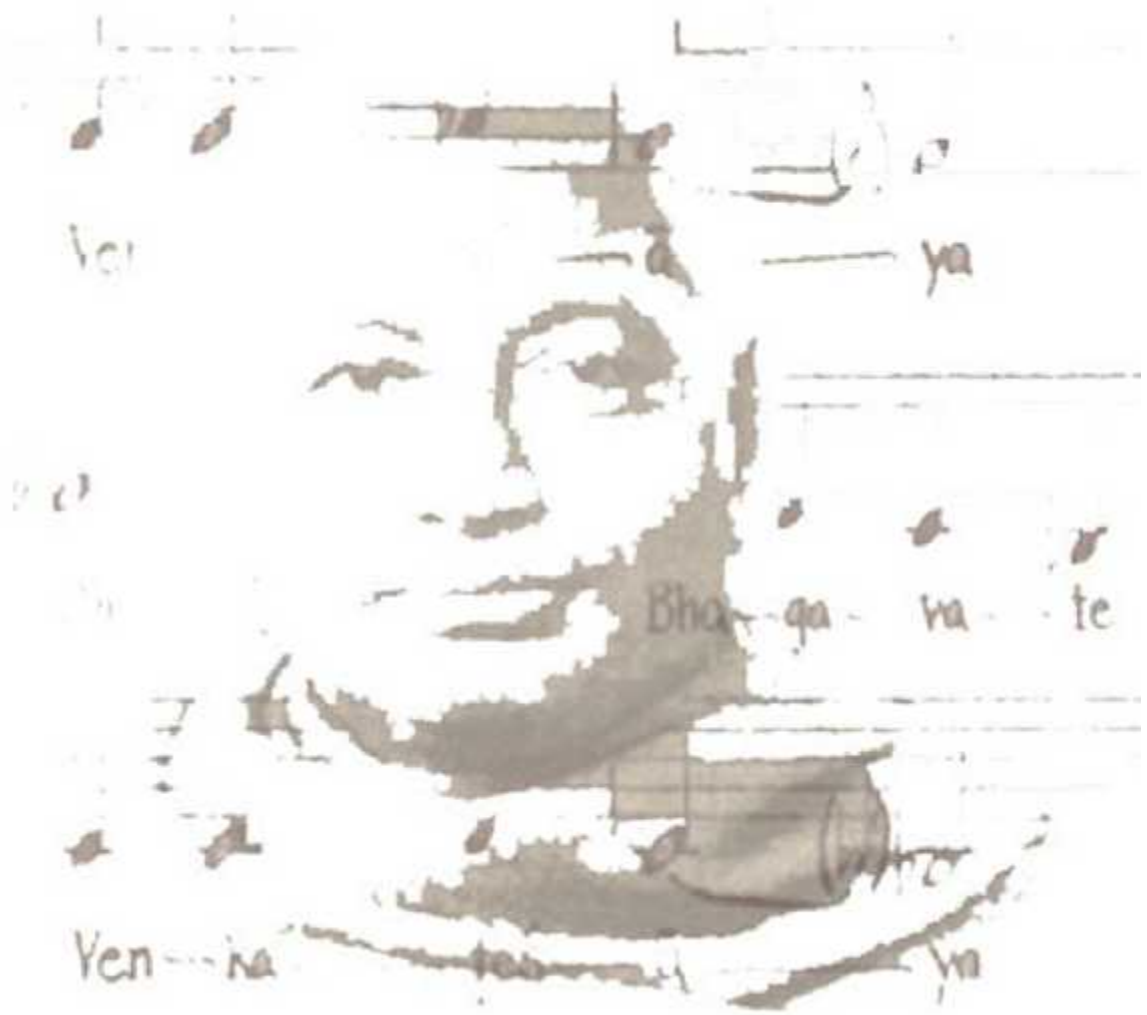


Talks in Canada



Swami Venkatesananda



Om Namah Venkatesaya
Om Namah Shivaya

Canada

Swami Venkatesananda

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Agression

I think it would be good to look into the Bhagavad Gita. Most of you have studied this scripture more or less superficially, but, I am sure, always with some kind of nostalgia. I wonder if not many of you - most of you are quite young - do not at some time or other share the despair and pessimism that people of my generation seem to suffer from chronically. They say that we are living in the Kali Yuga. There is a tendency to think that the period we are living in is the worst of all. Never was a time so bad. Do you not feel like that every winter?

I have been translating some texts from the Indian Scriptures written in Sanskrit which are pre-historic. Usually we think that 200 comes after 100. But this is not so. 2.000 years ago - something like, let's say, 13 bc. and from there on - the earlier it was, the greater the number, not after but before. 200 bc. is before 100 bc., not after. As I said, I have been translating a few of these pre-historic texts, and I am told in them that right from the dawn of creation there has been what those who lived in those periods regarded as evil. Look into your Bible, God created Adam and then Eve. They had only two children and one killed the other. Four people in the world could not live together in harmony. The first and second chapter describe the creation of the world. There is already disaster. I do not know if you have read the Bible. In Genesis, chapter 6, God looks at the world and says, 'What a vicious world is this.'

In Indian legend, there is something even more interesting. It is said that God was resting. He was asleep. Just before He woke up, He rolled around in His bed, and a couple of balls of wax fell from His ears and they became demons. That was even before creation.

What do these things indicate? They indicate that what is called evil existed already, and perhaps will exist for all time to come.

What is evil? Ask a little child, a school girl, 'Whom do you dislike?' She will answer, 'That bad man over there, he is my enemy, he is so wicked and I do not like him.' Who is a bad man, a wicked man? He whom I do not like. The argument ends there. The person whom I hate or fear is my enemy. Why do I hate or fear him? Because he is my enemy. In two steps you go around and come back to the starting point, and there is absolutely no sense, no reason, no wisdom, nothing at all. As long as this lasts, as long as the mind functions, classifying other beings - whether human, sub-human or super-human - into 'this I like and that I do not like', there will be conflict. This conflict has existed from the dawn of creation, and if you do not want to be a foolish optimist, it will exist as long as there is creation. It is the mind that creates all that. It is the mind that creates this division. We apply all manner of tricks.

We have even tried to 'see God in all'. How can I see God? I do not even know

what He looks like; so, how can I see God in all? We have tried political tricks, we have tried economical tricks. Only 40 or 50 years ago, some people thought that if the whole world became communist, all the problems would be solved. My brand of Yoga, your brand of Yoga, Yoga teachers, Yoga associations, Yoga dissociations, etc. I am sure you know about these things. In a world where conflict seems inevitable, how do I live? This is the question. It is a serious question, it is something which has to be faced realistically.

People have tried to reform society. You know what that means, do not you? It is the same dough. The dough has not changed. The dough has not been made sweet, it has not been made sour. It is still the same dough. He made it into some form - you do not like it. So, you make it into another form - and this is called 'reforming society'. The stuff is still the same - rotten. If you have some dough, you can mold it into any shape you like. You can form, you can re-form, you can transform, you can smash it, it still retains some form - and we become hardened. We have become so hard, that even re-formation is difficult. So, we have to soften it with some kind of bloodletting technique, called wars and riots. We have tried all this, for when it comes to re-forming society - society being so large and the people in this society so numerous - for a single person to bring about a reformation of this society is more than a full-time job. At least 25 hours of the day I have to be busy re-forming everybody else. What about me? I have no time for myself.

I have heard a story, but I do not know if it is true. It seems in England there was a prominent social worker, a lady. She was married and had one or two children. She was involved in social welfare activities, dealing with juvenile delinquents, taking children away from smoke and drink and drugs, etc. She was so busy that she left home at around 7 o'clock in the morning and returned home at around 10 o'clock at night. Of course, in those days there were domestic servants, cooks, gardeners, nannies who looked after the children. Years later, when she became busier and busier and more and more decorated by the King and the Queen, she happened one evening to return home a bit earlier than usually. That particular evening she returned home around 8 pm. When she drove her car into her driveway, to her horror she saw a young man there, sitting on the steps and smoking. What a disgrace. She approached him and asked him if he was not ashamed of himself. He said, 'Lady, you have not been introduced to me.' She answered, 'You cannot talk to me like that, who is your father, I am going to talk to him.' The young man answered, 'You really want to know - you sleep with him.' This was the end of the world for this most respectable lady. The young man continued, 'Do you not even know your own son?' She did not. She had had no time for her own son. While she was taking all the other children away from smoke and drink and drugs, her own son had been getting involved.

Whenever there appears on the world scene a social reformer, someone who tries to clean society of the social evils, however great, however divine, however mighty - and whatever might have been the result he had achieved during his lifetime, which is short - the world reverts to its own glory almost immediately.

We have seen this in religious organizations, the very same organizations that these people seem to inspire, become prey to the same evil. It is common knowledge that religious groups are fighting against one another. Here comes a Buddha and says, 'Om Shanti, Om Shanti, Om Shanti, all of you get together.' However, he cannot live forever. As soon as he dies, there are factions within the same group - these people against those people. 'We are all one, all religions are one, but all of us must follow this man.' What have you achieved? Nothing. Why do we not, for once, forget all this and face the music? Not accept conflict as inevitable, neither accept nor reject conflict as a way of life.

When the sun rises in the morning, what do you do? Do you accept it or reject it? The question whether I must accept all this, suggests that I must have an alternative that I can reject. Is it not possible for me to see that this 'is', conflict 'is'? I do not have to accept conflict as a way of life, I need not battle with it knowing that battling with it is what promotes this conflict, perpetuates it, keeps it going. Can we become aware of this, just exactly as you and I become aware of the fact that the sun rises. I do not accept, I do not reject, I merely see.

Seeing that we live in a society in a world in which there is conflict, where am I? I am surrounded by conflict. Where am I? What am I supposed to do? That is the question. It is not easy. You can see it in your own mind and heart. When two people are fighting, your immediate - what you call 'spontaneous' action - is to jump in and ... Or, you are very holy, you are 'way up there', you are God Almighty and you immediately know who is right and who is wrong. It is so simple. You throw your weight in favour of the one whom you regard as right, and then you are part of the conflict, part of the trouble, and they keep you going. I used to be very touchy and sensitive to this, especially when two Yoga teachers - Yoga leaders - started fighting. Till one day, by an accident of history, living in a far-off island called Mauritius, I was introduced to a Madison Square boxing bout on T.V. When the two boxers were in their respective corners for a while, the camera was turned on to the audience and to my horror, most of them were old women. He hits him, they clap; he hits him, they clap. The commentator said something to the effect that those ringside seats cost a lot of money, \$200.00, something like that. The next time the camera scanned the audience again I could only think, 'to pay \$200.00 to see two people fight, goodness gracious'. That cured me. Now, these two Yoga teachers fight and I get it for free. I do not have to pay \$200.00.

It is there, whether you like it or not. As long as there will be 'I like this and I do not like that' in my heart, this conflict will continue to exist. As long as there is one being on this earth, in whose heart exists 'I like this and I do not like that', or 'he is my friend and he is my enemy', 'I love this and I do not love that', so long conflict cannot be avoided. When I see this around me, what is my position? That is the question. The 'Bhagavad Gita', endeavours to answer that question. But before we go into that, perhaps we might look into the Epic of which the Bhagavad Gita itself is part. I presume that most or all of you know the story

vaguely.. It is said that there were two families who were constantly at one another's throat. Somehow the location has been identified as some part of India. The story says, that there were five brothers on one side and a hundred brothers on the other side. I am sure that this did not take place on what is known as Indian soil, it took place somewhere else. The 5 were very pious people and the 100 were vicious.

One thing immediately emerges from this: it is that this is about the most optimistic ratio of good and evil that we might expect in this world: 5 to 100. The wicked people constantly persecuted the good ones. It is an extraordinary lesson which is often ignored even by scholars and students of this Epic. When these vicious hundred were to hold or held a conference in order to decide on the next move, there is total harmony. The hundred wicked people act as one man. When it comes to this other gang, the five good ones, and they discuss strategy, all of them have different ideas. One says this, and the other one says that. They argue that this should be done and not that, and that this is right and that wrong, etc. Do you see the point? We often wonder why evil thrives in this world. We, who call ourselves 'good people', we cannot agree at all. A bunch of Mafia people, they agree immediately, they do not want to quarrel among themselves, there are too many other things to be done. But put a few swamis or high priests together, they never agree and I do not know why this is so.

We all complain that evil thrives in this world. It is as much due to the impotence of the good ones as the doing of the wicked ones. The good ones are effeminate and quarrelsome, unable to come to a decision and unable to come to an understanding, unable to agree among themselves, unable to act. Their goodness is usually hidden far away, it is never active. This is what keeps all these things going.

It is said that the 5 good ones were devoted to God - an Incarnation of God - in those days Krishna. I have a feeling that it was Christ - the name and the story are very similar. Finally, they went to Krishna and asked Him, 'What must we do? We are continually persecuted, thrown out of our own house, what must we do?' Krishna said, 'Fight. I shall make one last attempt at peace, if that fails, then fight.' Often, this injunction on the part of Krishna to fight has been misconstrued by scholars and politicians alike. 'To fight or not to fight' is not the question.

I shall give you an example. I was in Israel in 1965. A young man had heard that a Swami from India was staying in a village and he came to see me. 'Ah, you are from India - you know Gandhi?' 'Yes, what about him?' 'Well, you know, I am a great follower of his principles.' 'Well, to see a follower of Gandhi's principles in India is great. What do you do Sir?' 'Well, I refused to join the army because I do not believe in war.' 'I see, were you afraid to fight?' 'You know what Gandhi said on violence.' 'Yes, I do, and Gandhi said a lot more, if you are really a follower of Gandhi, you know what you would do, do not you? You would join the Israeli army, go between those two armies, the Arabs and the Israelis, you would hold up your rifle, break it into two and shout 'Shalom Salam', and sit down and meditate.

I am sure you know what would happen, one bullet from this side and one from that side, and that would be it.'

What is the difference between cowardice and non-violence? Krishna, commanding Arjuna to fight, merely says, 'Do not bring all your funny excuses here - he is hitting you, why do you want to keep quiet? He is persecuting you and you have that feeling in you, do not you? If you had no such feeling at all, if the thought did not even arise in you that he is persecuting you, then there would be no problem.'

It is like the story of a great Zen master. Someone went to him and asked him, 'If you are continuously tortured by someone, if you are in constant pain and suffering, what does one do, how does one go about this?' The Zen master said, 'Why do you ask me this question? I have absolutely no idea what this is like.'

Is there a way? If there is, then I must find out that way, neither by expressing violence, nor by suppressing it. If I hit you, I am violent, and if, while you hit me, I grind my teeth and try to suppress my feelings, then I am doing violence to myself. That is the problem. First of all, I must determine whether my not wanting to fight is cowardice. Secondly, I must determine whether it is the mind which is cooking up some kind of justification in order to cover up its own cowardice, its own weakness, its own foolishness and ignorance. It is then, when I neither suppress nor express this violence, that I see something else, something completely different arises. Hence, right in the beginning of the Gita, you have a rather shattering approach to the whole problem. One of the warriors refuses to fight on the battle field.

Krishna asks him what he is afraid of. The warrior answers that he does not want this war, because people get killed in it, etc. Krishna asks, 'Are you really and sincerely in love with life? Do you truly respect life? Do you realize that everyone is destined to die? What are you worried about? If not this person, then a mosquito or some other bug might come and kill you. Are we all physically immortal? Do you really think that if only I did not kill that person or that person did not kill me, you would be forever alive here? Get rid of that excuse.'

This is the first and foremost lesson of the Bhagavad Gita. In any puzzling situation, not only outside but within ourselves, this happens innumerable times nearly every day. I want to do something - I do not want to do something. For both these I bring in lots and lots of excuses, why I must do that and why I must not do this. Is it possible for me to clear all that rubbish, all my reasons, all my rationalizations? It is then that I see the truth for what it is, for as long as I am subject to the trips of the mind, it creates its own logic.

Take for instance: we are all against war. Why? Because we respect life. Really? What about motor-cars, what about pollution, what about the poisons which are taken in with fruits and vegetables, insecticides. Do you know what 'insecticide' means? It kills insects. The size of the insects is not mentioned here. There are

small bugs and you and I are big bugs. It is the same thing. One grain of something kills a bug here, 20,000 grains of the same stuff is bound to kill me. Do I really respect life as such - or do I draw my own lines wherever I like?

Some years ago, in Los Angeles, I picked up the morning newspaper. That was when Janice Joplin had died. One full page with her photograph and in big letters said 'Janice Joplin Dead'. One girl died. On the 76th page, two columns: 2000 people killed in Vietnam. Somewhere towards the end of that paper in one corner the number of people killed on the road during the past year, something like 3.000.

Where is your love and respect for life? Why do we bring in all these excuses for or against violence? Because there is violence within. I must be able to eliminate all these rationalizations, justifications, and I must see life for what it is. When I examine the truth concerning life, I see that life cannot be killed, life does not come to an end. Someone in Europe asked me a couple of years ago whether I would like to say a few words at their conference on world peace. I said I did not know what kind of peas they wanted me to talk about, but one thing was certain, the world was going to pieces. They asked me what I thought about wars and violence and the killing that was going on. I told them that if someone pointed a gun to my head, I might be able to tell him, 'Do not be a fool, what you are trying to do now will happen without your having to do it. Why waste a bullet? Wait for a few months or a couple of years more, and this here will be gone.' We must see the absurdity of it all. Should I smoke or should I not smoke? What is so important about that? What does it matter if you smoke, and what does it matter if you do not smoke? Maybe you live for a few years longer. What does it matter if you and I live for five years more or two years less? Why get into these silly arguments, giving objects a far greater importance than they intrinsically possess? The body is a piece of flesh, it is bound to go. It can last for a few more or less years. If you eat a little less, you may last for a few more years. If you eat more, you may not last that long. The Indians call this 'Karma'. Twenty-five bags of rice and fifteen bags of potatoes have been allotted to you; you can consume this all in three years or in thirty years. As soon as your ration is finished, that's it.

There is a lovely Indian saying, 'On every grain of rice or wheat is written the name of the one who is fated to eat it'.

There was a Swami in the Ashram in India, quite an aged man. He was ill, but I did not know that he was dying. The Ashram doctor visited him and told him not to eat rice any more. This poor man, for 73 years he had been eating rice and curry and suddenly the doctor tells him that he should no longer eat rice. He adhered to the doctor's commandments. It is funny, people do not adhere to God's Ten Commandments, but they adhere to the doctor's commandments. One day I had to go up to the printing press and I passed this Swami's room. He had a small oven on which he was cooking some rice. When he saw me, he wanted to explain. I told him to go ahead and eat his rice and not to worry about the doctor. He cut up some tomatoes and some chillies while the rice was boiling. I went up

to the press and when I returned within half an hour, I passed by his door and there was some fresh blood on his door-step. I looked inside - he was gone. I looked at the rice which was still boiling - 'your name was not written on that rice'. The rice was still boiling and this man's boiling had come to an end.

So, all this is irrelevant to the basic and fundamental issue of life. I must come face to face with life, I must see life, I must realize life. The body is but a recycled product. It is born, it grows and it dies, decomposes or disintegrates. Destruction. What lovely words. Destruction only means the opposite of construction. You put brick upon brick and call it 'construction'. Destruction is brick down upon brick down, that's all. Nothing to be seriously worried about. All these molecules are put together, composed into this and one of these days they begin to decompose. They are decomposing even now. That is perfectly alright.

What is it that lives? Can life come to an end? No. Take for instance a child. Even the famous 'immortality', 'perpetuation', 'life beyond death' is not so intriguing. Here is a young man who grows up. As he grows up, he gets married and a cell from his body is transmitted to the mother, and of that cell a child is born. The immortality is attained already. He does not die. That is being perpetuated for all time to come. Even the physical body does not completely perish. It merely decomposes and is formed into some other thing.

What is life? If life is energy, energy is indestructible. It can change its operation. If we can understand that, then life takes on a completely different meaning. It is not that Krishna asks these people to fight or not to fight, because to fight gives something a certain value which it does not have, and then, fighting to 'defend' what? My religion? My culture? My nation?

'Nation' is spelled incorrectly, it should read 'Notion'. 'Nation' is only a 'Notion in somebody's mind. There is no such thing as a 'Nation'. 'United Notions'. The word 'united' is also spelled incorrectly. It is 'untied'. Hence it should read, 'Untied Notions'.

What do we defend? What do we fight for? What do we fight against? We defend our culture. How do you know your culture is good? How do you know that your religion is worth preserving? To fight or not to fight is not the problem. What you are destroying may be good. What you are fighting for, what you are defending may also come to an end. In two verses Krishna brings home this beautiful truth: 'All this has been done by Nature already - all these people have been destroyed at their birth'. Even while someone is writing out my birth-certificate, my death-warrant has been signed. It is natural for people to be born, it is natural for people to die.

There is a Persian story. Death told someone, 'In reality it is I who kills, but I do not want to take responsibility for it, therefore I usually find some other excuse.'

You all know this. Someone asks, 'Why did he die?' 'Oh, he had a heart-failure.'

Can anyone die without heart-failure? We never say that he died of death. Death is natural, what are we worried about? Krishna continues, 'Action is inevitable in this life, motion is inevitable in this life, change is inevitable in this life.' If you think, egotistically, 'I will not do this, this is beneath my dignity', then you will be forced to. What you resolve not to do you will be forced to do by the Power that sustains this universe.

Having set the stage on the battle field, someone asks this terrifying question, 'Do I have to fight or not?' The Teacher Krishna completely ignores all that, and asks the warrior this simple question, 'Who are you and what are you?' It is only when one knows this that one will be able to find the answer to this vital question, 'what must I do?' We are busy trying to find out what we should do, whereas we should be busy finding the answer to the question 'what am I?'

If you go through a garden, have you ever thought about the flowers growing there? Has a flower ever asked itself, 'I am supposed to be a rose, what should be my fragrance?' This question does not arise. Hence, it is not the 'doing' that is such a problem, it is the 'being'. If a person is good, the question of 'doing good' does not arise at all. Whatever that person does must be good. So, instead of being so busy finding answers to the question 'what must I do', can I pose the question 'what am I'. It is not 'you should fight' or 'you should not fight' that is irrelevant.

It can happen that you are engaged in a fight, and it may happen that you run away from the fight. It may happen that you get killed, and it may happen that you kill. All these things may happen, totally regardless of your philosophy of life, totally regardless of what you wish to do or wish not to do. Nature, the world, takes absolutely no notice of your private wishes and desires. This is our daily experience.

This world has not been made for the pleasure and enjoyment of man. I live in a place where there are many mosquitoes. I look at them, 'No, you were not created for my pleasure.' Whoever says so has never been bitten by a mosquito. These are all irrelevant discussions and we waste most of our time in such irrelevant conversations. Do what you like. The vitally important aspect of life is to discover what is life, what is its meaning, what am I. When I know what I am, then, what I must do, becomes abundantly clear. There is no doubt at all.

Can we, by looking deep within, realize, come face to face with this truth - so beautifully put in the second chapter of the Bhagavad Gita, 'Never born and undying, therefore unceasingly existing, immortal, that is the Self.' It is not yourself nor myself, but the Self, which is constant, which is life. Can we look at That? Can we realize That? Can we realize That as the sole existing reality? When That is realized, then all these questions drop away. None of all those problems can ever be resolved except in that ocean of understanding. The problems dissolve. They do not exist and they do not arise.

Just as a spark of fire reduces a ton of cotton-wool, in the twinkling of an eye, one little spark of wisdom, self-knowledge, is able to dissolve all our problems.

That is the teaching of the Bhagavad Gita. Not whether I should do this or not do that, whether I should sit in the lotus posture or some other posture for my meditation, whether I should look at the tip of my nose or at the top of my head. All that is irrelevant.

The most vital thing is to discover this Truth, which is there. Not to create it, but to discover it. The moment it is discovered, confusion is gone and action takes place. Action happens. Life goes on.

When that Truth is discovered, whatever you may be doing, you are one with the stream. If it flows in this direction, you also flow in this direction. If it flows in the other direction, you also flow like that. Therefore, there is no conflict within you.

That is Yoga, the Teaching of Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita.

Nelson, British Colombia - May 15th, 1975

On the mind and meditation

Last night we talked about meditation. Everyone agrees that the vital essence of meditation is to make the mind supportless.

How do you make the mind supportless? Any technique that you may adopt of the many that are suggested must do this. You see some houses over there, they stand on some kind of foundation. The space which is about that support is called a house. When you knock these supports out, the space which was called a house, falls.

The very thing that was called mind before becomes non-existent as mind. But why does the mind reject a supportless existence? The supports are concepts, ideas, thoughts, feelings, emotions, beliefs. When you practice meditation, you find that you cannot even steady the mind, let alone make it supportless.

What is the difficulty? Why does the mind not want to remain steady? First of all, it is the nature of mind as mind to be restless. It is the nature of wind to move. Can you make the wind absolutely motionless? That would be like dehydrated water. Dehydrated milk is powdered milk. But what is dehydrated water? It becomes something else, something completely different. It is no longer water. So, if you make the mind absolutely still, it becomes 'no mind', it becomes something else. As long as you have to deal with the mind, you are dealing with something which, by its very nature, is restless. This is one aspect of it. The wind, as it moves, picks up something or other, some fragrance, some aroma. In the same way, the mind as it moves about restlessly, must pick up something or other. Ideas float in the air, thoughts float in the air - just like aroma floats in the air - and then floating thoughts are mind.

One vital and important question we have not asked ourselves: if there is lovely music being played here and I am completely and utterly deaf, would it distract me at all? If I went to a nudist colony and I were blind, I would not know if all of them are clothed or not clothed, I would not have any idea, and it would not matter to me in the least. If you have a heavy cold and there is a light scent in the air, you will not smell it. Thus the question is: there are a billion thoughts, concepts, ideas, floating around in this consciousness, in this mind. Why do you pick them up? Why do I pick them up? Have you ever looked at a carnival crowd, thousands of people all milling around. You do not really see anybody, you do not look at anybody, you are just scanning the whole place and they could just as well be mosquitoes, as far as you are concerned, bed bugs. But then, 'Ah, who is that?' It is somebody related to you, your son or daughter, your girlfriend or your boyfriend, whom you would not miss from a mile away. Why is that?

So, the first principle for the meditator is to see if he can distinguish between what I call a 'pedestrian' thought - a thought with which I am not related. It

comes and it goes. You are watching yourself, observing your mind; a thought comes and a thought goes, a thought comes in and a thought goes out. The mind is not built on them, they are not its supports. The mind is not built with them. You read a book or a newspaper and you forget all about it by the middle of the afternoon. That is why you buy another newspaper the next day. I do not know if you have seen, I think in the New York Times, that sometimes the same news is printed on three or four pages. The same news is printed three or four days later once again. Exactly the same thing happens, it is forgotten. Sometimes they do it to fill up space, sometimes by oversight. Your mind does not register it. It is dust floating in space. In the same way, unfortunately, we read our books. Not only school children, but even we, the children who are studying in the school called life. We also pass through life in exactly the same way. Nothing registers, except something in which you and I may be interested, in the sense that 'I am in it - you are in it'. The thought is not in you, you are in the thought.

As you are sitting in meditation, you are trying to watch your thoughts, you are trying to watch your mind. You have your own Mantra, the object on which you wish to meditate, and as you do that, there is a procession of thoughts. They come and they go and they come and they go. Why do they come at all? If they do not come, they cannot go. In order to go, they have to come. Why do they go? In order to make room for something else. This is a silly procession with which you have nothing to do. Also, it does not really disturb you. But then one thought comes along and suddenly you discover that that thought is not in you but that you are in that thought, and it carries you away, here is a procession of thoughts, coming and going, coming and going. You can be only vaguely aware of them and it is not very clear. For instance, you are asked to sit down for half an hour and note down all the thoughts that occurred to you during your meditation. You will not be able to note them all down. It is like with dreams, they are irrelevant, silly, stupid and they are not to be bothered with at all. But then there happens another thought, and yet another comes along, and you think it is all coming into you, but you are in it. Without your awareness you are carried away.

I think that it is very important for those who practice meditation to become aware of the distinction: what is a thought which I need not bother about at all, and what is a thought which I should be cautious about. How does one do that?

In order to distinguish between these two, we use a Mantra or we use a form or figure, whatever you like. Why not 'potato chips'? If you go on repeating 'potatoe chips', it may tempt you. Your mouth may be full of saliva and you will get into trouble. Instead of salvation, you get 'salivation'. Otherwise you can repeat any word you like.

As a matter of fact, there was a Yogi called Sri Ramana Maharshi. Quite often he would say, 'What Mantra do you want? Why do you not go on saying 'Aham', 'I am'?' I am is a Mantra. What is a Mantra? A Mantra is a sound which is mentally repeated. How do I know I am mentally repeating a Mantra? How do I make sure that I am mentally repeating a Mantra? How do I know you are sitting there? I

see it. When I have my eyes open and I can see you sitting there, I know that you are sitting there. I cannot safely say that you are there when I have my eyes closed. So, how do I know that I am repeating the Mantra? Because I can hear it within me. That is a point of reference. Everything else is referred back to this. Am I truly repeating the Mantra? How do I know? Am I sure? Yes. Are you sure you will not forget it? No. So, this is what I want to do, I want to repeat my Mantra. When you are serious about it, that Mantra which you are repeating within yourself becomes as clear as the sound you are hearing now, and as distinct.

At the same time it is advisable to introduce also a form, maybe the form of Krishna or Jesus, whatever you like. Or the sun, or a flower, or a mountain. Preferably anything that your mind associates with divinity. That, again, I must be able to see as clearly as this boy sitting in front of me. This is the point of reference: the Mantra and this figure, this symbol. They are absolutely clear to me. My attention is concentrated totally upon them, which means, they are absolutely clear, as clear as the sight of this boy, as clear as the sound of these words. Let all these pedestrian thoughts come and go. If I do not take any notice of them, then my attention is not disturbed and, therefore, the vision is not disturbed, the sound is still clear, the form is still clear. But when I pay attention to those pedestrian thoughts - as when you pay attention to your dreams - you are able to remember them. Not quite in tremendous detail, but vaguely.

