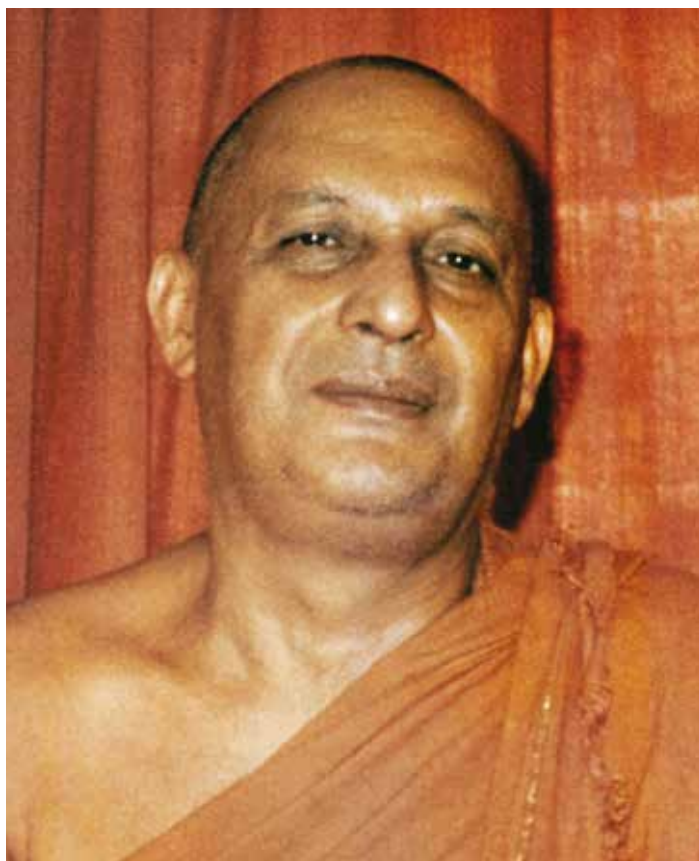


Volume X

Teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

Teachings of
Swami Satyananda
Saraswati
Volume X



SWAMI SATYANANDA SARASWATI
1923~2023
CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

Teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Volume X

*A compilation of talks and satsangs
given by Swami Satyananda Saraswati
at Ganga Darshan Vishwa Yogapeeth in 1982.*



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

Teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati, Volume X
Swami Satyananda Saraswati

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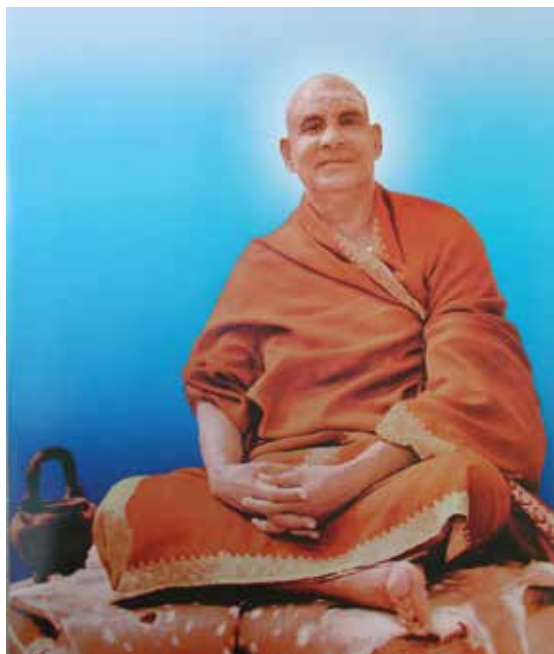
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Dedication

*In humility we offer this dedication to
Swami Sivananda Saraswati, who initiated
Swami Satyananda Saraswati into the secrets of yoga.*



Dedication

*To our guru Sri Swami Satyananda Saraswati
who continues to inspire and guide us
on our yogic and spiritual journey.*

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1

Coping with Fear

2 January 1982

Addressing a group of kriya yoga aspirants from Italy

How can we cope with the fear of death and other fears?

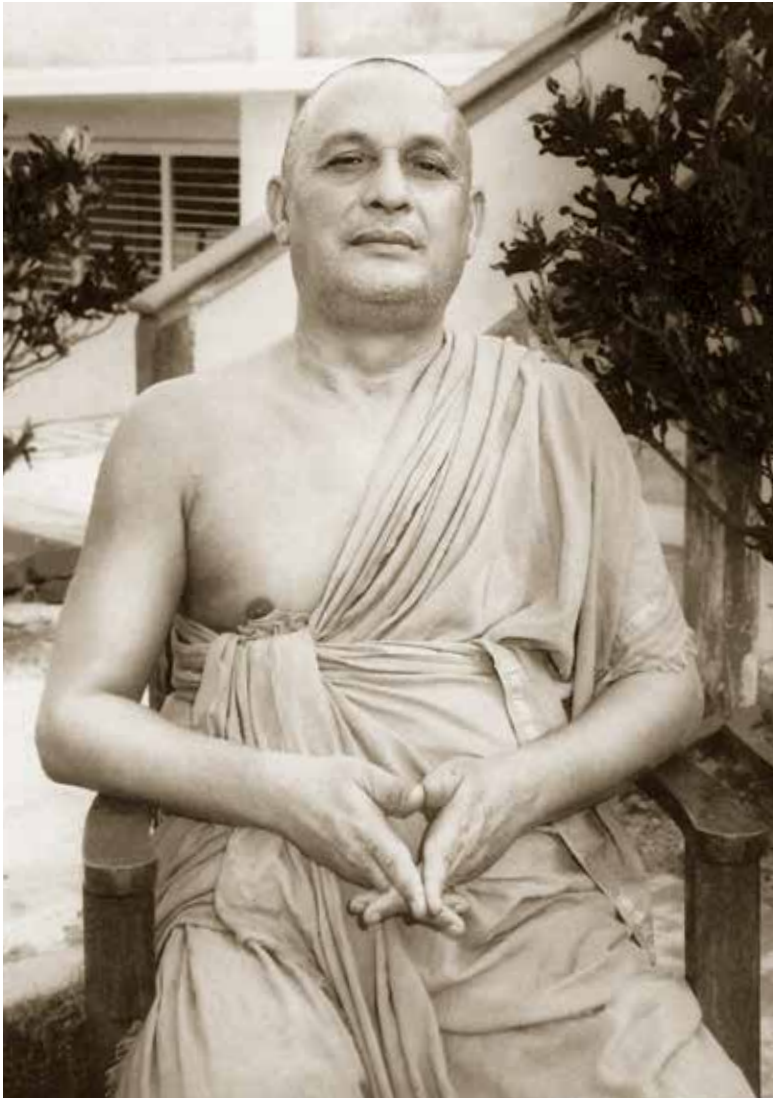
Who dies? This body dies. Who knows that he is dying? Who is this knower? So he, the knower, should transcend the realm of fear and come to the reality and become the spectator or the witness.

When you see fear as a witness or spectator it does not affect you. When you experience fear as an experiencer, that is a problem. Therefore, do nothing with the fear but try to disidentify yourself from it. Try to see the whole fear as it is happening to you and inflicting experiences on your mind.

This sort of experience has happened to many people who have seen the fear clearly as an expression. When such fear comes in your heart, do not try to tantalize it. Let it grow. You must see it happen. The heart will throb. See that the heart is throbbing. The fear of a heart attack will come. Then you must think that you are going to die. What will happen if I die? I will be lifeless. My kith and kin will be weeping and crying. Then they will take me to the burial ground. They will put me inside the grave, the worms will eat me, but I am seeing that. This is how you must separate the fear from the seer.

If you just read the *Hanuman Chalisa*, a verse from the Bible, or other texts, you are avoiding the real problem. I have told you very clearly that fear is necessary for your

evolution. If you make the mind free of fear, your evolution will be obstructed. So you must always be afraid. Tell children these things every day. If they say, 'I see a ghost,' you say, 'Throw a stone at him.'



2

Mantras, Mandalas and the Fear of Death

3 January 1982

Addressing a group of kriya yoga aspirants from Italy

Mantra is not the name of a particular god or deity. A mantra may have its own yantra or mandala. Even the literal meaning of mantra is not a holy name. The literal meaning of *mantra* is that by which the mind becomes free and liberated. The mind is obsessed by desires, worries, fantasies, evaluations, fear, psychosis and neurosis. The mind is never free.

What you know about the mind is not the mind. You do not see the mind; you do not experience the mind at all. What you see in the mind are known as vrittis. You must find a way to separate or liberate the mind from these vrittis. However, it is not safe to separate the mind from the vrittis all of a sudden. If you separate the mind from the vrittis by force or by a very strong method, you won't be able to face the mind at all. The mind is a very powerful force, and it is at a different level in each and every person.

In some it is at the rajasic level and in others at the tamasic level, while in a few people it is at the sattvic level. If you are able to separate the mind from the vrittis at the tamasic level, you will have a lot of problems because the tamasic mind will come to you like satan. Therefore, the mantra is designed in a particular way. If you practise the mantra it will slowly free the mind from these superimpositions.

It is very important that the freedom from these superimpositions must be a very slow and gradual process. Many

people who use LSD or heavy doses of other drugs cannot face the experiences. There are lots of accidents that are known to us. Therefore, the science of mantra concerns the process of freeing the mind, gradually and slowly.

Mantras belong to the five tattwas. The five tattwas should be understood first. Then mantras are classified according to the twelve zodiac signs. We are born at a particular moment. What is the position of the being when he is born in relation to the whole universe? From that point of view the mantra is usually selected.

After you have obtained the mantra from your guru, and you practise it year by year, you increase the number. After a few years of mantra practice, you start deep meditation, and then the mantra will develop the mandala. Mandala is inherent in the mind at a very great depth. When you practise mantra, it will help you to manifest that mandala. When the mandala is manifesting by itself, or it is instructed by your guru, then meditation takes place.

Usually we have a very unscientific idea about meditation. Most people sit in the lotus posture, close their eyes, stop thinking and after some time some of them go into hypnosis. They feel fine because their nerves are tranquillized and their heart enters into a state of inertia, their blood pressure drops, body temperature decreases and acid secretions decrease. This can all be verified today by sophisticated machinery. Serious students who are researching meditation are researching this type of meditation, which is actually not meditation. The word for meditation is *dhyana*, which means unbroken attention. Therefore, before practising meditation, you must realize the mandala. The mandala has to be realized by you.

At the time of mantra initiation, the guru gives the mantra. That is called guru mantra. When the question of mandala comes, the guru will say, 'You find out for yourself.' That is why it is not called guru mandala, it is called *ishta devata*. *Devata* means mandala and *ishta* means of your choice. They will say *ishta devata*, the mandala of your choice;

guru mantra, the mantra given or ordained by guru. There are millions of mandalas; everybody has a different mandala. Krishna, Rama, Christ are just meant for practices. It is like a sort of rehearsal. How do I concentrate on a mandala? I will teach you with a picture of Rama or Christ and say, 'Look at it and think.' However, you may realize an absolutely independent mandala. It can be anything. It can be just a small tooth or anything, this happens only when the mantra has touched the core of the unconscious.

These mantras are also composed of consonants known in tantra as *akshara*, which means indestructible. Every akshara, consonant or syllable has a colour. These colours represent the permutation and combination of the tattwas. Every sound you produce has a formation. We are educated people, so we cannot understand much about this. If I ask you to concentrate on the sound of *Om*, you won't be able to do it because you have seen *Om* in a particular form or you have heard *Om* in a particular way.

I tried once with an illiterate aspirant. She was unlettered. I gave her the mantra *Om Namah Shivaya*. She wanted me to write it on a paper so she could look at it. I said, 'No, you just hear and concentrate.' She asked 'On what do I concentrate?' I said, 'The sound which you are hearing from me now.' She asked, 'What will happen?' I said, 'If you concentrate on the sound *Om Namah Shivaya*, you will see the form of the sound because sound has a form.' We cannot see this because we cannot transcend the pre-conceived concept which we have.

Every syllable has a form and the combination of those syllables is known as mantra. According to one's relationship with the universe at the time of birth, the mantras are selected and decided. Once upon a time, the science must have been known all over the world but today only Hindus have this science. They are becoming more modern and western and thereby losing track of this science.

Apart from these mantras there are other mantras as well. They are the tantric mantras, not for samadhi or nirvana, but to affect the events in nature, to change somebody's mind,

to cure someone from sickness, to make somebody's cow or buffalo stop giving milk, to create sickness in the family or to hypnotize somebody to follow you. These are very secret mantras. They are not at all known unless the person belongs to the specific tradition.

They are to be practised only for a certain period, three months, four months, or 4,000 times, 5,000 times. You have to begin to practise these mantras from a particular period at a particular time. I tried once. I took initiation into a mantra which could cure a scorpion bite instantly by touch, because there were so many scorpions in the place where I was living, just like mosquitoes. There used to be dozens of cases every day, people used to come screaming and crying. On a solar eclipse day, I took a mantra and practised it for six months or nine months, I don't remember. It did work. Anyone who was bitten by a scorpion just came to me, I touched them and the person became all right.

How can we overcome the fear of death?

Not everybody is afraid of death. Only those who believe that death is the end of existence and there is no further existence after death are afraid of it. When your shoes become rotten, you throw them away because you know that you will get another pair of shoes; but if you knew that you would not get another pair of shoes, you would feel for the rotten pair of shoes and would not like to discard them. Some people believe that there is no continuity of consciousness. They somehow think that the consciousness is a limited event, and they attribute or identify consciousness with the body, the mind and the senses.

If you ponder deep into the nature of consciousness, you will come to realize that consciousness is a distinct substance from the body and mind. The driver is different from the car. The electrical current flowing through the wires is distinct from the wires or cables. In the same way, this body is like an automobile, and it has a limited existence; this is not the nature and it is not the form of the self. Consciousness and

the spirit do not have two feet or two hands. Consciousness has no name and no form. It inherits this physical body in order to work out liberation. The purpose of incarnation, the purpose of inheriting this physical body by consciousness is liberation or *kaivalya*.

If this philosophy is properly understood and ingrained in the mind and emotions, you will never be afraid of death. Everybody dies every night, but the next morning they continue their existence after a temporary death. At the time of death, nothing happens except the soul leaves this body, realizing its worthlessness. As long as this body is found worthy of the purpose, the soul will continue to inherit it. After the soul has left the body, it goes after another incarnation. Spirit and karmas are the same, but the difference is in the body.

The second chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita* speaks a lot about it. Krishna is instructing Arjuna about the immortal nature of the soul. He says that just as a man throws off his old garments and puts on new ones, the spirit throws off one body for a new one. On account of ignorance, we do not understand these things because for the whole lifetime we have been dealing with the body only.

Once a shepherd caught the cub of a lion. In the course of years, the cub grew up and began to behave just like the sheep because it did not know that it was a lion. Since he lived with the sheep, he thought that he was a sheep. One day while he was roaming with the herd, a lion saw him. The lion called out to him, 'Why are you here?' The young lion replied, 'Because I am a sheep, and as a sheep I live with the sheep.' The lion said, 'No, you are not a sheep,' the young lion said, 'You cannot cheat me because I know that I am definitely a sheep and you are not.'

Then the lion said, 'Look here, compare your body and my body, they are the same. You see that your body is different from those sheep. Now compare my teeth with yours, they are thoroughly carnivorous. In contrast you see their teeth, they are not at all the same as yours. Yours are carnivorous

teeth and theirs are herbivorous.’ But he could not convince the young lion. Finally, he roared and the sheep immediately took to their heels, but not the young lion. He just stood there and the older lion said, ‘See, we are the same.’

This is temporary. Our association with the body, mind, senses and object has been so long from our early period of life. Our parents did not tell us that we are atman. They only taught us that we are Christians, Hindus or Muslims. These are superimpositions, not reality. The spirit of man is neither Hindu, Muslim nor Christian. Our parents gave us a name and said, ‘You are that.’ They gave us this so early in life that we could not question it. From the time of birth or even when we were embryos, we have been thoroughly brainwashed by the philosophy of completeness. We are not taught *vairagya* or dispassion; we are only taught attachments. That is the reason why we always identify ourselves with the body.

You may say one hundred times, ‘I am the self’ or *Aham Brahmasmi*, but that is only a statement. You do not feel it, you do not understand it, you do not experience it, and that is the reason why you are afraid of death. I know I am the body, and when I die the body dies, and I know once the body dies, it cannot be resurrected. It is either in the grave or ashes. Therefore, it is very important for people to discover a true philosophy for themselves.

If the car is broken, it does not mean the driver is dead. He just finds another car. If he begins to believe that he is the car, I think he is crazy. If you think that you are the body, you are crazy. If you think that you are the senses or objects, the pain or the pleasure, birth or death, you are crazy.

Arjuna was very much horrified by the idea of death. He said, ‘Everybody will die. What will happen?’ Krishna said, ‘Look here, nobody will die, there will only be a change of train or change of plane. Maybe you will get a better body.’ We may be sick now, we may be idiots now, we may get another better body. This true philosophy should be the guideline in everyone’s life. This philosophy is not what we call a philosophy of convenience. This philosophy is not

a sectarian philosophy. It is based on accurate, concrete evidence and concrete logic. There are thousands of pieces of such evidence that have been recorded up to now where the continuity of consciousness has been proved.

Those who want to face death must first of all understand this complete philosophy. If you believe that this is the last chance that you have, and if you lose this, you lose it forever, then naturally you should be afraid of death. It is very illogical that after death you will not be any more. According to science, nothing is destructible, not only energy or spirit, even matter. Matter does not die; there is only a process of metamorphosis. Therefore, this transmigration is something like metamorphosis taking place in the nature of matter.

Science is realizing a very important truth – matter is convertible to energy and from energy to matter. Or matter is convertible into light and convertible from light into matter. If that be so, the question of destruction of the body also does not arise. In ordinary terminology, we say that the body is destroyed, but in fact, it is never destroyed. It is only a process of disintegration. Body is a combination of five elements. The permutation and combination that takes place within these five elements goes to form this body. After death, the body is classified and the elements go back to their own source. That happens not only with the body, but also with everything that is material. I am not necessarily talking about man. I am talking about everything that is in this universe.

From the full, the full comes out. If you deduct the full from the full what remains is the full. This full means this is infinite. This manifest universe which you see, the sun, moon and the galaxies, is complete. The unmanifest universe is also infinite. Now, go to the mathematical equation, infinity plus infinity equals infinity. Infinity minus infinity, infinity divided by infinity, infinity multiplied by infinity, is always infinity. The equation is: $\infty + \infty = \infty$, $\infty - \infty = \infty$, $\infty \times \infty = \infty$ and $\infty \div \infty = \infty$.

If that is true, where is destruction? So let us always be prepared to face death as a nice change of plan. It would

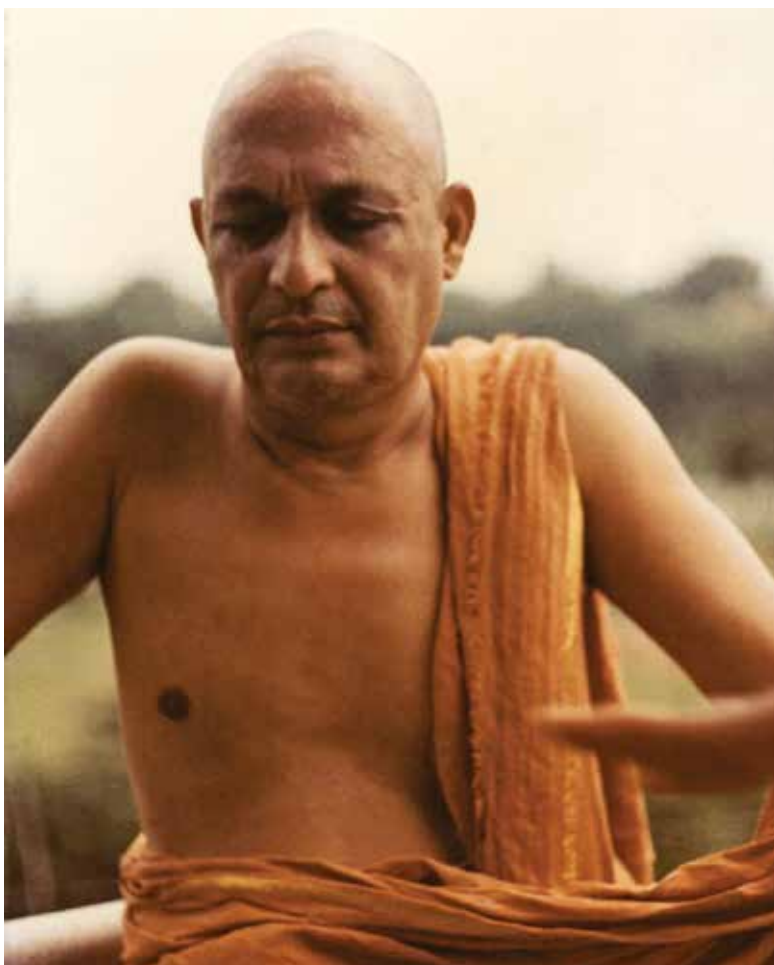
be very nice, you will get new parents; you will get a new husband or wife; you will get a new car; you will get a new country and nationality. You will also get a new passport. You may even get a new colour, brown, black or yellow. Who knows, you may have much better chances in the next life. Even if you are afraid, you are going to have chances, but on account of your own ignorance you are going to suffer the fear of death.

In India, many times we hear that old people at the age of eighty or ninety send letters to their relatives calling everybody and telling them that they are going to go now. They can even tell the date and time. As the time passes, the whole family sings kirtan and bhajan and there is a feast. Sometimes we do feel that we might lose him, and we are more or less prepared for it. At the appointed and fixed hour, he just sits in lotus posture and leaves the body. This is not uncommon, but in the last few decades, some changes have taken place.

Educated people, who have superimposed upon them the occidental idiosyncrasies, remain slaves to the body, mind and senses. They cannot think beyond refrigerators, cars, their flat and furniture. They cannot think any further than amusements, nightclubs and sports. They cannot think anything beyond coat, pants and tie. For them, God is only a supply inspector who will pass on their opinions, give them promotions in their profession, give them prosperity in their business, give them a good wife or husband. God is only what we call a dictator who does everything for man. He allows the sun to rise in the morning, everything He does is for man.

The so-called educated men in this country have brought a new demented philosophy. They are so short-sighted that they do not understand what God would really be. If you ask these educated people, 'Where is God?' they look up. They won't say, 'Here inside', it is as though God is sitting somewhere else with a whip in his hand, like a policeman, punishing someone, kicking somebody, throwing somebody into hell, rewarding heaven to somebody else, and who likes

buttering very much. If you pray every day you will go to heaven, if you do not pray you will be killed. These are funny things in the modern mundane materialistic philosophy of the educated people. That is why many people are very scared of death. If they hear someone is dying they are just shattered and shocked. It is as simple as that. The car and driver have departed from each other; therefore, death is not the end of the book, but it is the end of a chapter.



3

Birth

4 January 1982

Addressing a group of kriya yoga aspirants from Italy

Swamiji, in the New Testament it is written that Mary conceived Jesus Christ through the grace of the Holy Ghost. How can yoga explain such grace?

This particular place where you are seated now is named after a great yogi and an emperor who appears to have existed five thousand years ago. His name was Karna. This hall where you are sitting is the area which is famously known as *Karna Chaura*, the seat of Karna. The whole area is known as Karna Chaura, the area of Karna. He was the eldest of six brothers and he was also immaculate. He was born from his mother Kunti.