All of you dream, lots and lots of dreams every night. But you wake up and say, 'Oh, I slept and I had no dreams'. Of course you did dream. But they were all pedestrian dreams, like wind ruffling over the leaves. They did not leave any impression on your mind. They came and they went.

We can try a little trick now. Look at me just straight - my face is clear, isn't it? While you are looking at me without turning your face, please try also to look at someone else through the corner of your eye. It becomes very hazy. When the attention is thus distributed, dissipated, it becomes dull. An other trick; I am sure some of you have experienced it at some time or other in your life. You are sitting and looking at something, the sky or a tree, and suddenly you drift away. You think of your boyfriend or your girlfriend and the whole thing goes out of focus. But the face of that person appears in front of you. Your whole mind is directed totally upon that person. The one sitting in front of you has completely disappeared - vanished. That is what happens when that thought in which you find yourself, arises. Then the Mantra is gone, all your concentration is gone, meditation is gone, the whole thing has vanished. You suddenly find yourself in Vancouver or Spokane. It takes a few minutes to come back to the realization that I am still in Nelson, especially when you sit with your eyes closed. When you sit with your eyes open, you can come back to Nelson in three or four minutes. If you have your eyes firmly close, it will take about half an hour to come back. You are merely doing this: 'Ah, beautiful, the mind is absolutely concentrated. The Swami made it look as though it is terribly difficult, why, it's easy.' You are congratulating yourself. When you said, 'The Swami said it was so difficult, but it

is easy, I have made it', you have jumped on the Swami's shoulders and he takes you to the Yasodhara Ashram. 'This lady over there and I used to sit next to each other in the meditation room, you know she comes from Spokane. I have gone to Spokane already and it is such a lovely ride - free. Free ride.' And so you continue. If your eyes are not closed you suddenly realize, 'My God, I am still in Nelson.'

Now I do not ask how this thought entered my consciousness, I ask why on earth did I jump onto that bandwagon. I am supposed to repeat a Mantra here. While you do that, you suddenly discover why the mind is distracted by a particular type of thought all the time. That is what the mind has constructed, built as its permanent support - your husband, your wife, your children, your house, your property, whatever it is. The mind has created all of them. All these relationships are pillars on which the mind rests. If you knock one of them down, you are frightened. The mind is frightened to realize that I am alone. Unless, in the non-meditation hours - now we are talking in terms of the practice of meditation as a regular technique - I knock down those props, those supports, ensuring that the mind does not long for them, I am caught by this so that, every time I sit for my meditation, the attention of the mind is diverted to this - my family. Knocking down those props, those supports, this is called 'vairagya' - dispassion, non-attachment, freedom. If I allow these relationship-pillars to support my mind 23 1/2 hours of the day and then suddenly expect the mind to drop them for 1/2 hour during my meditation, it will fail, it simply is not possible.

The disturbing thoughts, the distracting thoughts are the product of a distracted life. The question is: can I sit then in real life and not in merely what is called 'meditation', can I be as watchful of what goes on in the mind now, when I am not meditating as when I am meditating? This is where they who prescribe meditation as a technique, fail.

When you treat meditation as a kind of technique: 'I sit in the morning and evening and practice', ok., that is good and I am not saying that it is not good. But that is where meditation does not yield either satisfaction or permanent results. Because for 23 1/2 hours I am propping all these things up more and more, and in 1/2 hour I want all of them to disappear. That is difficult, to say the very least and to put it very mildly.

What disturbs me during my meditation really and truly, that is something I have to pay attention to during the rest of the day. As you begin to take notice of these things during the rest of the day, you are extending your meditation. That is the beauty of it. Now, from there on, meditation is not sitting straight upright and looking at your nose, that is very easy. From there on you are watching and watching, all the time, 24 hours of the day. For instance, you meet someone and your heart jumps into your throat. It must have happened to you. You get out of the car and your child calls 'Mommy' - or, you meet someone suddenly and - you swallow it. You wonder, 'What happened now? Why am I excited?' Somebody misbehaves and is rude, you bristle up and get hot under the collar. Then and

there you begin to look, 'What is happening now?' You begin to wonder, 'What exactly is all this?'

As the psychologists or the Victorian-age grandmothers used to say, 'Are there many beings in me or am I one personality?' I have a feeling we are one personality, I do not know. We are not like trees. Trees are highly evolved beings, you know why? You can cut them into one hundred thousand pieces and plant them, they will all grow. If you cut me into two halves and plant them, nothing grows. Am I like some of those trees with hundreds of beings within me? When I awake in the morning, a Swami comes up, I am in a meditative mood. When the coffee is not ready, anger comes up, another chap. I am mad at my wife and a little later my child gets up and another Swami comes up. There are so many beings which take possession of you, one by one. Now you are loving, in another few moments you get down and find the car does not start, and suddenly you become mad. You wonder what happened. Am I one person or several persons put together? Sometimes this fellow works and at other times that fellow works. Great-grandmothers used to say that you are temporarily possessed by some strange spirits. Is this true? Maybe. Then you begin to watch, 'This is what happens to me in meditation, I want to be left alone for a little while, 1/2 hour only', and I tell my mind, 'My friend, look, just for this half hour leave me alone, afterwards I will let you play fully.' But it says, 'No, I am the boss.' Then enters a little bit of anxiety. When I push that away, a little bit of love, I push that one away, a little bit of anger. Push that one away, jealousy enters. 'Am I one or am I many?'

Exactly the same thing happens throughout the day if you care to watch yourself - every few minutes there is a change in your mood, in your mentality. You watch - look at it more closely. What exactly is this? Am I an accumulation, a trash-can into which all these things have been dumped, or what am I? When you begin to watch, then a completely different picture emerges. You suddenly realize that what you have been calling 'me' is plain, simple intelligence, some kind of an intelligent being. There is some intelligence, some consciousness which is functioning, this functioning meaning 'energy', movement, and consciousness is consciousness, intelligence. There is constant commotion in this consciousness. There is constant movement of energy in this consciousness. Is, what you call 'jealousy' anything other than this consciousness plus movement of energy? Is, what you call hate, anger - whatever you wish to call it - anything other than a certain movement of energy in this intelligence?

Your emotions, your thoughts, do they have an existence apart from this intelligence which you are? Movement of energy in this intelligence or consciousness is what happens all the time, whether you call it love or whether you call it hate, whether you call it affection, satisfaction, anxiety, hope or despair - all these are mere modifications of the same stuff. Understanding this or thinking about this - these are two different things. When you understand it, you understand it in your heart. When you are thinking about it: 'Ah, I am not quite sure. How can it be?' When I think of something nice and pleasant, when I am in

love, my face blushes. When I am angry, I get hot under the collar. When I am anxious, my stomach may be affected, it does not matter what you call it. It may be that the energy moves in certain regions of this consciousness.

Is there a thought or an emotion which is independent of your intelligence? Please, do not think too hard about this. What happens to you in sleep? Sleep meaning no dreams. While you are fast asleep, do you have these thoughts, do you have these ideas and these emotions, these anxieties, is there love, hate, like or dislike? Where did they all go? That intelligence which functioned when you were awake was not functioning when you were asleep, that's all. When this intelligence does not function, as in sleep, then all these things are absent. Therefore, all these emotions, all these thoughts, all these anxieties and fears and the rest of it are nothing but this one intelligence. You look at it without even thinking about it. It is quite simple.

The next step is a bit tricky. Some of you may like me, some of you may not like me, I do not know. But keep all those things to yourself. If you think I am funny, keep that to yourself. If you think I am serious, please keep that also to yourself. For the next ten minutes, whether you like me or whether you dislike me, keep it all there, and never mind. You look at me now. 'Ah, what a funny fellow.' As this thought arises, you look at it, 'it is nothing but a modification of my intelligence.' Let the realization of this also come up at the same time. As the thought arises, 'I like him, I do not like him', have the consciousness or the awareness that this is but a modification of the same intelligence. Love, hate, like, dislike, whatever happens now in your mind, it is the same thing, the same intelligence. You are still looking at me, but that 'something' which modified your vision has gone. That something, which modified and perverted your vision - perverted even when you say: 'I love you Swami', has disappeared. Even that love is a modification of your intelligence, that hate is an equally pernicious modification of your intelligence.

If you are able to confront each one of these emotions, each one of these thought, with this realization, that this thought, this emotion is nothing but intelligence - the yogis use the word 'consciousness', then what happens to all the excitement? The excitement is gone. You are still looking at me, you are still listening, you are still seeing, you are still trying to understand what is going on here, but that excitement is gone.

If I may say so, even your love and your hate may remain, but the excitement is gone. 'I do not like this', that's alright. There is no harm in saying, 'This is something I do not like.' You may still want to go to sleep, you may still want to raise your children, you may still want to lead a wonderful family life, you may still love your dog and leave the backdoor open, all these things you can still do. It does not interfere with your life, except that it takes the stress and strain away. This cannot be done by sitting for half an hour or so and looking at your nose. No. When in this manner you are able to look at the contents of your mind and recognize all of them as nothing but the modifications of this mind-stuff, of this

intelligence, of the energy moving in intelligence, that life itself is meditation.

When and if you are able to do that, then you can obviously see that you have no obstacles at all during meditation, you have no obstacles at all in the practice of Yoga. You do not need any special place for it, you do not need any special setting for it, you do not need anything. There is not even a technique for it. You started out with a technique, it was the technique that introduced you to this perpetual problem. It is the technique that unlocks the door for you and enables you to enter into yourself and meet the only real stranger you have in this world: yourself. All the others are not strangers, you yourself are the greatest stranger to yourself, you have not met yourself before. The technique merely opens the door and lets you through, but once you are there - it is up to you to face yourself from moment to moment, to live with yourself from moment to moment, to come to terms with yourself.

This is not selfishness because that again, you will discover, is a useless pursuit. You will feel it, you will see it, not because someone else says selfishness is bad, but because you will see that it is stupid and silly. You have self-knowledge. Self-knowledge not as a sort of blazing lights which you see when you sit in meditation - however, you can have all those things, there is no reason why you should not have them - but self-knowledge in that you see the emotions arising, you see these disturbing thoughts arising, you see these distracting thoughts arising, and you see them not as disturbing thoughts, not as upsetting emotions, but as pure consciousness. This is nothing but a modification of the same consciousness.

For instance, you have a family and you want to bake cookies. You make a dough to begin with. You may turn your back for a little while and your little daughter comes and plays with some dough. She may like certain movie stars and so she fashions them with her little hands and leaves them there. The father may come and say: 'No, that is not good, we must make a Yoga-Swami, my Guru.' He puts the dough back and kneads and makes a lovely Swami. The mother comes back and says: 'No, I want to make a Krishna, a Buddha and a Jesus.' Apparently, there were film stars, apparently there were Yoga Swamis, apparently there was Krishna, Buddha and Jesus, but in truth, they were all dough. With this dough you can make, any figures you like. That day, when I realize that whatever be my thoughts that occur to me and whatever be the feelings that arise in me, they are all this silly dough, called intelligence in which there is energy which enables this intelligence to function, that very day I am free.

Therefore it is said, that if you know the Self, that self-knowledge instantly frees you. There are no more anxieties, no more hopes and no more fears. Life goes on. You still continue to think, you still continue to feel, but they do not rule you.

There is one other problem which arises in the minds of most people who hear this, 'Ah, if I become a Yogi and attain to self-knowledge, I may become like a dummy, without any thoughts, without any feeling' or, 'My husband will not even look at me when he becomes enlightened.' This is a problem, isn't it? There exists

a Upanishad where an enlightened sage talks to his wife and gives her instructions. The way he addresses her makes it sound as though he is deeply in love with her. He must have been past eighty. He was about to leave the home and wander away. Merely because she shows interest in acquiring self-knowledge and asks him the right question, he says to her: 'Ah, come on my dear and I will tell you.' He is extremely affectionate. It does not mean at all that you become a dummy. It does not mean at all that you become a robot and wooden-hearted. You continue to think and to feel, but all this does not rule you any longer. You know all the time that all these are modifications of one thing, intelligence in which there is this energy inherent which enables the intelligence to function. From there on there are no obstacles. You can sit down and meditate whenever you want. Every difficulty, every obstacle that arises, you are going to make use of it. Whatever be the thoughts, emotions or what have you, you are going to say: 'This is all the same dough.' You do not hold, you do not push. When you are sitting down for your meditation, you are merely going to tell yourself: 'I am here, and for the next 50 minutes I am going to meditate. I am going to repeat my Mantra, and I am going to focus my attention upon the Divine Presence.' If there are some thoughts, they can come, they can go. That's all. There is free cross-ventilation.

If you are going to stone-wall the whole thing, 'I will not allow any extraneous thoughts to enter', you are inviting them. Right? If you are going to say, 'I will not allow any thoughts from the outside in', you know what you are going to do? For the next 50 minutes you are going to repeat this as a mantra. Standing at the window and preventing thoughts from entering is a waste of time. Once a thought has entered and then trying to push it out is another waste of time, because all the time we are sweeping the floor. So, I tell myself: 'I am going to repeat my mantra and visualize the Divine Presence, keeping both windows open, who comes in can also go out, I am not interested'. You know now that all these things are the same stuff. All these thoughts, all these emotions are the same stuff, the same play of the mind-stuff, the same play of energy moving in the mind, you are not interested.

Then there are no distractions, no disturbances, nothing. You enjoy your meditation, get up and go about your work - even then you are meditating. You are never, never stopping. This meditation is ceaseless. Your whole life becomes meditation. Om.

Question: What is your definition of 'Divine Presence?'

Swamiji: 'Divine Presence' means what you like, what your mind or what your heart likes to contemplate. As a matter of fact, even if you do not like it, try it. For instance, merely listening to your breathing itself may become quite sufficient for some people. But most people may not find it sufficient, the mind still wanders away. The mind brings pictures to you. So, instead of bringing in a picture, I give you a picture. It is not that this is God.

Question: If one is sitting in a room, and something that the mind likes, comes floating in, automatically the mind will turn towards that quite effortlessly, nothing whatsoever could turn the mind away from that.

Swamiji: That is correct, that's it.

Question: Then that should be the mantra, that thing that attracts so much.

Swamiji : That's it. That is the mantra you are planting. But it may not be found to be so easy. Is it possible for me to get hold of the mantra and let the mantra absorb the whole of me, then the yogi is free. But if the mantra is not strong enough to hold the attention completely, then something else comes floating in and that is more attractive than the mantra, what do I do then?

Questioner: Then that will be the mantra, the mind will follow that.

Swamiji: The mind will follow that for a little while.

Questioner: But isn't that alright?

Swamiji : The mind will follow that for a little while, and then follow something else. That is the whole problem. The mind as at present constituted is unable to get hold of any one of these and reach the source. All these tricks have been tried. If the intellect approves of the Mantra and says that this is going to lead me to absolute bliss, the attention is focussed on this Mantra with all that temptation for a maximum period of twenty seconds.

All the tricks that people suggest these days, they have all been tried. Music has been tried. Music has been tried to the extent of making me sick. Pop music, there is so much noise that you do not even hear your own breathing. You do not even hear your own thoughts, your thoughts are being wrenched away from you. When that noise stops, you are still where you were before, at the same place. All this has been tried. Some of these things seem to work. They seem to work because of their novelty. If you are being used to sit during Satsang as we are doing here and chant 'Om Namah Sivaya', it becomes dull after a while. You go to some of these lovely Bhajan concerts, in Ceylon they have plenty of them, you should hear them. You go there, you stop breathing, your eyes pop out, you swoon. 'That's it.' It works for a little while. But then even that becomes boring; and you shift again.

Kootenay Bay, British Colombia - May 18th, 1975

Bhagavad Gita

We were studying the message of Sri Krishna in the 'Bhagavad Gita'. It is believed that the whole episode took place on the battle field. A battle field is the scene of intense conflict and the teaching is said to be related to this conflict since we see that we live in this world where as far as our understanding goes, conflict has been with us from the beginning. Therefore we think that the message may have some relevance to us.

When we look into this text, we discover a rather strange approach to the whole problem. Two parties are fighting and one of the warriors collapses. The teacher, instead of trying to figure out who is right and who is wrong, instead of deciding whether to fight or not to fight or who is fighting right under certain circumstances and who is fighting wrong under certain circumstances, ignores this completely. Instead, he flies off at a tangent and discusses what we usually pigeon-hole as 'philosophy'. What is the reason behind all this? When you become aware of conflict, aggression, violence, it is usually when you see it somewhere else, in the other person, 'outside' yourself, in the 'outside' world.

When someone uses an expression like: 'I recognize this conflict', I wonder if he realizes what the meaning of the word 'recognize' may be. 'Recognize' means - I see it once again. Where did you see it the first time? In order to recognize conflict or violence outside, you must be aware of this violence, this conflict somewhere else before. In passing, incidentally, it is my argument with people who say, 'Do not do this or you will go to hell', that they seem to know the way. Did they come from there? So, in order to 'recognize' something, you must have cognized it before. Where? In yourself.

It is in that sense that we often refer to the world as a mirror in which really and truly that is reflected, which is in you.

Thus Sri Krishna says to do away with all that business, the 'rights' and 'wrongs' of war, the participation or non-participation in wars. Whether you participate in the war or whether you get away from it, you are still in it. I cannot remember which cult or sect it was, but the leader of that cult said: 'We shall have no disharmony in our group, all of us must be totally one.' What happens if he says he dislikes one Swami and tells him to get out and away from his organization? Did he not say that they all must be one? And so it happens that there are more people outside than inside. Therefore, even if you say that you will not participate in this world, you are creating another conflict. By saying that he is 'evil' and that you will not mix with him, you are contributing to the evil, you are participating in a different way. You will find - if you are a student of comparative philosophy or religion - that every time somebody jumps up and says that he will bring about world unity - bring all the people together points out to them that fundamentally truth is one - yet another group has been created.

Before there were five groups. Now, with this 'universal religion', it became six, because they do not agree with anybody else. You are a Christian? You are wrong. You are a Hindu? You are wrong. You are a Jew? You are wrong. You are a Moslem? You are wrong. You are a Buddhist? You are wrong.

They are all 'partial', but I am going to give you the 'whole'. This is impossible. You cannot possibly hand out a thing called a 'whole', it is broken already. By merely avoiding a conflict - getting away from it - you have not solved the problem. You have probably created some more troubles.

If two of us are quarreling and fighting, you, perhaps as a religious leader, can jump into the fray, deciding that he is right and that I am wrong and join him. By joining him you have made me weaker, thereby prolonging the conflict. Or, belonging to the other category you say: 'Ah, they are both fools - I am wise', and you keep away from them. Or, you take for granted that I am strong, so when I have 'finished' him I turn to you: 'What did you say? Did you say that I am a fool, too?'

Therefore, Krishna does not indulge himself in this troublesome problem. Where is conflict? In you. It is that conflict, it is that violence, it is that aggression in you that sees aggression outside. When a cat is playing with a mouse - the famous 'cat and mouse' game - who is the inventor of this game? You. Neither the cat nor the mouse invented a game called 'cat and mouse' game. The cat behaves normally and the mouse behaves normally. It is the psychologist or you educated people, highly educated, you degree-holders, you researchers, who invented this. You know what 'research' means? To search again. First of all, you lost something, you searched and found it, dropped it deliberately and then go and 're-search' it. Search will do. I had something, I dropped it, I went around looking for it, searching for it I found it. That's all. But then, deliberately I throw it away and go 're-searching'. It is the research-scholar who invented a thing called 'cat and mouse' game. The cat behaves as a cat should and the mouse behaves as a mouse does.

Only the man does not behave as a man should. He super-imposes, projects, his own violence, his own aggression, on to this poor innocent cat and mouse and 'reads' a cat and mouse game there. Why am I doing this? I want to find a rationalization, a justification. You may or may not agree with what is said here, whenever you feel within yourself the need to explain your conduct, rationalize - justify your conflict - then there is something you already know is wrong, something deep within you knows that it is wrong. We have all been breathing for many years. You have never felt the need to say: 'You know, I have to breathe'. It is only when I do something which, even if I do not know it is wrong or evil or sinful, is not acceptable to you, I come and explain to you, rationalizing, justifying. When I look for justification for what I am doing concerning the plants and the animals, I am already accusing myself. I know I am guilty and that is why I am looking for some justification.

When, studying the behaviour of cats and rats and monkeys we come up with fantastic discoveries such as: 'This behaviour is also found in monkeys'. I have a hunch that they realize that we are much lower than the monkeys.

You know if for instance - insignificant disciples that we are - we are found smoking and someone asks us: 'Why do you smoke?' We say, 'Oh, my Guru and also my grandfather used to smoke', which means: 'When even those great people smoked, what about little 'me'?' So, when you say, 'Even the monkeys have these behaviour traits.', it means: 'If such great things as monkeys behave in such a manner, what about us poor little human beings?' That is what it sounds to my ears. Or, 'Even the birds protect their nests, so I will shoot you if you dare come on my property'. Birds may appear to be aggressive during a certain nesting season but not always. We do not study all that, we only study to prove that which we want to prove. It is absurd. Is the aggression outside? No: It is the aggression inside, it is the violence within that projects the violence outside and reads it there.

Once upon a time before I had seen lions and tigers in their natural environment, I used to think they are ferocious animals. When I was in Africa - Nairobi, we went to the National Park and were told where we could see lions as close as we are sitting here. I tell you, I have never seen a more beautiful and peaceful face. Even when they yawn they are so beautiful. They had finished their siesta and they were getting up for their breakfast or lunch. It so happened that nature had provided a zebra as food for them. It is not their fault, it is not because they want to kill that they go and kill. Again, it is only man who behaves in a stupid way; he is sitting in the car and watches them. The lions had a drink of water and then they turned and looked at us. In that beautiful look I almost read the message: 'I do not come and bother you, why do you come here and bother us?' Believe me, the National Park where the lions live is just some miles from downtown Nairobi - they do not come and bother the people there at all. Eventually the lion was walking off to look for his food. He gave one more look - quiet, beautiful, peaceful, serene. I wonder how we would have looked - obviously I could not look at my co-passengers in the car, nor figure out how we looked to the lions, but I have seen it. Stand outside some of your big cities, New York, Los Angeles, Paris, London, etc. Look at all these drivers, long cigars, driving the most expensive cars, you have never seen more miserable faces on earth. The more expensive the car, the longer the cigar, the longer the face. We are the ones who project all these things on to what we see - it is not there. There is no violence outside. Perhaps we have made this mistake of looking constantly for this violence outside, whereas it is inside.

In order to deal with this problem of conflict and violence, Krishna says to forget all this outside world and look within and see: where is this violence and who is violent? In other words, where does this violence, this aggression, spring from? Where does conflict exist? Who are you? When you begin to look within you suddenly discover that all conflict can be reduced - not resolved - to two simple

words: 'like' and 'dislike'. If these two words 'like' and 'dislike' - 'love' and 'hate' are not there, that very moment conflict ceases.

But perhaps you are still looking outside, looking at the cat-and-mouse game. Whether the game is played by cat and mouse or by man and woman, what is the difference? That cat and that mouse are on all fours, this cat and this mouse are on two legs. The thing is the same. When you have dropped this 'like' and 'dislike' from your heart and when you look at it you probably see quite a different picture. You see something very interesting even in regard to the functioning of our several different faculties - no 'likes' and 'dislikes' exist in that world. Does Krishna suggest that I must, therefore, abandon all these likes and dislikes? This is not possible. Tomorrow morning someone will bring me a glass of hot nitric acid, 'Swamiji, to you it is all the same, coffee, nitric acid, have a glass of nitric acid.'

Your body, your senses, your faculties naturally react in a certain manner to certain things. You have no control over them and you do not need to have any control over them. When there is light you open your eyes and see, the eyes see. When somebody coughs, the ears hear. The skin touches. They all have their own inherent limitations. The eyes are limited in their faculty, they see only a certain range of spectrum; the ears can hear only certain decibels of sound, neither below nor above. In exactly the same way the skin can take only a certain temperature, a certain range, neither below nor above. If the hand, even by mistake, comes down on a block of ice, it springs off - the same hand, if it touches a hot stove, springs off.

Shall I then introduce the concept of hate here? There is a certain correlation between the senses and the objects, because they are part of the same whole. I have a couple of magnets, but I did not bring them with me this time. Probably you have all seen this: if you have two little magnets and you put them on this table here, turning one of them upside down and bring the same pole towards it, it will jump and turns back. As soon as it turns its back - they come together - when the unlike poles face each other. That is a natural thing.

This seems to be very pleasant to apply to human behaviour - that a man and a woman must be attracted to each other. This does not necessarily mean that a man should kill a man and a woman should chew up another woman. Jealousy is rationalized on this and killing - murder - is rationalized on this. There is this natural manifestation of attraction and repulsion which is limited to physical phenomena. This physical universe is filled with these two forces from end to end. That is why it is able to remain stable. Do not assume that what is happening to the eyes is happening to you, what is happening to the ears is happening to you. Look - see what you are. It is natural for the hand to spring away from the hot plate. Do not say 'I do not like this', because the hand has already said it does not like it. Also, do not say something which is very bad, but which is quite common among our friends: 'You know, I am a great Yogi - I can put my hand on a hot-plate and withdraw - withdraw the energy and keep it on top of my head.'

Unnecessary showmanship. Wait at least for another 10 or 15 years, when the body is about to be cremated, then that body can get up and say: 'I do not care, you can burn this.' Silly, very silly. Let the body do its own functions. Do not worry about that. What seems - on the surface - to be contrary impulses are complimentary in the structure of the body. There is a built-in mechanism which promotes the growth of the child and then arrests it. Some of you must be parents, so you know what I am talking about. If you observe the growth of an infant, the first 6 weeks or 2 - 3 months, you will be amazed. It is doubling its size every day. It grows fast, terribly fast. If that growth rate were maintained you could build a new house every two years. There is a mysterious power which makes a child grow and then says: 'Ah, enough now.' These two forces work constantly. One set of nerves gives the command to the chest to expand so that the lungs can breathe. If you say 'no, no, I do not like contradictions, I like harmony, let's leave just that one set of nerves, let the chest expand, let it go on', you know what? In 5 minutes it will burst into pieces. At exactly the right moment the other thing says, 'contract', and the lungs contract. This is not contradictory but complimentary.

So, it is possible to see that what you and I have called 'conflict' may merely be a restraining force. We do not know. I must be cautious and I must vigilantly watch to see - where does this conflict arise? The conflict arises when what is natural is extended unnaturally.

This is when and where your super-natural phenomena become deadly.

This person here says: 'You know, I do this certain thing and I levitate'. This person is a danger, a menace. Why must you levitate? I am levitating on this chair, is that not enough? Why do you want to distinguish yourself as something extraordinary? I have known an extraordinary man. All that I could see in him during the sixteen years that I lived with him was a man, a pure - absolutely pure and beautiful human being. He did not demonstrate any miracles, jump in the air, appear or disappear, nothing of that sort. Do you know who demonstrates? Can you mentally write that word? The state of a demon is called 'demon-strate'. Why do not you want to be pure, natural human beings? Because that is very difficult. It is most difficult because we have made it so. Why? Because we love the unnatural, calling it 'super natural'.

Way back, in 1946 or 47, a man appeared in my Master's Ashram in Rishikesh who introduced himself as a Yogi who could remain buried underground for 9 days in an air-tight and sealed container. He had a disciple with him. Both of them came to the Ashram asking for permission to demonstrate this in the area. We told him that this would be alright and we would inform the Master, Swami Sivananda. If Swami Sivananda, approves we will take the necessary steps and inform the authorities; the police, the magistrate, etc. At 2 o'clock in the afternoon some of us went to Swami Sivananda to ask his permission. He said: 'Ah, buried for 9 days? Very good. But not here - let him go somewhere else. You know, all these snakes and frogs etc., they are buried for at least six months a year

- they hibernate.' To finish the story - this yogi could not get permission anywhere around there and so both of them went to Delhi.

Why do you want these supernatural things? They are unnatural. The only important thing is to find out what my relationship is with the sight? What is my relationship with hearing? What is my relationship with all that is going on in this world? Why must a normal person strive to behave in an abnormal way? That is only entertainment. It has no value whatsoever.

I am going to give you another story. A wise man, a Guru, a Swami, was telling just this to his disciple - that supernatural things are unnecessary. He warned that in this world only the supernatural, unnatural phenomena are applauded and that natural human beings are not recognized, not wanted. The disciple protested and said: 'Oh no. There are intelligent people everywhere in this world, and if you are a noble man, they will recognize you. Truth is always recognized and exalted over falsehood.' The Guru did not argue but kept quiet. Wandering along, one day they entered a small village. In the marketplace they saw a small tent and on a billboard outside it said: 'Come and see a man grunt like a pig.' The admission was 20 cents. The tent could only accommodate between 30-40 people. As soon as all the people were in, they closed the doors and gave the performance. At the conclusion of the performance they would go away and the tent would fill up again. The Guru and the disciple also paid the 20 cents and went inside. In a few minutes the tent was full and the performer, the 'demonstrator', came in and grunted like a pig. Everybody laughed, 'marvelous, marvelous', and they clapped their hands. Then they walked out. They continued to talk about this all the way home. The Guru made a note of this, talked to someone in the village and returned to the same place ten days later.

The Guru had asked for the tent as well as the billboard to remain on the same spot, even though the demonstrator - the man who grunts like a pig - had left. The Guru made one little change on the billboard: 'Hear the Grunting of the Pig - see the Truth.' - Admission was 20 cents. He asked his disciple to stand outside the tent. People came, looked at the billboard. 'Sounds funny - well, let's go in and see'. About 20 people walked into the tent. The Guru was ready. As soon as the doors were closed, he brought a pig in from the outside. He twisted its tail and it grunted. All the people in the audience shouted: 'Ah, it is only a pig'. They stormed outside, a few wanted their money back and others picketed the place, telling everybody: 'It is only a pig.' The Swami told them outside: 'I promised you the Truth' This is the Truth. The other one was a fake - a man grunting like a pig is a fake. A grunting pig is the reality, is the truth.' Then he turned to his disciple and said: 'You see, nobody likes the Truth in this world.'

If the light hurts your eyes, close your eyes - they close themselves. Even this wonderful word 'clairvoyance' only means that the sight is clear, that I have no eye disease, no sore eyes. That's all. 'Clairvoyance' does not mean I know where you lost your teeth. It does not say so. It is a simple French word, mauled, distorted, perverted. In the same way 'clairaudience' means I can hear well, I am

not deaf. 'Can you hear the music of the spheres?' What spheres? None of these things are mentioned here, none. Here is a very clear and straight-forward statement of truth which is that there is limitation in your faculties and these faculties respond in a certain way to external phenomena, because they are related. The eyes are related to sight, the ears are related to sound, the skin is related to temperature, touch, texture, the tastebuds are related to different tastes. Let them perform their functions without any interference. Do not try to push them, do not try to pull them, let them be free. If you leave them free, you are free. If you give them their freedom, you will immediately realize your own freedom. Do not try to get into their grip, do not try to fall into their net. Be what you are and let them do what they have to do. When that is done, then there arises a state of mind which is called 'samam' in the Bhagavad Gita. 'Samam' is the same as the English word 'same'. You can translate it with 'equanimity'.

If you have understood what was said concerning the natural limitation of the senses and the freedom of the spirit from that natural limitation, you will understand this concept of 'samam' in a completely different light. 'Samam' does not mean that, to the yogi, heat and cold are the same - meaning that he will have a shower under fire and cook his food on water, that is not what is meant. These are perversions. 'Samam' is a completely different thing. Leave the senses alone, let the functions of your body go on - inwardly you are in a state of 'samam', sameness. This sameness is one degree higher than endurance, according to the Bhagavad Gita. Sameness is quite different from endurance. In the beginning we train ourselves to endure pleasure and pain, heat and cold - which means, that at present, in an ignorant state, I think: 'Ah, that is soft, that is nice - I feel this, I am touching this - the pleasure is mine.' That is when you are walking into the trap of the skin. 'Oh, that is terrible, that feels awful', - again you walk into the trap of the skin. If I do neither interfere nor get involved in what the eyes see, the ears hear, the tongue tastes, the skin touches - if 'I' is not involved in all that, then all function naturally. But since in a state of ignorance 'I' was involved in all this, a certain amount of restraint becomes necessary.

Do not mourn, do not lament, 'Oh, it is cold, oh, it is hot.' If it is cold, the body will know how to look after itself. If it is hot, the body knows how to look after itself. If it is cold, you start shivering and trembling, which is the most beautiful warming vibration, which you yourself could not produce even if you wanted to. If it is hot, nature knows how to produce perspiration and cool itself off. So, endure this in the sense of cutting yourself off from all that. Let the body function on its own, it knows what to do. If it is hungry, it will go and find some food; if it is thirsty, it will go and find something to drink; if it is fatigued, it will go and sleep. Do not get involved in all this, give it its freedom and regain your freedom, firstly by endurance, and secondly by this spirit of sameness.

This spirit of sameness is not indifference in the affairs of the senses, it does not say, 'I am a yogi, heat and cold are both the same'. No, not like that. Heat and cold are the same, to me, but not to the body. The body will react in its own way. Pain and pleasure are the same to me, but not to the body, it will react in its own

way. This 'samam', I do not know if it is right to call it a mental or a psychological state, it is something else, it is of the spirit. It is not a physical state either, it is something free. It is the spirit and when that spirit becomes free, there is peace. That peace is called 'samam'. One who is established in that peace has a completely different view of the world and its affairs, a completely different view of human relationships. That which is firmly established in this 'samam', in this sameness, is completely free of all sin and impurity.

That was shown by Lord Krishna, who took part in the battle without taking part in the battle. He became the charioteer, chauffeur, for one of the warriors. He did his job without aligning himself with this or the other party.

This is very difficult for people like us who are caught up in this trap of 'I' - 'You' relationship. It is very difficult to understand, to be in that conflict and yet not be a part to it at all. I have seen this in the case of my Guru, Swami Sivananda. He was constantly in it but never involved in it.

One example which is given in some scriptures: the sun shines without intending to shine. This is something most important to remember: the sun shines without intending to shine, there is no intention. It is natural for the light to shine, it is natural for the sun to shine, and in this sunlight you do all kinds of things. Some people do what is called 'good', and some people do what is called 'evil'. The sun is not involved in either 'good' or 'evil' trips and yet, the sun does not say, 'I will not participate in the affairs of this world.' The sun is there and without the sun's light we would be all non-existent.

This is the attitude of a wise person who has understood the truth concerning life on this earth. If this is so, who is 'I' and what is 'I' supposed to do? We shall deal with this some other time.

Nelson, British Colombia - May 22th, 1975

Meditation

Some signs which are indistinguishable from emotion are also described as the companions of devotion. You practice devotion when you sing, when you meditate, when you do japa. Even in the practice of what is known as hatha yoga, it is possible for the seeker, for the practitioner to experience certain signs and symptoms which are not distinguishable from emotional states, such as shedding tears or getting goose-pimples, etc. They are symptoms of devotion. However, they are also possible otherwise.

What are emotions and how do they arise? What are feelings and without suppressing them, is it possible for us to be in command, to master them? The devotional signs which are enumerated in some scriptures like shedding tears and body trembling are not within one's control, they are beyond the 'me'. They happen. If they happen, they happen and you cannot do anything about them. Since they are beyond your control, there is nothing that you can do to make them happen, and there is nothing that you can do to make them not happen. Therefore, we must know what is beyond one's control and what are the signs of inner awakening, signs of the spiritual power within which should not be tampered with. If some people have that kind of pre-disposition, they can have it, it is good for them. Others may not have this. It does not mean that it is essential and it does not mean that it is harmful. It does not mean that it is good, nor does it mean that it is undesirable. We are not talking about that.

In ordinary life we are subject to emotional upheavals. We become slaves of feelings, we are overtaken by emotions, overwhelmed by emotions, overpowered by emotions. Someone says something and you flare up. Or, there is the situation where you are tempted. Am I tempted or am I tempting the temptation? This is a difficult question to answer. If there is a cake on the table, is the cake tempting me to eat or am I tempting the cake to jump into my mouth? I do it, and then I blame the cake for it. That is a sign of immaturity. Doing something and then blaming somebody else for it: 'I would not have done this if you had not tempted me to do it', is a sign of immaturity.

Yet, these feelings, these emotions exist within me, I experience them. Can we try to understand this experience called 'emotion'? A strong feeling, whether we call it desire, anger, hate, love, fear, it is all the same. Strangely enough, your psychological theory and the Bhagavad Gita are very close to one another here. Krishna again and again emphatically declares that an enlightened person is not such a rare phenomenon. He says that there are many who have attained enlightenment. Of course, there is a catch. 'Many have attained enlightenment' may not mean that in the present world there are many. It simply means that there have been many. In the two million years of the earth's existence when every 50 years now there is a renewal of 300 billion human beings, 'many have attained' may mean that in a particular generation there may not even have been

one enlightened person. Still, 'many have attained me'. Krishna encourages. He says: 'Do not worry, do not worry, you also will get it, you also will attain enlightenment.'

I shall tell you a true story which happened in the Ashram in Rishikesh. A devotee had asked for a geometrical design, a 'yantra', to be imprinted on a gold plate and sent to her. With that she was hoping to acquire proficiency in music. This is according to some tantra. If you worship that yantra on the gold plate, and repeat a certain mantra for a certain number of days, the tantra says that you will acquire proficiency in music. I had asked a friend of mine, another Swami, to draw the yantra. He brought it back to me and asked what it was for and I explained it to him. He said: 'Ah, that is funny.' He thought that he also could do it - get a gold plate with this yantra inscribed on it, perform the puja, repeat the mantra, which is a mechanical thing, and that would be it. He was a person who had no relationship at all with music. Have you ever heard the expression 'tone-deaf'? He was absolutely tone-deaf. So, he asked me: 'If I do all that, will I also get proficiency in music?' I said, 'of course.' But the Scriptures do not say whether this proficiency will be acquired in this life-time or in some other life-time. Enlightenment is not such a difficult thing. If you do all this, you will attain enlightenment. It may take about three or four thousand years, that's all. How does one become of the same nature as the supreme being?

'Tapas' is burning, not merely austerities, but an inner burning, an inner psychic fire. By the creation of this psychic fire within themselves, many have reached a state of consciousness which is the same as the Cosmic Being, which means: one with the Cosmic Being. And this tapas, this austerity, this psychic fire, is not a mechanical, physical, or psychological affair, but it is its contents, jnana or wisdom. If one enters into this wisdom, into this consciousness, awakens this intelligence and disciplines oneself to remain there, sustaining it all the time, so that it burns up all ignorance within, then that person becomes of the same nature as this Cosmic Being. How does one get there? What are the characteristics? Those persons have extricated themselves, rescued themselves and they are free of themselves. They are free of love, hate and fear. How did they do that? They are constantly leaning on the Cosmic Being, 'they have become of My Nature.'

You look around and you see that this Cosmic Being functions without love, hate and fear. You see that in the trees, in the wind, in the water, there is no hate-fear-love relationship. All that exists in nature functions totally free from love, hate and fear. In order to be free of love, hate and fear I must understand these emotions. Do I know that if I do not love you, I hate you? Do you know of anything else than these two? If I love you, I am afraid, and if I hate you, I am afraid. If I hate you I, am afraid of you and if I love you, I am afraid I may lose you. Do I know how to overcome these, drop these, to free myself from them? In order to free myself from these, I must realize that I am being enslaved all the time by these three. I must be able to look within and see that my own life is tortured by these three: love, hate and fear. This expression occurs in the

'Bhagavad Gita' again and again: ragabhayakrodhah. Raga is not love in the sense of divine love, raga is love as opposite to hate. I love you and, therefore, I hate somebody else. I hate somebody else and, therefore, I love you. Now you must hate that person too. This gives us a common cause and you are my friend. It is that kind of 'love'. Do I know what it is to be free of this? How will I know what it is to be free of this unless I am able to see and to recognize that I am enslaved by this, oppressed by this. Can I know that I am tyrannized by love, hate and fear if I cannot stand a step aside and free myself? It is a vicious circle. I cannot know that I am tyrannized by love, hate and fear if I do not free myself from it. I cannot free myself from it unless I know that I am tyrannized by it.

A girl was suffering from a case of hysteria. They asked a doctor what they should do. The doctor said, 'Get her married and she will be alright.' They went to the parents of some young man and asked them what they thought of their daughter marrying their son. The young man's mother said: 'I hear, that your daughter is suffering from hysteria, as soon as you get this cleared up, our son will marry her. So, unless the hysteria goes, she cannot get married, and unless she gets married, the hysteria will not go. What does one do? Therefore, one practices meditation.

For the time being one learns to recognize the tyranny of emotions. One learns to recognize how the mind is constantly churned by its emotions. There is a lot in common between Sanskrit and English. Your God of Love is called 'Cupid'. You know why? He makes everybody stupid. The same meaning is derived from the sanskrit equivalent, 'stupid' is called 'manmakai' in sanskrit. What is 'manmata'? 'Matana' means 'to churn', 'ma' means 'mind', that which is able to churn your mind and make you stupid. The mind is constantly being churned by all these emotions. Can I - for a short time - experience this freedom? Can I experience also at the same time what it is to be tyrannized by all these emotions? Can I, just for a moment, by practicing what you call 'meditation' - the morning and the evening meditation is not the total answer, it is perhaps not even meditation but only an attempt at meditation, a vague, ineffective type of attempt - discover, that it can help me if I use it merely as a key? It is not the hall, it is not even the door, it is just a key. That meditation exercise is nothing more than a key. But I can learn to use it, and if I learn it, I can unlock this inner chamber to see what that freedom is, how to rescue myself, free myself from the tyranny of love, hate and fear. We take the same technique that we have been discussing for the past three weeks. I take a mantra and I take an image and approach this problem in two directions: (1) by tracing the mantra to its root, by which I discover what the mind is. I discover how the senses function, I discover how the mind functions; (2) by using the figure or imagining some kind of Divine Presence, using a symbol, I learn what it is to expand, to enter into it.

At present I have hypnotized myself into thinking that I am this body, that I live in this body, that every cell of this body is somehow related to 'me'. When you pinch your knee you say: 'I am being pinched, it hurts me.' You do not say: 'My knee is being pinched.' It is a funny relationship. Whatever happens to some part of the body is 'happening to me'. This is self-hypnosis. Right from childhood I

have hypnotized myself that it is not only my finger, but that it is 'me', so that if you stick a pin in there, I say, 'I am hurt.'

How do I de-hypnotize myself? People have said that meditation is self-hypnosis. No. This, our thinking, that is self-hypnosis. It is self-hypnosis to think that I am this body, that I am related to this body, that I am bound to this body and that whatever happens to this body happens to 'me'. That is self-hypnosis. Meditation is the method of de-hypnotization. I de-hypnotize myself by contemplating the Divine Presence and entering into It, by making the Divine Presence fill my whole being so that at one stage I think: 'No, not I, there is no 'I' here at all. It is He, it is the Divine that dwells in this. The Divine dwells everywhere. If God is omnipresent, He dwells here also.'

Where is the 'I' now? There is no 'I'. We can pull out everything one by one, there is nothing called the 'ego-sense' at all. This is your nose, these are your ears, this is your hair, neck, throat, arms, legs, heart, liver, take them one by one and throw them away. Where is it, that said 'I' in this body? You cannot dissect an organ called 'I', or a soul. What is 'soul'? We all have two soles and they may be the only ones I have. The 'soul' that the philosophers speak of may be a cell. That cell does not belong to you, it belongs to this Cosmic Being. You may be one cell in the body of this Cosmic Being and nothing more than that. I do not know where it is and what it is. Now and for all time to come I am a cell in this Cosmic Being, and so are you, each one of you. If you can hold that awareness for some time, then you know what it is to be free of love, hate and fear. There exists a relationship of identity - what 'I is', 'you is'. Then there is no problem. Immediately all this love, hate and fear take leave of you. Thus, meditation leads me to the discovery of this love, hate and fear within. What are these emotions here and how do they arise?

What I am going to tell you now is not something strange. I believe one great yogi who lived at the beginning of this century practiced this. He was a brilliant man, a mathematician. He had lost his father very early in life and was brought up by his mother who was very poor. He won a scholarship and went to college. All the other students came from fairly wealthy families and would bring their lunch basket, except this boy who had not much to eat. One day he took a little money from his mother and bought himself an apple. Apples were quite expensive in those days and he never had been able to afford one; so, now he bought himself an apple. He brought it home and there was such a craving in his mind and he found out, that as long as this craving persisted, he could not concentrate on his studies. Whenever he opened a book, he did not see the figures therein, but he saw only the apple. It was haunting him. He looked at it, he played with it and at night, when he was going to study and do his homework, he placed it on the table, looked in a mirror and said: 'There is the apple, now study, do your homework, the apple is there.' Somehow he persuaded himself that since the apple was there he could now do his homework and eat the apple afterwards. He finished his homework, again looked in the mirror and said: 'You will not have this apple.' He took it and threw it far away. Now, can you, in the same way, get hold of your candy-bar or your chocolate cake, put it on the table and watch what is happening

now? There is that stuff, sitting on the table, deep-brown and the light-waves enter the eye-balls and go to the visual centre of the brain. Also, I do not have to see it, a certain fragrance, aroma, enters my nostrils and goes from there into the olfactory centre of the brain.

Now, from here on, please join with me and see how this thing works, the brown stuff enters the eyes, the smell enters the nose, where and how does it become candy or cake? In other words, even if you were to take it and put a piece into your mouth, it has a certain taste, right? It has a certain form, it has a certain smell, it has a certain taste - but where does it become candy or cake? How are these sensory impulses integrated and interpreted into a candy-bar or cake? Once they are interpreted into what is called a candy-bar or a cake, which means linked to a memory, that 'something', then say: 'Ah, it is lovely, I like it.' Remember, you are watching this. There stands this deadly, muggy, clay-like stuff - it could just as well be clay with colour and some sugar around it. The sensory stimulus reaches the brain where all the stimuli are coordinated and it picks up the appropriate response from the memory bank - 'Ah, it is cake'. Then comes in the 'I like it'. 'Now, if you are in some kind of trouble, diabetes, or whatever it is and the doctor has strictly warned you: 'One more piece of cake, one more candy-bar and you go straight to the undertaker, do not come to me.' In that case, do you look at the brown stuff and say: 'Why not, have another bite?' You get the point, do you not?

So, first there is the coordination of the sensory impulse, stimuli, and then the linking of it with memory and then it becomes 'cake'. We are only talking theory, but can you see this, can you experience this for yourself? Can you sit in front of that silly cake and watch yourself and see where this thought arise: Where does the thought 'this is cake' arise? Where does the name, the word, the interpretation that this is cake or candy-bar happen? You continue to watch yourself. This sensory stimulus and the linking with the memory demanded some amount of energy and then a colossal thing jumps up: 'I like it.' At that moment you have lost all control of yourself. When that happens you are lost.

Can you, by intelligent practice, re-arrive at that stage where you can see this, recognize it, which means that it was there before and you linked the present with the past, you recognize, therefore, that this is cake. There is no harm at all in this. If you watch very closely, all this seems to happen in the head, the seeing and the recognition. Then, something suddenly from the chest, from the heart, leaps up like a frog and you become totally blind. This is an extra movement of energy, nothing more. Can you see this happen within yourself? When it is still in the process of building up, can you examine it? There is obviously no brain in the chest. How do you understand an emotion?

Would you like to try the following as we are going on now. You are looking at me and you are listening. What is it that listens to me? Your ears and your brain. Can you now let your attention flow down from the head to the heart and give yourself the feeling that you are listening with the heart and not with the brain? Keep your eyes open. I want you to get this very clear. First, you are merely looking, without

any awareness whatsoever. Then you begin to wonder: how do I listen to this fellow, how do I look at him? Where does 'listening' happen, where does 'seeing' happen? When you realize that all this happens in your head while you are doing that, can you quietly shift your attention from the brain to the heart and continue to listen and continue to see? It is no longer your brain that sees, but your heart. It is no longer your brain that interprets, but your heart interprets. Can you learn to think with the heart, see with the heart, listen with the heart? Then you have solved the problem - immediately. The commotion stops. You have gone straight to the root of the problem. You are seeing with your heart. There is no conflict between the head and the heart. The heart does not leap like a frog and upset your balance. It remains steady. You are now functioning on two levels at the same time - on the intellectual level and on the heart level. If you are able to do that, then there is only one more step to take.

As you are going on doing that - one little swallowing - and shift the attention to the solar plexus, then the whole thing happens from there. You think with your solar plexus, you feel with your solar plexus, because there is the source of energy. All that thinking and feeling etc. happens on account of the movement of energy. If the whole attention is shifted to the solar plexus and thinking, feeling etc. all happen there, then the movement of energy is sensible and wise. There is no wild movement of energy but wisdom, feeling and movement of energy, all these together happen at the same place, your solar plexus.

From there on there is no confusion. The moment there is turmoil, whether it is mental, psychological or emotional, you merely push it down to the solar plexus and you are safe. It is the solar plexus that gives you the energy for all this, and if the attention, your wisdom, your consciousness, your intelligence is directed there, to the source of all energy - which means the centre of Ganesha - where all your wisdom, your emotion, your devotion, the movement of energy are brought together, this body, this personality, this mind will function in tune with this Cosmic Being. There is no discrepancy, there is no distance, there is no space between all these and, therefore, there is the absence of hypocrisy. Then that, which sustains the entire universe and therefore this body and this mind and this personality, knows what should happen. This body, this personality, this mind will function in tune with this Cosmic Being without one wrong note, without mental confusion, without emotional upheaval.

Then your whole life becomes meditation. The brain functions as it should function. The heart functions, the emotions function. The supply, the source of the energy, which makes all these things possible, is controlled by intelligence and wisdom. From there on there is no blind action at all. Action becomes wisdom. It is not wise action, but action itself becomes wisdom. You do not go around doing something funny and then say: 'My God, why did I do it.' Whatever has to happen, happens, and life flows on most beautifully. You still may shed a few tears, you still will love, and you may still raise your family, you do whatever you have to do - but without love, hate or fear, one with the Cosmic Being, without a division.

Love, hate or fear creates a division between you and me. It will be a beautiful relationship, without attachments and without problems. There is freedom, and in that freedom only can one experience what love is in truth, not otherwise. In that freedom, there is love. That love is totally different from the love that divides. This is love that unites. The heart is purified and becomes of the same nature as the Cosmic Being.

Nelson, British Colombia - May 29th, 1975

Mantra

Please remember, what we are talking about is only an exercise, it is not meditation. Meditation cannot be taught, meditation cannot be learned, it is the total cessation of all effort which means complete absence of will, the total and complete absence of 'self'. This is when meditation happens. It is like sleep. When I enter into sleep without falling asleep it means, that the self and the will drop away. That is meditation which cannot be learned, which cannot be described, which cannot be written about and which cannot be spoken about.

If all these things are thrown away, what remains is an exercise in meditation, conducive to meditation, an exercise which may lead to meditation. The will has to be silent or, even if it operates, it is not related to the 'me'. We will try another approach to it, how to deal with thought, emotion and sensation. This is a simple, orthodox technique and the technique itself is like chewing. You can chew a gum, some nice apple or you can chew your own mouth. Each one has its own result. Thus, a technique is like chewing. It is what you put into it that really matters. The technique itself does not matter and has no value.

In the most popular and what one might call the most orthodox technique you use a mantra. What is a mantra? Mantra literally means 'a saviour'. The meaning of the word 'mantra' is: think of me, I will save you. That is what it really means. It is a saviour. Do not ask me who is saved from whom, that again has to be found out. 'That which redeems when contemplated and reflected.'

The way the mantra is used depends entirely upon what you want to put into it and what you want to draw out of it. If you merely want deep relaxation - 'I am a very nervous person, can you help me?' Yes. Repeat merely 'Om Namah Sivaya'. If your hand is shaking, I give you a mala. If both your hands are shaking, I give you a pair of clappers - 'Om Namah Sivaya'. If your legs also shake, get up and dance. So, if you merely want a mantra for deep relaxation, go ahead. If you are unable to sleep, a mantra is usually given. When I mention the word 'mantra' you are already yawning. It has a remarkable effect of putting people to sleep, especially when you want to keep awake and repeat the mantra. Tell yourself that you are going to repeat the mantra for the next half hour, which is not long, and that you will sit up straight. Exactly within less than five minutes you are fast asleep. Instead of sitting and gossiping you should do something else, gaze at the sky, if you cannot sleep and you do not know what it is to sleep. So, if that is your idea, please go ahead. You do not have to understand anything, just pick up a mala or a rosary. If you do not use the mala while repeating the mantra, then it is possible that the mind will start to think of something pleasant and you may not sleep. If you are using a mantra in order to go to sleep, take a mala, because the mala will pin your mind on to the mantra and that will put you to sleep. It has got an enormous number of uses.

If you want to acquire more psychic powers, then do this. You will acquire more psychic powers when you repeat the mantra while you are standing on your, or standing on one leg. These are all practices which have been proved to be effective. There was a yogi who stood on one leg up for 10,000 years and he had the power to burn the whole world. You may not be able to stand for 10,000 years, only for 5 minutes or 10 and, therefore, you may not be able to burn the whole world, but you may be able to light a cigarette. If you want to acquire some psychic powers with the use of a mantra, you can see that this is also possible.

There are also other possibilities. When you repeat a mantra while you are sick - you have for example a stomach pain - will that pain go away? No, because while repeating 'Om Namah Sivaya' - 'Oh! This pain', how can the pain go away? You are literally meditating on the stomach pain, you are invoking the Lord's blessings on that pain, so it will not go. But what will go is your fear of dying of cancer, that will go away because the person whom you had asked to give you the mantra had told you that it is a healing mantra and that it will save you. Since you have that much faith in the person who gave you the mantra, you continue the mantra and the fear that you had before you picked up the mala, that you may die of cancer, that fear is gone. You have no time to think of all these thoughts now, you are too busy repeating the mantra. What remains is merely the pain and that is a tremendous progress. Before you did that you were crazy, entertaining all kind of funny notions, funny ideas, funny fears. Now all those fears are taken care of by the mantra. After repeating the mantra for half an hour, you feel better and you can, if necessary, go to the nearest doctor and he will fix it. You are no longer afraid of dying, that's all. The imaginary fear is taken care of, and the imaginary disease is taken care of. That is what a mantra will definitely do for you. It will also give you God's Grace and reduce the cholic pain, but that needs a little more devotion, a little more intensity.

If I am poor I can also use the mantra to get some money. All that is possible. It will work in various ways. If you go to India you go to the river because it is very hot and humid and you repeat your mantra at the beach. You take your mala 'Om Namah Sivaya' - 'I need some money', and it may be that some people pass by and see this holy person sitting there, eyes closed and doing japa and they may drop some money beside him. By evening he may have several dollars. That is enough. The problem is solved. All these things are possible. I repeat, just like in the case of illness, if you repeat your mantra with great devotion, it is possible that God's Healing Grace may descend upon you and take your pains away. In the same way, God's Grace may descend upon you and enable you to find a treasure. All this is possible.

If I am not interested in any of these, knowing that all these are temporary result, I will want to know if it is possible, with the help of the mantra, to overcome some thing which is not so temporary. What is not so temporary? Me. I was there before the illness, and I was there after the sickness left me. I was there before the need arose, I felt the need, after the need was fulfilled I still continue to be. It is the 'I', the 'self', which suffers again and again and again, that seeks again and again,

that craves again and again. If all this is somehow understood and resolved then it is possible that the craving will not rise again, it is possible that the suffering will not arise again, it is possible that this sorrow will not arise again.

I come back to sleep. Sleep is a marvelous thing. It teaches us that where the 'self' is absent, where the ego-sense is absent, there is no desire, no craving, no pain, and no sorrow. How do I reach that state without going off to sleep? The Holy Ones say: 'Use your mantra, the same mantra which you used in order to fall asleep, now use it in order not to fall asleep.' But in order to overcome the self, one must go beyond the self. How does one use the mantra for that purpose? How do one use the mantra in order to discover the Self? 'Discover' means just that. You know, what 'discover' means? Columbus discovered America. I do not know why you say that, it was already there, what do you mean by 'he discovered it'? 'Discover' is quite simple: take the lid off, open the cover. 'Discover' does not mean finding something which does not exist. 'Discover' means, whatever is covered, take the lid off.

When you see a box you jolly well know that there is something in it, even if that something is space, emptiness. Discover it. That there is something in it, that much faith is there. But at the same time I do not know what it is. Unless that attitude is adopted, your meditation is not meditation. I must use the mantra to 'discover' the 'Self'. The 'Self' is there because this here is the cover, I can see that. But what is in it? When I take the lid off, there is something in it, there must be something in it. How do I know? Because I see the cover. When I see this cover, it must and it does contain something in it. It may be emptiness, it may be air, I do not know, I do not know anything. I am not anticipating anything, I am not hoping to find something, I am not expecting to find something, I am not afraid to find something, nothing whatsoever. Whatever it is, I am prepared to discover and to see. I see the cover and I know that when the cover is lifted that something will be there. I have that faith. But, at the same time, a nagging doubt, a curiosity, whatever you may call it, is being felt. I may find emptiness, or I may find something dangerous. So, one must have tremendous curiosity, tremendous inquisitiveness and tremendous faith. Do not anticipate anything. If the mind anticipates that 'I am going to see God', the moment you enter into meditation you will see God.

You created that God yourself, it is your own thought and like a cannibal, worse than that, you are eating your own off-spring that you produced. There is no harm in it, it is relaxing and you can go to sleep. Once again, if you want to have a vision of God - 'Om Namah Sivaya', 'Om Nama Sivaya', 'Oh, how beautiful, long beard, lovely hair, third eye open', if you want to see, see, it is good, very good.

But, if you approach the whole problem with two things: faith, intense faith, not belief, which is something entirely different - in faith you know that there is something. I do not know what it is, but there is something. The second important thing is that you must have a keen inquisitiveness. The Holy Ones say that you can do this with the help of the mantra. The mantra will help you to

discover the Self, take the lid off. The mantra itself will not do, but it will help you.

'Mananat' means when the mantra is reflected - not you. It will work. Can you see this? You have all seen reflections. Those who shave and do their hair, they are all bound to see a reflection. Where does one see the reflection? In a mirror. In order to see your own beautiful face reflected in the mirror what are the necessary conditions? There should not be a film of dust on it. If there is, the face cannot be seen. So, you wipe the mirror. As you are wiping it, it starts dangling since it is suspended from the ceiling. So, you must make it steady otherwise you cannot see the reflection in the mirror properly. Make it steady, wipe it clean. Then one more thing, the mirror itself should neither be broken nor distorted. When these three conditions are taken care of, then that mirror will reflect perfectly. In the same way, for the mantra to be reflected, the mind should be clean, free from dust, free from cravings, free from disturbing, distracting and destructive thoughts for the time being. I do not say that you should be that forever and ever. That will happen when you have discovered what is on the other side of the 'self'. The whole life will become orderly and virtuous, it will happen.

The virtue that you make happen is vice. Strange, isn't it? 'I want to be pure, I want to be good, I want to be holy', always this 'I want'. It does not work. You have tried it, it does not work. Real virtue 'happens'. But for the time being, for the sake of this exercise, I want the mind to be free of all impure thoughts, of all distracting and destructive thoughts. I want the mind to be steady. Also, I do not want any perversion to creep in. Perversion is when I anticipate what the result is going to be.