Before marriage, she conceived without any sexual interaction with a man. When she was a virgin, she worshipped the sun and imbibed the energy of the sun, and on account of that she conceived. When she became pregnant as a virgin she was very worried, because she knew what society would be talking about. Nobody is going to believe that her soul is immaculate. She concealed the pregnancy and when Karna was born, she quietly placed him in a basket to send along a river so that the people would not know. He was picked up by a charioteer.

Kunti knew about the child and her husband also knew about it, but her other children never knew about it. After about twenty-five years, when this boy met with his brothers, they did not know that they were brothers.

This sort of immaculate conception can happen by propitiating the higher beings. There are many such cases. It can happen and I have one more example in mind, but it is too early to talk about it. I know one other person who is living now and who is also immaculate. I know it well and I have no doubt about it. From time to time, immaculate children might have been born in this world about whom we have no record.

Karna was a great warrior of his time and he was a yogi. His presiding deity was Chandi. The place where he worshipped her is about two kilometres from here. He used to go there every full moon night and practise certain tantric kriyas. On account of those kriyas, sixty-four spirits used to manifest, so much so that during the time he was living here, he was considered invincible.

So there is no doubt that Christ was immaculate. In science, we also believe that conception can take place by a strong psychological process because ova and sperm can be produced in the same body. It is not possible for everybody, therefore they need the sperm to fertilize the ova. But if you create a very strong psychological and physiological process, you can create the sperm in you to fertilize the ova, and if that happens, conception will definitely take place.

Swamiji, at the moment of birth, the destiny of the child is given, but why is the atman always resisting?

The destiny is not cast at the time of birth. The destiny is implanted in the womb of the mother when the embryo is properly set. The embryo is framing itself for three months and it is only a lump of flesh, just like a tumour. In the fourth month, destiny is implanted within the cell. Implanting of the destiny takes place when a soul enters the foetus in the fourth month. He is no more a tumour or a lump of flesh. The life and soul begin to interact with each other. This is like putting the seed inside the earth. When the child is born in the ninth month, the destiny manifests. Just as a seed which you have put in the earth sprouts in ten or fifteen days, the destiny of

the seed of consciousness implanted in the fourth month, in that lump of flesh, is manifested as soon as the child is born.

The destiny that the child carries is the continuity of former existences. It is a very simple matter to understand. The seed which has germinated carries within it the continuity of its former existences. The mango tree or guava tree has its destiny embedded in the causal body. There are visible as well as invisible bodies besides the soul. These ten visible or invisible bodies are classified into three groups. They are known as the gross body, the astral body and the causal body. We can only see the gross body. Other bodies cannot be seen by everyone. It is the causal body, which is the container of all the possibilities of destiny, but the astral body is the destiny.

At the time of death, in the previous body, the causal body and the astral body integrate with each other and separate from the gross body. They depart from this body together. The causal body has no other function except working as a vehicle for the astral body. When the entry of the soul takes place within the embryo in the fourth month, the causal body enters into the physical body and plants the astral body. The astral body is planted in the realm of mind and therefore, in the next life, as the mind grows, the destiny becomes more and more manifest and expressed. In early childhood, the mind and brain of the child is not developed. So, it does not understand destiny at all.

The soul is distinct from the bodies. It just follows it. There is a parable in an Upanishad. There were two birds on a tree. They were friends. One was sitting on the lower branch and the other was sitting at the top of the tree. The bird who was sitting on the lower branch was eating fruits of the tree. Every time he used to eat the fruits they tasted bitter and he used to spit them out. When he finished the fruits of one tree, he migrated to another one. The bird who was sitting at the top of the tree also migrated. In the next tree, the bird who was sitting at the lower branch began to eat fruits, also found them bitter and started spitting them out.

For centuries this continued to happen. The bird on the upper branch was only following the bird on the lower branch. One day, the bird on the lower branch got really tired. He was frustrated but did not say so. He looked up at his friend and asked, "Hey why don't you eat?" The bird on the upper branch said, "You are doing it and you are spitting it out." He said, "But I am trying to find a sweeter one." He said, "Okay, when you get one, tell me. How many trees have you migrated to and how many times have you made trials and errors? You want me to make the trials and errors too. I am just waiting; the moment you get a sweet one I will participate."

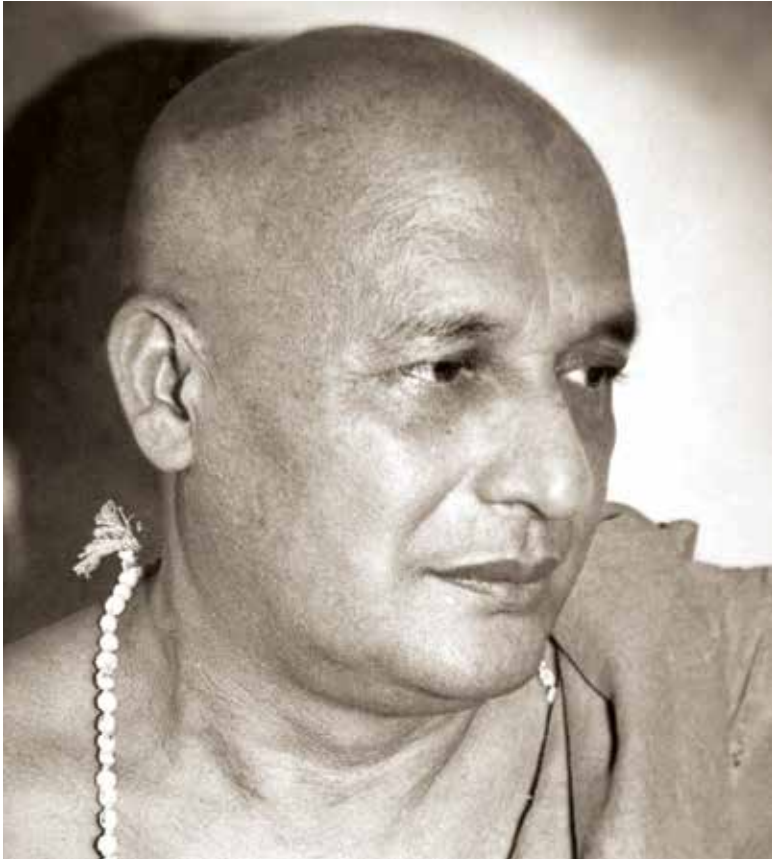
Then again the migration continued. One was migrating with bitterness, frustration and disappointment, with more desires and passions. The other was migrating without anything, for nothing. He said, "I am not concerned with eating and spitting, I am not even interested in going from this tree to that tree. He is my friend, so I am going."

Finally, the bird on the lower branch got disillusioned with all he had been doing so far, and he looked up and said, "What shall I do now?" He said "Just sit quietly here. Put an end to all your seeking, put an end to all your passions. There is no sweet fruit as far as I know. The only thing you can get in this life is to remain a witness to all that is happening without involving your ego in it." After hearing this, the bird on the lower branch became very quiet, tranquil and he became jivanmukta.

In the same way, the soul follows you life after life. It has nothing to do with what you are doing. It is not the experiencer of pleasure or pain. It does not share your joys and it does not even participate in all the idiosyncrasies that you have. It is a silent spectator of this meaningless voyage of life. Therefore, never ask what happens to the soul. Why is the soul transmigrating? It is for this transmigrating soul that one day the glimpse of that soul will be enough to make you a jivanmukta.

Today you do not see that soul; you hear about it from books. Maybe you may also not see it in the next life. Maybe

hundreds of lives will go by and you will not be able to see him. Once you have realized the fruitlessness of all that you have been doing in the past, you will see an alternative way of existence. When you stop somewhere and pause for a while and think, 'What is all this I am doing?', perhaps at that time you will get a glimpse of the soul. When you get a glimpse of it, you are then blessed forever. It is only for that momentary glimpse that the higher soul is following you in every world. Never think the soul is migrating. Your destiny is migrating; your desires are migrating; your passions and will to live and enjoy are migrating.



4

Kirtan

6 January 1982

One of the great saints of India was known as Gauranga. He was born in the eastern part of India and was a great scholar who also wrote a thesis on economics. He was a householder. Suddenly he developed intense love for God. He began to think that he was the wife and God was the husband. He renounced everything and embraced sannyasa. He used to sing God's name day and night and thousands of people used to follow him. He was a devotee of Krishna. He said that, when man's mind is totally corrupted and one does not find enough strength to control the mind, then all other forms of yoga do not really work. When your mind is tossed by desires and passions, then the devotion to God is not honest devotion. When you are fantasizing about the sensualities of life and your mind is filled with cruelties and terror, how can you really think about God and transcend the gross awareness of life? The easiest way then is to sing his name. Other than this, there is no sadhana.

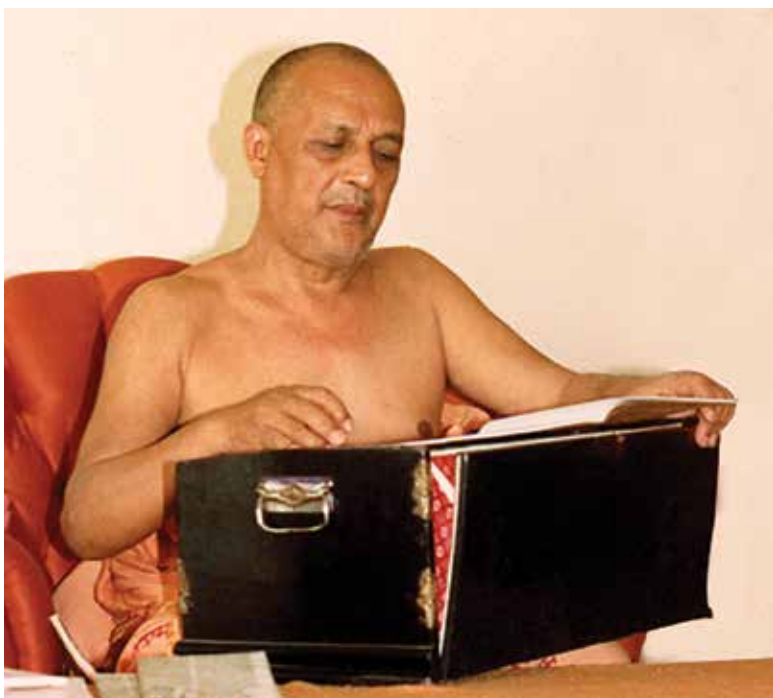
There are only three qualities that are required by a devotee to reach God. You should consider yourself and become humble like a blade of grass. You should be full of endurance as much as you see in the tree which faces summer, winter, storms and everything. The third quality is of singing his name. If you have these three qualities, then you can have the vision of the divine.

Gauranga gave the mantra *Hare Ram Hare Ram, Ram Ram Hare Hare. Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare*. This name was sung by him throughout the country.

When I joined the ashram life in 1943 in Rishikesh, I was too young for that life especially with the temperament I had. I was the least devotional person. Of course, I had read a lot of books on eastern and western philosophy. The first daily duty I was given in the ashram was something which I did not like. In 1943, a year before my arrival, Swami Sivananda, my guru, had made a resolution that in the ashram an unbroken kirtan of God's name would be chanted for all time to come. Therefore, in one corner of the hall, one swami or one person used to sit and chant *Hare Rama Hare Krishna Hare Hare*. After one hour, another person used to replace him. Thus the chanting used to continue for all the twenty-four hours.

It was a very difficult resolution, but it was that unbroken kirtan which became the nucleus of Swamiji's mission. I was given the duty to sing one hour in the night. I had to sleep in the hall, wake up at any time, and sing that name which was too dry, too tasteless and too funny for me. Yet I used to do it. After some time, I had some experiences. I cannot say why those experiences came to me. While I was singing the name in the night, just chanting without any life or any prana in it. Suddenly I found myself in the midst of wild animals. All those wild animals like wolves, tigers, hyenas were just coming to attack me and tear me apart. I was stricken with fear. That was the first time I experienced what fear is. Before I used to wonder what could fear be? I could walk through the wild forest with a rifle all through the whole night without any fear; I knew that I could face rifles and guns, but no fear. I never knew what that experience was. But in that dream I experienced fear.

I began to scream and did not know how to escape. At that time, a very big elephant came to me. With his trunk, he just elevated me onto his back and the fear was no more. After sometime I found it was not me; it was Buddha who was sitting there. This was one wonderful dream or vision



that I had while I was singing the name. Like this many other visions followed. It was for this particular range of experience that I had been working for so many years.

I did practise pranayama but that did not really work. Perhaps my brain, my constitution, my nature or my samskaras were very hard. What I could not achieve in so many years, I achieved by a sadhana in which I did not even have faith. Even though I did not like to do that kirtan job, I did it because it was giving me experiences after experiences and all that was fantastic and beautiful.

Swami Sivananda himself loved kirtan immensely. When he used to sing kirtan, he used to start dancing. He used to just get completely inspired and totally transmuted. So even a sannyasin belonging to the highest order of Advaita Vedanta, the philosophy of jnana yoga, was just dancing like a fool. A person who represented the highest philosophy in Hindu

religion, a person who was the preceptor, a scholar of the philosophy of pure monism, when I saw him dancing like a very ordinary man, I had to rethink about what I was thinking as right. I began to doubt about my rational approach to reality.

A little later I began to think that everything I had been thinking was only intellectual. All my knowledge came from what we call the upper layer of human existence, superficial not superior. It did not emerge from the depth of my existence. Then I gradually started getting into the mood of singing kirtan. Even today my approach to life is totally rational. I do not believe in the pantheon of many gods. I do not even believe in a personal god. I believe in a supreme total consciousness. That someone is sitting there and looking at me, it is all foolish for me. I do not think that god exists as a judge of man. I do not even think that he hears our prayers. When I pray I hear, I know. I hypnotize myself. Still with all this rational approach, I am very affected by kirtan.

There used to be a time when I used to sing kirtan at any time. Later things developed in such a manner that not only singing but music plays a very difficult part on my mind. It is very pleasant; it is more than pleasant. It is total bliss, but there comes a moment when my mind merges with the music and then I can't bear it.

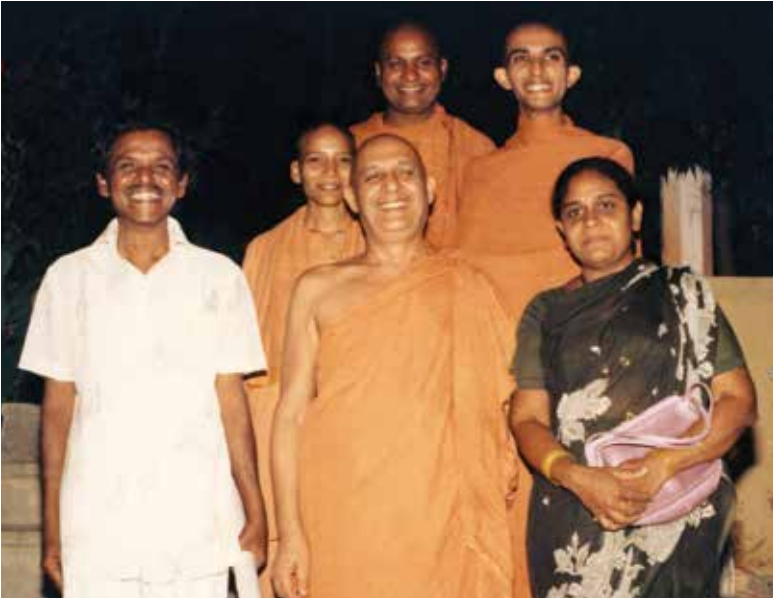
Many times I barely escaped from accidents. Even while travelling by a car or driving a car, it is not possible for me to hear any piece of music. I can completely lose the whole thing. When the *Ramayana* is sung or I hear any type of music, I have to withdraw myself completely to some particular way of thinking so that I do not hear it. It is a very high dose for me and that is the reason why, even though I like to sing, I will not sing.

I know of one thing for certain. I will leave this body while singing. This has come to me very clearly. It is not the time for me to leave this body. So final point, I cannot sing. There is the mood and that inspiration comes from inside. When I sing, it will be difficult for all of you.

5

Satsang

12 October 1982



Is there no other path to free us than the life of sannyasa?

This is not true. A sannyasin's life and a householder's life are defined as akarma and karma. Grihastha ashrama is called akarma in karma. You realize that you are not acting even though you are. A sannyasin's life is not acting while feeling you are acting.

In the second chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita* it is said, 'See karma in akarma, akarma in karma.' It can also be said, there are two paths: *pravritti*, involvement, and *nirvritti*, freedom from involvement. Sri Krishna thinks that these two paths are not contradictory to each other. If you are engaged in your own karma, you can attain siddhi.

The life of a householder is by no means inferior to the life of a sannyasin; but unfortunately, householders throughout the world have now lost track of their aim. Many people do not even know how they should live life, not only for self-realization, but even for attaining normal happiness they do not know how to live.

Either you live for happiness, comfort, tranquillity and more and more enjoyment or you live for self-realization. Householders today do not even know how to live a peaceful life. That means there is something lacking in them and that is why they are unhappy. Otherwise the life of a householder is a perfect pattern in itself through which you can attain nirvana, the highest summon bonum.

In India, there is a philosophy called tantra which has quite a number of branches. Vedachara tantra, kaulachara tantra and vamachara tantra are the various paths of tantra in which the sadhanas are so designed that they can only be done between married people and not by sannyasins, brahmacharis and recluses. How many people know it? Nobody knows. In the last ten or fifteen years, we have started talking about it.

A householder's life is known as *grishastha ashrama*. There are four ashramas – brahmacharya ashrama, grihastha ashrama, vanaprastha ashrama and sannyasa. You can take one of the four and you will realize the ultimate. There are some people who cannot become householders and they should not. If I were a householder, I would have been in jail. With such a mind which can think of so many things, how could I manage with one wife and two children with a little plot of land or a flat? I would have broken things. It is much better that I became a sannyasin and use the energy in

a much better way. There are people who should not become householders; there are people who should not take sannyasa.

You must remember that if they want to realize the ultimate nirvana, there are four paths – not only sannyasa ashram. Your house is also an ashram, provided it really is. It is not an ashram because you are not working there. Ashram is a place where you labour hard, *shram*. You labour in order to acquire external wealth. You labour in order to acquire inner wealth. There is also spiritual labour when you are meditating or doing karma yoga, that is also *shram*, hard work. You are working with your children and your family and that is also shram. You have to put forth hard work wherever you are for both worldly and spiritual wealth.

Therefore, a householder's life is as good as the life of a sannyasin. I am the biggest householder. Sannyasa is a philosophy. It is not just clothes; it is an idea. I have so many children, but they are not born of my blood; they are born of my philosophy. Children born of philosophy are much better than children born of one's blood.

There are millions of Muslims, Christians and Hindus around the world. Are they the children of the same blood? Are all the Christians blood children of Christ? Are all Muslims blood children of Mohammed? No, they are born of philosophy. I have children; we have work, duties and a lot of responsibilities. Nothing can stand on the path of a man if he knows how to live and how to accept. The harder we work, the better we feel because we are producing an external result for the community. We are producing a result for posterity, for history. At the same time, we are not diverting our energies to destructive purposes. We are neither destroying society nor ourselves.

If this idea of sannyasa is more or less translated into the life of a householder today, I think the householder life and the life of a sannyasin will come closer. Today the life of a householder and the life of a sannyasin have such a big gap, 'I am a householder, and he is a sannyasin. He is spiritual, can I be spiritual?' That gap has to be reduced.

It is true that life has to be based on kama, artha, dharma and moksha, the four purusharthas. For a householder, artha and kama come first – purpose and fulfilment of desires. For a sannyasin dharma and moksha come first, artha and kama come much later. That is the only difference. A sannyasin solely exists for dharma and moksha and a householder should not solely exist for artha and kama. Artha and kama are prominent, but a householder must know that the ultimate purpose of artha and kama is dharma and moksha.

What is the dividing line between yogasanas and spirituality?

If you take yoga postures as merely physical exercises, then I think they do not at all relate to spirituality. If you carefully study the significance of yogic postures according to the science of tantra and hatha yoga, then yoga postures become an aid to spiritual life.

Yoga postures improve the chakras in the body. They purify the energy centres throughout the body. Six chakras are located in the framework of the spine and these chakras have to be purified. In order to purify and awaken the chakras, yoga postures are helpful. In the awakening of transcendental consciousness or kundalini, first, you have to awaken the chakras, then sushumna nadi and finally kundalini. They are three different things, not the same.

Many times we misunderstand these awakenings for kundalini awakening. Kundalini awakening is a very important event in man's life. It is not merely an experiment that is taking place in the body. First of all, you have to purify the nadis and tattwas in the body, then you have to purify prana. Then you have to purify the chakras then sushumna. Only then should you venture to awaken kundalini and not before that.

Yoga postures clear the energy blocks in the body and create a balance in the hormonal processes. They help distribute the pranic energy throughout. This body, mind and soul are not free. At the gross level, it is body. At a subtler level, it is the mind. And at the subtlest level it is the atman or Paramatman.

Curd is the subtler form of milk; butter is subtler than that and ghee is the subtlest of them. In the same way, the body, mind and soul complex is one. Now you are rooted in the body so you have body awareness. When you are deep in meditation, you do not have body awareness; you have mind awareness. When you lose consciousness of ego in dhyana, you have atman awareness, not even mind awareness.

By the practice of yogasana, you gain a lot of benefits which you cannot imagine. Therefore, do not equate yoga postures with yoga exercises. I travel all over the world and I never say yoga exercises, I say yogasana or yoga postures. You have to assume the postures; you do not have to do all sorts of exercises. Even for therapy, it is not necessary.

When you go to spiritual life, you are not going through an abstract passage, it is a reality. How long can you sit in one asana? One hour, two or three hours? This capacity of sitting in one posture for three hours can only come to you if your body is purified through yogasana. Otherwise, you have a stiff body. If you are not able to sit for two or three hours in a yoga posture, you cannot create desired changes in the body, because the soul, *atman anubhuti*, is the essence of the body. From the body the mind, from the mind the vijnanam, from vijnanam comes the atman that is the innermost essence.

There are many people who feel that yoga postures cannot be linked with spiritual life. I also thought so, but I am convinced that it is necessary to hold concentration on one point for one hour at least. Do not talk of spirituality, talk of mantra anushthana. If by God's grace, you get an inspiration to do anushthana, what will you do? Anushthana will require you to sit for fifteen days, nine days, at least for a maximum of eight to nine hours a day and you cannot even sit for half an hour. How will you manage?

Anushthana is practising your guru mantra without concentrating, allowing your mind to flow, but with a will to repeat it. Your mind may go elsewhere but you do not care about it. You are seated in padmasana for one hour, repeating, *Om Namah Shivaya, Om Namah Shivaya, Om Namah*

Shivaya and your mind goes out. Eight hours today, eight hours tomorrow, nine days, seventy two hours, after that, on the tenth day you sit for meditation and you will see how calm and quiet your mind is. If you want to concentrate on the Shivalinga, you can do it; if you want to concentrate on Shaligram, you can do it; if you want to concentrate on nirguna Brahman, you can do it.

Yoga posture should not at all be underestimated. Nowadays we are using yoga postures for therapy, but that is not the main objective of yogasana. That is a by-product.

What are siddhis?

Siddhi means perfection. When the mind is under control having been trained through the practice of samyama, then your mind can produce results. It can produce things and it can go beyond the limitations of a normal buddhi. It depends on how much control you have over the mind. Some have *ashta siddhi*, eight siddhis, like Hanumanji. Some have one siddhi, two or three. They all belong to the area of the mind and depend on how much you can properly control your mind.

One very important point is that control of the mind is not achieved by suppression. If you repress the mind, you will not become a siddha. You will go to a mental asylum. You will become a mental patient. No suppression, no repression. You must practise satya, ahimsa, brahmacharya and this and that and you will get better results.

If I speak a lie, I will get a watch; if I speak the truth, I will get a big property. If I do not observe brahmacharya, I will get momentary pleasure, but if I observe brahmacharya, I will get a lot more pleasures. If this idea becomes clear in your mind, there is no repression. Whether it is satya, ahimsa, brahmacharya, asteya or aparigraha, you must understand that while fulfilling and accomplishing these qualities your gains are going to be much greater than if you violate them. People often think by telling a lie they are going to get a property and by telling the truth, they are going to get a watch, that's all. And that is why people tell lies.

Of course it is true that the fruits of satya and ahimsa do not come to you at once. If you tell a lie, maybe you will get a result the next day or immediately. But if you are going to stick to the truth at any cost, like Satya Harischandra and many other people, first of all there is a little testing and difficulty, but later on it will bear fruits.

How can we achieve absolute control over the mind?

Absolute control over the mind is known as samyama. I am not using the word samyama in the ethical and moral sense. It is a very technical term used by Patanjali in his *Raja Yoga Sutras*. When you close your eyes and you are able to visualize a lotus flower as clearly or nearly as clearly as you see it outside, that is called samyama. Dharana, dhyana and samadhi when they happen in quick succession is called *samyama*. When these three events take place in quick succession or at the same time, they are called samyama.

The sutra used by Patanjali is (Vibhooti Pada, 4): *Trayam-ekatra samyamah* – all the three together is samyama. Samyama is to be attained by gradual practice. How do you attain samyama? In raja yoga, there are eight steps: yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana and samadhi.

If you practise yama, niyama, asana and pranayama, then pratyahara will become successful. If you do not practise them properly and you go on sitting, trying to concentrate your mind, for one month it is okay, two months it is okay, but the third month the mind will give you a kick. That happens to most of us. Yama and niyama must be practised because that is mental control.

It is very difficult. You want to concentrate on your guru – oh, it is very easy. Put a photo in front of you, look at him for five to twenty minutes. But what about yama and niyama? You put the water on the stove and it becomes hot; remove it, it becomes cold. In the same way, this mind which you concentrate through dharana and dhyana loses its immunity because you have not established any preliminary controls – yama and niyama.

What are yama and niyama? Satya, ahimsa, brahmacharya, asteya, aparigraha are the yama, for preliminary control. *Asteya* means no stealing, *aparigraha* means not accumulating many things like twenty pairs of shoes, fifteen saris. What is niyama? Saucha, santosha, swadhyaya, tapasya, ishwara pranidhana. The shatkriyas of hatha yoga come into saucha. *Niyama* means observances. Five disciplines and five observances are primary controls. When you can accomplish these, you find no difficulty in concentration because after all what disturbs your mind? Passions.

If I light a candle here, the wick will flicker because the fans are on. There is no use crying or complaining, 'Hey, my wick is flickering.' Your wick is flickering; the fan is disturbing it; switch it off and the candle will not flicker. When the emotional or psychological tempest – complexes of the mind – or all the dirt that is hidden in the mind comes up during japa, dhyana and kirtan, it disturbs the consistency of the mind.

There is no use trying to concentrate unless you are able to get out of it. That is what Tulsidas has said in the *Ramayana*: "*Soham asmi vritti akhanda.*" Your mind must assume the vritti of *So Ham* in an unbroken way. How to do it? He said close all your windows because through them the wind is coming in and every now and then it blows out the candle of your consciousness.

So yama, niyama, asana, pranayama and pratyahara must be accomplished first. Then you will be able to gain control over the mind. When you gain control over the mind you can concentrate on the human mind and read all the thoughts as though you were reading a file.

Mind, when concentrated and controlled, is the most powerful element in your hands. All the great people who have changed the history of the world were people of mind, not of opportunities. I have not become great or you have not become great because there are good opportunities. In the lives of all people, many great opportunities come, but the people who do not have control of mind lose all those

opportunities. A great statesman, warrior, hero, poet or politician, even a great dacoit, is a man of strong mind.

Who are Shiva, Parvati and Ganesha?

In yogic and tantric literature, Shiva, Parvati and Ganesha are very significant figures. Shiva is known as the destroyer. What does he destroy? He destroys ignorance which is the root of all diseases. Therefore, he is the first guru. Parvati is the giver of life, blessings and wisdom. She is the first disciple because she did not guard the knowledge which was within her, but gave it out to all, even to animals.

Ganesha, also known as Ganapati, their elephant-headed son, is the remover of obstacles. Before any worldly enterprise or religious rite is begun, Ganesha is propitiated. Although he is known as the remover of obstacles, Ganesha also creates obstacles so that people do not become egoistic. His name is evoked and swells from the mouths of millions of people in India daily.

*Jaya Ganesha, Jaya Ganesha, Jaya Ganesha Pahimam
Sri Ganesha, Sri Ganesha, Sri Ganesha Rakshimam*



6

Satsang

13 October 1982

How are we to get direct transmission from our guru?

The mind can attain higher frequencies either through mantra, sound or yantra. When the mind can attain higher frequencies, it is in a position to transmit waves. By constant practice, it can transmit waves over thousands of miles.

A link has to be established between the guru and disciple. There are two links that can be established between them. One is the intellectual link and the other is the intuitive link. You can establish the intellectual link with your guru by hearing from him *upadesha*, spiritual instructions. He teaches you. The other form of link is through intuition. That is called transmission. For that the disciple has to prepare himself through constant sadhana by purifying the diet, channelling all types of emotions to the guru and, as far as possible, eliminating all intellectual links with him. It is said by the wise men, 'Under the shade of the banyan tree, the old guru and the young disciple are seated. Guru is not speaking anything, he is silent. That is his lecture. And the disciples' doubts are being cleared every now and then.' So it is not at all necessary to establish an intellectual link with the guru. In this age, we do have intellectual links with our guru, but then you will have to transcend the intellect.

Sri Aurobindo said to a disciple, 'Intellect was the helper. Intellect is the barrier. Transcend intellect.' The second

sentence he said, 'Reason was the helper. Reason is the barrier. Transcend reason.' A similar statement was also made in the Upanishads, particularly the *Kathopanishad*. 'This spiritual experiment cannot be had by listening to discourses, nor by improving the quality of your *buddhi*, intellect, or even by hearing about the experiment so many times from this book, this guru and that mahatma. You go on hearing about the experiments of samadhi and this and that, even if you hear it a hundred times, there will be nothing.' In order to establish the link, the most important thing is the connection between the two. I can give you two examples. One example is quoted in a book, *Psychic Discoveries behind the Iron Curtain*, which talks about certain experiments conducted in Russia. There is an experiment. Two people are chosen for transmission and reception and they are trained by developing their ESP, which means *atindraya anubhuti*, psychic experience.

First they transmitted and received at a distance of 1 metre and the final distance was 1,600 miles. As they succeeded, the distance between the transmitter and the receiver was increased until 1,600 miles. Then both people were enclosed in a Faradays cage. A Faradays cage is something in which electromagnetic waves, radioactive waves cannot penetrate. When these two individuals were enclosed in the Faradays cage, the transmission and the reception took place. This is one example of how the link has to be established by constant *abhyasa*, repeated practising. I have written in detail in the book *Taming the Kundalini* about the process of transmission between two individuals.

When I was in Japan this year, I went to a great scientist there, Dr Hiroshi Motoyama, to see his research centre because I am also planning a research centre at Ganga Darshan in 1984. He showed me a film at an evening get-together. I think the film was about fifteen minutes long and there was nothing to see but one small light, a mercury colour, sometimes becoming smaller and sometimes bigger. Sometimes it was descending, sometimes going to the right,

to the left and down and sometimes evaporating. That is all I saw for fifteen minutes, a light like a glow worm.

Dr Motoyama told me the story behind it. He met two Americans who were friends. One was a boy and one was a girl and they were very intimate friends. The girl was put in the experiment chamber, a room which is completely insulated by half-inch thickness of lead. Electromagnetic waves were unable to penetrate that room. The boy was sitting outside of that room with the registering machines and computers. He and she were both meditating on each other, the details I do not know, but they were in deep meditation on each other, let us use the word transmission.

On account of this mutual meditation on each other, in that girl, the energy was condensed and she was in that small 5 x 5 foot room with a television camera focused on her, filming what was happening. It was total darkness and her figure could not be seen. As a result of their meditation on each other, the energy was condensed at the point of mooladhara or swadhisthana chakra because the boy and girl perhaps did not belong to a higher category of sadhakas. They were beginners so the energy was condensed in mooladhara or swadhisthana chakra. The moment they used to go deep, the energy used to ascend and sometimes it became very clear, sometimes very dark, or even disappearing.

In our bodies, we have a chakra known as ajna chakra which is situated on top of the spine. This is the monitoring centre, and through concentration and development, evolution in ajna chakra, transmission between guru and disciple can take place and the link can be established. It is very difficult.

Once upon a time, I was in Goudana District doing my Chaturmas sadhana. A lady narrated her experiments to me. One evening, she received a sort of inspiration that her son living in Bombay was ill. She went there and found he was. At the time of her inspiration, her son had just fallen from his motorbike and he remembered his mother. Quickly the link was established between mother and son. The basis of

the establishment of the link has to be *bhakti*, *shraddha* and *abhyasa*, love, faith and practice.

Can you relate some of the experiences from your parivrajaka life?

In 1956 I went on parivrajaka life. I went in saffron but it was very dirty and could not be recognized as saffron. I went throughout India and visited Afghanistan, Nepal, Burma, Ceylon. The experiences are too many to relate. However, the most important experience was here, the place where we are sitting now.

There was a very big house here which was in dilapidated condition and the land was so different that you cannot even imagine what it was. Even Munger people cannot recognize it now. I used to spend a lot of time here. The whole day I used to lie down as I had nothing to do and nothing to accomplish. Sometimes I had such experiences that I thought I would go mad. Of course, I knew exactly what was happening. Sometimes I saw the whole earth split into two. Sometimes I had the feeling I was about to fly and similar other experiences occurred which indicated the awakening of something that took place, but I found them unbearable.



When I used to leave Munger for some other place, they ceased. I was calm, quiet and peaceful everywhere. I used to stay in Ananda Bhavan and nothing happened there except for two things. When I used to stay in a small building in Ananda Bhavan, I used to hear a girl dancing in the night. It was nice to hear, but it would have been better if I could have actually seen her. Sometimes I heard the sounds of a cashier counting money as if in a treasury. All night I could hear the sounds, but that also I could not see. It would have been nice if I did. These were the two experiences I used to have every now and then.

The building is known as Ananda Bhavan and was not at all used by the owners. They went there for an hour or two to play badminton and tennis and then they went back to their home. In the night, not even the watchman stayed there. I was invited to stay there by the owner. Perhaps the owner had great faith in sadhus and thought, 'If the swami lives there all the spirits will be liberated.' I stayed for four months and fasted during Chaturmas, and after that I did not have these two experiences. Since then so many servants, gardeners and watchmen lived there and nobody had that experience and they were quite happy. I think the experience I had was the last of the series.

Earlier than that, I often felt very depressed because I did not know why man is born and why he should live. I became too intellectual. Why should I realize, and what business has God to tell me to worship, praise and glorify him and tell him that he is omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient? I did not understand what business God had that he should ask me to praise him. These religious views became too tormenting to me and I was about to rethink whether God existed at all. It is important that if you are searching for something, you must be sure it exists.

There are interpretations given by different people in different books and traditions. They were so confusing to me. It is good that I want the experience, but why should you want mine also? These kinds of confusing thoughts came to me and I was trying to solve this here.

These painful, difficult and frightening experiences used to come to me whenever I came here. That is the reason why in 1968 I sent a message to the proprietor and owner of this property to give me this piece of land so I could stay and have more madness.

What preparations must be made for kriya yoga and is it suitable for householders?

Kriya yoga is meant for a householder who has a family and children and cannot abstain from the natural biological urges of life. Kriya yoga is not for brahmacharis because kriya yoga is a practice from tantra. Tantra is an age-old science in this country and in previous cultures elsewhere. In tantra expansion of mind and liberation of energy is accomplished in and through life.

The monastic tradition came later, the Jain tradition, Buddhist tradition influenced the monastic tradition of vedic Sanatana dharma. In Sanatana dharma of India, the great yogis and mahatmas were known as raja rishis, deva rishi, maha rishi and brahma rishi. *Rishi* means seer, one who can see; one who has the visions, who has *darshan*. Rishi is one who can see beyond matter, into the core of matter, into the reality and substance of matter. Then there were kings known as *raja rishis*. When the rishis were brahmins, they were called brahma rishis. When they were divine beings, they were known as *deva rishi*. When they belonged to any caste or no caste at all, they were known as maha rishi. That is how they were categorized.

The vedic maha rishis and the vedic tradition believe in sannyasa. Some people have to become sannyasins, but it is wrong to say that you can only become a seer by adhering to the monastic tradition. Brahmacharya is one way and, of course, its glories are great. Krishna was a brahmachari. Hanuman was a brahmachari. There are many other great brahmacharis; but at the same time, when you want to evolve your soul, expand your mind, see without eyes and attain inner vision, you cannot isolate the science to one group or the other.

This is the philosophy of tantra of which kriya yoga is a part. The Jain and Buddhist traditions influenced the tradition which later became Christianity. These traditions became puritanical. We are not criticizing; we are analyzing. In these traditions, if you touch a woman, you are a sinner. Tantra does not agree with this. It says, whether you practise *vedachara tantra* according to the sanctions of the Vedas, or *kaulachara tantra* according to the tradition of the traditional initiation, or *vamachara tantra*, practising with your wife, you can improve your consciousness, your spirit and you can have the sublime spiritual experience. You can become a maha rishi.

In the light of this tantric philosophy, many practices were evolved. Kriya yoga is one tradition which was discovered by the tradition of Paramahansa Yogananda, Sri Yukteshwar and other gurus.

Yoga nidra is another tradition which I discovered. Hatha yoga is a third tradition which was discovered by the nath gurus, the kaanphata yogis. Sri Yukteshwar, Lahiri Mahasaya and Paramahansa Yogananda discovered the kriya yoga system. I discovered the yoga nidra system. Maybe later some other swamis will discover some other system.

What is the significance of kumbhaka and how is it to be practised in order to attain the best results? Is there any harm in practising pranayama in the supine position?

Kumbhaka means pranayama. Rechaka and pooraka are there incidentally. The *Yoga Sutras* say (2:49):

... *shvasaprashvasyorgativichchedah pranayama.*

... pranayama is the cessation of the movement of inhalation and exhalation.

The gap between shvasa and prashvasa (inhalation and exhalation) is pranayama. What is the gap? Kumbhaka is the gap between inhalation and exhalation.

Kumbhaka is of three types – antaranga kumbhaka, bahiranga kumbhaka and kevala kumbhaka. In order to

establish mastery over kumbhaka and to get maximum results, the inhalation and exhalation have to be timed properly. The ratio between inhalation and exhalation is 1:2, and accordingly, you can do kumbhaka.

When you practise *antaranga khumbhaka*, internal retention, you should assume two bandhas – jalandhara bandha and moola bandha. When you are practising external kumbhaka, *bahiranga kumbhaka*, you must assume three bandhas – jalandhara bandha, moola bandha and uddiyana bandha.

In order to maintain the proper ratio, you must have a mantra. Without mantra the ratio cannot be maintained. Of course you have your own ishta mantra. Some may have *Om Namah Shivaya*; some have *Sri Rama Jai Jai Ram*. For pranayama the mantra is Gayatri because the scriptures say, 'Gayatri and prana are the same'. Gayatri has 24 syllables; the maximum vital capacity of a person is as long as the Gayatri mantra. If you can inhale up to 24 syllables, that is the ideal vital capacity. Some people cannot do it and many can. So one Gayatri is one mantra. If you take Gayatri, one mantra, as the base, then the exhalation has to be two Gayatris. Retention has to be first one Gayatri and later two Gayatris.

So, inhale, one mantra; retain, one mantra; exhale, two mantras; and retain outside, one mantra. This is how you begin. Later, inhale one mantra; retain two mantras; exhale two mantras; and retain outside one mantra. Maintain this mantra and do not change it. In the shastras there are various ratios – 1:1:2:1 or 1:2:2:1 or 1:4:2:2 or 1:6:4:4. You maintain the proposed ratio as 1:2:2:1 for five rounds. The only thing you can do if you have been practising pranayama properly and your constitution is cooperating, you make one mantra equals to two Gayatris. Up to now, one mantra has been equal to one Gayatri. Now you consider that one mantra is equal to two Gayatris. You have improved.

When you practise kumbhaka, certain experiences do take place. You cannot avoid it. Pranayama has to be done very gradually. The shastras say, 'Do not be in a hurry when

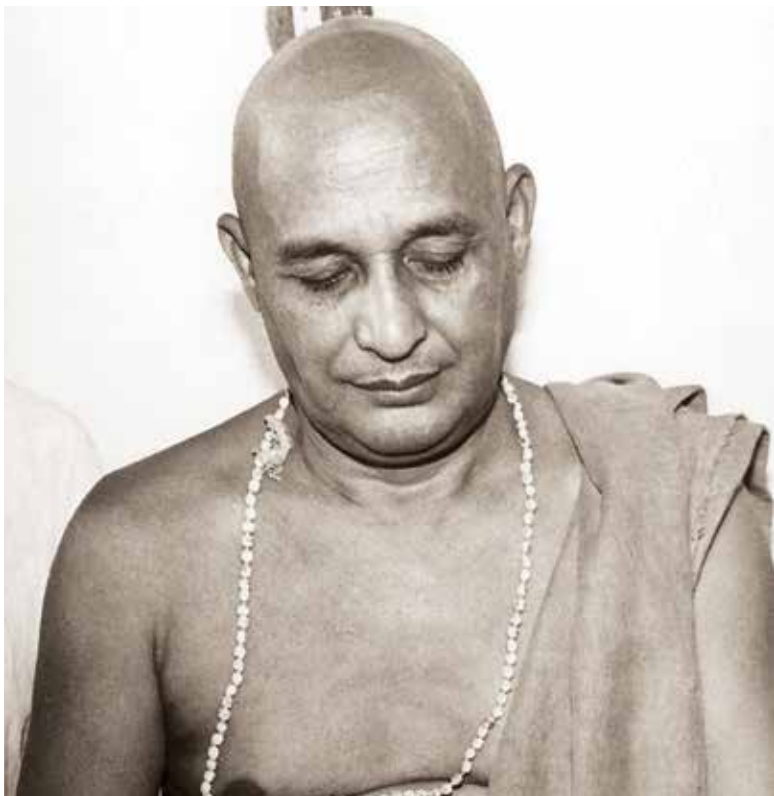
you want to train an elephant.’ When you want to train an elephant, you have to proceed with care. Kumbhaka is prana. You are holding the prana; you are not releasing the prana. Therefore, prana is a force. You cannot retain prana. It creates heat in the system. One morning when Hanumanji was very hungry, he found an apple – that was the sun. So he flew up, started eating the apple, the sun, and he swallowed the sun. All the three worlds became dark. This story indicates one particular yoga practice which Hanumanji must have been able to do. He suspended the prana completely. When the sun was rising, he swallowed the sun and the three worlds became dark. When pranas are suspended, the consciousness, subconsciousness and unconsciousness or the annamaya, pranayama, manomaya, vijñanamaya and anandamaya koshas – the activities of all five koshas – are suspended. When yogis assume jala samadhi, bhu samadhi, they suspend their prana completely. They transform the prana.

Therefore, when you are practising kumbhaka, as you increase its quality, you must improve your diet. You must also improve your involvement with the unnecessary things in life. You must also improve your emotional, intellectual and biological interactions. You cannot have your cake and eat it at the same time. Many people want to have the benefits of pranayama, but at the same time, they cannot get out of the ruts of life. No, that cannot be. In the beginning it is okay, but if you want to take the practice of pranayama as a special practice, you have to understand it properly.

Kumbhaka is responsible for the awakening of kundalini. There are many ways in which one can awaken this potential power like laya yoga and tantra yoga. Pranayama is the most powerful method. If you are practising pranayama and heat is generated in your body, if you feel pain in your body, restlessness, completely lost with the experience of the empirical world, if you begin to understand the sun, moon and nature differently than you do now, why do you wonder what is happening? Kumbhaka changes the quality of your

mind and perception. You want to change the mind but you do not want to change the quality of perception. This happens with most people. They want to practise pranayama, influence, improve and change their mind. When they begin to experience the consequences of that change, they ask, 'Hey, what's happening? I don't want it.' This is what you have to clarify first.

The moment you have a change in the mind, you will also have change in the quality of your perception. Your experiences of life will become different. You will look differently at a flower, the rain, sun and moon. You will look differently at the difficulties, troubles, pain, luxuries, passions, ambitions and diseases of your life.



7

Satsang

14 October 1982

What are the qualities of a true disciple and is it possible for a householder to develop these special qualities?

According to the traditions, there are many types of disciples and many types of gurus. There is the mantra guru from whom you take the mantra and you are a mantra chela. You learn kundalini yoga so you are a kundalini chela. You learn tantra from a tantric guru so you are his tantric chela. A householder disciple and a sannyasin disciple can have a high quality of relationship and attitude with the guru.

In both there has to be proper understanding, faith and devotion for each other. If the disciple is arrogant and stubborn, the guru cannot work very much with him because he is hard matter. If the disciple is soft and tender and does not interfere with the guru's way of working with him, he can become a good disciple.

What is the best way to develop faith in a pessimistic and negative person?

Satsang with saints and mahatmas and practising a little bit of sadhana will improve the quality of faith. Faith is inherent in everybody; you do not have to bring it. All our worships, rituals and sadhana are external because we do not bring faith into it. We have faith inherent within us and that has to be expressed and should be linked with your sadhana.

Through yoga practices, how can I help a friend who is an alcoholic?

Bring him here. One does need alcohol. You need it and everybody needs it. In yoga, you practise things and thereby you manufacture your own alcohol within yourself. When you get a better quality of alcohol, an inexpensive alcohol from within, why purchase a bottle?

There are many people who have benefitted by the practices of yoga, but with hard alcoholics you must not compel them to give up alcohol. If they are influenced by you and they give up drinking, they will have a crisis, nervous breakdown, lack of confidence, absence of faith in life, fear or other traumas. Before you tell them, teach them or hypnotize them to become free from alcohol, it is better to give them some sort of philosophical base. That is exactly what we try to do.

How can we help bring peace to the world?

I do not know. I am not pessimistic, but the world is a mixture of the three *gunas* or qualities: *sattwa*, harmonious, *rajasic*, aggressive, and *tamasic*, lazy, indolent, sensual, passionate. These three *gunas* are always there. You may make this generation wise, but in the next generation, foolish people will come again. You cannot educate people like this. We have to accept disturbances, wars and disasters; but at the same time, we should try to develop a human structure and a social structure. We should not be pessimistic; we should be up and about and doing. I know that if everybody became *sattwic*, it would be difficult to live in this world. Three billion people, all very good people. I cannot imagine; all the newspapers would go blank. The radios and televisions would have nothing to say. There would be no stories like . . . this boy killed . . . that man murdered . . . this man burgled . . . that man kidnapped . . . and that bomb exploded and this country destroyed. In the news there is so much of this, so much excitement and involvement with life. Kapila, the great philosopher of Samkhya said, "The mind is composed

of three gunas. Matter is composed of three gunas and five *tattwas* or elements’.