Without any of these, there is this mirror inside, clean and steady, and such a mind is made to repeat the mantra, such a mind is made to reflect it. How does it reflect? Naturally the mind is repeating the mantra also. If I am mentally repeating 'Om Namah Sivaya', at the same time I can see the mantra reflected there. I can see the mantra, and I can hear the mantra. Mentally I am repeating the mantra, and at the same time I am hearing the mantra, that is the reflection. This is possible. Otherwise, how do you know that you are repeating the mantra? In order to be aware that I am mentally repeating the mantra, I must also inwardly hear it. Can you, for just a couple of minutes now, try the following: I ask myself 'am I really repeating the mantra'; you have an inward feeling, at that time, that 'I am repeating this mantra.' When you ask, 'Can I listen to the repetition of the mantra within myself?', you become the hearer, the listener of that mantra.

Let us now shift from one position to the other. Now I am repeating the mantra mentally, now again I am listening to it. Now I am coming back to saying the mantra, now I am the inner ear, hearing the mantra. Now I am saying it - now I am hearing it. Does it not occur to you, 'Am I one or two? Are there several people inside, one saying the mantra and the other hearing the mantra and the other overseeing the whole operation, how come there is this division?' I am watching

all this, I am aware of all this, the Self is aware of this. It is the Self that is repeating the mantra, it is the Self that is listening to the mantra, it is the Self that desires to repeat the mantra, it is the Self that desires to listen to the mantra. 'How come there is such a lot of division within myself? Am I one or two or three or four or five or a hundred?' When you ask yourself this question, slowly the gap is getting shorter and shorter and shorter - and eventually like a flash you see, 'I thought it was 'me', and the 'me' suddenly exploded and, and ...' When the 'me' has suddenly exploded, what remains afterwards is unknown, unknowable.

Can the mantra be used in this manner? Can the mantra be used purely, simply without any great intellectualism, without even understanding the dictionary meaning, the literal meaning or whatever meaning has been ascribed to it so far? Can the mantra be used in such a way that one looks into it directly? Who is repeating the mantra, or who is listening to the mantra, and who is aware of all this? That is the Self. Can I become aware of the Self? Who is the 'I' that becomes aware of the Self? Is the Self one or two? It is the same thing.

When you are doing that, you are literally, actually, factually seeing the division that thinking creates within yourself. That is not an illusion, it is there. The desire to experience, the desire to become aware, the desire to know, the desire to think, that itself is the division, that itself is the cover. It may take 15 seconds or 50,000 years, that is not very important. For, once you have seen the division within yourself - what is time?

Time is another product of the same division. The time taken by thought to travel from this to that is time, isn't it? So, why am I bothered about time? Let it take thousands of years or let it take a few minutes, I only know that this is a fact, that this is true and that we are not dealing with hallucinations. This is a direct experience and everyone is capable of doing this. There is no magic here at all. I am repeating the mantra and I am able to listen to it, am I one or two? When I ask that question, I stand on the roof, suspended upside down and I am able to look at these two phenomena within. One is the repeats of the mantra and the other is the listener and I am suspended on the roof; so, there are three. You are repeating the mantra mentally and next you ask yourself, 'Am I repeating the mantra or am I sleeping?' That moment you begin to listen to the mantra, because it is when you listen that you are sure that you are repeating the mantra.

Then you play around. Once you repeat the mantra, you are merely shifting your attention, and when you think, 'Ah, I am repeating the mantra', then you are repeating it. When you ask, 'Am I repeating the mantra?', then you are listening. Then there is the puzzle, 'am I one or two?' Then suddenly you seem to withdraw, you seem to step back from both these fellows - one says the mantra, the other listens to the mantra, but you seem to step back and watch both these happenings, which means that I am three. 'My God, I am going out of my mind, there are three in me.' When you do this, you are four, the observer, the repeater of the mantra, the listener of the mantra, and you stand behind as the fourth one.

Some people get frightened because they think they are losing their mind, something is happening. Without any such irrational and stupid fear, knowing that all this is the Self, I am not trying to do anything. In sleep there was no gap between the sleeper and sleep. Therefore, there was no awareness of even the sleep. Awareness, experience demands space. The finger can touch my face, it cannot touch itself. Space is needed, duality is needed in order to create this experience. In sleep there is no such duality and, therefore, there is no such experience in sleep.

It is possible, therefore, to abolish this gap, this division between the experiencer and the experience. I am trying to see what creates this division, this gap, when I am repeating the mantra. I can hear it, and I know I am repeating it and I am standing there. What is this gap? What is this division? What is this space within myself? Then one discovers that the space is created and maintained by thought, by thoughts flowing in this direction. I think I am repeating the mantra, I think I am listening to the mantra. I am there all the time, trying to play a game within myself, dividing myself into all these three, playing all these three roles together. When these three come together, when this distance is abolished, then the condition, which prevailed in sleep, prevails now, but you are not sleeping. While remaining awake, you have reproduced exactly the same condition which prevailed in sleep where there was no psychological distance, no psychological division within you at all. At that moment, on account of the intensity of concentration, the self which was covering whatever truth lies hidden there underneath it, is not only lifted, not only discovered, but destroyed. The cover is destroyed.

When the self is destroyed, what lies within it? When the 'I' is destroyed, what lies within it? That is permanent, that is eternal, indescribable, not knowable by mind, by thought or by intellect. You can call it God, whatever you like, that is your business. Once you have discovered it, then it is your business to call it what you will. However, you may not wish to call it anything at all, it is there, why should I call it something?

If this line of action is adopted, the mantra can be of tremendous use. It is a tremendous help. Perhaps it is not even necessary to know the dictionary meaning of the mantra. If you want to know, that is alright, too. Nothing is needed in this, nothing at all. You can pick up any mantra you like, any sound, whatever you want. Even 'I am' or 'Om', provided this technique is adopted. The technique leaves you at a crucial point, at the cross-roads. Beyond that, the technique cannot take you. Many people are anti-technique. Without a technique, I may not be able to get to these cross-roads. There have been some who were able to get to that point, or even get beyond that point without the help of any technique, without the help of a mantra. They are wonderful and if you think you belong to that group, God bless you. I am not jealous at all. But if you think that that approach is a bit too difficult for you and that you need some help, then take a mantra. It will certainly help you. It will lay before you the fact that within you there is a division which is produced by the self, the ego-sense. When that is

eliminated and abolished, then there is enlightenment.

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The ego-sense

In order to resolve the conflict which we believe is in the world, the conflict within must be dealt with. When we look at where this conflict lies within oneself and how it arises we realize, that it is the ego-sense that causes it. If we examine the nature of the ego-sense it becomes vaguely clear, vaguely because it is the ego-sense that looks at the ego-sense. It becomes vaguely clear that it is the ego-sense itself that is creating the conflict - it is part of the Cosmos. There is a feeling 'I am' in each one of us which is an unavoidable reality, the ego-sense is there, but it seems to assume powers which it does not possess, it seems to arrogate to itself a role which is not properly its own. This is the only thing which needs to be very clearly understood. No one denies your existence. No one denies the existence of the world. No one denies the waves and ripples on the lake, but there is confusion.

The eyes are meant to see and as long as they see, there is no problem at all. But the eyes that see, do they judge, do they also produce value-judgments? No, the eyes merely see and there is no harm in their seeing. But when either the eyes or the mind, the brain behind the eyes, judge something, conflict is unavoidable. The brain behind the eyes can think, let it go on thinking, there is no harm. Where and how does one of these - either the ego-sense or the mind or the senses - indulge in judging? It is said in the Bible in two words, 'Judge not.' If only people had listened to these two words, listened not with their ears but with their heart and their soul, the world would be so much better, it would be totally different. People still would die, but we would not have the privilege of killing them. People come into being and they die. I am born and I am about to die. You would not be so stupid as to kill me.

'Judge not.' Where does this judgment happen? The ego-sense, arrogating to itself the status of a judge, the ego-sense, arrogating to itself the status of a doer, 'I am doing this.' The ego-sense, arrogating to itself the status of an experiencer, 'I am the one who is experiencing this, not my skin.' When it blows cold, you do not say, 'The skin complains that it is cold.' You say instead, 'I am shivering.' 'I am not shivering at all. When someone throws something at this body, I say, 'I am hurt.' 'I am not hurt at all. Somebody is hitting this body, some piece of flesh, it is not so important.

I shall give you the absolute literal translation of a couple of verses. While seeing, while hearing, while touching, while smelling, while closing and opening the eyes, while holding and while letting go, while enjoying, while suffering, the yogi thinks, 'I do nothing.'

The translation is defective, the expression is probably defective or, we have not understood what 'thinking' means. As long as the feeling is there in me that I am sitting here and talking, can I think that I am not talking? What does this mean?

The whole translation has to be read in a different way, 'While all these actions take place, or happen, the yogi does not entertain the thought that he does anything.'

I cannot sit here and say, 'I think I do not speak.' Having introduced this fallacy, I continue to say, 'God speaks through me.' Even then, this 'me' is somehow of tremendous importance. It is much more humble to say, 'I am speaking.' At least, there would be the freedom of the listener to say, 'It is all nonsense - this fellow is talking nonsense.' But when I say, 'I am not speaking the Lord speaketh through me,' then the listener is frightened to say openly, 'You are talking nonsense,' because then he is fearful that he is blaspheming against God, Who is the real speaker. All this does not work, it has all been tried.

While all these things happen, the yogi does not think 'I am doing.' What does he think? He does not think, thinking happens. The 'I', the ego-sense itself is a thought, is the first thought. The mind throws up the first thought and that first thought is the 'I' thought, ego-thought, ego-sense thought and it stays as a point of reference for the other thoughts. It stays as a locomotive which drives the other thoughts. All these things are merely happening, the 'I' does nothing. But the 'I' does nothing is not to be understood in the sense that 'I' do nothing.' If you make it the 3rd person, it makes more sense, so that the action in itself is neutral, neither good nor bad, neither need to be promoted nor prevented. The yogi does not think he feels, knows, realizes - use any word you like, and please keep changing it. Keep changing the expression so that you are not fixed to it, not caught in it, and do not make an image of it. If you use the translation 'think', please realize that you and I know precious little about what 'thinking' means. That is the problem.

While all these things take place, happen, there is the consciousness within the yogi that it is not the ego-sense that is doing all this. The eyes are open, and when the eyes are open, they see, sight being associated with light. When sight and light come together, there is seeing. That is all. It is inevitable. When the ear and sound come together, there is hearing. That is inevitable. When the mouth opens and wind blows out through the vocal chords, there is speaking, inevitable.

The 'I' is there, the 'I' was the first thought and all the wagons run behind this locomotive, it is inevitable. Even attraction and repulsion are in nature, but not in the way we think they are. Can all these perform their own, legitimate functions without overlapping, without arrogating the functions of another?

Stick to your duty. But I do not know what my duty is except when I cross the border and they levy some customs duty. But, what is my duty? I do not know. The concept of 'duty' has also some arrogance in it. 'It is my duty to do this.' If you do not exist, that duty will be done by somebody else with pleasure, great love and affection. When someone comes and says, 'You know, Swamiji, I am your disciple and it is my duty', please, do not do it. Or someone comes and says, 'You know, Swami, you are my Guru and it is my duty to serve you', I always feel

like saying, 'Please, do not do it, I am quite happy.' When you say these things, watch your heart, it is crying and weeping, 'Oh, it is my duty, it is my duty'. Why do you not do it with pleasure? If you are doing it with love and great affection, you do not want to say that it is your 'duty', that you are doing it because it is your 'duty'. No, there must be delight. In that delight, there is no duty, there is no relationship at all. In that feeling 'it is my duty' there is a duality, there is an arrogance.

It is that arrogance that judges, passes value judgment, and that is the origin of all conflict. The moment you indulge in value judgment, there conflict, the conflict being the direct result of value judgment. That is inevitable, just as when this shirt is thrown into the lake it becomes wet. Wherever there is value judgment there must be conflict, these two are inseparable companions. Do not try to separate them. Whether it is husband, wife, friend, Guru, disciple, employer, employee, whatever it is, the moment you make value judgments, you are in conflict.

I was playing with a child in Spokane. She said something very beautiful, 'Nothing in the world has only one side, everything has got two sides.' So, if you are saying that this is good, you are implying that the other thing is not good. You cannot have anything with only one side. Everything has got two sides. On one side is written, 'Value judgment', turn it over and it says, 'Conflict.'

I must see that the value-judgment is untrue and false. Drop it. Whatever happens, happens. It is when this truth is not understood that you and I, based on our own fictitious value-judgment resolve: 'I will do this' or 'I will not do this.' Those who were here during the first of these series will remember the story - the hero had collapsed on the battle-field and that is how the teaching came to be given. He had said, 'I do not want to fight.' This seems to be marvelous, great, glorious, highly righteous. Krishna's objection was not that he should fight. That was not the idea. Krishna merely pointed out, 'It is not up to you to say 'I will' or 'I will not'.'

Things happen in this world. In this universe, everything is active, dynamic, everything is in motion. Whatever lives is active. You live and you are active. The tape-recorder is also active, it is moving. But it does not say, 'Ha, look how nicely I am moving.' Maybe it is nearer to God than you and I because it is able to remember and record faithfully whatever is said without perversion. This entire universe is vibrant with energy which is inherent in the universe, in the cosmos and the whole universe is filled with intelligence which is inherent in the cosmos, cosmic intelligence. How silly for a little mosquito to jump up and say, 'I am doing this.' Do not say that. Do not let this thought even arise, do not let this feeling arise. Know that such thoughts and feelings are false. All problems arise with the thought, 'I am doing this', the 'I' arrogating to itself the role of a doer, the role of a speaker, the role of a listener. The 'I' is not there at all. When that is seen, you are free, at once, immediately free. 'Oh, I see, I am not the doer, that's ok'. I won't do anything. If I am not the doer, why should I sit here and talk? If

God does everything, let God come here and do the talking.

That one-sided philosophy is one-sided, not philosophy, because on the other side is written: 'Ignorance'. Thus, at the end of the 'Bhagavad Gita', Krishna gives another slap, 'If you think and say, on account of the false ego-sense, the self-arrogating ego sense, 'Oh well, either it is unrighteous to fight or, if it is God's Will that this battle should go on, let Him come and fight, I will not do it', that is foolishness. You have no business to say, 'I will' and you have no business to say, 'I will not.' Your only business is to see that all these are in their proper places. The brain is still in the head and it can go on functioning. The eyes are there and they can go on seeing. The ears can go on listening. Let each one perform its own allotted task, without the self-arrogating ego assuming that 'I am the doer.' That is all. When you take care of this, then the rest is take care of. That is wisdom, that is self-knowledge.

How is this being done? You have heard of the famous four main branches of yoga: karma yoga, bhakti yoga, raja yoga, jnana yoga. All these yogas are given in the Bhagavad Gita. On the dynamic level, the plane of action, which is karma yoga, I have no problem. Let's say I am unemployed and sick and she is a nurse. She is confronted with sickness day-in and day-out. That is on the plane of active living. On the plane of active living one who understands this mystery, is alive. It would be wrong to say 'he lives', he is alive. 'I' do not live, but there is life, and that life has to go on. Life means activity and activity continues. If there is this ego-sense, if there is this feeling 'I am alive', let that feeling promote activity. There is energy in the brain, there is energy in the hands, let it all function. However, do not let there be any motivation. After all, what is motivation? Nobody works and says, 'I want to be unhappy and miserable.' The motivation is always some kind of pleasure, enjoyment, profit. Can that motivation be removed? Can you realize that, whether there is motivation or not, you are still going to function, the body is still going to function. Whether I am going to succeed or fail, life goes on. Whether I am going to be healthy or sick, life goes on, the body continues to live, let it live. So, drop all motivation, knowing that with or without motivation, life will go on. You may not have any motivation, digestion goes on. You may not have any interest in life, but the heart continues to pump.

Nothing would stop because you would have no motivation. I can live for another 50 years like an imbecile, but life will still go on. Let things happen without any motivation. Does that suggest to you that it is better to be idle, which means, since everybody works for profit or for pleasure and since I am not supposed to entertain any motivation for profit or pleasure, that I shouldn't do anything? Or, you all know these famous voluntary workers, these so-called honorary social workers. They are neither honoured nor social nor do they work, none of these. Except when there is a press conference or some kind of tv-crew. Usually they attend the reception but the dishwashing is left to somebody else, the paid employees. Unless there is motivation, say the psychologists, there is no incentive. You have become so lazy that you need some kind of goad. Instead of calling it an incentive, you call it a whip or a goad. I think we should be ashamed

of all that.

'Why shouldn't I do the work? I am alive'. Why must there be a carrot in front, as if I were a donkey, looking for a carrot? Isn't it glorious enough that I am alive and that I can do something? Must I have a carrot on top of it? That again is the action of the self-arrogating ego. You have seen this in the case of immature adolescents, not babies, not mature adults, but immature little children. You ask the child, 'Why do not you study your lesson?' 'I do not want to study.' 'Ok., I give you a chocolate.' 'Alright, I will study.' Incentive. Or, the child says, 'I want a chocolate.' You say, 'No.' 'Well, then I will not study.' Immature, terribly immature behaviour.

To work for reward is the most demeaning attitude in life. It does not mean that I have done my work and now I want to go to a good restaurant and eat. That is not the idea, or is that my goal? Is that my motivation? Am I living in order to achieve pleasure or profit? Am I doing whatever I am doing in order to achieve pleasure or profit? If that is the motivation, then the person is not mature at all but terribly immature. Such behaviour is also the action of the self-arrogating ego. It says, 'I am doing this, I am doing this with this motivation, and if this motivation is taken out, then I will not do it.'

Can the motivation be dropped and the lethargy that follows the dropping of the motivation also be avoided? Then the energy that is bubbling in that body, in that mind, functions all the more brilliantly because you are not anxious. There is no anxiety, there is no fear, there is no ambition and no inhibition. The energy is free to express itself. That is karma yoga. Karma yoga avoids the self-arrogating ego-sense from assuming a role which is not lawfully its role. There is also an emotional involvement in this. This emotional involvement in the case of the yogi becomes devotion.

'He, that Yogi, on the plane of his own emotions or love or devotion, he enters into Me.' How does the yogi lose the self-arrogating ego-sense? He realizes that 'I' is not independent of everything else, 'I' is not independent of all this, it is part of all that. So, he does not push God into his heart, he does not try to push the Infinite into a little, finite vessel, but he offers himself into it - his mind, his heart, are entered into the Cosmic Being or God, so that he is still there, the 'I' is still there, the Jiva is still there, the individuality may still be there, as a cell in the Cosmic Being, which is called the soul.

The soul is a cell in the Cosmic Being, not in the sense of 'I am an individual as opposed to Him'; no, we are both cells in the Cosmic Body. Not as the 'you' and 'I' stuff, but as one indivisible thing, one indivisible reality. Thereby the devotee overcomes the problem of division, the self-arrogating nature of the ego-sense.

The great yogi who looks at his nose or the third eye - the eye of wisdom - and who practices meditation, what does he do? Meditation is practiced and you may even choose to have a focal point within yourself, meaning within your body, your

heart, your eye-brow centre. All this may be necessary as a training, and even if you are going to discover the existence of a divine ground within yourself, even if that is suggested as a healthy practice, it is only because that is the nearest point at which you can touch it. God or the Reality is omnipresent. Being omnipresent it is available to me closest here, in my heart, within me. That which is omnipresent here, right here, close to me.

I meditate. I turn the gaze within, direct my attention within. Meditating, I cross the ego-sense and suddenly I feel - 'Oh, That's it.' 'That' is not confined to the body, 'That' is not a product of the mind, it is not a concept created and produced by the mind, 'That' is independent of all that. It is a mere glimpse, an intimation of the existence of this truth and at that very moment there is also the direct realization of the truth that 'That' is everywhere. 'That' which is not confined to the body, 'That' which is not limited to this body, 'That' which is not confined to the mind, 'That' which is not a product of the mind, is everywhere. He, the Yogi, the meditator, sees God in all and all in God.

The jnani, one who knows, one who has direct vision of the supreme cosmic reality, what does he do? First I shall give you the translation and then we come to the proper understanding of it. 'Abandon all dharma, all codes of conduct, abandon all ideas of dharma, which does not mean 'do as you like'. Krishna says this to Arjuna. 'Take refuge in me, surrender yourself unto Me, come unto Me.' Jesus Christ is supposed to have said exactly the same thing, 'Come unto Me, come unto Me alone.' That's it. It is possible that Buddha also said the same thing. There are about twenty or thirty gurus today, each one of them saying, 'Come to me alone, I am the only one that can save and redeem you.

If all of them are standing in one row, you look and you are puzzled. The first thing you feel is like running away, and fast. Here is Krishna, saying, 'Come unto Me alone, not to anybody else, come unto Me.' There is Jesus saying the same thing, and there is Buddha saying the very same thing and here are all these holy people saying, 'Come unto Me, I will save you.' In the same text, Krishna says, 'I am the Self of all beings 'I and my Father are one.' Thus, this 'come unto Me' means, come to that centre, to that ground. Not to this Mr. Krishna or that Mr. Christ, no. This is too much superstition. 'Come unto Me, abandon everything else and come unto Me, come and fall at My Feet, take refuge in Me, in Me alone and nobody else.' This means, 'Do not go and fall at the feet of all these worldly powers, the powers that promise you wealth, pleasure and prosperity here, do not hand yourself over to them, come unto Me'. Also, there is a tremendous warning here: do not even surrender yourself to your own, self-arrogating ego, come unto Me, alone. Neither surrender yourself to those who appoint themselves your authority, nor surrender your intelligence to your self-arrogating ego. 'Come unto Me alone.'

'Dharma' also means: an essential characteristic. The dharma of fire is to burn. The dharma of water is to flow. The dharma of the air is to blow. The dharma of the eye is to see, the dharma of the ear is to hear, the dharma of the brain is to

think. But who asks you to assume that 'I' am hearing, 'I' am seeing, 'I' am thinking? Give up those assumptions. I may mean that: one who is wise, one whose eye is wisdom - not one whose third eye or eye of wisdom is opened, self-knowledge. He discards and abandons all these false notions that 'I' see, 'I' hear. The 'I' does nothing of those things. When all these notions have been abandoned, the heart, the soul of the Jiva naturally takes refuge in the Cosmic Being, in whose body he is a cell. '

Abandon all those false notions and realize that you are really, truly a cell in the Cosmic Body of God. At that very instant, all your sins are gone, the greatest sin being the vision of division, which gives rise to two other immediate sins: desire and hate, love and hate. These are terrible sins and they are born of the self-arrogating ego, assuming doership. When all these notions have been abandoned, the fundamental sin, which is the vision of division, from which arise attraction and repulsion, drop away. You are free from all sins. When this happens, you realize that there is no conflict either inside or outside anywhere in this universe. That is freedom, moksha, liberation, emancipation, liberation, and salvation.

Gooderham, Ontario - July 17th, 1976

Upanisad

You have often heard the word 'Upanisad'. I do not know if it is clear to any of us what the word 'Upanisad' may mean. Even the other book, called 'Bhagavad Gita', is known as 'Upanisad'. If, according to orthodox tradition, 'Upanisad' means 'Vedanta', the end portion of the Vedas, how does the 'Bhagavad Gita' come into it?

If you read the colophon at the end of each chapter of the 'Bhagavad Gita', it says: 'ity srimad bhagavad gitasupanisatsu', which means: ' This is a chapter in the 'Upanisad' known as the 'Bhagavad Gita'. But there is one thing that is common to the 'Bhagavad Gita' as also to what are known as the 'Upanisads', and that is: it is a personal encounter, a direct encounter. So, 'Upanisad' means 'direct encounter'.

There is another meaning to this word, and that is 'sitting near, sitting close'. Two people may be sitting close to each other, but may be far, far away from each other. That is also possible. It seems we will have to learn what it means to sit close to each other. It does not - obviously - refer to the physical sitting near each other. You and I may be sleeping in the same room, yet we may be in two completely different worlds. With open eyes you and I are sitting in the same ashram - what is the difference? It just is not so. Even here, there is this same difference. What happens in sleep and in dream happens now here too - we are in completely different worlds. You are living in your world, and I am living in my own world. Though there seems to be, superficially, a similarity between your world and my world, your world is totally different from mine - and I do not even know what your world is. With what eyes do you look at this, and what is your point of view of this - only you know, I cannot know. If I think I know, I only think I know. I do not know until 'Upanisad' happens. Until we are able, psychologically, to sit near each other, until, psychologically, we are 'on the same beam' - on the same wave length, until you come up with a problem which corresponds with what my viewpoint is.

The teacher has a point of view, a teaching, but it makes no sense to the student because the same problem is not there, the teacher's problem is not shared by the student. Until the student also comes up to that level - not level of understanding or knowledge, we are not talking of that - until the student also experiences the same problem which the teacher experienced, this psychological closeness does not take place. We are living in two different worlds.

There is something which I do not see, but which you see - I am your student. When you point it out to me it looks absolutely simple. I will tell you a very nice, simple story. There was a small gathering and the Master was discussing the 'ultimate truth' - we are always interested in the 'ultimate truth', not the present one, or 'Cosmic Oneness', saying: 'All this - everything - is God'. One student was

terribly impressed, 'Ah, all this is God, everything is God, how wonderful', and he walked away, repeating this sentence to himself over and over again. It is an intoxicating thought. Nearby, at the palace, the royal elephant had run amuck and was out of the mahout's control, who was sitting helplessly on top like a dummy. Our young student was walking along the road saying continuously: 'Ah, all is Brahman, look at this - Brahman, look at that - Brahman'. Everybody was running away from the elephant but this young man only smiled, 'Ah, Brahman running towards me'. The mahout on top of the elephant shouted at him: 'Get out of the way, get off the road, the elephant will kill you'. 'Ah, all is God, everything is Brahman', and so the elephant picked him up and threw him into a ditch. It was his luck that there was some water in the ditch and so he did not die, but he was bruised. He got up and mumbled to himself: 'That teacher is a crook - he did not know what he was talking about - he said that all this is God - if the elephant is God, why did that God pick up this God and throw him into the ditch - God, almost breaking all my bones?' He got out of the ditch and limped to the Master and said: 'Hey, you pulled a fast one on me, didn't you - look at this.' And he told the Master the whole story. The Master said: 'It is quite obvious, of course the elephant was God, you are God, but the one sitting on top of the elephant - the mahout - he was also God, and that God told this God to get off the road - why didn't this God get out of the way - why did you have to stand there and challenge him?'

Some little thing, which in a certain state of unawareness I do not become aware of. The problem is not there and so the understanding is not there. I must come up to that point where communication can take place, then you and I are sitting on the same platform. If that is done then, like in your famous Zen stories, enlightenment is instantaneous. Therefore they insisted on what was known as 'the preliminaries'. The 'final moment' is quite simple, it happens. But the so-called 'preliminaries' are of tremendous importance. What are the 'preliminaries'? They are precisely what the Master went through. The Master probably also worked like you and I work. He also tried to solve his day-to-day problems such as domestic problems, business problems, financial problems, etc., exactly as you and I have been trying to solve. At some stage he found that there is a fundamental non-understanding. You try to remedy your problem and suddenly discover that the remedy 'is' the problem, the solution becomes the problem. You know why? The problem that you were facing, to which you tried to find a solution, was itself a solution to some other problem. If you watch very carefully, what bothers you now is not a problem but the solution to a previous problem.

A young man or a young woman, he or she feels lonely. But loneliness was not the original problem. He decides to get nice company and so he gets married. Now marriage becomes the problem. But it is not the problem, it is only the solution to the previous problem. The solution itself becomes the problem now. Rather than sitting and looking at each other, they decide to have a couple of children. You think you are solving a problem? No, you are creating another problem, because the solution is itself a problem, because you are trying to solve a problem which is

the solution to a previous problem. This goes on and on, endlessly.

At one stage the Master stood still and said, 'Wait a moment - something is gone wrong here - I have never questioned some fundamental assumptions, I have never bothered to ask what is right, I have never bothered to ask who am I'. 'What is this strange feeling of loneliness or emptiness? I have never bothered to ask that'. This would have been the question to ask and not 'how shall I remedy this feeling of loneliness'. So right here, there is some misunderstanding. The fundamental problem perhaps exists.

What is this fundamental problem? Life, the sense of ego, the sense of 'I am' that you did not create, that is the problem. The coming into being of life itself seems to be the problem, or the rising of the ego-sense itself is the problem. By trying to cover this up, you create solutions which become problems. You are not satisfied with one solution, you multiply it; one becomes two, two become four, etc. Once you are really 'in the soup', you think you are free of troubles and the soup tastes nice. As you know, soup has some kind of consistency - and so you become consistent, conforming in your behaviour, a pattern of behaviour develops. That which was the original problem is neatly swept under the carpet and the carpet looks very nice. Such is life. When such a person approaches a teacher, what the teacher teaches has no relevance at all, there is no community of spirit and the teacher, therefore, usually sends the student back home to get married. Why? To examine, not to analyze, to look into it all, to experience it all. If I am satisfied with it, alright, never mind. How long? 60 years? 100 years? 20,000 years? Never mind, 20,000 years is nothing. You talk to some of the archeologists, they do not talk in terms of hundred or thousand years, they talk in terms of millions of years. You ask them how long this earth has been in existence, they say maybe 20 or 25 million years, give or take five million years, you can just gamble. This is already acquiring a new point of view, isn't it?