Therefore, the entire human society is composed of three gunas – *deva*, *manushya*, *rakshasa*, divines, human beings and demons. They are not external. All three are in me. Only yogis or mahatmas transcend the three gunas. When there is no tamas, there is no devilish in nature. When there is no aggression in nature, there is total sattwa, and life functions stop. At that time, the yogi becomes a *videhamukta*, his body does not respond, his mind does not react. For him a snake and a flower garland are the same.

Do you want to be like that? No. Without having different types of trees and flowers, a garden is not a garden. You must have roses, this type of tree and that flower. The world is beautiful and you have plenty to see. Of course, it is necessary to improve the quality of society and the nation every day by better ways and methods. I do not understand about world peace. This world is better off as it is.

What is the meaning of detachment?

It is in the nature of man to live a life of attachment. This instinct is so peculiar that it not only binds you by a large property, but also it can bind you through a small needle and the sufferings are the same. Therefore, you will have to analyze the whole situation carefully. It is no use fighting with the items of attachment.

Detachment does not mean disassociation with objects, people and property. Detachment is a philosophy, an outlook, a way of dealing with the matters of your life. Even if you denounce your duties and obligations, even if you renounce your present situation of life, even if you renounce your country and everything or you remain half-clad in the mountains living on a little food, you may still be attached to your ego.

The external attachment to the object is an expression of your attachment to your ego. The cause of suffering is man’s involvement with his own ego. If you can detach yourself from

your ego, it does not matter where you live, with whom you live, and whom you love. This detachment is called sannyasa.

What is non-attachment?

Non-attachment is actually non-involvement of the ego. I can give you an example. Whenever your interactions with work and life have a definite purpose, you can operate in the world without any involvement. You can involve your body, your thoughts, your senses, but the objective has to be there. If this objective is not present, you cannot practise detachment. You may renounce things or you may renounce your relationships with people, but it will not make any change. First of all, you have to set an objective for your life. The objective that has been given to us by our wise people is the purification of the self, mind or heart. Once this objective has been fixed, you can easily detach ego from the *karma*, work.

Is it possible to find a balance between not having ambitions and non-attachment?

Yes, the balance has to be found; otherwise, the whole structure of life will collapse. Life has its structure and evolution depends on that structure. If you destroy the structure, there will be regression. If you do not have desire or ambition, there is no incentive. You will not work. If you do not work, your mind will not improve. Therefore, desires, passions and renunciation have to be balanced properly.

Nowadays many people say that the moral and social values are going down everyday. What is your opinion regarding this?

I have a different view altogether. Nowadays people are more intelligent than they were fifty, one hundred or two hundred years ago. Humanity as a whole is getting very intelligent. As a result of this, there is a sort of conflict in the mind of society between the good and evil principles of intelligence. It cannot be proved that there were no bad elements in the past. It cannot be proved that society was once totally moral,

totally idealistic. If you study the scriptures you will find that, right from *Satya Yuga*, the first of the four ages of man, they tortured not only human beings but God Himself.

In *Satya Yuga*, the age of *satya* or truth, Hiranyakashyapu, the tyrant father-king of Prahlad, was born. God himself was born in the form of Narasimha to destroy him. If that be the case, you can imagine the type of corruption that must have been prevalent at that time. If you read the story of Prahlad in the present context, he was totally opposed to what was happening at that time. Later in the *Treta Yuga*, you find a cruel king like Ravana. Almost the whole of India trembled before him; no one could oppose him. He had the audacity to kidnap people's wives. So a force had to be organized to destroy him and the whole of the *Ramayana* is evidence to this.

What were the values in *Dwapar Yuga*? Yudhisthira, the king of the Pandava family, was called *Dharma Raja*, king of righteousness, but he put his whole empire at stake. Today you cannot even put your company at stake because it is not your company. You are only a caretaker. A king is only a caretaker; he is not the owner of his empire. In the Puranas, there are fights and wars between gods, between men, which proves that asuric tendencies have always been both within and outside man. Inside there is both asura or devil and devi or angel. Sometimes the devil is dominant and sometimes the angel; and it is the same in society too.

These demonic tendencies are always there in our *yuga*, age. There is a lot of corruption and there are a lot of things going on which religions like Christianity and Islam may not accept, not to mention Buddhism and Jainism. But there is a bright side also to our current age, never in history an individual had the right to protect and defend himself even against a king as he has now.

Is some kind of ethical work necessary for spiritual development? What is meant by 'working out' one's karma?

There is no doubt that spiritual development can go on without any ethical coordination. Ethics and morality are

social factors and schemes, mostly concerned with mutual relationships. As such it is alright to have faith in ethics and morality, but you must divest the spiritual factors from them. A detailed study of the standards of ethics and morality throughout the world in different cultures and times will definitely show that what is considered ethical and moral in some countries is considered unethical and immoral in others.

Working out one's karma means fulfilment of the obligations of man's nature and reality. By becoming a swami, one is working out karma. In the same way, everybody is working out their karma through their present incarnation. If ethics and morality are bound by time and space, how can they influence reality? Karma brings an experience. By working out that karma, you are replacing one experience with another form of experience.

How can we attain, identify, get to know and reach the feeling and realization of spiritual consciousness?

Slowly and steadily identify yourself with each and every thing in life. Every thing is a part of your self. That's all.

One student has been practising shambhavi mudra for one hour and he finds that his eyes are becoming strained.

That is too much. If one hour of shambhavi mudra has not given you the experience of light, then either you are practising too much or you are not practising it correctly. First, you practise trataka. Practise on a candle flame, a black dot, a point on the body of your ishta devata or on a crystal ball. Then concentration will take place. When concentration takes place, shambhavi mudra happens by itself. When you check the pupils in deep states of relaxation, they are in shambhavi mudra.

8

Mantra and Mind

15 October 1982

What is the effect of mantra on the mind and how is the mantra to be chosen for an individual? Are there any precautions to be taken while chanting the mantra?

Mantra is a Sanskrit word meaning repetition and liberation – *Mananat trayate iti mantraha*. *Mananat* means repetition, again and again. *Trayate* means freedom, liberation. So by constant repetition of a sound, the mind becomes free from *samskaras* and obsessions. This is the literal meaning of mantra.

Mantra is the repetition of a sound. Sound is an energy, like electrical or nuclear energy. Sometimes sound exists in low frequency, sometimes in high frequency and sometimes in the highest frequency. When you can resonate with this sound by repetition, it attains high frequency which can create vibration in the brain, the mind and the emotion of the inner field.

Mantra should be received from a guru who will give you a mantra according to his estimate. Sometimes we give mantra according to one's zodiac sign. Sometimes the mantra is given according to the *parampara*, the tradition. You may have a *kula devata*, a family deity, like Shiva, Rama, Krishna. In India, many people have the tradition of *kula devata*. Sometimes one has been practising a mantra without being initiated by his guru. Then we allow that mantra. We have many methods of choosing a mantra for seekers and aspirants.

As far as mantras are concerned there is no risk or danger. There are various types of mantras. One mantra is known as bija mantra; bija mantras are very powerful. When you practise the mantra with *sakama bhavana*, with a motive and a desire in mind, then you have to perform them according to the tantric rites and tradition.

These tantric mantras should be practised properly. You must pronounce them properly because if you do not, they can also produce negative vibration. Such mantras are not given; they are kept secret. They are not given to an aspirant in the form of initiation. In India, tantrics know those mantras. When you have certain difficulties in life, you go to them. Then they perform the anushthana for you. You do not have to participate in the anushthana. You only have to do the sankalpa. They have a sankalpa for you – ‘For this purpose I do this mantra.’ After that the tantric does that anushthana. If he is expert in his job, you get the result.

There is a beautiful story. Some years ago in India in the High Court of Calcutta, there was a Chief Justice. One day he was dictating a judgement. Half way through, his mind changed and he dictated another judgement. This went on happening to him. It was his stenographer who said, ‘Sir, both the parties are doing anushthana. They are sending you forces which are influencing your mind from time to time as the frequency rises.’ The justice said, ‘Nonsense. What are you talking about?’ In those days, the West had not accepted mind as different from the brain. The vibration, the transmitting powers of the brain, the transmitting powers of the mind, all these things were not even academically thought about. However, the justice could not dictate the judgement which led this man to delve deep into the mysteries. Later he became a tantric.

So nobody receives these tantric mantras?

They are transferred to certain intimate disciples by the teacher. To maybe one, two or three, but not many. When these mantras are given or initiated to some aspirants, they

are properly tested. They are judged because one who can handle these mantras can do anything. He can produce negative effects and he can also use these mantras for his own benefit.

In India most tantrics are poor. They are not rich people because they cannot use these mantras for their own good. They cannot even use these mantras for curing their own illness. They can do Lakshmi anushtana for you, but not for themselves. They can do Mahamrityunjaya anushtana for you, but not for themselves because there are certain rules which prohibit it. These mantras can produce negative results by mispronunciation and by wrong rites which are not written in books. Frankly, we do not know much because we do not belong to those secret traditions called tantric traditions.

The other mantras are very harmless and innocent. They do produce the result very slowly. When you are practising mantra, you are not practising it for the sake of concentration. I did not know this for many years and thought that mantra was an aid to concentration, but much later realization came to me that mantras are intended for purification of the inner self, *chitta shuddhi*, and not concentration.

When you sit for concentration, so many forms, thoughts and ideas come to your mind. What is that? That is called impurity which comes in meditation in the form of distracted visions, thoughts, wanderings and fantasies. It has to be expelled because it is deeply embedded in you. Therefore, mantra should not be practised for concentration.

When you practise mantra for a long time and you flush out everything slowly, gradually, the mind becomes empty of its influences. It is vacated of the samskaras and automatically concentration and meditation takes place. Dhyana and samadhi is not a matter of evolvment, it is already there. If you have a little gold or something valuable underneath your floor, you do not have to do anything else except dig up that portion and take it out. You are not making the gold; it is already there. The superconsciousness, the one-pointedness, the total absorption, this quality need

not be developed. It is already there. You have to remove the obstacle, and that obstacle is karma and samskara which is also already there.

Just as the sun is shrouded by the clouds and you cannot see it, this real experience of dhyana and samadhi cannot be experienced by you unless you follow a process of purging. Purging is a consequence of mantra. Therefore, you should try to practise more mantra. When you are practising mantra, if your mind is wandering, let it wander, do not stop it. If it is thinking horrible things, it is even better. If it is thinking dirty things, it is all right. If it is not thinking anything, there is something wrong. It is a mental block. It is a very simple thing to understand.

If you pass wind anytime and it has a foul smell, what does it mean? It means your stomach and intestines contain a lot of rubbish. So you take a laxative and you go to the toilet five, ten or fifteen times. Are you worried about it? If you are worried, you do not do anything. It is better that you are purging and the dirt is coming out. The impurities from your abdomen are coming out. In the same way when thoughts arise in your mind, that is the foul smell of your mind.

Tormenting thoughts, worrying, fearful, passionate, frustrating, disappointing, dejecting thoughts, all kinds of thoughts come into your mind during mantra japa. They are an indication that your mind is overstuffed with foul elements. And you are trying to meditate? How can you? Can you eat halwa with a bad stomach? It will become worse. Your stomach is so bad that the moment you pass wind the whole hall is full of bad smell. By taking halwa you are making matters worse. The best thing to do is shankaprakshalana and then take halwa, puri, rasagulla, whatever you like, even chicken or lobster, I do not mind.

Similarly, the stage of your mind that you experience during japa indicates the quality of the stuff of your mind. You cannot get it out by ethics and morality or by resolving to lead a pure life. No, you are making matters worse. Purity is a social concept, good for society, good for the king, the

ruler, the military, the police, the district magistrate and the family, but it is not for the evolution of the self.

For self evolution, you will have to throw the catheter out. Mantra helps you to throw that catheter out in a way that does not affect your family, society, community and the nation. When does the mind become free of thoughts? Only when you let it go out. If a bad thought comes into your mind during japa, what are you going to do? Say, 'Eh, stop it. I am thinking of Shiva, and this dirty thought is coming. No, no, no.' I am telling you that is a mistake; you may not agree with me, but that is your fault. I am telling you what I know, because for me, samadhi is not to be developed, spiritual experiences need not be developed or imported. It is there; you are that. That is your real nature. Gold is gold no matter whether it is in a pile of dirt or elsewhere. *Ratna* or a jewel is always a jewel. You just have to take away the covering.

The most important role the mantra can play in the life of a diligent, careful aspirant is that it gives him an opportunity to expel all karmas from the mind. You can experience your childhood, your matrimonial problems and quarrels, your financial problems, disappointment in economical affairs, family affairs, love affairs, everything. You can also experience your hatred, your criminal mentality, your suicidal complexes. Let them come out and see them. Say, 'Okay, nothing is happening, my mind is just purging. If you want to kill somebody, okay. How do I kill him? Through dagger. If he does not die? Okay, with a revolver. This is much better than the other way.' What harm is there in thinking? You are not killing anybody. You are only throwing the dirt out.

This type of puritanical concept that you have developed in your mind is the main barrier in spiritual life. The mantra makes you free from this. You should take your mantra and sing it, *Om Namah Shivaya*, or repeat it, *Om Namah Shivaya*, or think it, *Om Namah Shivaya*. Do it with the breath, *Om Namah Shivaya* in the frontal or spinal passage way, or in the chakras, or you can write it. Or keep your eyes open and visualize *Om Namah Shivaya* written.

At the same time, let the process of mental purging take place. It will take you many years – not one year. Mantra is a laxative not a purgative. Pranayama is a very high dose; if you practise pranayama it is not laxative, it is purgative. It is very painful. All these psycho-emotional crises that we sometimes experience during the period of sadhana are very important for us.



9

Dream

15 October 1982

During this lifetime, in the previous lives, and in previous generation of father and grandfather, each and everybody has accumulated experiences. These experiences are indestructible and imperishable; they do not die that easily. These experiences are embedded in the *karana sharira*, the unconscious, and are known as *samskaras*. They are the archetypes and there are billions and trillions of them in each and everybody. In a normal mind, such as we have, these archetypes or *samskaras* remain suppressed. They do not come out because of our lifestyle, religious and social training, the disciplines necessary to run a society without wild people. They are all suppressed.

What are these experiences? They accumulate through the senses and the mind just as this tape recorder is registering the sounds symbolically through electromagnetic waves. In the same way, whatever experience you are going through, second by second, is being filmed by an automatic process by means of consciousness. There is a field of consciousness known as *sakshi*, *grastha atma*, the seer-self. That self is not the actor. There is a personality, there is a face in you which is not the actor or the *karta*, the enjoyer or *bhokta*. He is just the seer; he just sits somewhere on the balcony and goes on seeing all the different things that you are doing.

Sometimes boys take drugs. Then they can come to the point of this witnessing self and begin to see what they have done what they are doing, how they are sitting, how funnily they are behaving. This type of witnessing process takes place sometimes by the use of drugs. Have you ever taken bhang? That is called *grastha atma* or *sakshi atma*. This *sakshi atma* is aware independently, impartially, without any attachment to what you are doing. Whatever you do, it sees.

In the *Shvetashvatara Upanishad* there is a story – ‘There are two birds sitting on two different branches of a tree. The bird on the lower branch goes on tasting fruits and finding them bitter, so he spits them out. He tries almost all of the fruits of that tree and realizes that this tree only bears bitter fruits. So he leaves that tree and goes to another one and tries there. There also he tastes and spits. Wherever this bird goes the other one follows. He does not eat; he just follows. They are friends.

After his adventure through so many trees and so many bitter tastes and spitting, he gets a sort of psychological aversion. He looks at the other bird and asks, ‘Why don’t you eat?’ He replies, ‘It is enough that you eat. You have been eating and spitting, I see it, so why should I make the same mistake?’ That is called *grastha atma*, *sakshi atma*.

That *sakshi atma* is responsible for registering each and every movement – internal, external and supra-internal which you know, can know and cannot know. There may be many things happening in your mind at this time. Even if you try to know them, you will never be able to. With psychoanalysis, sometimes you can get them out, otherwise not. Sometimes in dreams they come out, sometimes in the practice of yoga nidra. Sometimes at the time of a psycho-spiritual crisis like, kundalini awakening, these things which are going on in your inner being wake up and you come to know of them and are surprised as to what has been happening.

Man has been existing simultaneously, not only in one realm, but in different realms. I hope you understand. You are not only thinking now. Simultaneously, the mind is

working on different levels and each level is independent from the others. Here you are thinking about sadhana, yoga and spirituality, but in the back of the mind you may be thinking of something else. These experiences which the sakshi atma registers are transformed. That is the law of nature. When you see a beautiful flower, when you hear a nice song, it is registered but not in that form. There is a symbolic form for each and every experience of life.

The total experience of life has a symbolic form. Do you know it? I am not talking of one experience but the total experiences that you have from the time of birth to the time of death. That symbolic form is known as the *Sri Yantra* in tantra. It is called *srishti chakra*. The Sri Yantra represents symbolically the totality of the experiences of man during his lifetime.

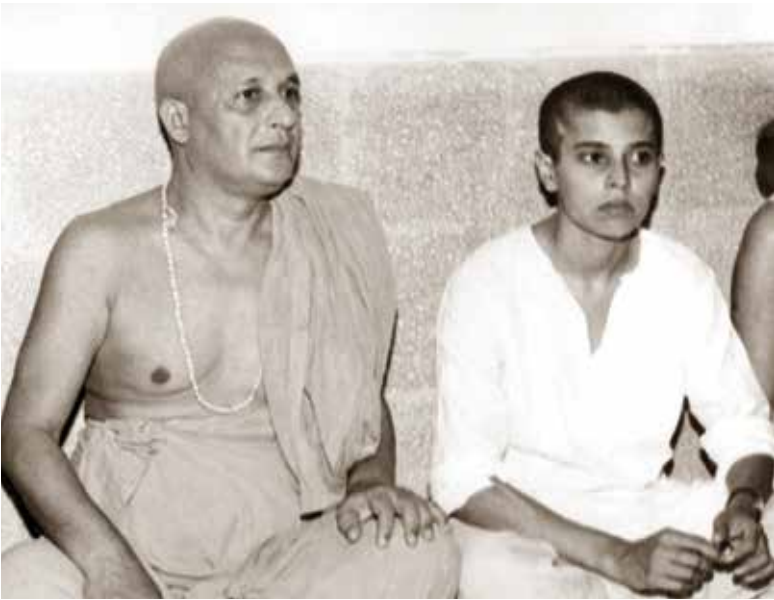
In the same way, each and every experience has a symbol. Music is not only recorded as music. A beautiful thing or a repulsive object is not recorded exactly as that object. For example, take a mango seed and cut it. You will never see a mango tree there. Microscope, supramicroscope or electromicroscope cannot reveal that this is a mango tree because this seed represents the mango tree symbolically. The seed of a fruit or flower is the symbol of its existence.

In the same way, each and every one of your experiences is transformed or changed into a symbol. These symbols are known as *samskaras* or as they say nowadays in western countries, *karma*. These samskaras live in different realms of awareness in a dormant potential state. Sometimes in dreams, meditation or yoga nidra, they happen to come up because there is no suppression.

10

Satsang

15 October 1982



Swamiji, will you give shelter in your ashram if one wants to become a sannyasin?

One who wants to become a sannyasin should not seek security. He does not need a protector or benefactor, a lover or beloved or any attachment. That should be the fundamental quality in him. Or else, if you go to an ashram,

you will be like a dog wagging your tail. Ashram is a place where you can develop your consciousness and analyze yourself. It is not a shelter. Sannyasa is a very difficult ideal. It is not an institution; it is not a cult, sect or *sampradaya*.

Sannyasa is an idea for those people who respect independence, not only in the social context, but independence in every context. Independence from the sensual enjoyments, independence from security and insecurity, independence from love and hatred. There are people in this world who have such temperament and nature.

Such people should never make a mistake in committing themselves to the normal ways of life. They will not be successful there. Sooner or later, they should visit a few ashrams in India. There are many good ashrams in this country. They should find a guru or a teacher, stay there and take sannyasa.

What happens in life after death and how many years until the rebirth takes place?

This is a very controversial subject. Those people who do not believe in rebirth will not agree at all. Different categories of people have a different transition from the body. Those who belong to the realm of *avidya* or ignorance, at the time of death, their consciousness becomes dormant potential and they become unconscious. The *sukshma sharira*, the subtle body, the *karana sharira*, the causal body, close up like a seed. There is no individual awareness, 'I', *aham*. There is nothing. This is so far as the people enwrapped in *avidya* are concerned.

There is another category of people who are yogis, not necessarily sannyasins. They have a highly developed consciousness. These people, at the time of death, are aware of the entire process of transition. They know that the self, the *atman*, is now leaving this flat, the body or temple. They follow its transition, this pilgrimage, travel or voyage of the soul throughout, even into the womb of the mother, even after the womb of the mother. This depends on the class of

the yogis. I am talking about those yogis who are highest. They are conscious of the entire process throughout, during transition, after transition, and after metamorphosis.

Then there are subcategories. After death, they enter another realm of existence which is as true as this one. One should not think that this existence is ultimate and final. There are many more layers of experience. There is a beautiful parable which explains this. Once a yogi was sleeping, he had a dream. He dreamt he was a butterfly. When he came out of the dream he wondered, 'Is a butterfly dreaming that he is a man or is a man dreaming that he is a butterfly?' We do not know whether this is the final experience or maybe someone is having this experience. You must think about it twice.

After this, they enter into these realms which are known as bhu loka, bhuvaha loka, swaha loka, maha loka, janah loka, tapah loka and satya loka. Satya loka is the highest. *Lokas* are the seven planes of existence according to their importance. After the departure from the body, these yogis of different categories remain in the loka beyond swaha loka, either in maha loka, janah loka or maximum in tapah loka. These are the lokas they can go up to. Other people go to bhuvaha loka and swaha loka according to their karma.

From these lokas, depending on the laws of nature, destiny and karma, they are born. They are born immediately. The minimum time is thirteen days. It is not necessary that everybody is born on the thirteenth day, but after the thirteenth day rebirth can take place. Thirteen days is the period for the spirit, the *atman*, to ovulate. Just as the egg fertilizes in the womb, the spirit fertilizes in the other plane in a minimum period of thirteen days. After thirteen days, rebirth can take place at any time. The more you are attached to the sensualities and pleasures of life, the sooner the possibility of birth will be.

If you go to Delhi or Calcutta and you are hungry, what will you do? If you are a Marwari, you will wait and look for the best hotel. It may take you half a day but it does

not matter. If you are not a person of standard, any dabha or inn will do and you will just sit down and eat. When the people who have a standard of philosophy in life are reborn, their destiny has to make a proper choice. Up to the time of that proper choice, the soul has to wait in the queue for the proper mother and father. The *Bhagavad Gita* says (6:41 and 42):

*Praapya punyakritaam lokaanushitvaa shaashvateeh samaah;
Shucheenaam shreemataam gehe yogabhrashto'bhijaayate.*

Having attained to the worlds of the righteous and, having dwelt there for everlasting years, he who fell from yoga is reborn in the house of the pure and wealthy.

*Athavaa yoginaameva kule bhavati dheemataam;
Etaddhi durlabhataram loke janma yadeedrisham.*

Or he is born in a family of even the wise yogis; verily a birth like this is very difficult to obtain in this world.

Those who have been practising yoga in their previous lives and have not been able to accomplish the final result and die are born in their next life in the *suchi*, holy, clean family, to people with good qualities, *sri matam*, not a wealthy family. A wealthy family may not be a clean family. They say, 'Sri matam, good quality. In the family of clean people with sterling qualities, these yogis are born. Or else they are born into a family of yogis. These people, who have higher consciousness from the previous life, are born into the family of yogis who are practising yoga or spiritual life.' You do not find such families in every nook and corner. They are so rare. Religious people are in abundance in this world. Faithful people and good people are plenty in this world. Ethical and moral people you can find in millions; puritanical people can be found in millions. Compassionate people you can get, but people with evolved consciousness, who can see matter, feel energy and consciousness, and see all the types of vibrations of reality are rare to find.

Matter is one vibration of reality; energy is another vibration of reality; spirit is the third vibration of reality. Those who can feel all three are very few in this world. Therefore, a yogi must wait in maha loka, janah loka or tapa loka for at least a few thousand years. They do not worry about the time because time is a relative factor. The people who are practising yoga will say, 'Oh no, it is a heartening statement that is being made because we are going to wait up to a thousand years. By that time the best things like trains, airplanes and computers will be gone.' There is nothing to worry about because time is relative. One thousand years here is one second there.

If you want to know more about it, study the theory of relativity in terms of time, space and object; or read the last portion of *Taittiriya Upanishad*. It speaks of the time ratio between this planet and the other planets, the loka of human beings, the loka of manes, the loka of spirits, and the loka of others. One year may be one thousand years here. You do not have to worry about time. You close your eyes and open them and you will find your bus went through Bombay, Calcutta, Ahmedabad, Switzerland and Finland.

In satya loka, there is no rebirth if the atman can ascend. There is a beautiful mantra in the *Sannyasa Upanishad*, *Naratparivrajak Upanishad*. It is an Upanishad which is meant for sannyasa. It says, 'They are born only once in a life time, why have two sannyasins?' Those who have been purified by the philosophy, ethics and actions of sannyasa are born only once, not at any time but at the end of the cycle of Brahma. We are born any time after thirteen days. We see any womb that is ready and we get into it, the sooner the better, so we can have maximum pleasures of life.

To what degree is it possible to affect physical illness by meditation and which types of meditation could we use for this purpose?

Meditation helps in curing various illnesses, not only psychological in nature but also both psychosomatic and

somatopsychic. You have one important meditation – meditation on *bruhmadhya*, the mid-eyebrow centre. You can practise this meditation with the help of crystal gazing, by gazing at a candle flame, on a black dot or on any point on your ishta devata.

After you practise *trataka*, you can close your eyes and concentrate on the counter effect at the mid-eyebrow centre. This is a very important meditation so far as the treatment of physical illness is concerned. *Ajna chakra* is influenced by this practice and *ajna chakra* is the monitoring centre. It controls so many functions in your physical body. If you can influence *ajna chakra* properly, it can release the influences to any part of the body. The second meditation is called *prana vidya*. It is also a very important meditation which can be used for treating quite a lot of illnesses.

Should one do intensive sadhana in isolation?

For intensive sadhana in hatha yoga and pranayama, the higher mountains, cold climates, pure air thick with negative ions is very helpful. In order to do intensive sadhana, one must equip oneself with *titiksha*, the power of endurance. When you have the power of endurance, then you can get along better in the Himalayas without any negative psycho-emotional problems.

I lived in Gangotri for nine months in order to perfect the practice of pranayama and I practised a lot of *kumbhaka*, pranayama and meditation. Just because you are inspired sometimes, you should not take to intensive sadhana practice.

When you isolate your brain and consciousness, there is eruption of the deeper consciousness. This is the law and sometimes this eruption is something one cannot possibly handle. There can also be psycho-emotional problems. There are people who are strong enough, who have the power of endurance, *titiksha*. They can handle even the psycho-emotional disturbances. But even if you do not have that, spiritual experiences erupt. They come up and sometimes you begin to experience a separate reality. It is a reality

different from yourself and as tangible and as solid as this reality.

The law is that consciousness expresses itself through the mind and the senses. The experience which you are having at this moment is sensorial experience, *indriyas anubhava*. This sense experience is not a manifestation of the mind. Mind is used as a tool by the consciousness; senses are used as tools. The higher consciousness or consciousness are immanent. You sometimes call it awareness. It is very hard to use a proper term for that. The *uchha chetana*, the higher awareness, uses the mind and the senses as tools. As a result, this external, objective perception takes place. When you involve yourself in intensive sadhana, the consciousness splits from the mind and the senses and isolation takes place. Isolation becomes deeper and greater; sometimes it assumes high magnitude and then spiritual consciousness unfolds itself.

Atman has no form; God has no form; the super-consciousness has no form; the supermind has no form, but it is not nothing; it is something. It begins to express itself in so many forms. At this time, one gets scared not knowing what is happening. Before one wants to take to higher sadhana in the higher mountains, in perfect and total seclusion, it is better to do much more sadhana here where one can find proper diversion from time to time.

Is it all right to use external aids such as a tape recorder in yoga?

The practice of yoga is a means and it is practised by those people who are infirm, who have weak willpower, who are ignorant of their own potential. As soon as they are admitted into the yoga practice, they do not become independent overnight. To change one's personality takes almost a lifetime. Therefore, you can use various aids to help this voluptuous and turbulent mind to experience tranquillity.

11

Satsang

16 October 1982

Is there any classification of our spiritual leaders like Lord Shiva, Krishna and Rama, and others, like Christ, Mohammed, Buddha?

In the fourth chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*, there are two slokas (4:7 and 4:8):

*Yadaa yadaa hi dharmasya glaanir bhavati bhaaratata;
Abhyutthahanam adharmasya tadaatmanam srijaamyaham.*

Whenever there is a decline of righteousness, O Arjuna, and rise of unrighteousness, then I manifest Myself!

*Paritraanaaya saadhoonaam vinaashaaya cha dushkritaam;
Dharma samsthaapanaarthaaya sambhavaami yuge yuge.*

For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked, and for the establishment of righteousness, I am born in every age.

Sri Krishna says, 'I come in every age in order to protect righteousness and the righteous people, to help them attain the spiritual life, and in order to suppress unrighteousness. And whenever vicious, demonical forces become powerful, I am born.' This 'I' relates not only to one but to everybody.

In every land, many people have been born like this and they are known as avatars. *Avatar* means one who has

descended, who has come down from the spiritual heights. Buddha, Rama, Krishna, Vivekananda, Christ, Mohammed and Zoroaster are the lights from higher consciousness who come to guide humanity from time to time.

Why are so many of the world's greatest saints passing away at this time?

This is the time when some of the old saints must go because their ideas and philosophies do not relate with the evolving philosophy of mankind today. New souls must generate new concepts and give to the millions of people a direction which is all-encompassing, all-embracing and which will bring about a union between *yoga* and *bhoga*, between the spiritual and mundane. At the same time, they have to give a scientific philosophy to the people. That is all. But why do you say that saints are passing away? Why don't you say that they are also coming in? Unless these people clear the field, how can we function?

Can we know our time of death beforehand?

Oh yes, why not? It is very difficult but it is better not to know. If you know when you are going to die, these few years left will be hopeless. One never knows when one dies so one has very little time to suffer. Otherwise one might have twenty-five years to suffer. Nature has put a stop-check there.

Months before their death, many yogis and even householders write letters to their children in America, Canada and Europe and call them on a particular day. They invite everybody. All the relatives gather and do kirtan, bhajan and pooja. The person sits in an asana, draws the breath in and never blows it out.

There are not just a few examples but many. Death is not an unhappy event for those people. For most people, death is unwanted. Nobody wants to die. Therefore, it is better that you know whether you want to die or that you respect death. Is it good or is it bad? Is it necessary or unnecessary? If you think death is necessary and death is good, the date

and time will be revealed to you. You do not have to do any sadhana for it; you do not have to try to die. That is not good psychological behaviour.

Everybody is going to die. Nobody is immortal. You must say, 'Yes, it is good. Just as I leave this flat and go to another flat because it is so old and the roof might fall down. As I change this robe and put on another, in the same way, as much as I have seen and experienced in this life, I can experience something else in another life.' So change, get into another flat, another country, another family and have more experiences of life and become more rich. In this way, people who are happy about death and who want to accept death as much as life, to them the date and time of death will be revealed.

Can you explain the experience of ananda?

No, it is not possible. You will have to experience it yourself. How can ananda be explained? Ananda is not an experience of the mind. If you ask me what is the experience of passion, hatred, greed, love, I can tell you. Ananda is an experience of the supermind. Therefore, there is no use telling you it is like this or like that. It is better that you try to taste a rasagulla yourself.

Please explain what is Brahma?

Brahma or Brahman? In Sanskrit there are two words. *Brahma* is the creator and *Brahman* is supreme absolute consciousness. God, the ultimate reality, the supreme being, the cosmic being Brahma or Brahman are the same. Brahma, the Creator, is responsible for creating the whole universe. He forms a part of the trinity, Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh who are responsible for creation, maintenance and disintegration.

Brahman is the absolute. He is beyond the body, mind, ego or even superconsciousness. The subject matter of all the Upanishads is Brahman. In English we call it Brahman and in Sanskrit we call it Brahmaa with a long 'a'. That is the subject matter of all the Upanishads. There are 108

Upanishads and of these, thirty are minor and ten are major Upanishads. These major Upanishads are: *Ishavasya Upanishad*, *Kenopanishad*, *Kathopanishad*, *Prashnopanishad*, *Mandukyopanishad*, *Mundakopanishad*, *Chandogya Upanishad*, *Aitareya Upanishad*, *Shvetashvataropanishad*, *Taittiriya Upanishad*. In these ten Upanishads the subject matter throughout is about the absolute reality and the dialogue that takes place intimately between guru and the disciple.

The disciple approaches his guru, sits down and asks, 'Your Excellency, please tell me what is Brahman?' Then the guru goes to explain various realities which are lower manifestations of the absolute, like prana, matter, mind, astral beings, invisible objects, and finally he gets to the point of explaining Brahman. At that time, he stops. He says, 'Look here, I am not going to tell you what is Brahman. First of all, you must purify your mind because, without a purified mind, without objectless consciousness (I don't say subjective consciousness), without infinite consciousness, you cannot experience that.' There are many beautiful dialogues on Brahma held between guru and disciple and there is a very beautiful story.

Virochana, the ancestor of demons, *rakshasas*, and Indra, Lord of the *devas*, the divine beings, approached Prajapati, Brahma, the creator and said, "Lord, please give us some good advice." Prajapati was very pleased because he got two great disciples. He said, "Sit down. I will say, *Tat Tvam Asi*, and you both say, *Aham Brahmasmi*. So, Brahma recited, *Tat Tvam Asi* and Virochana and Lord Indra said, *Aham Brahmasmi*.

Tat Tvam Asi means 'Thou are that', and the disciples repeat, *Aham Brahmasmi* which means, 'I am absolute consciousness'. Three times he repeated it, 'I am absolute consciousness, I am absolute consciousness, I am absolute consciousness'. And three times he instructed, *Tat Tvam Asi*, 'Thou art that'. Then both of them left. Indra got confused. He thought, 'How can I be Brahman?' 'I' means 'Indra, swami, Mr, Miss, Mrs, how can 'I' be Brahman? Brahmaji instructed and I said, 'I am Brahman but this body cannot be

Brahman because it is not absolute. Mind cannot be Brahman because that is not absolute. Senses cannot be Brahman because they are not absolute. All this is not Brahman because they are not absolute. Brahman is not subject to time, space and object. Indra went on reflecting, introspecting, contemplating and questioning and he entered an inner mood where he realized that inner experience.

Virochana was very happy when he left. He kept saying, 'I am Brahman, I am Brahman'. He slapped himself and said, 'What beautiful biceps, I am Brahman. I am such a strong Brahman'. On the way, he got down from his horse to drink water from a pond. In the water he saw a reflection of his whiskers and hair and he said, 'Brahman is very strong'. He identified that absolute consciousness with this body, with the nature of the body and with the manifestation of the body. So he became the king of the demons and the founder of materialism in Indian philosophy.

Prana is said to be present in every matter. Why then does a piece of stone not decay, whereas human and animal bodies, after losing the soul, start decaying inspite of the fact that it is still a matter and prana is present?

Matter, energy and consciousness are three different states and in each state everything is inherent. Energy and consciousness is inherent in matter, but the form of prana which is present in insentient objects is a rudimentary prana, not a type of prana which the vegetable and animal kingdoms have.

Stones and rocks also follow the process of decay like humans. The process of disintegration of the elements is the same in all. Transformation or metamorphosis is the law of each and everything which exists in creation, both visible and invisible.

Human beings are the higher, evolved forms of matter. Within this matter, energy has manifested itself. It has no more potential or is no longer dormant. The levels of energy are different, the ordinary energy, the special energy and the divine energy. The ordinary energy is responsible for our

sensory and mental functions. The special energy is supplied by the awakening of kundalini to develop the special faculties in the brain. Divine energy is responsible for self-realization.

After death, the soul does not change itself in this higher form of matter. The change takes place as far as the body is concerned. For us, one whole lifetime might be just one chapter of life, but many lives are many chapters that comprise just one book, the entire human. We may have reincarnated fifty or one thousand times, five thousand or twenty thousand times. All that should be considered as one experience – not two or more experiences.

You are comparing the age of a stone to the age of a human being, seven or eight hundred years. The body lives for one hundred years, which is its capacity, but the *jiva*, the individual consciousness, lives through many hundred incarnations. All those incarnations comprise of just one experience, as you talk about one experience of one rock.

Can yoga be useful in treating minor forms of cancer?

Everything depends on the teacher. If the teacher of yoga can dive deep and understand the intricacy of the illness, he can manage any illness.

In Australia, Dr Ainslie Meares has been working on the effects of yoga on cancer, successfully through meditation, pranayama and relaxation. He is able to create wonders by going deep into it. Not any yoga teacher can handle cancer patients. In the same way, you have to study every patient who comes to you properly, give him a proper atmosphere and work with him for a long time.

We would like to hear a parable about life that will help us to understand our own spiritual life?

I will tell you one parable. There was a king who had a daughter. He was a very egoistic king and on account of his ego, his daughter could not get married. He had made a resolve that whoever could tame his four wild horses would receive his daughter in marriage.

Many boys, princes, rich men and young men came. The wild horses were let loose, but most of the young men died. The wild horses kicked them and broke their bones. The poor princess remained unmarried.

One day, a young man came. He was not a prince, but he told the king that he would try. The four horses were let loose. There were actually four young men who came and each took a horse. By midday three of them came back with mortal injuries. The fourth one did not return so it was taken that he may have died.

After a period of time, everybody had forgotten the story and the princess was still unmarried. After one year, they saw that young man riding the same horse and galloping towards the fort. They looked at him and they took him to the king. The king asked him, "How did you manage to tame this horse?" Then the young man narrated the story.

He said, "When the horse was galloping, I was running after him, and when the horse was tired and was just standing, I was just standing; when the horse was grazing, I was cooking my chapattis; when the horse was relaxing, I was also relaxing, and when the horse started moving, I also started moving, but I always maintained a distance.

After a few weeks, I moved a bit closer to him. I decreased the distance between him and myself. In the beginning, the horse was not comfortable when I did that, but later he got used to it. Again, I decreased the distance and left only one meter between us. Then I used to sleep by his side. In the beginning, the horse was very uncomfortable with my proximity but later he adjusted himself.

One day, I took a bunch of grass and went to feed the horse. He ran away. I tried again many times and finally the horse accepted and gradually we slept together. We moved together but I did not dare ride him. Then I began to touch his body, take care of him and shampoo his body and now we are here." . . . and the young man was married to the princess. This is exactly what happens to a diligent sadhaka who practises yoga and deals with his wild mind.

Does a regular practice of yogasana lead to the suppression of sexual desire?

I do not think so; it improves the quality. Of course, it may decrease the wild desires and the frequency. You may not be passionate. Passion brings a low quality of experience in sexual life. If you can control passion and then interact, the experience will be better, more enduring, more satisfying, less exhausting and more relaxing. When you practise yoga, you have a very durable and strong nervous system, the vital capacity is increased and the time of retention of a particular thought can be increased.

Two things are very important to live a very fruitful matrimonial life: one is that you have a wholegrain and vegetarian diet, including all vegetables with very little animal protein, and the other is with hatha yoga postures to have better experiences in your matrimonial life.

I think yoga helps you to conquer passion. Yoga helps you to conquer depression and suppressions, but it does not kill the natural flow of energy that you know as *maithuna*, the sexual act, because the sexual urge is a manifestation of energy. It is not a simple emotion; it is not just an animal behaviour. It is an energy. The manifestation of energy in a fan or a light is the manifestation of the electrical energy.

In the same way, energy within you manifests in the form of intellect, memory, peace, compassion, love, sexual ideas and interactions. That is energy. There is a positive side of the energy and a disastrous side of the energy, like hatred and jealousy. Yoga always improves the quality of sexual experiences though it may decrease the wild, untamed passion.

Why do different spiritual gurus advise different ways for realization?

Gurus teach different techniques but they are not different paths. You are going on the same path; someone is going by a car, bicycle, motorcycle, truck or bus. Only the techniques are different; the paths are not different.

Pranayama, mantra, nada yoga, japa yoga or kundalini yoga are vehicles according to the quality, temperament and capacity of an aspirant. People of Bengal are devotional. Naturally, they will do more kirtan and pooja. In the same way, in different provinces and areas, people have their own temperament and attitude and accordingly you have the path of jnana yoga, raja yoga or bhakti yoga.

The people in Mithila, North Bihar, and Assam are more psychic; therefore, they follow the path of tantra. The people of Assam are of one type; therefore, they follow the path of vama tantra, so do the people of Orissa. According to the culture, temperament and capacity of the people, gurus who know their disciples very well teach them a particular technique and allow them to use a particular vehicle. The path however is just one.

Swamiji, I am worried. If I am able to awaken my kundalini and if that state is wonderful, I will be so attached to it and would just be in constant meditation all the time. And what about those people who will never be able to attain the state even after many years of practice, and will never have the opportunity to know of it. What will happen to them? Can we transmit the energy we receive to them also?

If I get \$1,000,000 today, what am I going to do? This is the way you are worrying about kundalini. What am I going to do with that \$1,000,000? With the awakening of kundalini, awakening of vairagya also takes place. A detachment takes place and with this detachment, the awakening of kundalini becomes peaceful and the transition is smooth.

There are of course millions of people throughout the world who should have their kundalinis awakened, but it is not going to happen because kundalini belongs to the law of evolution, and each and everybody cannot have that awakening. Out of millions of people, just a few strive to awaken. The *Bhagavad Gita* says (7:3):

*Manushyaanaam sahasreshu kashchidyatati siddhaye;
Yataataamapi siddhaanaam kashchinmaam vetti tattwatah.*

Among thousands of men, a few strive for perfection; even among those successful strivers, only one person knows Me in essence.

So out of thousands and millions of people, rarely a few people strive to attain that and out of these few hundred people, hardly a few can be counted on the fingers who really achieve it. Do not worry about when everybody is going to be graduated. Let the boy in the primary, kindergarten, middle school and high school go gradually, step-by-step as he follows the process of evolution. Everyone will have his own chance.

Swamiji, will you kindly narrate your experiences of sadhakas whose kundalini is already awakened?

Awakening of kundalini is the last thing which happens in one's spiritual career. First of all, there is an awakening of the chakras. After awakening of the chakras is complete, awakening of sushumna takes place. After sushumna has come into evolution, awakening of kundalini takes place.

I am talking about a threefold awakening and each awakening has its own set of experiences, known as psychic experiences. Many aspirants do have psychic experiences. They think that it is an indication of the awakening of kundalini, but it is not so.

The experiences that one has after the awakening of the chakras are not so frightening and not so critical. They are very pleasant, hallucinating and comfortable. Even if it is an experience of terror and fear, it does not shake your mind and most of us who have the experiences of ishta devata, guru and many other things in meditation or during kirtan feel so nice. That is awakening of the chakras and not kundalini. It leaves a very beautiful and comfortable feeling. Afterwards, you feel nice like you had the feeling of bliss or ecstasy. This is to encourage you to go further.

The awakening of sushumna brings some mind exploding experiences which are sometimes confusing. You can smell bad and good odours; you will hear shrieks and screams as

if ghosts are crying. There is a feeling of heat, a creeping sensation and pain in different parts of the body. You may experience sickness like fever or some sort of diseases which are sometimes very difficult for medical science to handle, but the symptoms are those of the common diseases.

At the time of sushumna awakening, the quality and experience of the mind begins to change. One has the experience of depression, lack of appetite and loneliness. You begin to realize your inner essence and matter which you see in front of you like these walls appear to be nothing. You feel that they are made up of air. About yourself, you feel that you are not this physical body, but you are someone else. When you look at people, animals and nature like flowers, trees, rivers and mountains, you feel that they are communicating with you as if you can understand a tree, a mountain, a dog or an animal. There is a feeling of communication between you and the other objects of nature.

At this time, you can also come across some of the things that are to happen. You come to the category of a prophet more or less. You begin to know, not very clearly, accidents or disasters that will happen. You get to know only the bad things and not the good things – imminent perils, disasters and catastrophes. You do not like to work and these painful experiences continue for a very long time.

At the time of the awakening of kundalini, the presence of a guru is very essential. He can explain what is happening to you because you are not in a transition from one state of mind to another state but you are jumping from one state of mind to another.

The scientist Eddington was observing the determined laws of the electrons and was trying to formulate a system and a law, which came to be known as the law of determinacy. At one time his vision entirely changed. When he was looking at those things, he found that electrons were behaving in a very anarchical way. There was no mathematics, logic, system or hypothesis behind their behaviour. That was his vision and he called that the law of indeterminacy.

He was asked, 'What is the law which you have found behind the mathematical and logical behaviour of the electrons?' He said, 'It cannot be explained.' Someone asked, 'How can you say that a movement in matter cannot be explained?' He said, 'It can be explained if you can jump over the mind.' He meant if you can transcend the mind.

Now, there is a process of transition. The baby, the child, the young man, the middle aged – this is transition. Supposing you were a baby and suddenly you became an old man. First you were four, five or six and within a few days, you found you had suddenly become grey-haired, tall and were talking like an old person. It would be very difficult for you to handle the situation and connect both the areas of life. That usually happens with those who have the awakening of kundalini.

If the awakening of kundalini takes place according to the laws of nature, which could take a few million years, that is different. We who are sitting here today, after one million years, our kundalinis may awaken in the course of the evolution of nature. If the same thing which is to happen after one million years begins to happen the following morning, it will be very difficult to handle.

These experiences are sometimes imbalanced. You do not really understand. You feel the whole body is burning as if it were in flames and you begin to feel a snake is crawling through your body. Sometimes you look at a person's face and you see there is a ghost, 'Oh no, he is not Mr Singh! Who is he then?' For an ordinary guru, it is very difficult to handle these matters. For an expert guru, it is also very difficult to handle if the disciple does not own him as his guru. If such a person comes to me and if I am an expert guru, I will not be able to handle him unless he accepts me as his guru or I accept him as my disciple.