Up until yesterday you were anxious 'what is going to happen to my life?' When you learn that this stone here has been much, much longer on this earth than you and I, and has not asked the question 'when will I attain moksha' at all, then your great anxiety simply drops away. Most of us are worried about this: 'When will I get liberation, when will I attain moksha'. Liberation from what? From that. From this anxiety itself. You are generating more and more anxiety and wondering when you will get rid of that anxiety. Make up your mind - you want it or not? If you want your anxiety, keep it. If you do not want your anxiety, do not create it. It is from here where these so-called 'preliminary disciplines' started. Do not become hung-up, do not become anxious and worried but examine, examine. Live it. If you want to enjoy yourself, please do so. Life teaches you a few lessons. But in order to learn I must be peaceful, not anxious, not afraid; only then can I learn, otherwise you are up-tight.

First lesson to learn is: everything that comes - goes. Whatever has a beginning comes to an end. This you and I see. In America you have a nice word for it, 'recycle'. This recycling goes on all the time. When you look at the Swami, you also

see that the Swami is re-cycled garbage. Once you see that, you are probably shocked at first, but then you begin to wonder: this comes into being and it goes away.' That removes the restlessness from your mind. The anxiety is now gone - then, when you know that whatever comes also goes, you are not seriously affected by the passing phenomena. You eat some sweet pudding, enjoy it, knowing that it is going. When you have a headache, suffer it, but know that it is passing. It is quite simple: that which comes must go; what has a beginning must come to an end. Only that consciousness, that intelligence which is aware of that is free from involvement.

The consciousness that observes this procession of phenomena is not involved. If that, consciousness were also involved in it, it would not be able to observe it. You are standing on the bank of the river and you are able to see that the water is moving - that's it, that's the flow.

The intelligence, the consciousness that observes life - examines life - not analyzes it, is able to watch this, and that which watches is not involved. Therefore, there is peace, because there is total absence of anxiety. This peace - now it gets very tricky here - which is constantly observing, which is pure observation, is able to see changes arise in it. When you are here in the Ashram, it is easy. Sit under a tree, listen to the wind rustling through the leaves, or listen to your own breathing, do what you call 'meditate'. You will be able to see your own mind, as it were, and while you see your own mind, you see that it is absolutely peaceful. For a moment the attention was distracted - for a moment there was a little anxiety - and it is lost, that's it. When you become unaware, it 'hits' you. Trouble occurs in your life when you least expect it. When I am not aware, then I am in trouble, whether the trouble is actually there or whether it is coming or going, I am in trouble. So I get back to this: I sit under the tree again and become more aware of all this. As you put your foot down to go, again, watch what is happening within you.

Some of you Yoga teachers must have seen this happen. You know the triangle posture, where you are asked to look up at the ceiling and put your hand on the floor. If you watch, most people will look down to see if the floor is still there. I told them that the floor has no chance, that it cannot jump up, but somehow they have to look. Let us say, I have a purse in my pocket. When I get up from here, I bend down, and when I straighten up, I touch my pocket and make sure it is still there; 'Yes, the purse is still there.' I walk down the stairs and touch - 'Yes, the purse is still there.' You can be sure that as long as I am ensuring every few minutes, at every turn, that the purse is still there, that it will be there, that it will not run away. Now that I must cultivate: I sit there under the tree - the peace of mind is there - complete calmness tranquility. I get up, I do not have to look at the ground, the ground is still there; so is my foot. What I need to look at is whether this inner peace is still there or not. Without even looking at the ground, I keep on walking - but with all my attention on this inner peace. The feet know how to walk, this happens automatically. While this goes on, can I become conscious of this inner peace - aware of this inner peace - and realize, that

without disturbing this inner equilibrium, life can go on - is this possible?

If that is possible, then the next step is easy. The next step is: you become aware of a little disturbance which is about to rise in the mind - as it is coming up - it has not yet become a reality. Now watch. I say something to you which is unkind, unpleasant for you to hear and you can - if you have been watching this peace within you, this tranquility, this equilibrium - see this coming up; the irritation, the irritability, whatever. If you watch it very closely, it will go away or it does not develop into an explosion.

You may still say: 'Shut up, Swami'. Alright, do so. That's all. At that point you have already self-realization. It is nothing more than that. The mind is calm and fully conscious of its own movement. When you say the mind is calm and fully conscious of its own movement, then it is not moving, it is the spectator standing on the bank of the river, it is not the river. Therefore it is not involved in this procession of pain and pleasure, happiness and unhappiness. So they said: 'Come to this understanding'. What 'understanding'? The understanding that there need not be any anxiety at all. In a manner of speaking, this body has been here for 20 million years - it is the same thing, you know - vegetable, flesh, then garbage - garbage, vegetable, flesh. It goes round and round and round. Even physically we are undying. This boy here is you - a little bit of his father and a little bit of his mother is made into this body. He is the true immortality of his parents, the same body is still continuing. This boy's ancestors of 20 million years ago are here even now. - I have no anxiety concerning self-realization or liberation. Seeing this procession of happiness and unhappiness, I am in a state of peace and tranquility. In this state of mind I begin to wonder: what is all this, what are we doing here? If everything that has a beginning must have an end - why must I begin anything at all? If change is the nature of the universe, is there something unchanging in it?

These are not questions, just a wondering. The Upanisads are full of such statements. Probably a teacher and a student sit next to each other and the student is intrigued and says: 'Hey teacher, your mouth is opening and closing and how is it that I can hear these sounds and derive some meaning from them?' Have you ever thought of that? No. What actually happens is air coming out of this mouth - and how are you able to make any sense of all that hot air?

Audience: 'Spirit'.

Swamiji : 'Spirit' is in the bottle. Thank you. This is a classic example of a fundamental problem. If I asked someone, 'How is it you are able to make some meaning of this hot air?', she would answer, 'Well, I have been taught'. When you were taught, let's say the English language, that was also hot air. That is what we do all the time - we take a problem to be a solution. But it was not a solution, I was taught. Of course I was taught the English language with the help of which I am able to convert this hot air into a meaning. But then, the teaching of the English language way back when I was at school was also hot air, how did that

become meaningful? So, what is it in me - that is the question. What is this in me that is able to put meaning into this hot air?

Audience: 'Intuition - feeling'.

Swamiji : 'Feeling' is a word which was once upon a time imparted to you. Feeling is a word which is also nothing more than hot air which someone whispered into your ear and you thought it was meaningful. Imagine if nobody, from the day you were born, had uttered that word 'feeling'? So this is the fundamental problem confronting the student. You and I we are satisfied with the mere re-statement of the same problem in different phraseology. If I go back, way back - if I never had heard that word 'feeling' in my life - the word 'feeling' was transmitted to me by my teacher, by my mother, father, sisters and brothers, and the translation was also hot air, if that was not there at all - how could I hear a meaning? In other words; what generates 'meaning'? When you ask yourself that question, you are really wondering aloud. Thus, when you come across a question like that in the Upanisads, it was not really the student questioning the teacher, but the student wondering aloud.

A mind which is free from anxiety, free from disturbance, in a state of equilibrium, is able to wonder, truly wonder - not just being curious - but really wonder: 'What on earth is this?' Then a different outlook on life, a different state of mind is created. That is what they call 'wisdom'.

Wisdom is when one looks straight into oneself, knowing that if I ask my teacher a question he is going to give me an answer. The answer, obviously, would be put in terms which he believes I may be able to understand. That is all. But then I am already worried and I ask him: 'How am I able to understand the spoken words?' The reply to this is not another set of spoken words, when this question is posed, it is not really directed towards the teacher, but the question is an indication of wonder that arises in the student. 'What is a thought?' 'How does it arise at all?'

Only the calm mind which is free from anxiety is able to see a thought arising. Normally we are not aware of thoughts arising. You think or you think you think; 'I am not aware of thoughts arising at all'. But when the mind is calm and free from anxiety, you see a thought arise and you wonder: 'How does a thought arise?' I am not asking the other person, because what the other person is going to say is but a set of words, but when a thought arises in me, it does not arise as a set of words. When the mind is at peace, observant, aware, there arises in it a wonderment concerning the fundamental issues of life, not the superficialities; 'What is thought, what is a feeling, what is hearing, what is listening, how do all these happen?' While the student is thus wondering aloud, the questions seem to be directed towards the teacher. What does he do?

There is a beautiful way in which these questions are answered in one of the Upanisads. The student is asking: 'How does the mind think, how do the eyes see, how do the ears hear', and the teacher says, 'You know, there is a Supreme Thing,

and that is the Mind of your mind, the Soul of your soul, the Life of your life, the Eye of your eye, the Ear of your ear'.

If an immature person were there, he would laugh and say: 'Hey, do not you know what the eyes are?, and you are telling me 'Eye'of my eye, 'Ear'of my ear, etc., you are only adding to my confusion, you are not clarifying anything at all.' And he will walk away.

But when the mature student hears this answer, he goes even deeper within himself, to see and to observe. That is wisdom, when the mind, the awareness flows deeper and deeper within oneself, so that all the daily problems get solved somehow. I am sure most of you have had this experience. Some problems you had, solved themselves when you did not create more problems, when you left them alone. Most of these personality conflict problems are usually solved if you do not complicate them more. You and I have a misunderstanding. Why quarrel? You keep quiet and I keep quiet and in a little time I am gone - and it is finished. Some problems are easily solved and some problems, when left alone, solve themselves. The yogi therefore concerns himself with the deeper problems, which is wisdom. Wisdom is not knowing how cleverly to solve our problems and create a few more - but to go to the fundamental essence of our existence. This is called 'viveka'.

'Viveka' is not merely discrimination between right and wrong - discrimination between right and wrong often creates right and wrong.

I was shocked to hear the following statement, shocked because of the status of the person who made this statement. An American priest, a very brilliant man, a very good friend of mine was asked at a small gathering: 'What is the origin of sin?' He gave a very forthright and simple answer: 'The Commandments'. He continued: 'The moment somebody told you 'thou shalt not', sin was born. If you were not told that you should not do it, it would not be considered sin. Your own concepts of right and wrong create what is right and wrong. Life goes on - it does not take any notice of your own private likes and dislikes, but you have an idea of what is right and when you do it, you pat yourself on your back: 'How nice, I have done right'. When you have done something else, you pat yourself on the other shoulder and say: 'I have done something wrong'.'

At different times I have mentioned this before. You all know that the Swamis are not supposed to be married. The Archbishop of Canterbury came once to Mauritius and I went to his reception. I was introduced: 'Swami, this is His Grace the Archbishop and Mrs'. So it is. Then I learned that in the Anglican community it is optional. You may marry, you may not marry, that is up to you. Then I went to Israel the first time in 1965. I went to see Mr. Ben Gurion. It was his wife's birthday. When she came out, she started asking me questions: 'Where do you come from?' I said: 'I come from Mauritius'. 'Where is your home?' 'I have no home'. 'What, where is your wife and family?' I said: 'I have no family'. 'You have no family - that is a sin'. To a Jewish person, not to be married is sin. I felt

suddenly quite confused. When I die and go up there, I am not going to take this body along. So, there is no identification whether I am Jewish, Catholic, Anglican or Hindu. Do they have the same thing up there? 'Hey, did you get married?' 'No, Sir.' 'What religion do you belong to?' If I am a Hindu, became a Swami and then got married - or if I am a Catholic Priest and got married, then I am fallen, a mortal sinner. If I am an Anglican Priest, then it is alright - it is up to you. If I am a Jewish Rabbi and told them that I am not married, then I would be told: 'Out. This is a sin.' So what? 'Viveka', wisdom, does not necessarily mean the discrimination between right and wrong,, but something deep - wisdom. Wisdom - understanding why this 'right' and 'wrong' may have come into being, goes straight to the root of the whole problem: what is mind, what is life, who am I? When the inner observation or inner intelligence thus flows smoothly toward itself, observes itself, then - what you call 'ethical discipline' - happens. Vairagya happens. What is 'Vairagya'? 'Vairagya' is turning the whole stream of life onto itself.

Gooderham, Ontario - July 18th, 1976

The Scriptures

This is what all these so-called Scriptures are about, they are merely operating instructions, operating instructions on how to manage your life, how to live knowing that while you are living you are also handling this or that and working with some thing or other, just like you are working with a tape-recorder, or with your body, or with a thing called 'mind'. Then, while you are working you want to know what is working and 'how'.

The truth or the facts concerning all this are given in these operating instructions called the Scriptures and one must use them that way. In India it is a famous pastime, like in some of the Jewish and Christian communities, to hoist a Scripture on top of a pedestal. We do this and the Muslims do this too, with the Koran or the Torah or the Bible. You do not enter that place without covering your head, crawling on your knees, throwing some rose petals and waving incense.

All that is very good, but even these rituals and ceremonies are intended merely to create the inner climate. It is possible to read the Bhagavad Gita like I read the morning newspaper and then throw it away. But then it does not produce a deep impression. I am not open to it, I am thinking of something else just as you are doing while you are munching your toast, sipping your coffee and reading your morning newspaper. There is nothing terribly valuable in it. If I study the Bhagavad Gita in the same way it does not work, it does not ferment within me.

So, in order to make it work I am asked to approach the Bhagavad Gita in a different spirit. I do not approach it like I approach the morning newspaper. I do not approach it like a student approaches a textbook, with fear, with trepidation, with nausea, 'I hope I get through the exams and please, God, as soon as it is over, I will throw the book away and spend the rest of the year forgetting all that I learned'. So, I do not read the Bhagavad Gita like a newspaper or like a textbook, but I read it with my heart. That is what you people use, this lovely expression without meaning it 'by heart', 'do you know it by heart?' Isn't that what you ask? You do not say, 'Do you know it by your brain?' Yet, what we use in actual practice is the brain and not the heart. That is what this wonderful expression 'understanding' means. The head does not stand under, it is on top. What is learned with the head - with the brain, is not 'understanding'. What 'understands' is the heart, which stands under.

Thus they said, when you approach the Scriptures, approach them with love and devotion. But there is again something else. Imagine every loving and devoted wife welcoming her husband back home. The husband is supposed to be regarded as God. 'Oh my dear husband, I regard you as God, I love you, I adore you, I worship you, I go around you 108 times.' Then he says, 'My dear, what about a cup of tea?' But the tea is not there. 'I adore you, I worship you', but the operative

part is not there.

The devotion is there, no doubt. That is precisely what we do with these Scriptures. We go round and round them, we worship them, but what about doing something about this. He says, 'I am supposed to be your husband, what about doing something about it?' Shy says, 'I am devoted to you.' This is no good. I must be devoted to the Scripture, my heart must be open, I must understand but, it must also have some relevance to my life. If it has, then, of course, there is a new birth coming out of that, there is something tremendously important that emerges from it. This is why they said, approach it through the heart, understand it and then let it become the operating instruction in your life.

The Scripture in itself is not to be deified, but the message in it is deified. Can the operating instructions be wrong? Possibly yes, possibly no. How will you know? You know only if it does not work. There is absolutely no way of proving or disproving it until one applies it, until I operate on the basis of these operating instructions I cannot know. This probably is true even of your Bible, Koran and so on. After all, they were transmitted and written down by people who were also alive to the problems which beset you and me and who applied their intuitive intelligence to that.

In applying it, there is yet another problem. I cannot apply it cosmetically, but I must assimilate it. The Bhagavad Gita cannot be read and applied on top, it must come from within. It is not something cosmetic. If I assimilate the message, the message may be relevant to me now or not, I do not know, but the message must be assimilated. People all over the world read their Scriptures routinely. One is supposed to read the Torah every Saturday at least. Christians are supposed to read their Bible every Sunday morning. We are supposed to read our Bhagavad Gita, if possible, every day. This is true of all cultures. They say that you must stand up to listen to the word of God. Why? If you do not stand up you may fall asleep.

An illusion is created. I have read it so many times, and so I do it mechanically. You take it for granted that you know what it is all about. This is also true of human relationships. The moment that you and I take each other for granted, our relationship has gone sour. It is finished. There is no longer any charm in it, no excitement and no love, we take each other for granted. In the same way, if you take the Scripture for granted, it does not mean anything anymore. I may read the Bible, the Koran or the Gita every day, but if I do it mechanically, it has lost its purpose. If I read the Gita every day, just a little bit - one or two verses - most of the days it does not mean anything, except the words. The words have a meaning and I think I know the meaning of the words.

But some day something hits you. Some problem arises, and then the words that you had swallowed blindly, foolishly, mechanically, suddenly spring up and say, 'Ah, this is it. This is what you studied in the Gita'. Then your action becomes more sensible. You read the operating instructions, they do not mean a thing. It

says there that when it does not work this way you should do it that way. Right now, it works nicely, there is no problem with these operating instructions. But when it stops, when the car stalls, then you know what was meant in the instruction booklet.

So, I must read the book with devotion, read a bit every day if possible, and keep the mind open. I am not saying receptive, but open. When the brain is open, then the message passes through it into the heart. It is not necessary for the brain to receive it at all, because if the message of the Gita or the Upanishads or Bible is received by the brain - it distorts it. I do not know if you have experienced that. If you read the Talmud, you will understand what I am talking about. The moment you receive the scriptural truth with the brain, then you pervert it and stop it from going further. That is very important to remember; if the brain receives it, then it stops there, it does not go any further - the heart has nothing to do.

When the brain - the mind - is kept open, not exactly receptive in the sense of receiving it, but receptive only in the sense of allowing it to pass through, can the scriptural truth pass through the mind and go wherever it wants to go? Then it is possible that it gets into your heart and works from there.

They have a beautiful expression: 'Aravana', which means you go to a master or teacher or the scripture - which may be your master or teacher for the moment - and keep yourself completely open. The example given is of the ear. 'Sravana' means the 'ear'. I do not know, I sometimes feel that it does not mean 'hearing'. You talked the other day about symbolism, and this 'Aravana' may merely mean the symbolism of the ear. There are three avenues of learning for us: the ear, the eyes, and the mouth. If you look at these three, you will probably understand a lot about the secret of learning. The ear is always open. You can close it but that would be 'ear-plugging'. It is - naturally - always open, it is a natural openness, a constant openness. As for the eyes, you can keep them open or you can keep them shut. If you want to look, keep them open. If you do not want to look, keep them shut. But the mouth - please dear God, may it remain always closed. You can open it with a little effort, but its normal position is closed. So, therefore, when someone uses the symbolism of hearing, of the 'ear', it means keep yourself completely open, the openness being your natural state. When the mind and the heart are open in this manner, let the message pass through the mind. Naturally, the mind soaks up a little bit, but let it pass through and right down into the heart, to work from there. When the truth becomes living, when it lives, then it is useful.

The famous St. John Gospel, 'The word became Flesh', 'The word was made flesh', may apply to everyone of us. The word enters into you, fills every cell of your being so that literally the word is made flesh. That is what sits in front of me. From there on the Scripture does not act from your brain just because you think it is a clever idea.

If I do something wrong and you are my boss, my husband or wife or mother or

father or whatever, and you say to me, 'This is bad, you should not do it', and I reply, 'Judge not', it is the devil quoting the Scripture. It is convenient to me, it suits my purpose, and so I bring in this quotation to stop you. Instead of using the Scripture as a sort of big stick to beat everybody up with, can the truth become flesh? Then the truth itself acts, the lesson acts, the Scripture acts. If one is able to live the life of the 'Gita', living according to the teachings may be a good thing, a good beginning, but it is not satisfactory.

I will give you an example, a true story. Someone in Europe wanted to become an acclaimed, accredited spiritual leader, a guru. There are dozens of swamis passing through Europe every few months. Now this man studied and watched each one of them and he found that the first batch that he was exposed to, were all vegetarians and unmarried. 'Look at these swamis, these fellows are all exactly like me, but why do people bow to him and not to me?' Does this question ever arise in your heart? 'Why do all these people run after these swamis and not me?' 'Ah, I can see now - I can see,' - but what he sees is only what is external - 'this fellow is dressed in a specific style. That's alright, I can also get clothes like that, that is easy. He is not married - alright - we will see about that. He is also a vegetarian, he does not eat meat. Right.' This particular gentleman was married and had a family.

One day he called together his disciples, followers and friends and announced the following: From this moment on I am going to be a pure vegetarian, from this moment onward even though my wife is here we are going to live like brother and sister'. This is something which impresses people - and it went on for some time. He was still living with his wife and children, and what goes on behind locked doors is none of your business. Anyhow, they did not have any more children. It is not always possible for even a spiritual person to eat only at home. Sometimes you are invited out and you have to eat outside. This man was very fond of meat before his dramatic conversion. He did not enjoy vegetarian meals. One day one swami came to live in his house - and when he asked this swami what he would like for his lunch, the swami replied: 'Do you have some fish?' 'Fish?' 'Oh yes, fish I can eat daily'. 'What about meat?' 'Oh, occasionally.' 'But you are a swami.' That swami got angry and gave him a big talk on what goes in and what comes out of the mouth, how what comes out of the mouth is important and not what goes in, etc. 'Ah', said our friend, 'that's it'. His resolve was ditched because 'it was based on a misunderstanding'. Do you see the point? It was based on a misunderstanding. 'I thought in order to be a swami, a holy man, a seeker, I had to be a vegetarian and that is why I resolved to be a vegetarian. But now you have made it clear to me, clear as daylight, that as long as I am not killing in order to eat, it is alright. Somebody has killed 'it' already. I am merely interested in the ecology of it and so I did not want to throw it away and cause pollution. I am helping in the cleaning up.'

So, if you try to understand it mentally, naturally some perversion sets in. I am not living according to the Gita or the Upanishads or the Bible or Koran, but I am trying more and more to assimilate the Scripture so that the Scripture acts: the

'Word became Flesh.'

Often one wonders. This was Swami Sivananda's specialty. He started His Ashram with only one aim: dissemination of spiritual knowledge. One wondered why He went on writing and talking about these things when what went on in the Ashram was often in conflict with some of His own teachings.

For instance, I went to the Ashram in 1944 as a visitor. I spent a week there. On the day I left, Swami Sivananda gave me the twenty instructions. He said, 'Do not take tea, coffee etc.' I was addicted to tea and coffee. I went back to Delhi and I said to myself, 'I must at least experiment to see if I can stand it.' For two or three months I practiced it, tested it and found, that as long as I got some hot liquid in the morning, it did not matter what you called it. And so I was well qualified to practice all these teachings. I went back to the Ashram and we arrive there late in the afternoon. Passing by the room of a senior swami I could smell first class coffee, such as could be made only in South India. Marvelous. When I entered this senior swami's room, he said, 'I know you also come from South India and I am sure you will appreciate a nice cup of coffee - sit down.' You know, we do not question these elders, especially when it suits us. This was one of those occasions when you do not question: 'He is a great man, he is a marvelous man, and so I do not have to worry about it. He is having a cup of coffee, so what - I am only keeping him company.'

Then there was a beautiful scene at the Ashram which I cannot forget. Someone had come from Ceylon and he was given a formal reception. Towards the end of this formal reception, Swamiji said a few words and those few words were inspiring. He repeated a remarkable formula, a sort of hymn: 'They are indeed supremely blessed who wander about naked without any possessions whatsoever, merely clad in a loin cloth.' As Swami Sivananda was repeating these words, He was clad in his overcoat, as it was winter. It was a lovely nylon overcoat that Swami Nada had brought. And there He stood, saying, 'They indeed are blessed who wander about in a loin cloth.' Truth is truth. That I am clad in an overcoat and I have got an Ashram and all of this property and so on, that is alright - truth is still truth.

Without squeezing one into the other, it sounds like hypocrisy - but it is not. This is very tricky. One can interpret it in a hundred ways, I am sure. I do not want to twist the truth to suit my present state of undevelopment, nor am I going to twist me in my present state of undevelopment into this perfectionism. You can try to do this now - throw off all your clothes and walk into the bush. You would last - at the most - for about 6 hours. You would go crazy with all these mosquitoes. So, without doing one or the other, is it possible to study again and again till the truth permeates every cell of your being, not asking 'what for', nor saying 'I cannot, it is too much', or 'I can never become like that', etc. How do you know? Are you a prophet? You never say, 'I cannot become like that', nor do you say, 'I can become like that'.

Do you all understand me? One way you are squeezing and pushing yourself, the other way you are twisting and turning the Scripture into it. Let these things be as they are and carry on. See what happens. As the truth, the reality, the teaching or the doctrine soaks through more and more, then, one day 'the Word becomes Flesh.'

That was Swami Sivananda's extraordinary specialty. Nobody else dared to do it. He was the only one who had the courage to do it. Others were too scared, 'What will people say?' that is the usual thing. What will people say, if while drinking a glass of wine I give you a talk on sobriety, or while I am puffing away at a cigar keep telling you that tobacco is terrible. He could do that. This is the truth. You are unable to measure up to it now. Do not try. Let the truth be assimilated within you and then let it manifest. How beautiful it is.

As usual, every thing that is beautiful has a snag in it. The snag here is: it is possible for an insincere person to go on, to take shelter under this. When it came to such people, Swami Sivananda had no impatience at all. You know why? An insincere person can say that, yes, he is trying to give up smoking or that he has already given up smoking fifteen times. Swamiji never lost his patience with these people because they are insincere in any case. Nothing is lost. He has been smoking for ten or fifteen year and he never said that he is trying to give up smoking. Now he says 'I am trying to give up smoking', and he does not mean it.

What is lost? Nothing. The mind can take shelter under this, saying, 'I am sincerely trying to give this up - I am trying to become better.' Swamiji's attitude was that if a person did study and read the Scriptures repeatedly, one day some change must happen. Must. You go on reading the same thing over and over again, something may happen in your life which may bring about a change. In that way Gurudev was a tremendous optimist.

There is a lovely little story. There was a robber who had resolved to rob the king. He knew that this king of ancient times had money and jewelry in his own house, in an iron safe. The keys to this safe were under the royal pillow at night. As the thief was edging towards the royal bedroom, the Queen screamed suddenly. He froze. He heard the Queen telling the King, 'Oh, I had such a terrible dream. I had a vision of some celestial being that stood in front of me and said, 'I know you are worried about finding a good husband for your daughter, your only child, and I know exactly who is most suited to succeed you on the throne. Take that road out of this city and exactly at the fourteenth mile stone you will find a big tree, underneath which is seated a Yogi, an ascetic. He is the man, he is the only man qualified and fit to become your son-in-law.' "This is what the celestial said and so I screamed and woke up.'

When the thief outside heard all of this, to be sure, he ran faster than the royal chariot. He found the tree, tore off all of his clothes, took some ashes, smeared himself with it and sat down in samadhi. Half an hour or one hour later he heard foot fall, the royal foot fall, but he would not open his eyes. Ascetics are not

disturbed so easily. He felt the touch of some flowers. He saw somebody sitting in front of him and after a long time opened his eyes half-way. 'Hello, how are you - Hari Om Tat Sat.' The King fell at his feet, 'I want your blessings.' 'God bless you.' Then the King said, 'Please, can you come to my palace?' 'Palace, oh no, we are ascetics, mendicants, what have we to do with your palaces?' The King's heart nearly broke. He wept and cried and did all sorts of things. Then, finally, 'It must be God's Will, it must be the Divine Will - alright.' He got up and started walking with the King. They arrived at the palace and the same thing happened there once again. They made him sit on the throne and he resisted. Then the Queen came along and wanted to worship his feet. He resisted. He did that every time.

Eventually the girl was brought in and both the King and the Queen caught hold of one foot each of the holy man and said, 'We have a prayer.' 'What is it?' 'This is our girl, the only girl, the heir to the throne. We find you are the only one qualified to marry her.' 'Oh, terrible, how terrible.' Then all three pleaded and carried on. The swami then looked at his nose and said, 'Yes, it seems to be the Will of God, so be it, so be it.' Then they took him into the inner apartments, gave him a nice bath and shave and gave him royal robes. He decked himself in them and while the attendant went out to fetch something, he looked at himself in the full-length mirror and sort of talked to himself, 'You look charming, man, you look charming. It's fantastic, that's what cleverness means, and also good luck. Good luck and cleverness came together - beautiful.'

As he was looking and looking something was happening within him. 'Heh. Wait a moment. If for merely pretending to be a holy man for one hour, you could be so lucky, what would happen if you really became a holy man?' He tore off the royal robes, threw them away, jumped up and ran for his life

This is the story, but the lesson is obvious. I am struggling to be holy. I am trying to be holy. 'I am trying' means I am not. That much is clear, isn't it? 'I am trying to give up smoking' means 'I am smoking'. I have not given up smoking. So, if I am trying to be better or good, then, one day, it is possible that though I appear to be insincere, one day it is possible that something happens within me.

To bring about certain understanding, there is a certain inner awakening. If merely pretending to be so, and so brings so much, what about the real thing? That was Swami Sivananda's attitude. Go on disseminating this knowledge, study it regularly, assimilate it, let it be assimilated. You may not be able to assimilate it by will force. Even food cannot be assimilated by using will force. It has to happen. If it happens, it happens. If it does not happen, something else does, and the earth is fertilized.

So, let the assimilation take place. Keep on studying. It is possible that at some stage you merely pervert the teaching, twist the teaching. It is possible that you may apply the teaching cosmetically and find it smelly. But it is also possible, at some stage, for the teaching to be assimilated, for the 'word to become flesh'. Then it becomes the 'living truth.'

In the Gita, after explaining this in such tremendous detail, Krishna ultimately says, 'Reflect, understand this truth, assimilate this truth - then do what you want to do.' XVIII-63 Understand the truth and do what you want to do, these two are tremendously important. Let the understanding of the truth go on, do not twist it. Do not say, 'I cannot do it and it is better to re-translate the whole thing to suit my present state,' then the truth is lost.

That is what we are doing with the Bible for instance. They do not say, 'Thou shalt not kill' anymore; the modern translation is, 'Thou shalt not commit murder.' Killing is alright. They have said that killing in certain circumstances is inevitable. Moses or God could not really have meant 'killing'. And so, 'Thou shalt not commit murder.'

What is murder? We will look to some of the courts. When I kill somebody, it is self-defence, a 'pre-emptive' strike, a lovely word, isn't it? The idea is that he was thinking of shooting me; so, I shot him. He does not even have a gun, but he was thinking of shooting me. If I had not shot him, then he would have gone to New York, bought himself a gun, come back and shot me. That is called 'pre-emptive strike', I believe. When I do that, it is a 'pre-emptive' strike. When he does it, it is murder, and he must be hung. Once having twisted 'Thou shalt not kill' into 'Thou shalt not commit murder', there is no way of stopping the corruption.

There is a lovely story connected with Socrates. It seems he was sitting somewhere outside his hut when a soldier who was chasing a murderer came to a halt because there was a fork in the road. The soldier wanted to know which road the murderer had taken. Socrates was the only man in sight; so, the soldier walked up to him and said, 'Socrates, did you see a murderer around this site?' 'Murderer, who is a murderer?' 'Someone who kills.' 'A butcher?' 'No, no. A man who kills another man.' 'Oh, a soldier.' 'No, a man who kills another man during peace time.' 'Ah, an executioner.' 'No, no. A man who kills another man in his own home.' 'Ah, a doctor.' All these are murderers, but they are called by different names. Very respectable. If you kill me, you are a murderer. If you hang up about ten or fifteen of you and kill ten or fifteen of us, you will probably be given a reward, a medal or something.

Without twisting the truth in the least, leave it as it is. Leave the truth as it is. If you do not measure up to it, you do not measure up to it and that's it. At the same time, let the evolution, the maturity, go on. One day you will find you are measuring up. Suddenly you will find the Scripture is no longer there, it is here, you are the Scripture. The 'word has become Flesh.'

Peterborough - July 19th, 1976

Yoga

I understand from your yoga teacher that many of you may be fairly new which I usually do not believe because one does not go into a yoga class or attend a lecture or a talk on yoga without having some knowledge - which is the problem. If one approaches yoga without knowing anything at all before, it is much easier to communicate what it may mean, otherwise one is always prejudiced and one approaches the whole thing from that prejudice.

Some interesting prejudices might be looked into to begin with. I hope you do not have any of these. One very funny incident comes to my mind. A well-known yogi was billed to address an audience and the man who was chosen to preside over this function was the Mayor, quite a busy person. This man probably had put in his day's work, was tired and as usual the yoga meeting took place in the evening.

Somebody introduced the lecturer: 'Yogi so and so is going to deliver a talk on yoga', and this Mayor, this dignitary, promptly fell asleep. It is a good thing, it shows you how relaxing even the word, the very idea of yoga can be.

Towards the end of the talk his secretary nudged him and said: 'Hey, the talk is finished, the President's remarks now.' He opened his eyes and got up: 'Ladies and gentlemen, I am sure you all enjoyed this wonderful talk on yogurt. Have a glass of yogurt every morning before your breakfast and you will enjoy good health.' You hear the word 'yogurt' and - right - it has some similarity.

Another incident which was a bit more serious and ridiculous happened to me when I first visited Australia in 1961. There were a few newspaper representatives at the airport and they saw me. They entered the lounge, most of them drew back as though I was something strange. Then when my host shook my hands and greeted me they thought 'Oh, 'it' can be touched.' Then they saw that this 'thing' could speak their language, English, so 'it' is communicable, not a disease.

Suddenly a young lady-reporter asked me: 'What place does sleeping on a bed of nails, chewing glass pieces and broken razor blades have in the total scheme of yoga?' At that, I turned to my host and said: 'I hope you have some kind of breakfast for me', for it is possible I would be served a bowl full of broken glass and razor blades.'

The other misunderstanding - and a very serious one - I heard when I was young, about fifty-years ago. We were told that a yogi is a magician, someone who could read your thoughts, bend your mind and all sorts of crazy things. Consequently, when I started practicing yoga, doing some asanas, the family became frightened; 'My God, this boy is going to become one of those, someone who is interested in black magic, that sort of thing.'

Often we are asked: 'Can you read thoughts?' I have another forthright response to that question; 'Can you imagine the fate of a person sitting here, facing forty or fifty people and reading everybody's thoughts? He would go mad in ten seconds. Look at these fifty people, all the thoughts that pass through their mind, this is terrible.' My second response is, that if it is immoral and unethical to open this young man's mail and read it, why does suddenly reading somebody's mind, somebody's thoughts, become such a glorious thing? It is also immoral and unethical. So, we do not indulge in such practices.

There are other problems connected with the practice and teaching of yoga. One which is also a fallacy and which prevails in the minds of many people even now is, that it is a form of religious cult. I was in Fiji a few years ago and there were a couple of yoga classes here and there, mostly yoga asanas - postures. It seems that someone, a very good religious man, cautioned his congregation: 'Do not join this yoga.' 'Why not?' 'It is the devil's teaching.' At the same time, the editor of a newspaper had asked me to contribute some articles on yoga, which I did. Every day I discussed one posture or the other. Then came 'Soorya Namaskar', 'Salutation to the Sun'. I think most of you know this one. I pre-faced this article with the remarks, that 'Soorya Namaskar' is not a yoga posture, but a movement, a complete thing in itself. Then I went on to say in the next paragraph: 'I can almost hear someone heaving a sigh of relief. Who was it? I believe a very good, religious man remarked that 'Yoga is the teaching of the devil.' Not being acquainted with the devil I do not know what his teachings are. He who says that this is the teaching of the devil is obviously acquainted with it, otherwise, how do you know?'

Is yoga a religion? It is not a religious cult. 'Do you believe in God?' 'Of course, but that is my personal affair.' Must I believe - the word 'believe' is a funny word - in God before I can join a yoga class? No. We do not discuss your belief. You know what belief is, do not you? Belief is something which hides effectively a lie within itself. Can you write the word 'belief' and see that there is a lie in it? Every belief has a lie in it. Without a lie, there is no belief. There may be some truth in every belief, but we do not discuss this. You believe what you want to believe in, and I believe what I want to believe in. We do not sanctify or emphasize the sanctity of a particular belief knowing that our belief has a lie in it. If you believe that God exists, all right; if you do not believe that God exists, all right. If you do not believe that God exists, you know that God does not exist, which means you believe in God more than the other fellow who believes that God exists, because you are fighting this thing 24 hours of the day, whereas he who believes that God exists goes to church only on Sunday morning. It's a crazy thing.

So, we are not interested in any of those things: what your life style is, what you do, what you do not do - all that is your business. Can we drop all these notions that we may have had, these beliefs, these prejudices, and enter the practice of yoga? When all these are dropped, one thing remains: 'Ah. It is a matter of good health.' Some very nice propaganda. We emphasize good health and a state of well-being but then - if everybody went on repeating this same formula: 'Yoga

promotes good health and bestows a sense of well-being upon you', it becomes boring. Someone else gives you another cliché, another formula: 'forever young - forever healthy'. If you want to be forever young, there is only one way: when you are still young, have a nice statue made, that is the only thing that is going to be forever young. I have lived with yogis and I have never seen anyone who was forever young. They all got old and many of these great yogis whom I was acquainted with have since died.

Yet, you pick up an elementary text-book on yoga and find there that yoga conquers and overcomes old age and death. That the yogi overcomes old age and death is written there in the 'Hatha Yoga Pratipika', and all the sacred texts which give you the fundamental principles of yoga. But, 'overcomes death' is quite a different thing, 'overcomes old age' is quite a different thing. Whereas the body may grow old - undergo changes which are considered to be the process of aging - the inner intelligence may still remain vital. This is totally different. Is it possible for you to overcome the fear of old age and the fear of death, the unwillingness to face the inevitable? You are not able to arrest it, yet you are fighting this change, fighting the inevitable. Is it possible to overcome that? Then you have overcome old age and death.

It does not mean that your hair will forever stay black, black is a colour, white is another colour, isn't it? So, what is the big deal of having black hair and not white hair? Can you have colourless hair? Impossible. The Yogi is not interested in all this, not at all. When you practice yoga, what are you trying to do? If it is not possible to push old age off, if it is not possible to avoid death, what are you practicing yoga for? It is extremely simple: Self-knowledge. One simple word may explain the whole philosophy of yoga: Self-discovery. It is very important to remember this, as a friend asked me this afternoon, 'I understand yoga is practiced by most people to get rid of tension, for relaxation.' The moment you introduce this as the motivation for the practice of yoga, you have destroyed it. That's simple, isn't it? The moment you introduce this as the motivation, that I am going to practice yoga in order to enjoy complete relaxation, this mad craze for relaxation and freedom from tension, which is what made the scientist invent the tranquilizer, you destroy it.

Before that they tried other methods, you know: 'count the sheep'. This person was so tense and worried, so he started counting the sheep; and there was the anxiety not to miss the next one. This man was counting his money in his business, counting his profits, that is what brought him here. Instead of taking his mind completely away from that, you are introducing another anxiety. The psychologist or doctor yells at you, 'For heaven's sake, relax.' If you could relax, you would not have gone to him. Then they say that it is impossible and so they kill you with tranquilizers; kill the whole nervous system, kill the central nervous system, kill the brain. Oh, it's so beautiful. You invent all these lovely words, but unfortunately, you do not even look at them. I look at them. Then there are sleeping pills. They are meant to sleep in their own bottles: sleeping pills. They are very, safe there, let them sleep. When you swallow them, it is the pill that

sleeps, you do not sleep. Even within you it is the pill that sleeps. You wake up as mad as ever.

A few years ago I had a funny experience here in Canada. A short and shriveled old lady met me one day. She jumped in front of me and said: 'I have not slept in three years.' You may think I am callous, I am indifferent and cruel, but the only two words that occurred to me immediately were these two blissful and beautiful words in the English language 'so what'. But then, when I looked at her I was really frightened, because her eyes were wild and her whole appearance looked wild. She continued: 'I have spent fifteen thousand dollars going from one psychiatrist to another.' Maybe they found that her pockets were empty and so they shoved her around to yoga, wanting her to practice yoga, they would have nothing more to do with her. What to do with her? What do you do with a person who says: 'I haven't slept for three years, I have spent \$15,000.00 going from one psychiatrist to another What do you do? I gave her a rosary, took her to a room and said: 'Go on, sit down and say: 'Om Namah Sivaya, Om Namah Sivaya..' 'I went back half an hour later and she was still doing it. 'I can't sleep, I still can't sleep.' I thought to myself; my God, what am I going to do with this person? I told her: 'Look, do you have faith in me?' She said: 'Yes, you are the only one who can cure me, nobody else can'. All the others had given her up. So I said: 'Now I tell you this: go on repeating this 'Om Namah Sivaya', it is possible that you will sleep in about an hour or so. If you cannot sleep, then you know that with every repetition of this Mantra, you are gaining a more guaranteed access to heaven - heaven is opening - so go on repeating this Mantra. If you cannot sleep you will go to heaven, if you do not want to go to heaven, you will sleep. Either of these things must happen.' So, what happened? Nothing happened, the anxiety dropped, the anxiety about repeating the Mantra, the anxiety of going to heaven, the anxiety of going to sleep, the whole thing dropped. All motivation was taken away. Half an hour later she was fast asleep. The mala or rosary had dropped out of her hands, she was fast asleep in the room. That's all.

Can I approach this field of yoga without any motivation whatsoever, merely observe what goes on? When I do the yoga postures, I am just observing what happens; when I am doing the breathing exercises, I am merely observing what goes on; and if you want some kind of a kick - yoga is supposed to give you that - then you begin to wonder. Someone once said, 'Wonder is the beginning of Mysticism'. We have lost that. We have lost that completely because of the illusion of knowledge. You cannot sit down with anybody - man, woman or child, without that man, woman or child talking fantastic scientific jargon. 'Cardiac hypertrophy' - I thought it was some kind of a trophy: Someone comes and tells me that I have 'cardiac hypertrophy'. You go to the Olympic Games and you win a trophy. Big words. An illusion of understanding how the body functions. 'Duodenal Ulcer'. We know nothing, nothing about the body, nothing about the mind, nothing about the world, nothing about anything. This thing here is called a 'tape-recorder', because somebody else called it a 'tape recorder'. I do not know whether it is a tape or a recorder, I do not know how it functions. Even the scientist does not know how it really functions. He has been able to put things

together, that's all.

Do I know how I am able to hear? To see? I do not. I have got explanations, marvelous explanations, books full of explanations, but the explanations are not the truth. I have got fantastic analyses; how the dna and the rna function - and yet? A beautiful young woman is analyzed: so much hair - let's say half a pound, ten square miles of skin, fifty miles of arteries and twenty-five miles of veins. Sounds ugly. Flesh. And yet, she is beautiful. You put all the analyzed components together and it looks ugly, filthy. Yet, this person is not just the explanation. There is something else.

Can we discover that? That is what yoga is all about. Can I discover what 'I am'? Discovery in the simplest sense of the word. Here is something, I do not know what it is. It seems to be covered. I must be able to look at that and with a child-like wonderment uncover it, without anticipating anything, for it is the anticipation, the expectation, that ruins the beauty of yoga. This is what happens to the executives who come to practice yoga, the millionaires. Their problem is expectation, greed, which is what brought on this tension. This is their problem to begin with - and so they come to the yoga classes and again they are asking: 'What will I gain from this yoga?' This is the problem: 'what will I gain?' My God, I cannot do anything at all without this greed coming into my mind, ambition and competition coming into my mind - bringing this even into the practice of yoga. Therefore, there is no discovery at all. Even here I want to cover my action, my activity, my effort with this ambition, with this new cover. Can I dis-cover? Yoga is 'self-discovery'.

Self-discovery without assuming the existence of something and without denying the existence of something. Therefore, there is no belief involved in yoga. You may have your belief - I am not interested, but there is no belief in yoga. I am not starting with the hypothesis that the body does not exist and that it is an illusion, that is nonsense. Pinch me - I feel it. Neither am I saying that the body is the 'be all' and 'end all' of my existence. No. I want to discover what the body is, how it functions. I want to discover its potentialities and its limitations. I want to discover what it can do and what it cannot do. If this basic attitude is adopted, then there is absolutely no possibility of injuring oneself. There is no danger. The danger is when I want to compete with somebody, when I am pushing myself. 'She does something marvelous, I must do better'. It is the same business all over again; you have that problem there and you bring it to the yoga class. There you competed with your business rivals, here you compete with your yoga teacher and-or yoga students. Nothing of that sort. I am merely discovering what this body is, this body and not that body.

What is this body, what are its capabilities, potentialities, what can it do and what can it not do? I see a yoga teacher do some fantastic yoga postures - I am merely observing the possibilities'. He looks like me, he is a human being - and so am I; he is a body, I am also a body; he does these postures, it is possible that I can also do them. It is a mere pointer to the possibility of your potentiality - and from

there I work on this body, not on that body. Can I discover? As I discover my own potentialities, I also discover my limitations.

We were talking about health. Even health is a matter of discovery, discovery in the sense of 'uncovering'. Health is there. If it is not there it cannot be put in, isn't that right? If health were not there in this body you could never gain it. Health is there, it is only 'covered'. My lungs breathe and my yoga teacher tells me 'you must breathe deeply, take deep yoga breaths from here to there and then you will live long.' Somebody else tells me that it is the oxygen that makes me live long and this polluted air makes you die quickly. Somebody is dead and they put him into an oxygen tent, full of oxygen, but it does not work. Something which was there, which was able to breathe this oxygen, is no longer there. If I am alive, all your vitamins and proteins and fourteens and fifteens can be of tremendous use, but if I am dead - what kind of vitamin and protein will make me live again?

I am interested in that, I am interested in the life. Can I discover that life? Health is there in this body, in every cell of this body. Can I enable the cells of this physical being to get to that toxic substance which covers the health in the cells of this body? The toxic substance may be removed, that's all. When it is removed I see something magic, a miracle, and there is enlightenment. You know what 'enlightenment' means? Press the switch and the light comes on, or sit with your back straight and look straight at the tip of your nose or between the eyebrows and you see light.

I once saw light which is indescribable. When I was small, we used to play with wooden sticks. You have a small stick, throw it up in the air and you have a slightly longer stick, and you hit that small stick before it falls down. Two or three were playing this game, and I was standing to the left of the boy who was playing. He hit and missed that stick and his big stick landed right on my right eye. The lights that I saw then - undescribably brilliant. Press your own eyeballs, you can see all kinds of funny lights. If you are interested, please do.

Enlightenment is something very different. There is an official orthodox meaning for the word 'enlightenment'. I will come to that later. This is an unofficial definition of mine, it is also good, why not. You know that this tape-recorder here is heavy - that one over there is 'light', it does not shine, but it is light. Light as opposed to heavy. Enlightenment means light, not heavy.

If the body is in a state of health, the body feels light, not luminous, but light. The enlightened person is one who travels without excess baggage, not only physically but mentally and emotionally. Can you go through life without feeling that life hangs heavy on your shoulders? That is enlightenment. The yogi's body is light. This is not something which can be detected by the scale, it is a feeling of lightness.

The other, official, orthodox meaning of the word 'enlightenment' is that you are able to look within yourself, there is light within you. When the body is not

functioning properly, when there is some ailment, you do not have to go to a doctor to know that you are not well. People go for so-called 'routine check-ups' and come back with strange stories. You look healthy, perfectly alright, but then, after having had your check-up, you come back and say that the doctor said your blood-pressure is higher than higher than what? My blood pressure is my blood pressure, isn't it? If I can have my nose, why can't I have my blood pressure? I do not have somebody else's blood pressure. So, even if there is something amiss you know it before your doctor - that is called 'enlightenment'. The whole being is full of light so that when there is the least disturbance in the functioning of your body, you become aware of it first - that also goes for your mental states. That is enlightenment, beautiful enlightenment, a beautiful self-discovery. I discover this life-force that enables me to live, that enables this body to function, enables this mind to think. The discovery of that is yoga. It is simple.

But people think that yoga is all sorts of fantastic gymnastics and so on. 'Stand up'. - a girl stands on a chair. You see it is very simple, I am asking her merely to stand there and balance herself and keep looking straight in front. Now please watch. To the girl: 'Can you lift your right foot up? Stretch it out and perhaps raise yourself on your toes'. To the audience: 'Watch - watch these arms - that leg - watch what that leg is doing - it is trembling. The arms raise themselves of their own accord, she did not raise them deliberately, there was no will involved'.

Beyond all that there is some intelligence which is a lot more intelligent than your brain. She did not know how to do all that. She merely raised her leg when I told her to do so. I hope I can make the following clear: when there is a problem, when this body is confronted with an existing problem, that intelligence within springs at once into action. The body does not anticipate it. She cannot do it now sitting there on the floor - she cannot tense her leg and do what she did here on the chair, it is not possible. That body intelligence is capable of dealing with every situation that arises in your life and the yogis are bold enough, courageous enough, frank enough to say that that intelligence knows how to maintain health in that body as long as it lives, and terminate life in that body when that becomes necessary.

It is that intelligence that governs both life and death - what you call 'death'. The yogi is interested in discovering that. He is not frightened, knowing that it is that intelligence in the body that is responsible even for what the doctor calls 'sickness'. It is the body's response to certain environmental conditions. Do you know what 'environ-mental' means? 'Environ' is surrounding - mental; the mind acting upon what exists around you - that is called environmental. When these two come together in a conflicting situation, the body reacts, the body intelligence reacts - and the body is a lot more intelligent than we grant.

Watch the body. In summer, when it is hot - you perspire, you have your own cooling system. In winter if you happen to expose yourself - you shiver, that action creates heat. The body intelligence is capable of all that.

Sickness is the body intelligence's own reaction to wrong living. The yogi, when he is able to dis-cover, un-cover, dispose of these physical toxins, psychological toxins - which are prejudices, bias, pride, lust, anger, greed, greed most of all, when he is able to get rid of all that, the mind becomes pure, the body becomes pure.

Now comes an important fact: when the body and mind become pure, they react spontaneously and strongly to any evil influence. A reason why a little child catches cold a lot more easily than you do. The baby is full of life and that life does not want any interference. Put a little bit of tobacco, alcohol or beer into the baby's mouth - and it will throw everything up. But, you know, we say, 'Well, of course I can have four bottles of beer without any problems.' That means the whole system is more dead than alive. So, when the body and the mind are pure, they react spontaneously, immediately, strongly, this is number one. Number two is that that pure mind and that pure body are capable of sustaining health.

Once the body has tasted and enjoyed good health, it does not want bad health. Once the mind has learned to enjoy peace, has tasted peace, it will not value anything more than that peace. Therefore, the yogi's self-discovery is its own guarantee for continued well-being. Nothing disturbs it afterwards.

If we continue to be restless in our life it is only because we have not really and truly tasted that peace, that inner peace. Afterwards it is not possible to destroy it. All of this is the essence of yoga.

They have a system of yoga postures which leads you on to the discovery of the life force through breathing exercises (Pranayama). This will lead you on to contemplation and meditation. You will then discover that contemplation has been there right from the beginning, right from the moment she stood on the chair lifting one leg up she was already meditating. In that meditation she will discover the existence, the presence of a life force, the presence of a divine power which is omnipotent, which is supreme. At that very moment you are free from fear, free from anxiety and everything that disturbs this peace of mind and state of well-being.

Audience: Do you think yoga has to be done in a group or can it be done on your own?

Swamiji: I hope you realize, Sir, that even in a group you are doing it on your own. This is, I think purely a local and regional problem. In India we have very few yoga schools as such. We all learned sometimes from other teachers, sometimes from books and we practiced it all on our own. But it is, of course, true that as the psychologists say, there is a group psychology, a mass mentality and that does seem to help some people. Not many would be so regular in their own practice of yoga if they were allowed to practice in their own homes. But when there is a class you feel like doing it. Once again this is unfortunately the competitive spirit. Not only the mass psychology but also the competitive spirit,

so it may have some benefit. Related to it is a belief that when we practice yoga in a group or when we sit and meditate together with others a certain power is generated in that. That is somebody's belief. Please do not question it.

Audience: Swamiji, would you please comment on the commercialization of yoga in western countries. Why cannot they give it for free as they do in India?

Swamiji: I am not sure of the second part of the statement: why should we not teach it for free. I will give you an example; when I started yoga classes in Mauritius, the classes were free, of course. But then everything was provided free to me; I was living as somebody else's guest, I was well looked after. I did not have to pay for my board, lodging etc. and the local bodies, the government and other institutions, provided their accommodation, the halls were free, whatever was needed was given free. Then it is possible. In a society where such a complete and total voluntary give-and-take principal exists, it is easy. In India, for instance, as our friend suggested, most of the ashrams exist by voluntary donations. Do we all know what an ashram means? Ashram is a spiritual community which exists around a spiritual leader, a Swami. People who do not get anything from that ashram, who may not have even visited that ashram would gladly give very handsome donations. This may sound strange to you. Now, the ashram gets some money from its donors and it is able to offer its services free to people who need it. I do not know if such things exist in North America, I doubt it very much. But apart from that, even in India it is getting to be commercial. We are also ruining it, getting 'civilized'.

St Catherines - July 26th, 1976

Yoga

'I do not know what you are interested in.' That expression is slightly defective because I understand that 'to be interested' is already to be 'in', in-terested. Interest, the word itself, means to be 'in'. What are we interested in? That in which we are - yoga. When we forget that, then we go looking out for something else. We listen to something, we listen to someone talk or read a book - and this is where things have gone wrong. I am not interested in what I am reading. It is obvious, isn't it? The ideas are contained in the book, I am not 'in' the book. So there is no relationship between the reader and what is read, between the reader and the book.

Often these books that I read or that you read create a tantalizing image. You read a lovely book 'Tales of Power', or about some mighty yogi who could fight with a tiger. I myself have read the story of a great yogi who could just look at a tiger, mesmerize it and make it lick its foot. Yes, this is inspiring, tremendously inspiring. It is beautiful. Then, from there, where do I go? Looking for a tiger? Someone comes along and is introduced to you, 'this is Mr. Leslie, yoga teacher.' 'Hi, Mr. Leslie, have you mesmerized a tiger?' If you were a yoga teacher, what would you do? 'Of course, I can mesmerize a lot more than a tiger.'

You see how an unnecessary problem has been created. This problem was not with me at all. I was not interested in this kind of thing. I picked up a book which said that yogis can mesmerize tigers, and so I go looking for a tiger. Someone comes to me, a good friend, probably he is able to teach me some yoga postures, fix my bad knee or bad back, but the only question I ask him and the only thing I am interested in is 'can you handle a tiger?' If he says 'no', what kind of yogi is he?

This is what we do, unfortunately, most of the time. I am not looking at the problem of living itself, the problem that I am creating for myself all the time. It is possible that in the life of that particular yogi, his problem was meeting a tiger. It is quite possible that he was living in a forest where there were many tigers and every morning he had to deal with a tiger; so, he learned the art of mesmerizing tigers. Why must I do that?

When I begin to practice yoga, when I think of yoga, the only thing that seems to be relevant is: can this practice, can this technique, can this yoga, enable me to overcome the miserable life I am leading? Can it make some change there? Can it bring about some change within me, can it change me or abolish the 'me'? That has to be done, so that I do not create a problem for myself, nor do I become a problem to others. In the 'Bhagavad Gita', the 'Song of God', there is a lovely verse: 'He who does not hurt others' - and what is even more important - 'He who is not capable of being hurt, he is a yogi.' Can you live in such a way that you are not hurt and you do not hurt?

The two together are important, not just one. It is easy for you to practice one and not the other. It is possible for me not to be hurt. I become wooden-hearted, cruel, aggressive and blame others for all that I do, for all that happens to me. And so, before you even open your mouth to insult me or to annoy me, I stop you. That is possible. By hurting you I do not get hurt. Or it is possible for me not to hurt you at all and every time you insult me or hit me I lock myself in the bathroom and start weeping there. I am hurt all the time. Very often either of these is possible and very often either of these is practiced in the name of something or other. I become a Guru and discipline all of you 'Thou shalt' and 'Thou shalt not', hurting you all the time so that you are frightened of me and you do not hurt me anymore, you worship me. All that is possible. In the name of 'ahimsa' you grind your teeth and you say, 'I do not want to hurt anybody', and you even look for insult and injury, because otherwise you cannot turn the other cheek. I turn the other cheek only when I am kissed on one cheek, then I suddenly turn the other cheek, not when you hit me.

Is it possible to live in such a way that I am not hurt and I do not hurt? Life is not a burden and I am not a burden on life. This is my new definition of what is called 'enlightenment'. The enlightened person is light. The handkerchief is light, you cannot use it as a flashlight but it is light in the sense that it is not heavy. And what does 'enlightenment' mean? 'Enlightenment' means that this person is able to go through life 'lightly'. He is not a burden on others and others do not become a burden on him. Is that possible?

The snag here is again the tiger. Because I am going to be asked, 'What are your credentials - as a yogi, what can you do, can you fly in the air?' Of course, I buy a plane ticket: the problem with this yoga of 'enlightenment' that we are discussing here is, that you become just an ordinary person. You are not someone extraordinary. That is clear, isn't it? You cannot go about saying, 'I am an extraordinary person, I saw Krishna come through that window and Jesus Christ walk out through this window, and I saw the spirits of my great-grandfather enter into here, I heard voices and noises and saw visions'. You cannot do that. You are just an ordinary person. You do not have these extraordinary experiences. Is that all this yoga is going to teach me? Perhaps disappointed I go into my prayer room and suddenly see another kind of light. This light is called 'insight'.

I will tell you a little story. Perhaps you have read a few anecdotes, interesting little stories attributed to Mullah Nasrudhin. This is one of them. This mystic called Mullah Nasrudhin had gone to a friend's house and they were sitting and chatting. It was probably in a little village which had no electricity. As it was getting dark, the other fellow called out to Mullah, 'Hey, it is getting dark, we cannot see each other. Light a candle, you will find it near your right hand'. The Mullah replied, 'If it is dark and you cannot see, how do I know where my right hand is?'

How do you know where your right hand is when it is dark? This is a very serious

question. When it is totally dark and you get out of bed you do not see anything. How do you know you are walking forward and not sideways? You can do that now, just after the meeting. Ask yourself: 'How do I know I am going forward and not sideways?' Just like that. You can see now, but when your eyes are bandaged - how do you know? That is the inner light, it is quite simple, you see. There is a light that enables you to know in the darkness. You do not see yourself, you do not see your body. In that inner light I suddenly see something fantastic: It is the craving to be other than an ordinary human being that makes for all my troubles. What is the problem of a business man? He is not as rich and wealthy as his neighbour. What is the problem of this young man here? He is not the no. 1 person in his college. What is the problem of this young girl? Her pictures do not appear in the newspaper, she is not as famous as that movie star. Drop it. It is because of this persistent craving to become conspicuous, to become extraordinary, that I am in trouble. I create trouble for myself and I trouble others, I compete with others.

By merely taking that craving away, yoga has taken all my sorrow away. It is a tragedy that coming into this field of yoga I am once again creating the same problem that I created outside. It was the ambition to become wealthy, to become more this and that, which caused my problems: headaches, tension, frustration, etc.etc. Now I come into this yoga and once again create the same problem for myself. 'I want to become an extraordinary yogi, not the ordinary type, oh no'. That's it. That was your problem to begin with. Do not create it here again. Here, all that I want is to become completely simple, completely ordinary, face the problem within, see and realize that it is this persistent craving for pleasure, profit and power that creates all problems. I do not want them any more in any form whatsoever. It is when you begin to look at the source of these problems within yourself, that you start to meditate. Meditation is, of course, regarded as the very heart of yoga, the very essence of yoga.

About twenty or thirty years ago everyone thought yoga was some kind of magic cult, now it is considered to be another gymnastic cult. You have heard that, haven't you? 'Keep fit', 'keep fit cult', 'fitness cult', etc. It is a funny thing. As you have probably guessed, English is not my mother-tongue, I learned it at school. I am always intrigued, puzzled and often worried when one word is used in different senses, in different contexts. Take the word 'light'. I really would like to know why this is called 'light' - Swamiji holds up a handkerchief - and why this is called 'light' - Swamiji points to the light bulb. In the same way, when it comes to this word 'fit', we used to have this problem. We used to have ink bottles when we were at school, and sometimes we lost the cork. We used to go looking for a cork and we were told that the cork had to 'fit' the bottle, otherwise the ink leaked when the cork would not close the bottle. So, 'fitting' means that, doesn't it? We have a bottle and we find a cork to 'fit' that bottle. Now I am supposed to be 'fit'. What do I 'fit' into?