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Swami Sivananda

*16 October 1982, addressing a group of yoga aspirants of a
Teacher Training Course*

**Swamiji would you kindly relate your experiences with
Swami Sivananda for our benefit?**

Swami Sivananda was born in the district of Tirunavalli of South India on 8 September 1887. He was a descendent of a famous saint and scholar in India, Appayya Dikshitar, who was a great yogi, a siddha and bhakta. Once he went to Tirupathi Balaji to have his darshan.

Those days, the Vaishnavites in India did not have the right attitude towards the Shaivites. Appayya Dikshitar was a devotee of Shiva. He was not allowed to have the darshan of Tirupathi Balaji. Through the mysterious powers, bhakti and extreme devotion of Appayya Dikshitar, the poojari or priest in the temple found a Shivalinga side by side with Tirupathi Balaji. That changed the whole attitude of the Vaishnavites of that century.

It is in this line of great philosophers, saints and bhaktas that Swami Sivananda was born. As a young doctor, he was practising in a plantation in Jor Bahor in Malaysia, known as the Federal States of Malaya. In 1923, he resigned from his job and straight away came to India. He was then initiated by Swami Vishwananda, a sannyasin of the southern tradition.

Thereon, Swami Sivananda performed austerities. He practised a synthesis of karma, bhakti, raja and jnana yoga. He did not leave any stone unturned and tried all the great



methods, but he found that *bhakti yoga*, surrender, was the best form of self-realization. By the repetition of name, *nama*, having total surrender to God, unflinching faith in the cosmic being, your ishta devata, you can attain the deepest and highest experience, whatever you may call it – nirvana, moksha, samadhi or darshan.

In 1942, when I left my home, I came to Rajasthan, the western part of India. There I had an adopted sister who brought me in touch with her tantric guru. I lived with him for some time, he liked me and I liked him because he was a master. He could greatly impress me, but I understood that my guru was elsewhere. I left his place and again wandered for some time.

I came to Rishikesh and did not know how I came to be there. I have no idea – I am not aware of it for a certain period of my wanderings – I was led. I came to Rishikesh and one great swami, who is no more, Swami Vishnudevananda of Kailash Ashram, Rishikesh, directed me to Swami Sivananda the day after my arrival.

I went to the ashram in 1943. It was not an ashram. A few kutiyas here and a few kutiyas there, that was all in the

wilderness amidst scorpions, serpents and the tormenting mosquitoes, beautifully on the banks of the Ganga from where one could see the Manipur mountain ranges, Badrinath and Kedarnath, two important shrines for Hindus.

When I came to the ashram I did not see him, but I saw another swami who was then the vice-president of the Divine Life Society, Swami Narain. He made me sit in a hall for some time; I felt nice. Then he took me to the temple, Vishwanath Mandir. Pooja was going on and prasad of khichari was being distributed. That khichari was a wonderful experience. I have never tasted anything like that again. That was the first experience I had.

Then I was led to Swami Sivananda who asked me just one question. I said, "I have been practising *dhyana*, meditation, for many years and I am able to forget myself. I am able to transcend my individual consciousness, but I am not able to experience anything inside. Nor do I know what to do, where to go, and what to try. I go in, I sleep, finish. I cannot get beyond that because my individual consciousness gets dissolved completely in *shoonya*." He briefly replied, "You stay here in the ashram and do selfless service." That was a very comforting sentence.

It was very comfortable, but when I led the ashram life, I really got to know how comfortable karma yoga was. Selfless service is worse than the work a donkey does. It was very painful; it brought many *samskaras* out. All the good opinions that I had about myself were completely thwarted. I thought I was a good man, but then I realized that I was a very angry man. I thought I was a pure man, but then I realized that I was a hopeless man. I thought that I was a strong man and I got to know that I was weak. I thought that I was not greedy, having been brought up in a good family with plenty to eat and nothing to worry about, but I realized how greedy I was when I saw someone drinking tea and I was not getting it. These *karmas* and *samskaras* came out within the range of my awareness.

No japa, no meditation, nothing, ever gave me such peace of mind as that on that momentous day of 19 March 1943

when my intellect suspended. I had been confused with all the books I had read in my life, almost a library. Apart from meditation, philosophically I was also totally confused. The moment I met Swamiji, all my questions ceased.

There is a beautiful sloka which I always reiterate. 'Under the shade of the banyan tree, the age old guru and the young disciple are seated. Guru is not speaking anything, he is quiet, but the questions and doubts of the disciple are getting cleared one by one.' That happened to me. Questions ceased. Intellect ceased. In my previous ashrama at home, I had not even washed a handkerchief; I did not even have to clean my room. I had not seen even one mosquito. I did not know what a mosquito looked like, much less how it bites? I came from a strict non-vegetarian family. Here I used to get hardly chapatis and dal.

For that, I had to walk one and a half miles or maybe even two miles in the hot sun of Rishikesh from Muni Ki Reti to Kali Kamlivala. At 10.30 in the morning, they gave alms to all the sannnyasins, four chapatis and dal. For a young man, only four chapatis and dal! At that age, I used to eat eight chapatis and rice. Once I went to Nepalik Kshetra in the evening. I ate seventy-five chapatis and the lady went on giving. She was very happy because Hindus believe if saints or pandits eat a lot of food it is a sort of blessing to them.

Swami Sivananda used to remain in his kutiya. He did not come to the ashram for anything else but to give darshan. He used to come two hours in the morning, one hour in the afternoon and one hour in the night. We could only see him for four hours. He used to lock his kutiya. There was only one swami who used to remain with him. Even if any other disciple had any work, he would not be able to meet him. Whether anyone burnt the ashram or was gunned down, it was always four hours.

Swami Sivananda was primarily a seeker, a sincere aspirant. He did not talk much about himself. He came and settled on the right bank of the Ganga. Some of the young boys lived with him and became sannnyasins. One of them was

Swami Paramananda who once upon a time was a manager of the Great Raymond Circus. After coming to the ashram, he began to do the same circus there. He started making programs and buildings, registering the society and income tax and so on. Swamiji one day asked him, "Hey, what are you doing?" He said, "Swamiji, we are serving you." Swamiji did not know. He thought, 'Okay, let these guys do all this.' However, things started to become so great.

Every day they used to tell him, 'Swamiji, today that guest has come and you have to see him.' He used to say, 'I am not going to see him.' They used to say, 'He has come from Delhi, he is from I.C.S.' He said, 'I.C.S or I.P.C. they are ice cream sellers and potato choppers to me.' However, he always gave in and relented. One day, Swami Sivananda packed his bags and left the ashram. He got out of his kutiya without money, just took his dhoti, *Gita* and *Ramayana*, and left.

He went two miles on foot to Rishikesh, fifteen miles to Hardwar, and six miles to Jalpur. There he spent the night in the cowshed of a Punjabi. In the morning, when the Punjabi came to milk his cows, he saw a brilliant swami.

Swamiji had a very tall structure with big feet and a big head. His arms used to go below the knees. This is known as *ajanubahu*. In the Hindu tradition, Rama is known as *Ajanubahu*. The milkman prostrated before him and brought him roti, milk and ghee and wanted to know who he was. Swami Sivananda did not reveal his identity. He said, "I am a sadhu, I am going on *tirthyatra*, a pilgrimage. I have come from Hardwar and I am going back." However, it was so difficult for Swami Sivananda to tell a lie. After some time, he told the Punjabi, "No, I am from Rishikesh." You see, he was like a child who when the phone rings says, 'My papa says that he is not at home.' That was the type of man he was. If he told lies, you could pick it up at once.

If we tell lies, one can never catch us. We are such sharp people and that is why we are suffering. We are so complicated. So he said, "No, I am not a *tirthyatri*, a pilgrim. I am from Rishikesh and my ashram is there." The Punjabi

sent his son to inform the swamis that their guruji was with him. All the swamis came, touched his feet and said, "Please come back and stay with us." He said, "You give me one promise. Do not bother me except during the hours I give you and during these hours if I say keep quiet, you will not bother me." The swamis said, "Okay."

He was brought to the ashram and the rules were framed that two hours he would give darshan to the aspirants, mantra and sannyasa diksha. One hour again in the evening he used to come and sign books.

One hour in the evening he came. Throughout his life until his death, he never missed that one hour kirtan. He used to call it satsang. Sometimes even the swamis in the ashram did not come for kirtan, sometimes four, sometimes three, sometimes two, sometimes one. I remember once only he was there and I was there, but he attended that.

With these four hours, he was very regular. Otherwise no one could go to his kutiya to tell him anything. If anyone ever told him that this swami or that swami is bad and this or that swami is good he used to say, "Be above raga and dwesha, be above jealousy and hatred and love. Just be calm and quiet."

He had the sterling qualities of a great, good man. So far as his attitude to people was concerned, it was purely selfless, honest, full of love, charity and compassion. He would never offend even a cat. In my twelve years, I never heard him say, 'Ay! No!' He was ever calm, peaceful, loving, sweet, no sarcasm, no hollow intellectualism. He respected his disciples. You cannot believe it. Just as you respect me or you respect Rama or Krishna. He never called me Satyananda. He always called me Swami Satyananda Maharaj, Namō Narayan.

He used to greet everybody. Once a year, he used to collect all the sweepers, mehetan, night soil collectors, scavengers of society, call them to the ashram and wash their feet. For an ignorant, self-deluded Hindu, it is so difficult to wash the feet of a mehetan, but he used to wash the feet and make the swamis wash the feet. He gave them chadar, dhoti, blankets, halwa and puri and he used to do namaskar.









He used to say that one has to renounce the ego first, only then the realization can come to you. Meditation is good, yoga is good, bhakti is good, everything is good. But what is the use? You can bring all the flowers, all nice furniture to your room, all the beautiful men and women, but you have no eyes to see. What is the use of bringing the most beautiful things to your apartment without improving the quality of your cataract? How can you realize the highest being, through bhakti or other things, unless the ego is terminated or eliminated?

For the termination and elimination of ego, one has to renounce *abhiman*, pride. I am a great swami, that is *abhiman*. I am a holy man, that is *abhiman*. I am the son, nephew, sister of the brother-in-law of the prime minister, that is *abhiman*. Even a person who is a debauchee, a drunkard or a gambler has *abhiman*. That is the centre of his personality and that is from where he operates. This *abhiman* has to go if one has to make oneself infinite. For this purpose, he led all his disciples into karma yoga and guided them from time to time.

I had many experiences with him. I will give you just one experience. There was a servant in the ashram from Garhwal. Khushiram was a very arrogant young man. And there was an old swami who after his meal would leave his plate in the kitchen to be washed. The ashram rule was that every inmate and guest should take their plate to the Ganga which was quite close by and wash it. He was an old swami and I had told him, 'Just leave it, I will have it washed.' I knew that he could not possibly go down to the Ganga.

Khushiram was washing other big utensils. He got angry, "No plate here. Throw it away." He threw it away and I told him, "Get out, leave the ashram." That was my nature. I did not consider that he too was a man; I just considered my own reaction. I was a strong man, so naturally when I said leave the ashram, he had to leave the ashram. Somebody told him to meet Bara Swamiji, that is Swami Sivananda, and request to stay. That was the tradition in the ashram.

In the evening when Swamiji came out, he touched his feet and said, "Swamiji I am going." Swamiji said, "Why are

you going?” He said, “Swami Satyananda has ordered me to leave the ashram.” Swamiji did not call me, he understood everything because Swamiji was a very shrewd, intelligent man. He took Khushiram in his personal kitchen and kept him there.

That was a direct insult my guru was giving me. He was keeping him for his personal service when I had chucked him out. Where I had to go every day, I had to meet this fellow at Swamiji’s gate. It was so insulting that I became very much disturbed.

All the yoga that I had been talking about like the superconscious, the unconscious everything was destroyed. All the mental frames were in disarray; all the emotions were in confusion. Everything that I was thinking about, all the philosophies I was talking about and maintained in my mind were all in confusion. I said, ‘I’ll leave the ashram and go away.’

Just a little insult, and that too from your guru, and you want to leave the ashram! If you cannot observe and understand even the insulting behaviour of your guru, then what are you here for? Why do you say that he is your guru? Tell him that I am your worker, please behave better with me from today. I am your true worker, you do not give me money, you give me food. I would like to serve your institution, but I am not your disciple and you are not my guru. One way I say you are my guru, you are my life, you are my prana, you are everything, and once he gives me one acid test, I fail!

I did not remember. I made so many plans the whole night that I did not sleep. I was no less than joint secretary of the ashram, not an ordinary member. I had almost all the keys, the entire cash, the banking and everything else and I thought that this insult meant my death.

Next morning, I had to come down. I hesitated to go to Swamiji’s kutiya. It was very psychological. I had chucked the servant out and he was going to be there at the door telling me, ‘Ah! You have chucked me out.’ It was going to be a very secret and unspoken warfare between him and me and I

could not understand. Now I understand, because I am out of the picture. My disciples do not understand because they are not out of the picture. Today in my ashram, I am not afraid to test my disciples. I have tested once, and I have tasted it as well.

So the next morning, when I went to see Swamiji, he was at the gate, not the servant. He opened the gate and said, "Hari Om Namo, Namo Narayana." I said, "Oh yes, you know what's happening to my mind." He took me inside and saw the papers I had to show. He did not speak anything, but he said, "You liked that I opened the door for you." I just went into an ecstatic fit.

I said, "You have to open the door, otherwise who will do it." I gave him a bit of my mind. I mean that I did not want the servant to open the door, that was one point, but the next point was that he was the guru. Guru has to open the door. The door that leads towards the light. So he said, 'You liked when I opened the door.' He meant more things and I also replied more things, after all you have to open the door. That was all, then we went inside and it was all right.

In 1946, I was tired physically. I had an attack of jaundice, many times diarrhoea or dysentery. I did not even know then what typhoid or paratyphoid were. I did not know because I never consulted a doctor. There was no doctor, there was no medicine, there was nothing. I knew that I was unwell and physically I was reduced to a skeleton. I think I still had energy.

I thought, if I have to do this, I can also do it at my home because in my house I had so many buffaloes and ponies, so much cattle, land and property. I can work there. That was maya surrounding me from all sides and giving me the best of the arguments.

I wrote a letter to one of my friends in Lahore. It was before partition. He replied to me that he was arranging my appointment as a sub-editor to the magazine called *Tribune*. After a few days, the letter of appointment came to me and I wrote to him, 'I don't have money.' He sent me some four

hundred rupees, and I made a coat, pants, tie and everything. What a foolish swami I was!

When everything was prepared, I went to Swamiji and told him, "I am going." He said, "What for?" I said, "I think I want to go back." I gave some kind of reply. He said, "Okay, on 8 September my diamond jubilee is being celebrated. You can work here and after that you can go. Stay for two months more."

I did not know that he was trying to surround me from all sides, so I stayed. His birthday was over on 8 September. On ninth and tenth visitors were leaving. On eleventh September he called me and said, "You are coming tomorrow morning and you are going to take sannyasa." A bolt from the blue. I did not know what to say. He said, "Tomorrow morning at seven you are going to take sannyasa and throw away all your attachments, commitments, obligations to the lower realm of life." I said, "All right," and again it arrested my mind.

I forgot all about the *Tribune*. I forgot everything. My mind was just blank. The whole night I could not sleep. I was repeating my mantra. At that time my mantra was Gayatri. I was very eager, waiting for the morning to come, and it was a very long night for me.

In the morning, I got up at two o'clock, three o'clock, six o'clock. I was waiting and waiting, and suddenly there was change in my mind. At seven o'clock I went and he called a barber and shaved me. I was already shaved, but I had a little ego and he cut it off. He gave me a little langoti, loin cloth and a dhoti and he took away my *janeu*, sacred thread.

He said, "In this life, beyond life, after life – whether you are in a toddy shop or you live among prostitutes, never give up geru." That was one sankalpa, one order he gave me. He said, "It does not matter what you do I don't care. Geru is your skin now." That is why I love geru so much. This is the only ashram where you will find swamis wearing geru. Other places they put orange colour, red colour, or red and blue colour. In this ashram, we stick to geru.

One day in 1956, he called me. Swamiji felt that his ashram was not the right place of expression for me. I had to express within a framework and within that framework, expressions were original. He knew that I had originality of philosophy, way of working and living.

For three years, from 1953 to 1955, he allowed me to stop working in the ashram and study. During that period, I completely dwelt in the shastras, day and night, from *Rig Veda* up to the books of the Gandhi age, every religion, Sanskrit, Hindi, English, whatever. He sent me for one year to Gujarat and Sourashtra and when he went on his All-India tour for three months, he took me with him – so that I could have an idea of the people.

In 1956, I was not keeping well. I was resting in my room and I received a message from him to see him. When I went to him, he told me just one thing, “The ashram is too small for you, and your destiny is an important one.” He gave me one hundred and eight rupees. They are still with me in my bag, I have not spent them. I treasure them you see. I keep them and they are under a seal and after I relinquish my responsibilities, the administration will have to look after that, not spend it. He said, “You take away whatever you like from the ashram, but it is better to go with minimum things.” On 19 March 1956, I left the ashram, it was the same day I had arrived. He did not tell me anything else.

He said, “There is something which people do not know and which we do not really teach people because they are not yet ready. People are only wanting a little bit of asana and pranayama. Most people are afraid of yoga and therefore I do not teach much to them.” So he taught me kriya yoga. It hardly took me five minutes because I knew the kriyas of kriya yoga.

I roamed all over, and at that time I was completely averse to institutions; no ashrams, no disciples, no money. I led the life of a mendicant or a beggar. I just wanted to be very independent. If I want to smoke, nobody should say, ‘Why do sadhus smoke?’ If I wanted to drink, nobody should say,



‘Why do you drink?’ How is it your business? I mind my own business, so you keep quiet.

Society is a well-knit organ that people have to follow, whether right or wrong. Nobody can say that whatever society has decided is right. The rules of society are made up automatically. Sometimes they are made up by the people who are suffering from false vanity. Naturally one wants to live independently for some time. If I want to close my eyes for five hours, what business does my wife or mother have to say, 'What is happening to you? Are you going mad?' Yes, I am going mad, and if you do not like it, get out. For that reason, I used to live anywhere and alone.

Even today, whenever I go out, I never live with families because there I have to say, 'Yes, yes, very good.' I like to live somewhere else. I can sleep when I like, I can snore as much as I like. I can take a bath, I can sing, I can cry, I can sleep on the floor. I lived like that for a few years. When I came to Munger, I think that was the beginning of an era. The place was very nice. On 13 July 1963, I had an inner awakening, a message, and that is how things have started with a lot of experiences.

Swamiji how should the guru mantra be practised?

First mantra should be practised with a mala and you should not give up your mala. You should not think that you have been practising mantra for ten years, now you have evolved, you do not need a mala. You always need a mala. So for that you have to fix say one mala or two malas or five malas of Gayatri, twenty times, fifty times. You must use the mala.

When you practise japa yoga with mala, you can also practise the mantra with the natural breath, not the restrained breath. Sometimes it is deeper, sometimes very deep, sometimes shallow and sometimes fast, but the average is fifteen respirations per minute. That is in one hour it is nine hundred breaths.

It is not necessary for everybody to practise mantra in the chakras. Those people who have a tranquil mind and who can manage to do japa successfully, at least about half of the time, must use the mala and the breath. If the mind is wandering

and you are not able to fix it properly and it creates a lot of disinterestedness and indifference towards the mantra, you must give a sort of variety to the mind because mind likes varieties. So practise sometimes with mala, sometimes with breath, with chakra or in bruhmadhya.

That means the practice of mantra by various methods is for people who are dissipated by nature. If your mind is, by and large, of better quality and does not dissipate every now and then, it is better to fix one system and that is the system of mala.

When you want to practise mantra in the chakras there are many techniques of doing that. One technique is you concentrate directly on the point of the chakra and create or imagine the creation of the sound vibration *Om*, *Aim* or whatever that is. You can also imagine that the mantra is written there and you are repeating and concentrating.

If it is difficult for you to locate the centre on your back, then there is a connecting centre. For mooladhara there is no connecting centre, no contact centre, so you can concentrate on the complex centre. For swadhisthana it is the lower abdominal viscera, for manipura the navel, for anahata the heart, for vishuddhi the throat and for ajna it is the eyebrow centre. You can practise the mantra, either by imagining the letters or the sound vibration.

Swamiji, whenever I do shavasana or yoga nidra, within a few minutes I feel a tingling sensation all over the body.

When you practise yoga nidra you should not try to concentrate. You should not practise awareness of the instructions intensely. The practice of yoga nidra has to be a very casual practice. We should not be tense. You should not try to be introvert and go deep. When you go deep, these kinds of experiences do come up.

Next time when you do yoga nidra, you must try to maintain the external awareness. You should try your best to maintain external awareness side by side with internal awareness. The practice of yoga nidra is very difficult. People

do not do it well for they become tense and try to relax. Why should you try to relax? Relaxation happens; you do not have to try to relax. When you try to relax, that is not relaxation. When you are trying to relax, it creates tension. When relaxation happens, it is relaxation.

When you are practising yoga nidra there are certain instructions: right hand thumb, second finger, third finger, fourth finger, fifth finger. You just listen and think like that. If you do become a little introverted, you can murmur a little bit. In yoga nidra you must arrest the ingoing tendency of the mind. It must be arrested at a little deeper level than the conscious mind. You do not have to go very deep. It is not hypnotism where you have to forget what is happening.

In tantric practices when you sit for pooja, they have the mantras, *Om netra netram*, *Om shrotam shrotam*; so you touch each part and say a mantra. It is called anga nyasa. *Anga* means organs or limbs of the body like the toes, knees, hips and the back and the chest and shoulder blade and head. *Nyasa* means to place. It is the word used in sannyyasa also. Sannyyasa does not mean renunciation. When I give you twenty-five thousand rupees for a charity or an orphanage, I place it with you, that is nyasa. You place the mind on the organs of the body, that is called anga nyasa.

The second method is called placing your mind on the different parts of your hand, *kara nyasa*. *Kara* means hand. Anga nyasa, kara nyasa and varna nyasa, placing the mind on the *varna* or colour. The fourth method is *matrika* nyasa.

There are so many nyasas in tantra and they are all done in siddhasana or padmasana. Before pooja they have to do it. Through this anga nyasa, varna nyasa, kara nyasa, you purify the elements of the body: *bhuta or tattwa shuddhi*, purification of elements; *prana shuddhi*, purification of the life force. Before the actual practice of pooja, prayer, chanting, invocation or the actual rites begin, you have to purify yourself. This process of purification is known as *shuddhi*.

The simple shuddhi means to take a bath and change your dress. Taking a bath and changing of the dress is

good, but do you accept or do you believe that it is the only shuddhi? You have many more things in you. You have prana, you have elements, you have a nervous system, you have nadis, you have a stomach, are you not going to purify them? Why do you confine purity only to certain factors?

In tantra, before the actual ceremonies, you are led through a process of purification. This nyasa, anga nyasa or kara nyasa, are considered to be one step of purification from which I have compiled this yoga nidra. Yoga nidra was not known to people, just like kriya yoga was not known before Paramahansa Yogananda, Lahiri and Mukteshwar came. Nobody knew of kriya yoga, so Paramahansa Yogananda discovered, developed and made it accessible. In the same way, yoga nidra was developed by me.

When you practise yoga nidra, the psychic experiences must be avoided. Psychic experiences can happen mostly to people when they are a little bit lower than the coccyx level. Of course, to madcaps they can happen anytime, but to most people, psychic experiences take place when the frequency is reduced and when the brainwaves change.