The one who is 'fit' is not a bully who goes around hitting everybody else. 'Oh, he is very fit, look at him, look at his muscles, his arms, look at his thighs and legs.'

Frightening. That is not what is called 'fitness'. To be 'fit', if I am to be 'fit', I must be capable of fitting perfectly into any situation in which I find myself. This means that you are a good mother or a good father, that you are a good husband or a good wife, you are a good citizen and a good leader, whatever be your situation, you 'fit'. It is not a physical thing, this 'fitness', I do not believe in it. But you use the expression and I borrow it from you.

If you enjoy physical fitness, it is possible for you to satisfy the first definition of yoga that I gave you: that you do not become a burden on others and others do not become a burden on you. The following question you probably pose also, 'is the person who practices yoga asanas every morning to keep fit and to be free from illnesses not a selfish person?' I say 'no'. He is the most unselfish person who seeks to be healthy. The sick person demands attention all the time. The sick person is selfish. 'I want somebody to give me a sponge bath, I want somebody to get me breakfast in bed', etc. Whereas if I am healthy I am able to serve others. So, even physical fitness is important only because it enables you to 'fit' into the society in such a way that you are not a burden on others, and others are not a burden on you. Can I find a life where I do not create a problem for others, and others are not allowed to create a problem for me? This is yoga.

Maybe some of you are wondering, 'Is it possible for me to achieve this state of enlightenment in the society in which we are living, in this modern 'lightless' society?' Yes - unless you are lightless yourself. If you are lightless yourself, then I suppose it is impossible, because you are creating problems all the time. If you are not, it is possible. How do I know it is possible? From the observation of my own daily life, and my life is not extraordinary. My life is not different from this gentleman's here, except that probably he is working and I am not working. Except that, there is absolutely no difference between him and me. I also eat, I also drink and sleep, exactly as this man does. By observing my own ordinary most simple daily life, I discover a wonderful truth: that there is a time, a period in our daily life when we measure up to this marvellous description of yoga, when 'I do not hurt you and I am not hurt', when I am asleep. When you are fast asleep - not when you are dreaming, but when you are fast asleep, you are not hurt and you do not hurt. A thought just crossed my mind, which I will share with you. It is possible that you throw your leg over your husband's neck, but you do not do it intentionally, not to hurt him. Such things happen in life.

There is a period in my daily life where I know I do not hurt and I am not hurt - when I sleep. If that is clear, then it becomes immediately abundantly clear why we are asked to meditate early in the morning. I shall tell you in a few minutes that meditation is not a sort of exercise. Why we are asked to indulge in this exercise early in the morning is, because then and there it is possible, and I repeat, it is just possible to become aware of the arising - the birth - of the problem right at its very source. You can do it now, however it takes a bit of effort and study. But, early in the morning, it is very easy for one to become aware of the arising of the problem at its very source. You may still be in bed, stirring, sleep is coming to an end. What does it matter if sleep comes to an end? I was

alive in sleep, I was breathing, circulation was going on, the heart was beating and perhaps some part of my brain was also awake, I do not know, so that if the blanket fell off, you somehow pulled it up, covered your legs, even though you were not mentally aware. Something was awake, something was alive, something very intelligently managed the functioning of the organs of the body. When I was asleep I was not even thinking I was asleep. Everything went on fine, beautifully. Now sleeps come to an end.

What wakes up when sleep comes to an end? Whatever it is that wakes up then is also responsible for ruining my life. This I see very clearly, do not you? You and I are sleeping under the same roof. You do not insult me and I do not insult you. You are not hurt by me and I am not hurt by you. Sleep comes to an end and immediately the troubles start. If he is my son he is supposed to get up very early - you know - study for his exams. 'What. You are still sleeping?' As soon as you open your eyes, must you start barking? Could you not have waited just a little while? Must you start all your tensions and quarrels and fights as soon as you wake up?

Now, what is it that wakes up when sleep comes to an end? The problem seems to be there. Therefore we are asked to meditate or practice a technique at that hour. In India there are lucky superstitions to help us wake up at that time. They say there is a flock of angels flying carrying pots of nectar and if you get up at half past four in the morning and look out, it is possible that one drop of nectar might slip from there. I know that there is a similar superstition among Christians, something connected with angels. If you look at them early in the morning, they will bless you and you will have a long life and all that. We have these superstitions in all cultures and in all religions. They all thought we could be easily tempted to get up early in the morning - and if you did get up at half past four or five o'clock in the morning you would have nothing else to do but to sit and meditate - there was nothing better to do. I am saying this, because I knew of at least one Swami Sivananda who regularly got up at exactly four o'clock in the morning. What did He do? He answered His business correspondence and on Fridays and Saturdays He worked out on what horse to bet. He said that it's the best time of the day, the brain is cool and the mind is clear. What I am implying is that it's not automatic that you will want to meditate if you happen to get up at that time.

I must be interested, I must begin to wonder. I do not know if you are familiar with the word 'mysticism'? He is a 'mystic'. A real mystic is an ordinary person. A real mystic is not an extraordinary person who jumps up and down, dances, rolls around and does all kinds of things. A real mystic is your baby. In the life of that little infant or baby, there is an unceasing wonder. So, I translate 'mysticism' as 'unceasing wonder'. I am fast asleep. I do not know that there is a thing called the 'world'. I do not know that I exist and - this is very important - I do not even think I am sleeping. While you were sleeping you did not even think you were sleeping.

May I give you another expression - if you will forgive its faultiness. Try to

understand the spirit of the expression 'sleep and you have become one'. Does it make sense? That is yoga. You have heard that yoga is defined as union. When sleep and you had become totally as one, when you did not even think that you were asleep you created no problem for yourself and you created no problem for others. What does this mean? What does this imply? What does this lead us to? It leads us to just one inevitable conclusion: that whenever and wherever this happens there is no division in my mind, there is no division in my consciousness, there is peace, there is yoga.

If you can think of one incident in your daily life, when you had so completely and totally forgotten yourself, when you were not even thinking 'I am doing this', when there was total wholeness within yourself, at that moment there was union, there was yoga. Perhaps you can see many situations in which this thing could happen. Especially those of you who have had babies, you must know this. There is a totalness, a wholeness, when you do not even know 'I am happy'. That's it. That's terribly important. When you think you are enjoying yourself, when you think you are happy, when there is an object you are enjoying - then you are already frightened that it will not last, that it will go away.

This happens to me all the time, and I am sure it happens to many of you, especially those of you who do not live with parents, boyfriend or girlfriend, husband or wife, etc. When I go somewhere they say: 'Hello Swami, how are you? It is so nice to see you. How long are you going to stay? When are you leaving? Oh. What a pity.' Why do not you enjoy the fact that I am here now? Since there is the thought that I am enjoying your company, that thought is accompanied at the same time, simultaneously, with the unexpressed thought of fear that I am going to lose you. It is only when I do not even think that I am enjoying - that I am really and truly enjoying.

When there is that total union within oneself, in which there is not even a distinction between the experiencer and the experience, when I am not even aware that I am happy, then I am completely happy. This is what happens to you in sleep. When you wake up, what is it that disturbs? What is it that interferes with you? Thought. What is thought? Mind. What is mind?

I wake up with this wonder and that wonder is mysticism - the rest is mistake. Can you raise this wonder in your heart? It does not need anything whatsoever, you do not have to be a scholar, nothing at all, absolutely nothing. Can you revive this wonder which you had when you were infants, babies? It is, I repeat, easier to do this in the morning when sleep or that period in which there was wholeness, comes to an end - and something else wakes up. The 'thing' that wakes up begins to create endless seas of problems - till - once again, God puts us to sleep. Thank you God.

There must be a very special lesson in sleep. You know why? If you maintain a log book and enter into it all that you do, all the different pleasures you enjoy, all the different types of work you engage yourself in: your music and your yoga -

standing on your head, standing on your feet, etc.etc. and you calculate the time spent on all these activities, you will be shocked to find that the maximum number of hours spent on a single project is in bed, sleeping. We are such marvellous, intelligent creatures, highly cultured, highly civilized, so industrious - yet, everybody spends the maximum time in bed, sleeping. One can do without company, without food, without water, one can do without nearly everything, except sleep. You prevent a man from sleeping for three days and he becomes non-man, nonhuman. There must be a lesson in that. What is it? It is there that you regain that purity, that wholeness. Can we, in the same way, regain that wonderment and examine what this sleep is? When that sleep ends, how do these divisions arise? Can I be like a baby and begin to wonder - what happened to that peace of mind that I enjoyed only a minute ago, why must I suddenly become terribly anxious as if the whole world rests on my shoulders - 'without me this is going to happen; if I do not do this, that will happen', and so on. All that could have happened at night, while you were asleep, there could have been a flood, there could have been an earth quake.

Can I revive this wonderment right at the moment of waking up in the morning? Keep it simple. If you complicate it then you are complicated. I splash some water on my face, that's optional, and sit down. That's not optional, there is only one way, you cannot 'sit up', you can only sit down. 'Sit' means 'down' already. Then just begin to wonder: what was that sleep? When sleep came to an end, what started the problem?

What do you need for this? You need the ability to look within. Therefore a technique is provided. The technique is not meditation. Meditation is not a technique. Meditation cannot be taught. Meditation is not a method. Meditation is not in books. The word 'meditation' is, yes, make no mistake. All the dictionaries in the world contain the word 'meditation', nothing more. Just as the dictionaries contain the word 'meditation', books also contain the word 'meditation'. But that is not meditation, techniques, descriptions, are not meditation. Meditation must happen when you begin to wonder. This wonder may not be tangible, so they introduced a technique.

If you do not like these techniques, do not bother, tickle your own foot. Five minutes ago, if someone had gently tickled my foot, I would not even have noticed it. Now I notice it. How come? What is it that enables me to experience? What is 'tickling'? Where is the sensation experienced? What is the relation between me and that experience? That's all, you have got it. If you do not want to tickle your own foot, I will give you a mantra. This is inner tickling, internal tickling. What is a mantra? An internal tickling. I am not joking. You know that a clock ticks and internally the mantra is tick-ling. The mantra goes: tick, tick, tick - Om, Om, Om. 'Ah, now I see another kind of fun'. You must enjoy it - and you must have this wonder. There is nothing serious about it or maybe, there is too much seriousness about it.

You know this - Swamiji claps, one palm hits the other and a sound is produced.

Om - I know exactly how this sound is produced; there is air in my lungs and there is a little membrane in the throat and when the air is pushed out through that membrane, the membrane flutters and a sound is produced. Good. Now my teacher says: 'Repeat the mantra mentally'. What does he mean 'repeat the mantra mentally'? This is also very simple and it must be absolutely clear. In order to keep the clarity of the question, it must be made simple and one must not assume that one knows the meaning. If she says: 'Swami, pick up this handkerchief with your fingers', I do it. 'Here you are'. She continues: 'Drop it, can you pick it up with the fingers of your left hand?' 'Here you are'. She says: 'Swami, drop it, try to pick it up with your foot'. 'Alright, here you are'. But now she says: 'Pick it up with your mind'. That is what she said. So, when someone says 'repeat the mantra mentally', you assume you know what it means. I do not: in yoga, not a single thing is taken for granted or assumed. If you do so, you will destroy the whole thing. Just as you destroy your own relationships with others by assuming.

The boy is in love with the girl and they are courting. They are terribly conscious of each other. They get married - and one takes the other for granted. The moment you take something for granted, it is gone. You have let it slip through your fingers. In yoga, if something is not clear, stay there, work at it. 'Om'.

This is vocal repetition of a mantra. What does 'mentally repeating a mantra' mean? Where is the mind? Immediately you begin to meditate. Can I pick up this handkerchief with my right hand if I do not know where my right hand is or where the handkerchief is? Then how can I 'repeat a mantra mentally', if I do not know where the mind is? When you think you are mentally repeating a mantra, you are tickling yourself internally. Where is this tickling going on? Can you look at it? Can you mentally repeat your Mantra 'Om' and see exactly where this tickling happens? Where - here? No. In the ears? No. In the brain? In the heart? In the lungs? In the abdomen? Where does it happen? You tell yourself: 'Maybe it is happening in the throat - it seems to happen in the throat - some people say that meditation happens in the heart - maybe it is happening in my heart?' It could not all be true. And you continue: 'The typical yogis say that the deepest and real meditation takes place when you repeat your mantra in the solar plexus - let me see - I am the highest form of yogi, yes!'. And then you think: 'No, the Swami said something about tickling the foot, maybe the mantra is happening there?'

What does this mean? It only means that I am thinking I am mentally repeating the mantra. It is at this point that meditation starts. When you begin to watch, 'Where does this happen?', it is simple wonder. You can choose any mantra you like, you can choose any form.

There was a great sage in India a few years ago who said: 'Keep repeating 'I am''. Probably you have heard other masters say: 'I want you to repeat 'Coca-cola'. No harm. But please do it mentally. We have taken the word 'know' to mean 'I know this is a handkerchief, it is not part of me, it is an object which is outside - I know

this is a young man and I know this is paper'. Those of you who have been to medical schools know if you tickle a frog you can see if it is still alive. You wanted to kill it, but it is still living. If somebody is lying there, apparently not even breathing, and as a doctor or a nurse you go and listen to the heart-beat, you decide that that person is still living. How do you know you are alive? If someone said: 'Hey, Swami. You are dead', how do I know I am alive? Whether I am in bed or whether I am walking, whether I am moving or whether I am not moving, I know all the time that I am alive. How do I know this? What is that knowledge? That knowledge is different.

Knowledge that this is a handkerchief and knowledge that I am alive, these are two totally different concepts. What does it mean to know I am alive? It is in that sense that the word 'know' is used in the Bible: Adam 'knew' Eve means that at that moment there was not even a consciousness or awareness of an individual personality and, therefore, not an awareness of an object. As soon as they knew the sense in which we are still looking at each other, they became ashamed. That's it. At that point 'Adam knew Eve' meant there was no ego-sense at all, it was a state of self-transcendence.

There are moments in our daily life when this happens. Therefore however much you may struggle to get to this point, it has to happen, because as long as this struggle lasts the thought is there, the effort is there and the division between the experience and the experiencer is there.

Audience: Let me ask you a question. Can you practice Christianity and yoga at the same time? I am confused. I read your book 'The Song of God' and it is really beautiful. I try to understand it and then sometimes I read the Bible and I get all confused.

Swamiji: Can I be a Hindu and travel 'Air Canada'? Does it alter your Christianity or your faith if you ask yourself early in the morning, 'My God, why am I worried now, why am I anxious, why am I angry, why am I disturbed, why have I lost my peace of mind?'

The practice of yoga can only be hostile or antagonistic to any religion that says: 'Please, as soon as you wake up in the morning, get worried, anxious, frightened and confused - thou shalt be confused every morning, thou shalt be vicious to your parents, your husband, your wife.' Any religion that commands that would be hostile or antagonistic to yoga.

Audience: That is not really what I mean. I sort of believe in reincarnation.

Swamiji : You do not have to.

Audience: But I do.

Swamiji: Do you want to?

Audience: Yes, I want to.

Swamiji: Alright.

Audience: I talk to different people, but they think I am crazy.

Swamiji: That is a very common thing in this world, my dear. Every crazy person thinks the other person is crazy. What do you do? Thank you.

Not to be hurt and not to hurt. This means that you have your own belief, your opinions, your thoughts, your concerns - and so have I. That's all. It is quite simple. Here, once again, I think yoga will help me not to be worried about what other people think, even of me. It may enable you not to be so sensitive, but still keep your Christian faith, any faith you have.

As a matter of fact, I have just now completed the translation of a famous Sanskrit text which includes this theory of reincarnation from a completely different point of view.

There is a book which Mrs. Rosino brought me a few days ago, 'Life after Life'. It is coming. Most of the stories in it come from Christians, very devout Christians. 'Life after Life', that has been my contention all along, though I could not put it in such a beautiful expression. Life is incapable of dying, that's all.

'What happens afterwards?' is again an absurd question, because what do you mean 'afterwards'? Life does not die at all, what then is 'afterwards'?

If you want to take up the practice of yoga seriously, you do not upset anyone's belief, you do not touch it, it is too sacred, his faith is too sacred for me. He can be anything: atheist, agnostic, anything at all. We are merely asking: 'Are you worried, confused, disturbed - there is a way in which that disturbance can be taken care of.' 'Are you unhappy? There is a way in which you can deal with the problem of sorrow.'

St Catherines - July 27th, 1976

Mantra

When there is understanding of the spirit of yoga - that itself becomes action. You have heard the expression 'living truth'. What is living truth? When your life is lived not by your mind, your emotions, your cravings, by your fears and your anxieties, but when the whole life is lived by - not governed by - truth, that is 'living truth'. Whenever I read the following statement in the bible: 'The word was with God and the word was God, and the word was made flesh'. I find this a very beautiful and meaningful expression. I do not know how it is interpreted by you. It does not say 'God made flesh', but 'the word was made flesh'.

If I listen to my Master's teaching in such a manner that it enters into every cell of my being, every particle of life that may constitute what is called 'my intelligence', that becomes 'me', or what I have been thinking of as 'me'. As it is now at present, what becomes flesh? Bread and butter, potatoes and tomatoes. That is what constitutes the flesh. Can one listen to the Master's teaching in such a manner, that it is properly digested and assimilated? The word 'assimilate' means 'as similar to', so that this becomes similar to that. 'This' refers to the body, the mind, the personality, the ego, whatever you wish to call it, the Jiva, the soul, etc. Can that teaching permeate the entire being so that from there on - if the flesh still continues to be - it is no longer made of cabbage which is nothing more than recycled garbage - but it is 'the word made flesh'.

When the spirit of yoga is assimilated in that manner, then the question we usually ask each other does not arise. The question is, 'Oh, I have understood all that, Swamiji, what must I do now?' - Let's say this girl here has brought a bulging bag in and she happens to throw its contents on the floor which happens to be a rattle snake, would you stand there and say: 'Yes, I understand this here is a rattle snake, what must I do now?' You would run so fast I wouldn't even see your face. When there is understanding, the question 'what must I do' does not arise. This is the only purpose of what is called 'theory' and is really meant in the sense in which the word is used, knowledge.

A wonderful man once wrote to my Guru, Swami Sivananda, that he had been meditating for years and years, had seen lights and shadows, had seen visions, heard sounds, etc. One day, my Master received this letter from him: 'Swamiji, I am in the highest state of consciousness, Nirvikalpa Samadhi, what must I do now?' When the question 'what must I do now?' arises, it means the spirit has not been imbibed, assimilated, the truth has not been understood at all. We are vain enough to think that we are educated, literate, just because we are able to hear and listen to the words and the words 'make sense to us'. You know what 'makes sense' means? That I am not deaf.' The sound strikes the sense of hearing and then you are able to hear and relate these words to the meanings of those words that I learned at school. That's all, no more than that.

But that is not understanding at all, that is brain pollution. Before you came here, at least these words had not been heard by you and your brain was purer to that extent. Now that you are hearing these words, a little more pollution is entering the brain, unless you refuse to grasp these words with your senses and mind. Is that possible? If I do not grasp these statements, these words with the senses - eyes, ears etc.. or with the brain - then they reach somewhere else where they become assimilated. It is possible these words make no sense at all - that is good. It is possible they are puzzling - that is good. It is possible they are confusing - that is even better.

You know what 'confusing' means? Fusing. When two things come together and fuse properly, when the positive and the negative come together, then there is light. When does one feel confused? When there is a pig-headed, obstinate idea which does not want to go, i.e. 'this is the truth, nothing else is truth.' When this pig-headed idea is confronted by a new thought there is confusion, because that pig-head get agitated since it feels threatened. However, without getting confused, there is no enlightenment. I am playing with a toy and someone is placing before me something more interesting. I must have the courage to look at it without getting agitated, without trying to grasp it with the senses, without trying to say that I understand - because I do not understand. What is understood or grasped by the mind is pollution. There is one thing called food which, when it is properly eaten and digested becomes assimilated, it becomes like you. There is something else, a toxic substance which is not only not assimilated but which poisons the system. One must learn to distinguish between these two. So, what is grasped by the mind is pollution. When it is neither grasped by the mind nor the brain - when the mind is kept completely open - then assimilation takes place. I am neither accepting nor rejecting your teaching - I am digesting it. When will it be properly digested? It is quite simple: if the food is just right and related to your body, if it is eaten at the right time when there is an appetite, when the digestive system is efficient, then it is digested, assimilated. In exactly the same way the spiritual truth is assimilated: when it is related to you, when your system is efficient and mature, when there is this hunger, this appetite for that spiritual food.

If a certain teaching 'makes sense to me' and creates an illusion that I understand: it is not assimilated, it is thrown out. There was a wonderful philosopher in India. Once he visited our Ashram and gave us a new concept. He said that there are philosophers in the world today who could appropriately be called 'eustachian philosophers'. What is an 'eustachian philosopher'? The tube that connects the throat with the inner ear is called 'eustachian tube'. An 'eustachian philosopher' is one who hears a number of talks here and there, the ideas and concepts of the words enter his ears and they come out through the mouth. Why so? Because there is this illusion within oneself that one has understood, 'it makes sense'. When there is this illusion that something is understood, you talk. You heard something and you have instant mastership, become an instant teacher. It is such a nuisance to be a student - and, of course - if you believe in reincarnation and you 'realize' that you have been a student

through so many births.

One of the Upanishads says after giving some kind of instruction: 'If you think you have understood, you are a fool, because if you have really understood, you may not want to say 'I have understood'.'

You look at your own beautiful face in the mirror - can you recognize a tomato sticking here and bread and butter somewhere else? All that has become you, totally indistinguishably one with you. That is beautiful. You are no longer able to say: 'Oh yes, the tomatoes are in my cheeks'. When the truth is assimilated, you are not even able to say, 'I know this', it is the truth that lives, it is the truth that speaks, it is the truth that breathes, it is 'living truth'. When this happens, one does not ask, 'I have understood what meditation is, what you say 'makes sense' - what must I do now?'

The teacher of yoga is compassionate and when an immature or semi-mature person goes to him for help, he helps. Your health food stores, chemists and pharmacists carry what is called 'predigested food'. We do not have to digest it, just swallow it and it is digested. It comes already 'pre-digested' in the bottle from the factory, that's all. So, the Masters gave what may be considered 'pre-digested' food. But I prefer to think of these techniques, given to us by the Masters - as capsules. You have probably heard of vitamin capsules - vitamin 'E' - maybe you even take it. It is a gelatin-like thing and inside is some powder or liquid. The contents is probably not very tasty and so they put it into these capsules. The importance of this capsule is that the material of it is assimilable, digestible. It is dissolved in your system. The capsule which you swallow is perhaps not made of the medicine that you are supposed to take, the capsule being a vehicle. But the capsule is made of some substance which the body can digest and eliminate properly, unlike a bullet, for example. A bullet also looks like a capsule, but if you take it - if you are lucky - it passes right through. It is a capsule of a different kind, it is an unassimilable capsule. Some capsules are assimilable, some are unassimilable.

Most of the yoga meditation techniques are of the assimilable capsule variety. One has to be very careful here. Even a little baby, if you give it a little bit of chocolate, wrapped up, will put it in its mouth and spit the little piece of wrapping out, after having sucked the chocolate out of the cellophane paper. This is of the second variety, the unassimilable capsule.

These are the two types of meditation techniques given to us when we approach these teachers. When we are mature the teacher will probably say: 'Look at your nose - what do you see there - who is it that sees it?', slapping the whole enquiry back unto itself. This is the direct method. Ramana Maharshi was of that type and many of the Zen masters are reported to use that technique. You all have heard the famous story of the young man who went to the great Master. He waited outside his house for days on end - being buried in snow - when the Master opened his eyes he asked in a harsh voice: 'What do you want?' 'Oh

Master, please destroy my mind.' 'Give it, give it to me so that I can destroy it.'
'But Master, I cannot see it.' 'I have destroyed it.'

That is the direct method. Whenever anybody went to Ramana Maharshi with any problem - maybe a headache - he would say: 'Is that your head?' 'Yes.' - 'Are you sure? Why do not you enquire and see if this is really your head or whether it belongs to somebody else - it came out of your mother - it probably belongs to your mother.' This is the direct approach, turning the question, the quest upon itself, see from where the whole thing comes. This is suitable only for extremely mature people, who just need one little spark to set them ablaze. If I do not belong to that category, I am semi-mature. I will be given the technique in an assimilable capsule. The same technique becomes unassimilable if I put it in a nice little metal container and swallow it. It will pass right through, lucky for me.

I hope you are following this, it is quite simple. While giving you the meditation in an assimilable capsule called a technique, they hoped that you would be at least as intelligent as this little baby, chew the chocolate and throw the covering out, or, do not pay too much attention to the capsule itself but assimilate the medicine. Otherwise it becomes a rigid dogma, a rigid doctrine, a rigid ritual, a superstition. They hoped that you would be intelligent enough. They gave the student a mantra. What is a mantra? 'Oh, it is a secret.' Yes, it is a secret. It is a tremendous secret. Why is it regarded as a secret? So that we may not analyze it. It is something to be assimilated, it is something which I may need to use to achieve self-redemption. When a mantra is contemplated it leads to self-redemption, therefore it is a mantra. The commandment to keep it a secret might also have arisen from another meaning of the word mantra. It is a simple word. Pick up a sanskrit dictionary, you will probably find about 10 or 15 different meanings to this word, some of them totally unrelated to what we are discussing. mantra may even mean 'wise counsel'. It can also refer to conspiracy. A 'mantri' is a minister - cabinet minister, government minister, and the advice that he tenders to the king is also called 'mantra' and it is also top secret. It is quite possible that these considerations govern the secrecy that usually surrounds a thing called 'mantra'. Most mantras can be found in books. What is so secret about them? But then, most human figures in books wear clothes, as though one did not know what is inside. That's it. It is a secret from one point of view and it is public from another point of view. We know what a human body looks like, but we do not know exactly what that particular body looks like. We know what mantras are, but you do not know what 'my' mantra is. Even if there are a dozen mantras, you do not know what 'my' mantra is'. That is a secret.

What is a mantra? A mantra is anything which, when contemplated, leads to self-redemption. My Guru Swami Sivananda only emphasized the repetition of a mantra when it came to a technique for meditation. He never bothered about detailing meditation techniques. 'mantra - repeat the mantra - repeat the mantra mentally.' Can I repeat the mantra mechanically and yet learn how to meditate? If that were possible, this tape-recorder here would be meditating. So, somewhere along the line this capsule which is the mantra, which contains the secret of

meditation, must dissolve and meditation must be revealed. If that is not done, you are swallowing the candy with the cellophane paper in which it came and it will pass right through.

A good friend of mine used to sit in front of his altar and repeat 'Om Namah Sivaya, Om Namah Sivaya, when is breakfast ready? Om Namah Sivaya, Om Namah Sivaya'. You know, it is a wonderful exercise for the jaws, it is possible it will cure a sore throat, it is very good. It is like the capsule, nicely wrapped, and you swallow it. That which it contains - your medicine - is not assimilated and it passes right through. He probably did this for about 30 or 40 years and he died, and 'Om Namah Sivaya' also died. That is the totally immature person. In his case it becomes a dull, routine ritual with no meaning whatsoever.

It is not assimilated - it could even become poisonous at some stage, where you begin to ask, 'What are you doing?', and the other person answers, 'I am repeating a mantra'. You say, 'Nonsense, who is your master?' 'My master is Swami X'. 'Nonsense. My master he gave me a mantra and I swallowed it, my God, it's there, it's solid, it is still passing through my intestines, I can feel it.' We become vicious, aggressive, spiteful, disgusting, jealous beings, misusing the very thing that was given to us to redeem. Damning myself instead of redeeming myself. That is when the unassimilated capsule becomes toxic, a menace, a poison to me and to others. I must realize that this is a mantra which was given to me by my Guru in order that with its help I may learn how to meditate. He said, 'Repeat it mentally'. What did he mean 'mentally'? How do I know that I am repeating it mentally? So, you sit down and from now on you practice whatever he said. Perhaps you may glimpse some truth. 'I hear it. I hear it.' That is the only proof that I am repeating it mentally. Please, note this very carefully, I can be sure that I am repeating this mantra mentally only when it is clearly audible within me, all the time. If your mind is not concentrated, you will not be able to hear. Please, try this. You are repeating your mantra mentally - if you are listening to the mantra you hear the mantra - when you are listening to the noise outside, you are not listening to the mantra - and so it is lost. But then, when I am listening to the noise outside, what can I do? My mind is distracted.

I will tell you a little story. A young couple, both of whom were born and brought up in a little village, migrated to the big city, New York. They were not accustomed to large crowds, high-rise apartment buildings, etc. One day, the young man came home from work and found his wife miserable. He asked her, 'My dear, what has happened to you?' She answered, 'You do not know how bad the big city is. You go away and I am left here all alone. There is a young man over there, he is vicious. He is looking at me all the time with wicked eyes and evil intentions.' What would you have said and done? Roll up your sleeves and start fighting with that man? This fellow did not do that. He said, 'He is looking at you all the time, how do you know?'

Does that sound which is outside jump at you and say, 'Listen to me'? Or does the mind get interested in it and the attention wanders away? Let us say, I am

meditating and somebody walks in front of me - I am meditating with my eyes open. Watch carefully; does that distract me? Or, while you are meditating a child starts to cry and continues crying - watch very carefully - does the crying of the baby disturb you or is it the thought, 'My God, why does that baby have to cry now?' that is disturbing and distracting you. In other words, is the distraction there or is the distraction in your reaction to what is happening outside? It does not take long to realize that it is your own reaction to what happens outside that is distracting you, the distraction is not outside.