With normal brainwaves, you cannot have psychic experiences. You have only thought experiences and thought awareness. You do not have psychic awareness. You do not feel heat and cold, angels and demons. You feel it only when the brainwaves change from the normal range.

When you are trying to practise yoga nidra, you just lie down and tell your mind that you are going to take rest now. Let Swamiji say, 'Right hand thumb, right hand finger, I don't care.' Casually listen and when you feel that you are about to blink, about to sleep, you must say, 'No, I am not going to sleep.' You must avoid sleep. You must avoid introversion and the deep state of mind.

You must stay almost on the border line, on the fringe of consciousness, where you can know that you are in this room, the fans are working, the electricity is on, somebody is walking to the balcony or some machine is working. You must know all these things. You should not go far. If you go

far, then yoga nidra is not yoga nidra, it becomes a part of meditation.

Swamiji at the beginning of every class or kirtan we start with the chanting of *Om*. Can you please explain in what way it is helping us?

When you produce a sound, it purifies the atmosphere. When you organize and arrange that sound, it not only makes the atmosphere around you, but also the mental atmosphere sweeter. When you sing, you are developing the same state of consciousness.

There is one experiment cited by the scientist Itzhak Bentov. You put a few clocks in a room on the wall and then put a grandfather clock. Before you put that grandfather clock there, all the clocks' pendulums are swinging their own way, sometimes together, sometimes in their own way. When you put that grandfather clock, you will find after some time that all the clocks are following that.

There has to be one-pointedness or one level of mind, when the teachers and the pupils are practising yoga; therefore, kirtan is done before that. Secondly, I think if you do yoga without bringing the mind to the point of tranquillity and equipoise, you only get the benefits of physical exercises that you can do in a gymnasium or anywhere you like. If the benefits of yoga are to be attained, completely and properly accomplished, the mind should be brought to a point of equipoise and tranquillity and there should be unity of all minds.

The minds of the fifty people work in unison while practising yoga after kirtan or bhajan. Their mental waves function on almost the same frequency. It is fifty people at the same frequency, and that is how the minds have to be united.

13

Origins of Ganga Darshan

17 October 1982

Will you kindly enlighten us on your special experiences at this particular spot in Ganga Darshan and its history?

This place is historically known as Karna Chaura. Karna was a great yogi, a great man and hero well known for his generosity. He was the ruler of the area of Bhagalpur and Munger known as Anga.

Karna lived about 5,100 years ago. References to him are plentiful in the *Mahabharata*. Karna was the eldest son of Kunti, the wife of Pandu, who died at a very early age. Karna was born to Kunti before she was married when she was a virgin. As such, Karna can be considered as an immaculate, or what is called *manasputra*. Kunti and society did not own him and he was left with a family of charioteers.

Later, Karna practised yoga, tantra and the science of archery. Quite close to our ashram is Chandi Mandir, a temple where he used to do his tantric practices. Those practices were very difficult, but symbolically it is said that he used to offer his body to sixty-four yoginis who could completely devour his body and bring him back to his physical structure.

The entire area, about 28 acres, is known as Karna Chaura. The place where we have built the hall, Jyoti Mandir, was a big platform when we obtained this piece of land. In 1956, during my parivrajaka days, when I was wandering and

had no ashram or place, I came to Munger. I was staying with a devotee who was then the subordinate judge, Shyamnandan Prasad.

After that, I stayed with another family. I had very intimate links with the family. During the daytime or sometimes in the evening, I used to come here and sometimes sit, sing or just lie down. During the summer, I passed quite a few nights here sleeping. This place attracted me very much.

Psychic experiences at Karna Chaura

People do a lot of sadhana and many have a lot of experiences. They will tell you they had this experience or that experience, they saw the sun, the moon, flowers, but what is the use of having the experiences if they do not have any meaning. You may go on having psychic experiences for forty or fifty years, but finally you find that you have not got anywhere either in the spiritual field nor in worldly life. These psychic or spiritual experiences may be the expression of archetypes. That is all right for some time, but the experiences which you have in spiritual life do not merely represent the manifestation of the deep-rooted complexes, deep-rooted psyche or deep-rooted emotions.

It is true that in the early stages of sadhana, when you have dreams or see photographs or images or you hear sounds, that could be an expression or manifestation of what is already hidden in your mind. Due to concentration or one-pointedness, you are allowing the outlet. Otherwise, it does not happen. The reasoning mind, the intellectual mind, the social mind, the restricted mind and the mind which is ridden by turbulent complexes does not allow those things to come out, but when the mind is concentrated the barrier is lifted. You lift the lid and all or many deep-rooted samskaras come out, and the archetypal manifestations take place.

These expressions may not give you anything else, but at least they purify your mind. There has to be some end to it. Then you experience a tree through your eyes, then you see that there are mangos on that tree, you get up and pick

the mangos. This is the outcome of your experience. You experience a flower; you have the perception of a flower and you smell it and like it.

When you have certain experiences in spiritual life at a later period, those experiences must have some outcome. If they do not have an outcome, they are just hallucinations, fantasies or you are at a very preliminary stage. Many people have these experiences, but what is the outcome? So many things are happening in your meditation, but in actual life nothing happens. All your prophecies and predictions go wrong. All your premonitions are either negative or go wrong. Is your mind that inefficient?

Even after the mind loses the barriers of time and space, still the perceptions that it has been in the depth are not true because whenever you do sadhana the ego goes with it. Even in the highest state of meditation, the experiences which you have are the manifestations of your ego. It is the pure cow's milk with a few drops of lemon. Beautiful expressions could come to you, but ego is there. With all our sadhanas, we plod along the path with the help of the ego. There is a moment in spiritual life when the experiences take place without the aid of ego. That happened to me here.

Earlier I had done purushcharana. I had done sadhana. I had experiences. I was not here for any experience. I was living with these householders and I had nothing else to do. I was not a teacher. I did not read books. I did not meet people. There were four or five members in the family and I would talk to them for one or two hours, but what to do after lunch? Just come here and sit down, look at the sky, breathe fresh air or just sleep. It was not at all in my mind that I would sit here and some sort of spiritual experiences would take place.

At that time, this place was full of a certain type of women. They used to dress themselves all day, combing, powdering, creaming and brushing their skin. In the evening people used to come, drink and have nice times here. The rikshaw wallahs, the low income people used to come here, but that

had nothing to do with me, and they also did not care. They said, 'Babaji has come, it is all right'.

One evening at about half past seven, I got up feeling a bit drowsy. I thought, 'Hey, I have slept here all night, I must go and take bath'. So I went to bathe. It was evening and I thought it was morning. Then I realized it was not morning but evening. Now, such experiences can only happen if one is totally mad or has taken a little bhang, ganja or too much drinking. Everything was okay and when I realized it was evening, I slept there.

When I came the second time, I found that the whole earth was shaking in front of me. I just kept myself calm and cool because Munger was known to be on a seismic belt. I thought, 'It may be a little earthquake'. I was in a safe place as there was no roof over me. So I kept sitting and I knew that I was aware and not unconscious.

After some time, just at a distance of 15 feet, the platform cracked and from within the crack a man came out dressed in a white flowing robe. He came out with a staff in his hand and just went away. That of course was frightening. I saw it but I did not know whether it was a ghost or a spirit. Or was it my imagination? I found that there was a crack. A big gap was there and underneath there was a grave. I thought it would be best to get out of here as soon as possible because he might return and take me with him. I was a bit frightened. I went away and the whole night I had lots of nightmares.

When this building was being built and the foundations were dug, I saw him where the crack was. When the swamis said, "Shall we blow it up?" I said, "Leave it. It is better to let him come once again. I am going to talk to him this time."

When this happened, I was only thinking that things were happening externally. I was not aware that things were happening within me. It is so difficult to believe when I see a different or separate reality in front of me. If I can see through this mind my guru, who is no more in the physical body, walk into the hall, how can I say it is subjective and not objective? There is a stage of mind, experience and perception when



your inner experience and external perception are both the same, not different. You can see your guru in front of you in flesh and blood, knowing that he has come from the higher plane, but you are playing the game within yourself.

It is such a tremendous separation of the two elements in man – matter and the energy of consciousness. There is something which is separate; the seer is separate. When I saw that good old man in the evening, I thought he was a spirit who came to me. He was Mearji, a Muslim.

The next day when I came, I saw there was no crack because I think the crack in my mind was okay by then. The crack of consciousness which was in my mind during that moment was finished and there was no crack. Then it came to my mind, 'Hey, it is not the external crack that I saw. It seems I have gone too deep, beyond ego, *ahamkara*, beyond the domain of individual consciousness, beyond *jivatma bhava*. Somehow, I had gone too far, and in that way I experienced that man. The whole experience was happening within the depth of my own consciousness. However, everything was taking place as if it was happening outside. Still, everything was not clarified.

Experiences and experiments during chaturmas at Ananda Bhavan

Then I left Munger and forgot all about it more or less. I used to speak about these experiences to only a few people. After

a few months, I returned to Munger. I had no devotees in Munger at that time, except one or two. There was one girl who was a musician. Now she is married and lives in Bombay. Her name is now Amar Sangita who was the only friend I had, because I used to learn Hindustani music from her. I thought it was necessary for me to learn music.

I spent three nights or maybe three days and two nights at Karna Chaura. I used to take my food and then come here and sit. One day in shavasana, I found that I was going up with such terrible speed in the shavasana position that my heart began to palpitate. I was aware of both the realms. The external realm, the realm of ego and the internal realm which was playing games with me. I was even aware of the distance of my body floating up in the air for a very short time.

Again I came down. My whole body was perspiring; my heart was throbbing so hard that I pressed it. I could not manage it. I tried to sleep on my left side, my right side, my chest and my back and breathe deeply, but nothing helped. Suddenly, it happened that the same man came up from the platform, and just told me, 'You stay here.' In a great hurry, I got out. It was so frightening! If a dead man or a ghost tells you to stay there, what are you going to do? Your heart fails. You have to escape. He spoke to me in beautiful Urdu. I thought 'This is not a very safe place for me', and I left.

In the mean time I had another devotee, Mr. Kedarnath Goenka. He is a straightforward man. He just invited me to his place and said, 'Stay here.' I said, 'Okay.' I stayed in his beautiful house and did not come to this platform at all. Then I spent Chaturmas in Munger. Chaturmas means that for four months sannyasis live in one place and either study the *Bhagavad Gita*, Upanishads and *Brahma Sutra*, or talk about it. They do not shave their beard and head; they do not go on lecture tour. For four months of chaturmas, they stay in one place.

For sannyasins it is four months and for householders two months. Householders must observe celibacy. If they are non-vegetarian, they must become vegetarian. If they are not doing worship or sadhana, they should start doing

it. On every Monday, they should go to the temple of Shiva. If *Amavasya*, no moon, happens to be on Monday, it is considered to be the most auspicious day. During these two months, householders must do maximum fasting. They must take the minimum possible diet to survive; and at the same time, they must not drink milk because it produces hormones and stimulates sexual tendencies. These two months for householders are almost an experience of *sannyasa*. *Chaturmas* starts from the day of *Guru Poornima*, *asha poornima*.

For four months I stayed at Ananda Bhavan. Mr Goenka is a well-to-do citizen of Munger and an affluent industrialist in Calcutta. One of his sons, Krishna Kumar Goenka, is personally devoted to me. The family said, 'Swamiji, you stay here.' I said, 'Yes, I will stay here, but I am not going to eat food.' They said, 'Okay, whatever you like.' The servant kept coming for four months leaving fruits and milk in the outer chamber. I used to remain in the inner chamber.

During those four months, I did not eat food. I took only fruit once a day and I practised a lot of *hatha yoga kriyas*. Many of the *hatha yoga kriyas* I teach, I never practised in Rishikesh. I practised in Munger. I tried *shankhaprakshalana* on myself, with salt, with *bhanga pani*, with onion water, and with water mixed with *asafoetida*. I tried a number of things. I thought, 'Let it happen after all.' Then I practised quite a lot of things which I knew but had not practised before. I also practised *neti* in a number of ways, *danda dhauti* with turmeric, putting the turmeric roots inside. I was never a fat person. I was always lean and thin and you could count my bones, but during this period, you could not only count my bones, you could even see the bones, and nothing else.

One night around midnight, when I was just sitting and practising *mantra* everything became quiet, nature was silent. Nobody used to stay in Ananda Bhavan. Even the servants did not remain after dusk. They were all afraid of spirits. Suddenly I heard a dance. A girl was dancing and *dumaroo*, *mrindanga*, *dasari*, *puchouwas* and *khanjari* were

being played. I thought, 'What happened to this servant? He never stays here and today he has brought *naachne wali*, dancing girls. I thought this was happening on the ground floor where there is a chamber for the servants. I went down to find out what they were doing because sometimes they can bring women and do all kinds of things and the owner is in trouble later. The door was locked and inside it seemed like a mehfal, a gathering. Music was going on and the raga was *Basant Bahar*. It was beautiful. I went up and continued to hear it. I thought, 'Okay, whatever it is, whether it is the spirit of a dancing girl who must have been murdered by the kings or emperors, or whether it is my personal experience, I don't care. It is better to forget it.'

Surprisingly, when I was having that experience, I was concentrating and listening because there are sometimes beautiful elements in a dance. Sometimes you have some ecstasy; your soul is immediately imported and you just jump. But later as I was thinking about the tala and the sura, I just slept. In the morning when I got up, I remembered the night incident. While I stayed there, I heard the dancing many times.

I was staying in a small building Golkothi. After the four months were over, I shifted to the bigger main building, Ananda Bhavan. By the side of that building is a post mortem house. People do not go there in the night because they think that there is an adda or get-together of the spirits. In the night, I heard money being counted in the next room as if it was a treasury. I know there was nobody there to count money because I had the key and I had locked the door myself. I said to myself, 'It is the same thing happening.' I stayed there in spite of it and had other experiences as well. I do not know whether they were true or not. Many times I heard a crow, falcon or some other bird flying around in my room. In the morning there was nothing there – no bird, no bat, no crow, no falcon, no kite, no eagle, but I used to hear it.

I am sure that I had not hypnotized myself. Earlier in my life, before I became a sannyasin and even afterwards,

a part of my life was purely intellectual. I had gone to the point where I doubted the existence of God. It was a period when I studied the communist philosophies. I had read a lot of communist books and commentaries. I also read Samkhya and that impressed me very much, because in Samkhya there is no reference to God. The only word used twice in the *Raja Yoga Sutras* is 'Ishwara', who need not be the God of Hindus, Christians or Muslims. Ishwara can even mean a governor. The literal meaning of *ishwara* is governor, one who governs. Your mind is your governor; your mind is your ishwara.

I liked the philosophy of Samkhya by Kapila very much. In those days, I also read the *Tripitikas*, the collection of the teachings of Lord Buddha. One devotee asked Buddha about God and he said, 'If you have pain, you ask for medicine. That would be better. Do not ask me who caused the pain. If your house is burning, first you try to extinguish the fire. After everything is settled, then you find out what caused the fire. The search for God at the outset is not the right way'. All these things came to my mind and I had become a confirmed atheist. It was also very hard for me to accept anyone as my guru.

When I went to Rajasthan, I met the guru of my adopted sister. He was a good man and I admired him, but he used to talk so much about God that I was fed up with him. I said, 'What is he talking about? He is talking about something I cannot see. Let him talk about things I can see. That I can understand. This man was not God'.

At that time, there were quite a few people who used to say they were gods. I always said, 'No, it is not true. First of all, there is no God. Secondly, if there is a God, he should be omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient. He cannot be like you and me'. If you say God is the supreme being, he makes rain, clouds and storms, he does everything for you, but this man is only a religious or philosophical preacher. He preaches a philosophy, a school of thought. Once he has a little mental power, he can look after a few people, but he cannot be God.



I had all kinds of confusion, positive and negative arguments, but very convincing arguments. When I came to Rishikesh, it became very difficult for many swamis to survive. Swami Chidanandaji, even today, when he meets me anywhere (I have great respect for him and he has great respect for me), he says, ‘No arguments with you. You are right.’ The same with Swami Venkateshananda and all my guru bhais; even today, I am the intellectual terror. If they say anything, I say, ‘No.’ At that time, it was a very cruel relationship between them and me. I used to say to them, ‘Why do you go to temples? Why do you touch feet? Why do you speak like that?’

However, later, when I came to the point of experience, my whole mind changed. I began to see the whole thing in the context of man’s total awareness, not in the context of my awareness. A guru, a teacher, or even a mother has to see things beyond her context. They have to see things in the full context. The mother likes pakora, but the child does not like it. If she only cooks pakora, the child will not eat. I like Samkhya but you do not like it. I like Christianity and you do not like it. I like Vedanta; you do not like it. So which is important? For a guru or a teacher which is important, what he likes or what others like?

Anything is right and anything is wrong because everything is born from man’s deeper existence. Perceptions that are

external, experiences that you have through the senses, and the knowledge you derive from the object, ultimately come from the very depths of your existence. I am not using the word mind. Beyond the mind is consciousness and beyond consciousness is existence. That is called *satchitananda*. Existence has no categories. Mind comes much later in the process of evolution, incarnation, be it ascent or descent.

Smashan sadhana experience

I can tell you another experience which has nothing to do with Munger. When I was at home with my father in Almora, I had a friend who brought me to a type of sadhana called *smashan*, burial ground sadhana. We were young children of 14 or 15 years. We used to go to the burial ground to do sadhana. My father was an Arya Samaji who are very disciplined people. I would not say they are close-minded. I am using a better word for them, very strict people.

So I made some excuses and went to the burial ground with my friend and did some mantra which I have forgotten. It was a very big mantra which had no grammatical meaning. I was doing it up to 12 or 1 o'clock, but nobody came. It is very difficult to handle one's deeper mind. You cannot handle passions, jealousy or one single worry. How can you handle deeper experiences? You cannot handle them. Some people are afraid of cats, some of dogs, others of cobras. When you are not able to handle these external objective experiences, how can you handle the inner experiences? Maybe it was good that my father did not come that day.

The next day my father said, 'You are not going away.' I said, 'One day more.' I consulted my friend and he said, 'Okay, we will do one thing.' He had a guru and he said, 'I have consulted my guru and he said we can take the charcoal and ashes of a dead body.' I did not bring it into the house. I put it on the terrace of the house. There was one tin flower pot on the top. I put it there and went away.

That same night when I was sleeping, there was a lot of running and jumping on my terrace, as if some people were

jumping and fighting with each other. My father got up and got his gun and then I got up and we went up there. There was nobody there. He came down and he heard the same thing. He went up again and there was nobody. Somehow he knew I was doing something. He asked me, 'Have you brought anything and put it on the terrace?' I said 'Yes.' He said, 'Go and throw it away.' I was so afraid I told him, 'You please do it.' That was a great test for that Arya Samaji father. He said, 'No, you do it.' I said, 'I am not going to do it because I am afraid.' He said, 'No, you will have to do it.' Then I thought of the best thing to say, I said, 'Because you are afraid. Why don't you take a gun and do it?' I said firmly.

Anyway he did not go and I did not go. The next day they brought a tantric and got the whole thing removed. I do not know what they did with it. The whole night was a nightmare. Still, I do not think it was a ghost who was jumping. Now I know it, then I did not know it. I knew it much later.

It is possible that a man's deeper experiences can affect another mind and minds without his knowledge. Without my knowledge, my deeper fears, passions, knowledge and understanding can affect you and cause an experience. My father did not know that I had put the ashes there, but I knew I had put them there. My knowledge was enough to create a turbulence and an experience for him. What he experienced was in me.

Perhaps somewhere in the depths of my mind not consciously, it must have been working like this: 'The ashes are up there. The spirits might come. They might jump and dance.' It was somewhere in my mind and this structure got connected with my father. Two minds were linked. It is always true that we have individual minds, but in reality, we are interlinked like these fans. They are different, but somewhere there is a link where they have the same energy. The link of energy is one and the same. The centres and samskaras are different, the structure is different, but the energy which flows from one mind to another mind is always interlinked. It is there all the time.

Darshan

Munger became very important for me. I came again and again and every time I came, I came with greater determination not to allow my mind to go deep, to realize the separate reality and see it outside. I do not want to unite the internal awareness and the external perceptions at one point. I am Hindu and have been trained in the philosophy of darshan.

There is a famous verse from the *Ramcharitamanas* known to most Hindus. When Tulsidas, the author of the *Ramcharitamanas*, was alive, he used to live in Chitrakoot, a place sanctified by Sri Rama during his exile, just as Vrindavan was sanctified by Sri Krishna and Rajgirh by Lord Buddha.

Tulsidas was an ordinary brahmin and not a very rich man. He had to make his livelihood every day. So he was making sandal paste for the pilgrims and applying it for one or two annas. One day, while he was doing that, he saw a young, bright man. He looked at him and applied the tilak. At that moment, he realized who he was. He knew that he was Sri Rama because at once the whole figure changed. He was young and fully adorned with his bow and arrow, wide chest and hands reaching to the knees. Rama is known as *Ajanubahu*, with hands to the knees. The complexion of Sri Rama was that of a blue lotus; he was not fair but *shyam varna*, dusky complexioned.

The moment Tulsidas put the tilak on him he knew because he got a shock. He then came to touch Sri Rama's feet, but he had gone away. That is called darshan. Hindus, Hindu shastras and Vedas believe up to this day that you can have the darshan of your ishta devata. Darshan means seeing him face to face. Hindus, shastras, Vedas and other traditions consider this as the ultimate aim of man's incarnation. Even if there is no God, if you can see the nucleus of your existence face to face, you are the greatest man.

Not everybody can do it. We cannot even see our own complexes. We cannot see our character or personality. If we

can go deep and much deeper beyond ego to the nucleus of our existence, of what we are, and see it outside as an object, a form, a reality, and visualize it face to face with eyes open, that is man's greatest achievement. It is for this purpose and for nothing else that yoga, tantra, karma, shastras, niyama and yama are being taught. We are not worried about a social order, like many other religions of the past, present or future. The most important thing is that we will have to organize our life, business, food, relationships, enjoyments and everything around us in order to facilitate this experience of darshan.

On 13 or 14 July 1963 around midnight, I had an inner awakening. I am using a different term now. I am not using the word darshan. I was sleeping but during sleep my consciousness transcended the barrier of the present physical and mental experience. I was in Rishikesh along the bank of the Ganga. I saw that there was a small motor launch travelling in the opposite direction towards Swarga Ashram. Trumpets and conches were being blown and bells were ringing. Swami Sivananda was seated on a chair looking towards Swarga Ashram. I was on this bank of the Ganga and for a split second, he turned towards me, looked, I think at the left side. The moment he glanced at me the flywheel of the motor launch splashed water on my body. Then my awakening came to an end.

I got up and for some time, I did not know for how long; it was very difficult for me to know whether I was in Rishikesh dreaming of Munger. For some time, I thought I was in Rishikesh seeing Swami Sivananda travelling, and suddenly I started dreaming of Munger. The experience of this consciousness became almost intolerable. Gradually, I controlled myself and thought and thought. Then I came to know that my external world was Munger. This inner experience was so clear. It was not a dream; it was happening as if I left this planet to go to the moon to meet him. It was so clear, tangible, fresh and true. It was not hazy; it was a true experience. You can say it was as true as any experience.