So, I come back to the question, 'How do I know I am repeating the mantra?' Because I can hear it. At that point, you have found out for yourself what has been described in thousands of books with the help of millions of words, one small concept called 'concentration' or 'dharana'. This concentration cannot be learned, cannot be taught from books - you must experience it within yourself. How to do it? The Master gives you a technique. Or, if you pick up a book on raja yoga, you can find out about other techniques how to achieve this concentration. I am not saying that repeating a mantra is the only method, please understand this very carefully.

There is concentration, total concentration. In that concentration you discover that the mind is not glued - the attention is flowing towards the mantra. The mantra itself is constant flow. The mantra is not like a black dot on a wall and you sit there and stare at it - the mantra is something which is moving, flowing, and your attention tries to follow it and listen to it.

Patanjali says very beautifully, 'There is a flow of thought - there is a movement in the mind - but it is restricted. Instead of thinking of a million things, you think of that one thing called a mantra.'

One exercise - 'technique' if you wish to call it that - which has been found very effective, is counting. Count from one to a million. If counting 1, 2, 3 looks like primary school, count om 1, om 1, om 3 ... mystical school. With the inhalation say, 'Om 1, and with the exhalation 'Om 2, inhalation 'Om 3, exhalation 'Om 4, etc. Now if you do not like that, merely count each inhalation and forget the exhalation, or count the exhalation and not the inhalation, but please count. When you come to 7.239, then you will be afraid that one little shifting of your attention is going to ruin your counting. That is a very good method.

With the help of some of these methods, you try merely to restrict the movement of the mind so that the attention does not wander into millions of thoughts. There is still a flow, the mind does not come to a dead stop. At a psychological moment - what I am saying must happen and it will happen, if you are awake and alert, the thought arises 'Euh, this is funny, I am repeating the mantra, and I am also hearing it.' You have heard expressions like, 'I pity myself', 'I hate myself', 'I dislike myself'. Which one is you? The one that is hating or the one that is hated?

Self-hate - I do not understand, I do not know what it is. Somebody comes up to

me and says, 'I hate myself, Swami'. Which one is you? This one or that one? Am I the hater or am I the hated? A similar problem arises when I repeat my mantra and I hear it. Which one is me? Am I repeating the mantra or am I the one that listens to the mantra? I am one and yet there seems to be a division in this one. Am I one or two? If you are not alert and vigilant and if your attention is not moving in the right direction, you suddenly discover: 'I am repeating the mantra, I am hearing it', you step behind and from there you see, 'I am repeating the mantra, I am also listening to the mantra, and I am different from both these.' You are not moving in the right direction, you are moving away from the problem. What I am really asking myself is, 'Which one is me, which one is the Self? Am I repeating the mantra or am I listening to the mantra?'

Instead of this, I duck the issue and I say, 'O no, I am the silent witness of all this.' You are not. The expression 'silent witness' was used in a very different sense, not in the sense of merely isolating yourself or disconnecting yourself from this question. How do I know I am repeating the mantra? If I am repeating the mantra, why do I hear it? How do I hear it? How can I be here and repeat the mantra and how can I be there and listen to the mantra? This is absurd.

From here on you enter into meditation. From here on you discover that there is no technique, no path, no way, no help, you are all on your own. You are there already. When this question arises within you, you are there already. Beyond that, only God's Grace can help you, because who is going to answer this question? The question arises, the question has to arise, 'Which one is me? How can there be a division in this one 'me'?' When the light of meditation shines brightly on this and, unable to verbalize and intellectualize an answer, the only answer that seems to be honest is, 'I do not know.'

So, we are trapped. I do not know how it is possible to mentally repeat the mantra and to hear it. We are not looking for an explanation but we are looking for the answer, the truth. The truth is, 'I do not know'. When you are trapped in this, in the direct realization of, 'I do not know'. I am not avoiding the problem, I am not averting the issue, but simply I know that I do not know. When you are locked in this mortal encounter, then the rattlesnake is right in front of you and you do not know how to get out of there. What do you do? You just stare at it - you do not know when it is going to strike. In that exercise, suddenly something snaps - by God's Grace - and you realize that the division was never there, that it was just one, total one. The mind was one, the consciousness was one, God was one, the truth was one and in that, somehow, an experiencer had arisen. The capsule is dissolved, meditation has happened.

If the mantra is used in this manner, then it must lead to meditation. If it is not used in this manner, it can remain undigested for a whole life time. You may adopt an image or a picture - Buddha, Krishna, Jesus Christ, etc. to contemplate, and you have discovered the non-existence of this division or ego within yourself, you have learned to watch, to observe the mind, its motions and activities, which is what you are doing when you repeat your mantra. When you come out of that,

somebody is nice to you, charming - watch what is coming up - you are very pleased. Watch - what is going now? Just as I was asking there, 'What is this mantra sound that I am hearing within myself?' - so I am asking now, 'Which is this excitement which is coming up?' Somebody else says, 'You are a little beast', and again this irritation comes up. Again you are asking the same thing, 'What exactly is this now?'

If, during meditation, you are alert and moving in the right direction, you will certainly discover that one thought is no better or no worse than another thought. There are funny stories in India. I will give you one story current in India and then another story current in Greece. This one concerns a great tantric Master who had a very complicated mantra. When someone went to him for initiation, he would give him that complicated mantra. A man came to him for initiation who was of a very simple mind, not mad, but quite simple. He heard the last part of the mantra - and it sounded slightly familiar to him, because he used to eat frogs, and frog - kari - was called tavalakari. That last bit of the mantra sounded to him like tavalakari. He thought, 'Oh, that is a good mantra'. He went home saying, 'tavalakari, tavalakari, tavalakari', and he entered into deep meditation - samadhi. The master was not in samadhi, but the disciple was. The master asked him, 'How come that you got perfection so easily? The disciple, folding his hands, bowed deeply down and answered, 'Grace, Maharaj'. 'My God, what have you been doing?' asked the master. I have been repeating 'tavalakari, tavalakari.' He had been repeating 'fried frog'. Whatever it was, his mind was totally in it - and that's it. There was redemption.

Another story is told of some people on an island off the Greek shores. There three pious catholics who were performing miracles. A priest was sent there to investigate and he asked them how they were able to do all these miracles. They fell at his feet and said that it was all the glory of Jesus Christ. The priest asked them what they meant by this. 'Oh', they said, 'We repeat this famous mantra: 'Chrislos, Chrislos', since they were illiterate and could not pronounce the famous prayer correctly. The priest understood that what they meant was 'Kyrie Eleison - Christe Eleison'. The priest went to the bishop and reported this. So, the bishop came down and said, 'You seem to be very devoted men, why do not you repeat the prayer correctly - 'Kyrie eleison - Christe eleison'?' The three men hastened to show their gratitude and repeated the prayer correctly. The bishop left, happy to have saved three more souls.

About a month later, the priest was taking a walk along the sea-shore and he saw flickering lights coming over the waves. He looked and he looked, 'Oh God, there were these three fellows walking on the water.' The priest ran to the bishop and cried, 'You see what you have done, you not only redeemed them, but, by your Grace, they are now walking on water like Jesus Christ'. The bishop came running and the three men came ashore. When they saw the bishop, they fell on the ground, muttering, 'my Lord, my Lord'. The bishop told them that he was extremely happy that they had cultivated their great love for the Lord and continued, 'I see you have made great progress since I last saw you'. The three

men prostrated again and again and said, 'We came here because we have forgotten what you had taught us - please forgive us.' The bishop asked them, 'What are you doing?' 'We are saying 'Chrislos, Chrislos'. The bishop asked, 'And this repetition of 'Chrislos, Chrislos' enabled you to walk on the water?' 'Yes'.

You see, that is it. This does not mean that we can do what we like with these mantras. But what is more important is the inside of the capsule. The mantra or the technique is like the capsule, assimilable capsule, but within this is the meditation, and that must happen. Therefore, another holy man, Ramana Maharishi, used to say, 'Why do not you say 'I am'?' Say 'I am' just once. It is not a mantra to be repeated. Even a mantra may not be repeated. If you can utter that mantra only once and enter into meditation, that is good. Why do we repeat? Only because we are not satisfied. When we have three sandwiches, we are not satisfied with the first and go on with the second. If you can enter into deep meditation by merely repeating your mantra but once, good on you. If you find that this is insufficient, then go on and repeat it. But the repetition itself is not important.

If the mantra is used as it should be used, as an assimilable capsule, it will lead you on to meditation. From there on you are meditating. The division that seemed to exist within disappears. During meditation you ask yourself, 'How does the division between the hearer and the utterer of the mantra arise?' When you come out of the meditation and something happens to you, once again you are asking the same question, 'Am I 'this' or 'that' - I see you, just as I heard the mantra - now here I see you - am I this or that - what is seeing? Am I seeing, is there an 'I', is there an ego, is there a self, is there a soul or what have you? Do I see you or does seeing merely take place, just as hearing took place?' The hearing of the mantra took place - there was neither someone who was repeating the mantra nor someone who was listening to the mantra - the mantra sound existed.

It is the same way in my daily experiences. The experience exists, neither 'I' nor 'you'. There is no essential difference between a painful experience and a pleasurable experience. I see all that as one, so that everything that happens to me from then on becomes an exercise in meditation.

If you insult me, once again I ask, 'What is being insulted?' Somebody says, 'You are a fool', well, it may be true, so what? I am not hurt. If there is an impulse to hurt, I want to know from where this impulse arises, what this impulse is to hurt somebody else, and right there it dissolves itself.

From there on the whole life becomes yoga - the whole life becomes meditation, meditation becomes natural. There is not a single moment that the yogi is not in meditation, because there is the perpetual, vigilant watchfulness of the arising of the 'me', the concept of 'me', the idea of 'me', which creates and generates all the problems in our life.

That is how a simple technique such as repeating a mantra leads you on to this

glorious factual meditation. Do not repeat the mantra mechanically. Keep it sacred and secret and do all that, but if it is used correctly, intelligently, then it becomes itself meditation. You become the mantra, your whole being becomes the mantra without a division, and your whole being becomes divine, without a division - exactly what happens when you are asleep. Therefore, samadhi was considered 'sleepless sleep'. You go on repeating the mantra, watching all the time, watching for that division, observing that division, till the division is seen not to exist.

When the division within you is seen not to exist, then there is only the mantra; neither one who repeats the mantra nor one who listens to the mantra, nor one who observes all this, but you become the mantra.

When that truth is realized, whatever may be the experience in which you may find yourself, you are whole and totally aware. When the division is not there, pleasure is not experienced as pleasure - as a temptation, pain is not experienced as pain, but there is the bliss of deep sleep throughout the day.

Rosemary Heights - July 17th, 1977

Meditation

In order to understand what we were discussing yesterday properly, well, and without self-deception, the Master gives an exercise.

How do I know I am observing the field? There is fear - how do I know that I am observing fear? And not thinking that I am observing fear? These are two completely different things. One is to observe - and the other is to generate a thought that I am observing. How do I know? So, the Master says: 'I will give you an exercise, a technique, a method which does not involve a life-and-death situation, which does not involve the ingredients that bring about self-deception.' It is a neutral thing; it is neither negative nor positive, it is neither painful nor pleasant, so that the self does not react before the self is observed. The self does not spring up and change its appearance before it is properly observed. It is a neutral method, a neutral technique. That is what is called 'meditation' in the texts. Two types of meditation have been given, two methods. First we shall look at the difficult one, the abstract method, and if most of us decide that this is a bit tricky, we will go on to the simpler one.

The abstract method is very beautifully described in the 'Bhagavad Gita', Chapter VI, where a whole lot of detailed instructions are given: how to sit and how to keep your back straight and what to do and where to look and where not to look, etc.

'Sucau dese pratisthapyā sthīram āsanam ātmanah' - let him select a pure and holy place. Why a 'holy' place? Who decides that it is holy? You decide that it is holy and call it holy and then enjoy the benefits of its holiness. First call it holy, condition your mind into thinking that this is holy and then feel inspired by the holiness of the holy. You created the holiness in the first place, you invested it with that holiness. Still, one who is familiar with the workings of the mind realizes that the mind functions on this basis.

The mind functions on the basis of habit and a certain conditioning. You build a conditioned reflex into it, and it works with less loss of energy. All the techniques are based on these two. All the techniques given are based on these two fundamental principles: that the mind functions on the basis of habits, which is the same as when a conditioned reflex is built into it, the mind functions without too much loss of energy. But these two can also be traps, that is obvious. You can go to sleep very easily. But then, there is absolutely no method, nothing that one may do in the name of meditation or yoga, which is not plagued with some risk or the other, which is totally free of all risks. One has to take that in one's stride. So, to begin with, the yogi, especially the yogis known as 'tantrics', are quite adamant on that.

They say: 'You must sit at a particular time, every day, at a particular place, every

day, on a particular seat. The seat must be the same, every day, and the clothes that you wear must also be the same.' Sometimes they do not wash the clothes at all, that is why they use silk. They wear the same clothes and they are kept in the meditation or puja room. I know of some, in Bengal, where the clothes are washed daily, but still, they would often wear these fresh clothes when they come out of the bath-room and then, as they are about to enter the meditation or puja room, they would drop these clothes at the entrance and jump naked into the meditation room and put on the other ones, so that these do not even touch that holiness there. That's it.

Then use the same type of incense, sit facing the same direction, light the same number of candles, so that the moment you get into that atmosphere, the mind says, 'Aha, this is meditation hour.' You are using the mind's own weakness to beat it. If you look at it one way, it is very clever. If you look at it the other way, then it becomes dull, monotonous, routine. We shall come to the conditioned reflex later. You see how the yogi uses the mind's own weakness to conquer it.

So, Krishna gives very nice and detailed instructions: choose a holy place - sthiram asanam atmanah. You can already see this here, if you sit in this nice chair, the seat seems to shift every few minutes and when you want to adjust and lift yourself up, the seat also comes with you and no adjustment is possible easily. You think you are doing something, but the seat has adjusted itself to your adjustment. Thus, in order to make these adjustments possible, have a firm seat which does not yield, which is firm and comfortable.

Na tyucchritam na tinicam - do not sit too high up. Some of these things must be understood with reference to the context, otherwise one can again be misled. This probably applied to the conditions which prevailed in those days. It is not necessarily so only in the Himalayas, or in India or in Canada. The conditions 3,000 years ago were that there were no carpets and probably people were sitting outside on the lawn and meditating. Even if it was inside the house, the house was freely accessible to insects such as ants, scorpions, snakes and things like that. Therefore, na'tinicam - do not sit on the ground. One day, an ant might crawl and bite you. It just so happened, an ant was crawling along the floor and you happened to be in its way. It wanted to remove you, but could not do that and its attempt to remove you was interpreted by you as biting. It did not want to hurt you, it was not angry with you. But then you were shocked and your meditation was disturbed and especially if it was a large type of ant and it hurt you for some time, the next day when you sit down for your meditation, suddenly you will find ants crawling from every side every few minutes. So, you will not be able to meditate from there. Why? The same thing, the mind has formed a conditioned reflex that the ant seems to know when I am sitting for meditation and it comes crawling. That's why you should not sit on the floor.

Alright, so you prop yourself up on a higher seat, na 'tyucchritam, do not let it be too high. When you are still attempting to meditate, concentrate and meditate, as we shall see in a few minutes, sometimes you might get good meditation and

sometimes you might get good sleep. Both these things are possible. It is not because of 'beginners', 'adepts' and so on, because even adepts can sleep. Some day it so happens. It is possible that sometimes you will be sitting up right and sleep and sometimes it may happen that you nod and fall forward. If that happens and if you are sitting too high from the ground, there may be serious injury. However, if you are not hoisted up too far above the floor and you fall down, it may be more gentle on your body. It is all common sense, simple, very beautiful instructions. Cailajinakusottaram - this was the traditional seat used - the three from the top: first comes a piece of cloth, then a skin, a buck skin - I do not know why, I am covered with skin and that should be sufficient, but, my skin is useless. I have to go and get hold of a bear-skin, something like that and then, underneath that, a grass mat. These were available in those days where the teaching applied and so these were prescribed. The skin seems to have one great advantage, and that is its action as a non-conductor between the body energy and the ground condition. Your energy or psychic power that you build up is not lost, grounded, and the conditions that prevail on the ground did not worry you. I often wondered why then did they insist upon a piece of cloth being spread on this skin. That suggests that they were sitting with few clothes on their body so that their body was not constricted. They were probably sitting almost naked. If you sit almost naked on a deer skin, then you will appreciate why a piece of cloth was put on top of it - yes, it is a bit ticklish. So, all these things were very minutely thought out and very beautifully described.

Sanam kayasirogrivam dharayam acalam sthirah - keep your neck and your head in a straight line, that is the posture in which it is possible for the mind to free itself from the body's demands, so that the attention may be focused upon the mind itself. Any other posture imposes some amount of strain upon the mind, upon the attention. Some discomfort, any discomfort in your body draws the attention to itself, to the body, thus diverting the attention from its proper focal point.

Dharayann acalam - without any movement of the body. Any movement might also reflect as a movement in the mind. Please bear in mind that this is an exercise, it is not the whole of meditation, because afterwards you are going to be engaged in your daily work and still be meditating. Once you have acquired the ability to focus your attention upon the mind, then that stays with you even if the body begins to move. But to begin with, to gain this ability to focus the attention upon the mind, you hold the body steady, helping the mind, the attention, as it were.

Sampreksya nasikagram svam disas ca 'navalokayan. This simple translation I will give you and then we will go into the complication. Looking at the 'nasikagra' and not looking here and there. Not looking here and there is quite obvious. I want to meditate and I do not want to look around, rolling my eyes around, looking at people, that would keep the attention distracted again. So, there is this thing called 'nasikagra', looking at it. 'Nasika' is nose, the same sound as in English. 'Agra' can have quite a number of meanings, thereby creating divergence

of opinion. It may mean: front, tip and root, and all these things are applicable here. It may mean: right in front of your nose or the tip of your nose, or the root of your nose.

Fortunately or unfortunately for us, all these practices prevail especially among the hatha yogis. Some hatha yoga texts describe the benefits of these three, or two. Looking at the tip of your nose, they say, if you can sit in a dark room and keep looking at the tip of your nose and meditate, you will enter into meditation quickly and also you will experience divine fragrance. If you are interested, please.

There is also another school of thought, a school of yoga practice, who say that if you look at the space between your eyebrows, sitting in a dark room, you will see some divine light. If you are interested, please, help yourself to it. This is commonly known as 'looking at the eyebrow centre'. Except in its literal sense it does not mean what it is taken to mean, the 'ajna chakra' is elsewhere. You do look at the eyebrow centre, that you can do, but the 'ajna chakra' is elsewhere. I believe, according to some kind of psycho-medical research they say that if you are able to look at the eyebrow centre for a considerable time, certain psychological faculties may be aroused. The reason given in that article, which I read a few months ago, is, so they say, that the brain-centre for arousal - obviously they mean sexual arousal here - is also located in the front-part of the brain, so that there is a tendency to roll the eyes up when someone is sexually aroused, and so the yogi, who also wants to be inwardly aroused, looks at the eyebrow centre. Very good. God bless you.

But then, a much simpler explanation seems to be: merely look in front of the nose and do not look in any direction. I do not know if you realize the 'joke' here - even if I do not look to my right and to my left or above, below, behind or whatever it is, I am looking in front. How is it possible for me to obey this instruction, not to look in any direction whatsoever, with the eyes open and looking in front of the nose? The meaning is quite clear, clear as day-light. Even though the eyes are open, do not look in front. Quite simple and beautiful.

Tatrai 'kagrain manah krtva - make the mind totally one-pointed. Here is the abstract meditation, after all these beautiful, detailed instructions comes a simple bomb-shell: yatacittendrivaakriyah - do not think. If you can do that, you are in abstract meditation and you will like it, I think. You do not have to use a mantra, you do not have to use an image, you do not have to use anything at all. Just sit there, do these very simple things and do not think. What is happening to me now? I am thinking that I am not thinking, or, I am thinking that I should not think. How do I know what is meant by 'I think' and 'this thought occurs to me'. They are two different things. A thought occurs to me, am I sure that this thought 'occurs' to me and that I am not thinking this thought? What is the difference? So, in order to help me in this - the others do not even mention this, the 'Gita' is the only one where this is mentioned - sit down there and do not think,' and you will naturally develop the faculty and the ability to raise this observation within

yourself, which is powerful enough to ensure that 'I do not think'. If thoughts have to arise, if actions have to take place, they will take place, not because I want or I do not want. That is the end of it - you are liberated instantly.

But if you find this difficult - and if you are honest and sincere, you will find this very difficult, this question keeps arising: 'How do I know that I am not thinking?' Thoughts occur, even then. How do I know that they occur to me and that I am not thinking? How do I know they arise from pure consciousness and pure intelligence and not from my ego? How do I know that I am not bluffing myself that this is God's or the Divine Will? That this is an act of God and not 'my' will, my wish, my desire, my craving? How do I know this?

So they say: 'Alright, if this is your problem, we will give you a simple exercise. That exercise involves a simple mantra. This is called 'raja yoga'. The Master of 'Raja yoga', Patanjali, gives a Mantra 'Om'. Why is the Mantra 'Om' given? Something has to be given, some mantra has to be taken. The shorter and the briefer the formula is, the easier it is to focus your attention upon it. Otherwise that itself forms a distraction. If the mantra is too long, if you recite a whole prayer, then you are battling with the memory all the time, and that itself becomes a distraction. Let us take 'Om'. Two simultaneous suggestions are given: mentally repeat the Mantra 'Om' and let your mind reflect the substance or truth of this mantra, the reality of this mantra, that is all.

'Artha' is a very difficult word to translate in sanskrit. 'Artha' means 'meaning' in the dictionary sense. Pick up a dictionary and you will find the meaning. 'Artha' also means the object denoted by the word. The 'artha' of the word 'book' is a number of twenty pages, bound together, enclosed in covers. That is one of the meanings of the word 'book'. The other meaning is this: this is a book - I do not even explain what it is, this is a 'book'. The 'artha' of the book is this.

Now, when I repeat the mantra, I repeat the mantra, I mentally repeat the mantra. The mantra is happening in me because I want it to happen. This is a thought which I am thinking. This is the direct opposite of the previous teaching. I am thinking this thought and as I am thinking this thought, some other thought enters the field of my attention. My attention is totally and completely focussed on that one thought - the mantra.

Now another thought enters the field of my attention. It goes away. You can even play with your own hand like this. You are looking and it looks at you and this hand seems to be coming into this field of my attention - and it goes away. Is my attention distracted by this or not? Need not be, but it may be, depending upon which is more attractive or in which I am more interested.

So, Patanjali says: 'Better choose something which you like, then you wo not blame.' Better choose an object which you like with your heart, with your mind, with your everything, then it is possible that you do not complain but you see - 'I want to meditate on God and then the devil comes along and I like him'. Now

here, I like this mantra, maybe even because I am curious to experiment with it and find out this basic thing in my life - how to know which is a thought that I am thinking myself and which is a thought which merely occurs to me, for which I am not responsible. After having discovered the difference between these two, then I eliminate the thoughts that I think. It is as simple as that. I have learned to distinguish between the two: the thought that occurs to me, and the thought that I am thinking. Then I forget all about it and I do not want to think any more. It is by watching that I discover, 'This is a thought which I think'. I make up my mind to look at this thought. She is combing her hair - but I am not interested in that, I am not distracted. She is laughing - I am not interested, I am not turning my attention upon her. This is what I want to focus my mind upon and that alone shall happen.

The yoga sutras go step by step in a beautiful way and that is why it is called 'scientific'. It enables you to arrive at that point. Having taken this Mantra 'Om' for instance, you are mentally repeating this 'Om'. You are interested in it, so it is a thought which you have planted in the mind deliberately in order to learn first of all to focus the entire attention upon that, and, secondly, to distinguish the thought that you think and the thought that occurs to you. As you are looking it is easy to see. If you want all your attention to be focused on something, then the space around is blotted out. I am looking at your face now - all the other faces around are vague, not clear. Only then is the focusing of attention powerful. That is very much like the magnifying glass with which you played as children. But one nice thought crops up and that floats into this field, 'Ah, it is so nice', then you jump on it and it takes you for a ride. So, this risk is seen to be present.

It is then that I begin to learn the very beautiful tricks of the mind how, while being concentrated on one object, another object floats into the field of consciousness in which I am emotionally involved. I jump onto it - it is not the temptation that tempts me, but I tempt the temptation to tempt me. 'There is no temptation that can tempt me if I do not want to be tempted'. I tempt this temptation to tempt me - and then blame it.

By keen observation, I learn this simple but most wonderful truth concerning the behaviour of the mind. I learn how to focus my attention and when this attention is focused, everything else is obliterated. That is how the process, called concentration, is described in the 'yoga sutras'. When the field of attention is assiduously restricted to just this one point, the field - except for this focal point - is completely obliterated. Nothing but that one thing exists. Everything else that may happen in the mind may happen in the mind - it is not my business at all. I am not going to take any notice of it, I am not going to resist it, I am not going to push it, I am not going to destroy it, I am not going to pull it, I am not going to tempt it, nothing. I am not interested at all. While I am saying, 'I am not interested', I am also learning how not to jump on one of these and what it is to be taken for a ride. These two things I learned from there, and from then on I may be able to avoid it, without reacting to it.

I am not even going to say: 'Well, if during this morning's meditation the thought of so-and-so arises in me, I will not respond.' That is already planting mischief. I have learned this and that is all. I am going tenaciously to focus the attention upon what I want to do. Now, for the present, what I want to do is repeat this Mantra 'Om'. Where that object alone prevails, there is meditation. The 'Om' alone prevails there to the exclusion of everything else. There is no struggle, there is no effort, there is nothing. Steadily, effortlessly, naturally the whole attention flows towards that 'Om' sound.

Now comes the second part of the other instruction. I am repeating the 'Om', but I am wondering now what that sound is, where is it heard, what is its substance, what is its reality and the last and very important question: who is hearing it? Who is repeating it? All these questions must spontaneously arise in the observer by previous programming. It is the attention itself which is observing this and it is the attention itself which is raising this question in itself, 'What is this?' 'What is this 'Om'?' Not its dictionary meaning, but, 'What is this - this is a book, but what is 'Om'?' That is why some sages suggested, like Ramana Maharishi, that any sound will do. Do not get terribly worked up about 'this mantra is better than that mantra' and 'this mantra is more supreme than that mantra', etc., but try to see what the mantra is. This is my heart, these are my lungs, this is my stomach, but what is a mantra? Where is it heard? Knowing that 'this is a thought which I have planted, this is the thought which I am thinking and this is the thought which I love to think now.'

These are the considerations which later are going to help you when you want to focus your mind on something. Merely tell yourself, 'This is what I want to do for the next half hour', whatever it is. For instance, you want to change the baby's diapers. This is what I want to do now and I do not want the attention to be distracted from it. Then the attention will stay there if you have trained yourself.

If, later, you choose to adopt the abstract method and you do not want to think at all, then again you know what it is not to think, not to produce that one thought that you have learned to produce. Eliminate that also and then you are completely, totally without thought. Even though thoughts may occur, come up, grow and subside, I am not thinking any thought. That is also possible.

But to come back to our original technique, 'Where does it arise and what is it made of?' When you focus your attention upon that, this internal sound of the mantra reveals to you its true nature. I will leave it at that, because, calling it the 'mind', 'mind stuff', 'intelligence', etc. is going to spoil your meditation. You have to discover it for yourself - where is this sound heard? What is it made of? What is its substance? What is its reality? When the total attention is focussed upon that, then it will reveal its truth to you.

You have now learned what thought is made of and what it feels like to think. To think - not to let thoughts occur - but to think. These two important discoveries you make for yourself. There is just one more question that needs to ask itself -

the question must ask itself, I am not going to ask that question, but the question must arise and find its own answer, and that is, 'If I am repeating this mantra, how come I am also hearing it? How has this space arisen within me, I am one person and yet, it looks as though that one part of me is repeating a mantra and another part of me is listening to it, this is an absurd and illogical thing. What is this space and how has it come into being, and what is there in between?'

When that question arises and prevails seriously, when that Truth or Reality alone shines, when the observer and the observed have lost their identity, when 'I', the observer and the object of my observation - when these two have lost their identity as separate subject-object phenomena and when the Truth alone shines, that is Samadhi.

We will leave it at that, otherwise this becomes another game, another image. When this whole process is clearly understood, then one may need to use some method, some kind of technique to arrive at the effortless, natural, no technique meditation.

Krishna suggests as a sequel to this meditation that once you have arrived at this proficiency in meditation, then you do not see any difference at all, you do not see any division within yourself and outside yourself. Functioning as an individual, you are still one with the entire cosmos, knowing that as the nose goes on breathing, the breathing is breathed for the whole body. The person who has attained to self-realization does not cease to be himself because he has now become 'the All', this would be like saying that now, that the nose has realized that it is part of the whole organism, it says, 'Alright, let my toe do the breathing, why should I alone be given the duty of breathing.' The nose still continues to breathe, but it does not regard itself as an independent entity, hostile to the others. It functions as it should. It goes on doing its duty, what it is meant to do, without wishing it otherwise. That is the whole technique.

One thing I forgot to mention. One great yogi said that there is an injunction to look at the tip of one's nose, not because of any mystic value in itself but the Master wants you to become aware of the breathing. His idea, once again, was that you become aware whether the breath flows through the right nostril or the left nostril or through both. But it may also have another meaning which is suggested in the 'Yoga Sutras', that by observing the flow of breath in the nostrils you can know whether you are tense or relaxed, whether you are agitated or calm, because the breath is the surest indicator of the state of your mind and, strangely enough, the very observation of the breath seems to have a tremendously calming effect upon the mind. If you sit down, merely listening to your breathing, the breathing seems to become calmer and calmer and more and more peaceful.

That is the whole technique of meditation.