14

The Mantra Om

*19 October 1982, addressing a group of yoga aspirants of a
Teacher Training Course*

Swamiji, will you please explain the difference, significance and importance of *Om* chanting in its various ways?

In Barcelona, scientists have conducted research on the effects of *Om* chanting on the brain waves. This study has been going on for over two years in the medical university and they have come to certain conclusions.

The first conclusion is that the effect of the sounds A-U-M is not the same – it is different on the brain waves. When you chant the sound A, then U and then M; or alternatively, if you chant the sound Au, then M, the brain waves alter.

When you compare these studies with the *Mandukya Upanishad*, we find a striking similarity. The *Mandukya Upanishad* is the shortest Upanishad which deals with the three matras of *Aum* or the four matras of *Aum* and its relationship with consciousness, with man's performance on the plane of ego. There are various commentaries on the *Mandukya Upanishad*. One is by Adi Shankaracharya, his Guru Govindapada and his grand guru Gaudapadacharya. Gaudapadacharya's commentary on the *Mandukya Upanishad* or *Mandukya Karika* is considered to be excellent.

The sound combination of *Aum* is not merely a religious name, sound or mantra. Neither is this mantra the name of God, if there is such a God, nor is *Aum* a holy name or a sacred formula. In science there is no such thing as sacred

and holy. For one who wants to study things impartially, he should get out of the idea of sacred and holy. One has to be an impartial investigator, whether it is Ganga water, the idol in the temple or *Om* chanting. There has to be an impartial investigation.

The commentaries by Gaudapadacharya and his grand disciple, Adi Shankaracharya, define what these sounds really represent. Whether these sounds are symbolic representation or tantric representation is a matter of great controversy.

Aum has four matras: three matras are subject to mind and intellect and the fourth matra is unheard and invisible. Therefore, the fourth matra of *Aum* is known as *amatra*. The first matra is A, second is U, third is M, and fourth matra is called *amatra*. The first mantra of the *Mandukya Upanishad* is:

*Omityetadaksharamidam sarvam tasyopavyaakhyaanam
bhootam*

Bhavadbhavishyaditi sarvamonkaara eva;

Yachchaanyat trikaalaateetam tadapyonkaara eva.

The word *Om* is the universe. Everything that exists in the past, present and future is *Om*. And that which exists beyond the threefold division of time is *Om*.

Aum is the equation of the entire creation, an equation like $E=MC^2$. *Aum* is the equation of the entire creation that was, that is and that shall be. Creation has to be understood in terms of time. Space and object must exist in time. Time, space and object are interrelated factors. One cannot exist without the other. These three are also categories of the mind; the mind cannot exist without these three. If there is no time, no space, no object, then there can be no mind. If there is no mind, then there is no time, space and object.

The *Mandukya Upanishad* says that the first stage of consciousness is objective. The second stage of consciousness is subjective and the third stage of consciousness is unconscious, known by us as waking, dreaming and sleeping,

jagrat, swapna and *sushupti*. Therefore, when you are chanting *Aum*, you are passing from one phase of consciousness into another phase. In modern psychology, 'A' represents the conscious mind. 'U' represents the subconscious mind. 'M' represents the unconscious. These states of mind or these states of ego manifestation are known as *vaishnavara* or the conscious mind, *taijasa* or the subconscious mind, and *prajna*, the unconscious mind. In Samkhya, Vedanta and Indian philosophy, mind is known as *chitta*. Whereas for an ordinary man, mind is nothing but the awareness of object, thoughts and emotions, but that is not mind.

When you remember things, when you can understand things, when you feel hatred, love, passion and compassion, that is not mind. That is called manifestation of mind, *chitta vritti*. Manifestation of mind is not the mind. Very few people have been able to see the mind at any level. Those who can see the mind at any level, can either go insane or can go to jivanmukti. Mind is that powerful substance, powerful manifestation of consciousness, which is formless and abstract. You can only see its patterns like *raga, dwesha, kama, krodha, lobha*, attraction, repulsion, passion, anger, greed, but this is not the mind.

The *Mandukya Upanishad* makes it very clear that consciousness manifests itself on the lower plane in three stages. This perception which you are having is a manifestation of consciousness. Dreams are a manifestation of consciousness. Profound sleep is also a manifestation of consciousness. By consciousness I mean *atman* or *chit* as in Sat-Chit-Ananda. 'A' represents objective consciousness as at this time the atman is in direct contact with objects through five karmendriyas, five jnanendriyas, five pranas and the fourfold mind – *manas, buddhi, chitta, ahamkara* or the thinking process, the rational process, the remembering process and the ego process. This is called *antahkarana*, the inner mental instruments. These are the nineteen principles with which the chit interacts. Atman in interaction with these nineteen, 20 minus 1 is in Sanskrit, *ekora vimshati*, one less

than twenty. Through this interaction one type of experience takes place. That is called the experience of 'A'. That is the first experience.

The second experience is when the atman is not in relationship with these nineteen. The relationship, which the atman had already obtained through these nineteen principles, brings another experience called dream. Dream depends on the experience you are having now. Then there is cessation of experience. The atman without form, without name, without desire is called *prajna purusha*. There are three names: vaishvanara purusha, conscious mind, taijasa purusha, subconscious mind, and prajna purusha, unconscious mind. Now you know what the sound of A-U-M really means.

When you want to manifest a sound, you have to open your mouth. When you want to stop the sound you have to close your mouth. When you close your mouth, the sound produced is Mmmmmm. When you open your mouth, it is Aaaaaa. From the production of sound to the cessation of sound, there is a third process called Uuuuu. A-U-M therefore represents creation, sustainance and dissolution.

When I use the word creation, I am not using it in terms of the sun, moon and planets. Creation is within you. Creation is the perception of an individual. It is very difficult to understand. Creation is a perception. Creation is an experience of an individual. If something happens to that individual and if he transcends that state of mind, there is no creation. Therefore, when I say creation, maintenance and dissolution, I mean that they are of the individual. Atman in relation to these has the experience of creation and at other times it is completely dissolved.

Besides these three there is a fourth matra which is called *ashabda*. In yoga you have *shabda* and *ashabda*. *Shabda* is produced and is called *ahata nada*. When you strike something against another object, there is a sound. *Amatra* or *anahata nada* is produced without any interaction between two objects. An experience is a product between two. If there

is no duality, there cannot be an experience. If there is only one, then who is going to experience whom. Experience presupposes the existence of two persons. In anahata there is no duality. The experience is experience itself. The *Mandukya Upanishad* is a beautiful Upanishad.



15

Yoga Nidra, Pranayama and Yajna

*20 October 1982, addressing a group of yoga aspirants of a
Teacher Training Course*

Swamiji, how did you develop the yoga nidra system?

When I was leaving school, a few boys were interested in mesmerism and hypnotism and we had a tiny society. Besides mesmerism and hypnotism, we practised various forms of spirit invocation. Not only planchette, but other things as well. That made me go deep. I wanted to find out what manifests during the hypnotic state, who comes and inspires automatic writing; what makes one tremble a lot and be hysterical for some time and finally settle down to make a prediction.

According to Hindu theory, it is devi, devata, god and goddess. I have attended a number of sessions of spirit invocation known by various names in India. In the Kumaon hills, they call it *devata jagana*, to awaken the divine. I used to see the people who were subjects. They used to dance a lot, sometimes too much, and shout. When they came to the point of climax and were supposed to have transcended normal awareness, they were tested by placing burning charcoal in the palm or were given one chillum of ganja, which they finished in one go. After that the anti-climax began. The person became very slow, very rhythmic and nodded his head. Then the questions were asked by the people, fifteen or twenty people, about marriage or sickness. The replies were astoundingly true.

I wanted to know, what is it? Is it Hanumanji? Is it Deviji? Is some other realm of the personality or consciousness coming to the forefront removing the conscious mind? This made me a clear seeker of the deeper faculties of man. Now I believe and I keep telling all of you we have much more potential than this intellect. You may not like my statement, I know. I think, if there is any instrument that is important in man, it is intellect. Intellect in man is a very important instrument; however, emotion is much higher than that.

It was very difficult for me to find a way by which man could go a little deeper and then have contact with higher knowledge. I knew that if a man goes very deep, he may not be able to experience anything. Even if he experiences anything, he will not be able to come out of it and say anything, as you remember many dreams but you do not know what they are. You forget them. In the same way, when you are given contact with the deeper phases and you come out, even after having the experience of knowledge, you cannot communicate and you cannot know. It is necessary not to go very deep in the initial stages, just a little deeper, so that you can maintain a contact with the external means of communication, the mind.

I was searching for that. I had seen many people using ganja and other drugs and they could go very deep. They could transcend everything. But when they came out, they could not bring that knowledge with them. They could not communicate it and that is the tragedy with all people of today. Many people can go very deep, but when they come out, they are as good as an ignorant person. It can be illustrated like this. There is a pitcher and inside the pitcher are cashew nuts. A monkey is trying to take the cashew nuts out in handfuls. Very carefully he is trying to take the cashew nuts out. He cannot take them out. If he has to take them out, he will have to leave half or three-quarters of the cashew nuts in the pitcher and only get a few. Only then can he bring his hand out.

The same is the case with all the sadhakas. They go so deep, but when they come out, they cannot come out with any-

thing. They come out completely empty handed. They have to come out empty handed because there is no communication between the mind and that experience. Even if we cannot establish any link between the mind, this state and that one, at least we can establish a link between the gross mind and the deeper, calm, tranquil mind, the *shant man* or peaceful mind.

When I came to Rishikesh, I was 19 or 20. By the side of the ashram to the left, there was a darshan mahavidyalaya, a school run by a Vaishnavacharya named Veerraghavacharya. He was a good old man. He had about twenty or twenty-five children in his ashram. They learnt *Laghoo Komudi*, Sanskrit primer or *Siddhanta Komudi*, the higher Sanskrit Grammar. *Mahabhashya* and *Kavya*, literature and poetry, and darshan or philosophy. They used to learn the six systems of Indian philosophy and astrology. It is compulsory for a Hindu to cast the horoscope. The children came from Garhwal and they used to stay there.

Veerraghavacharya, the principal or the founder of that ashram, used to go every second or third month to Lucknow to get donations. During that period, he used to request Swami Sivanandaji to look after the children. In 1943, his ashram and our ashram were situated right in the forest. In the evening at 6 o'clock, you could hear the roar of tigers, see the cobras crawling and scorpions climbing on the walls. Even now they are there.

Once the duty was given to me. I used to do the work in our ashram. In the evening by 5 or 6 o'clock when I had finished my food and duties, I used to go just about 500 yards away from there and keep awake. The children used to sleep in the night and I used to keep awake. At 3 o'clock, when the monitor and other teachers got up and rang the bell, I used to sleep. That happened for over one month.

In 1947, after about four years, there was a big function. Swami Sivananda's sixtieth birthday. On the day of his birthday, there was vedic chanting, and the children from that school came in groups. They honoured Swami Sivananda by chanting the vedic *Swasti Vachan*, wishing a long life. When

they were reciting that *Swasti Vachan*, I became introverted because I was trying to remember where I had heard this recitation before. I had an education in Sanskrit and was educated in vedic learning, but my school is a South Indian school called *Krishna Yajur Veda*. These boys were reciting the Veda according to the rules of *Shukla Yajur Veda*, which is for people up to the northern borders of Maharashtra. The pronunciation, grammatical conjunction and raga, everything is different. I could not figure it out.

Swami Sivananda noticed that I had been very introverted. After the function he asked me, “What were you thinking?” I said. “I have heard this recitation before and whatever they were chanting I know and remember it very well, each and every akshara, but I do not know whether I have dreamt it or heard it before.” He laughed and said, “You must have heard it when you were on duty at the Mahavidyalaya.” I said, “No. They used to sleep when I was awake. In the morning when they were up and chanting or studying, I was sleeping, so how can I hear?” Swami Sivananda said, “You think when you are asleep, you don’t hear.”

That was a great discovery, a great realization. He said, “Yes, in sleep you can see, you can hear, you can feel, you can taste, you can remember everything that happens. The only difference is that you do not know that it is happening. The only difference is you heard that recitation, but you did not know you were hearing it.”

It occurred to me that one can go a bit deeper to the realm which is between waking and sleep. This state in the Upanishads is known as *bindu jagriti*, the threshold between waking and sleeping. It is not dreaming. It is just a line of demarcation. Then I began to develop the science of yoga nidra. I collected all the information that I had about hypnotic sciences, about tantric and other systems. Gradually yoga nidra was developed and after coming to this ashram, I tried yoga nidra on one swami.

He came to me when he was four years old. He was very naughty and used to be with me all the time. He used

to sleep in my room on my bed. In the night when he was sleeping, I used to read the *Bhagavad Gita* aloud, the Upanishads, *Mahabharata* and whatever came to me. For four or five years during this period, he refused to learn from any book. The boy lived in the ashram and did a lot of mischief. He used to destroy things and harass visitors during class. He did all kinds of funny things, but with me he did not do anything.

At the age of twelve or fourteen, suddenly something happened to him and everything became clear to him. I took him to Belfast with me when he was ten and left him in Belfast. I told him, “Now you are ten, already grown up, look after yourself. You are a sannyasin. I do not have to look after you. I am not your father; I am not your mother. You are ten, you know how to eat, bathe, dress, keep money, so look after yourself.” From that time, I did not look after him. He was in Belfast for about a year or two, then a year or two in Europe. I think he was fourteen when he was in Colombia and everything exploded. He began to recite the *Gita*, Upanishad, *Brahma Sutra* and *Ramayana*.

He was my first experiment on yoga nidra. When you can cultivate a certain type of knowledge in a realm of the mind which is not very far from this mind, then in a few years’ time you can bring it back again. When he used to sleep, certainly he was not in samadhi. He was in sleep and his consciousness at that time, according to philosophy, was resting in the *karana sharira*. There are three bodies or states of consciousness. In Vedanta and Samkhya, they are known as *sthula sharira*, *sukshma sharira* and *karana sharira*, the gross, astral and causal consciousness. During dream your consciousness is operating in *sukshma sharira*, the astral body. In deep and profound sleep, your consciousness is operating in *karana sharira*. *Sthula sharira*, *sukshma sharira* and *karana sharira* are also indicated by the *Om Bhuh*, *Om Bhuvah*, *Om Suvah* of the Gayatri.

When I was teaching him his consciousness was very close, within a certain boundary, not beyond. If I had taken him

deep into meditation and given him some knowledge, he would have not been able to express it at the age of fourteen.

This is how I began to develop the science of yoga nidra. I tried it on a few children who used to do bed-wetting. There was a girl about five and every night she used to wet her bed. The parents created a lot of complexes in her mind and being only five, she was not aware of all these complexes. The complexes would only play havoc once she would reach the age of nineteen or twenty. Then they would form her personality. When she was left in the ashram, I was made aware of her problem.

I took her with me, and before she went off to sleep, I used to talk to her – a story, some gossip, some light things. I used to tell her that she should say, ‘Hmm, Hmm’. She used to nod and I knew that the moment she was not nodding she was going to sleep. When I saw that after about five minutes she had completely stopped responding to my stories, I used to call her name. I woke her up and said, “If you want to go to the bathroom at night, you please wake me up at night.” I spoke exactly the same sentence every time. I wrote the sentence down, so that I did not forget it, and did not make a mistake. That was all. After fifteen days she woke me up and said, “Swamiji, I have to go to the bathroom.” So that is it.

This is how the mind and the unconscious motivation and actions can be properly influenced. I also tried yoga nidra on a dog. In 1967 in the old ashram, I had an Alsatian dog. I gave him only one training. First, I taught him Hindi. Second, I taught him that nobody should touch my bed. Oh! Nobody, not even the in-charge of the ashram, could touch my bed. He would not allow anyone. That was the perfect training I gave him. I could not look after the intelligent dog because I am not fit for it. He died and after that I decided not to have anything to do with dogs.

There is also a dog in our Australian ashram. I have never seen such a trained dog who can understand everything like a human being. Much more sensible than a human being. He understands the difference between a swami and between a guru and disciple. He understands who is guru amongst these

5,000 people and who is a chela. I give you only one simple example. In that ashram, I have one room and another room with an attached bathroom. Then there is a third room, where the telephone, cash and other things are kept. At night the dog remained in the bathroom and I was in my room. The moment I opened my door, the dog is out of the bathroom and goes to the next room. I do not have to drive him out. I do not have to tell him, "Hey, Arjun get out of here." He understands English, not Hindi. He leaves the room and goes to another room. I have tried many times. I quietly leave the door open and go inside and peep. He goes and peeps to see whether I have gone or not. He knows I have not gone and he knows that nobody should peep through my window. If strangers come to my window, he will chase them out, but if I call someone he won't even raise his head. I do not know how he knows that this man is called by Swamiji and this man peeping through his window is not.

This is an outcome of a training of the mind which responds to certain vibrations. You can train people by their mid-eyebrow centre. You can train people by placing your hands on their shoulders or on their backs by sleeping with them. There is a relationship not only between one intellect and another intellect; there is a relationship between bodies.

Everybody has an aura except a dead person. The more developed you are the greater is your aura. It is a fact. It is not imagination. It is not mythological. It is proved by Kirlian science. When these two auras meet, then one person can absorb another's aura and give his aura. There was one experiment: two of my disciples are married in Australia. They are keen researchers on Kirlian photography. They tried an experiment with auras. At first they examined their auras around the hand through Kirlian methods. Then they held each others hands for some time and then separated them. It was found that the aura in the lady's hand had increased and the aura in the man's hand had decreased. It means the man loses energy when he touches a woman and women get more energy by touching men.

You can give your thoughts, your knowledge to other persons through the medium of the aura, not only intellect. Now I am giving you knowledge through the intellect. I talk; you understand. This can also be given through the process of intuition, by touching the forehead, through sankalpa and by intermingling the areas of the aura.

Yoga nidra is not just an ordinary science. Yoga nidra can be utilized for hypnosis, but it is not hypnotism. Many times teachers who do not understand the depth of yoga nidra unconsciously make it a practice of hypnotism. In yoga nidra you should not sleep. Even if you are very tired and sleep is overpowering you, you must try your level best to maintain your consciousness. You may not be able to maintain your consciousness completely one hundred percent, but at least you can maintain a trace of ego-consciousness and your relationship with the external factors and environment: you are here, a swami is teaching yoga nidra, so many people are snoring, the machine is running and the fan is on.

You may not have total knowledge, you may not be able to observe each and every thing, but you must try to observe each and every thing. When I used to teach yoga nidra, I used to say in between, “Blue Lotus Number 1” and then continue with the instructions of the yoga nidra practice. Then again I would say, “Blue Lotus Number 2.” At the end, I would ask, “How many Blue Lotus did you count?” The students used to say, “You didn’t say Blue Lotus, you were saying right hand thumb, second finger, third finger.” I said, “You had lost contact with me, you were floating into the subconscious, subterranean channel.” Sometimes I would announce, “Today I am going to say Blue Lotus.” The people used to become very alert, but I did not say Blue Lotus. These are the tricks which you have to play with the mind in order to maintain its consistency of awareness. When you are maintaining the consistency of the external awareness of fans, walls, the room and the people around you, a funny thing happens – you are both outside and inside.

All the time you are under the impression that you are aware, but you are not aware. You think you are awake, but later realize that you were not awake. At the time, when I said fourth finger, fifth finger, somebody sneezed, and you did not hear the sneezing. He was next to you. He was snoring. I said, "Did you hear the snoring?" and you said, "No, I did not hear the snoring." These are some of the peculiar functions of this little mind which become known in yoga nidra.

Sankalpa and *vikalpa*, thought and counter-thought, are the two characteristics of the mind. If there is no *sankalpa*, there is no *vikalpa*; there is no mind. As long as you have a mind there will be *sankalpa-vikalpa*. In yoga nidra we are utilizing the natural contents of the mind. *Sankalpa* plus *vikalpa* equals mind. Mind minus *sankalpa* and *vikalpa* equals zero. When you practise yoga nidra, you make a *sankalpa*. When the things are repeated to you, second finger, third finger, fourth finger, and so on, it is called *vikalpa*. The mind is jumping from one formation to another formation. Everything you are hearing is *vritti*. When you throw a pebble into a lake, there is a circle or motion, then a second circle or motion, then a third circle or motion and the ripples keep on moving. This is called *vritti*.

In the same way, when an idea is thrown into your mind, there is a wave because mind is not the brain. Mind is much bigger, more extensive than the brain. Consciousness is endless, mind is endless and infinite. You know a little and you do not know the rest.

When you throw an idea, right hand finger, second finger, third finger, blue lotus or white lotus, you are creating a wave in the mind and that wave is a pattern of the mind. These patterns are fivefold. The empirical experience, the normal experience which you have in everyday life is on account of the *vrittis*. These *vrittis* are generated by interaction between mind and object. The interaction between mind and object, mind and idea, mind and memory is called an experience of knowledge.

The fivefold vrittis mean that you can create five types of formation in the mind. In the beginning, of the *Yoga Sutras*, Patanjali says (1:5 and 6):

Vrittayaha panchatayyaha klishhta aklishtaha.

Modifications of mind are fivefold; they are painful or not painful.

Pramana-viparyaya-vikalpa-nidra smritayah.

The fivefold modifications of mind are right knowledge, wrong knowledge, fancy, sleep and memory.

The formations of the mind are in five categories: *Pramana*, *viparyaya*, *vikalpa*, *nidra*, *smritayaha*, right knowledge, wrong knowledge and opposite knowledge, absence of knowledge and past knowledge. Even sleep is a vritti. Sleep is a state of mind. Sleep is a formation of the mind. Memory is a formation of the mind. When you mistake a cow for a tiger, a snake for a rope, that is also a formation of the mind. When there is nothing but you see something, that is also a formation of the mind; it is imagination, hallucination or delusion. That is a formation of the mind; it is not beyond mind. All this collected and compiled together makes up the entire structure of yoga nidra.

Should we practise pranayama and meditation, without direct guidance and advice from a guru?

You can always practise everything without a guru but you must practise it as a chela. In order to learn swimming, you do not just jump into the ocean, a deep river or a deep swimming pool. You put a tube around you. With or without guru should not come into the picture. If you do not know swimming, you need a tube, otherwise you will drown. If you are so egotistic and foolish to say, "I do not care for all this, I will jump into the ocean and swim," one out of thousands might survive.

If you practise sadhana systematically in a peaceful, calm, natural and spontaneous way, without accusing your

mind, antagonizing your habits, penalizing yourself or creating problems for your body and soul, you can manage to practise yoga without a guru. But who is going to tell you what to practise when? You need someone to tell you not to do pranayama, but to practise only mantra. Thousands and thousands of people throughout the world belong to some guru or the other. They practise their mantra and they try to concentrate very hard. Nobody is telling them not to concentrate because they think mantra is an aid to concentration. Whereas mantra is an aid to purification, purification is an aid to concentration and concentration is the way to meditation, which is the way to samadhi. Nobody can say at which point you are able to control your mind and concentration begins or at what moment concentration stops and meditation begins. There is no line of demarcation at all. You are practising japa, *Om Namah Shivaya*, and then suddenly you are gone. That's what happens.

Pranayama definitely needs a guru. Meditation also needs a guru. Shiva first instructed Parvati in tantra. Out of 125,000 techniques of controlling the mind and concentrating the mind, not all techniques and practices are suitable for everybody. Some people can practise pranayama and will be benefited very much. When I was in Gangotri, I practised pranayama and I benefited. At the same time, I developed pleurisy, a patch on my left lung. I suffered for one year. I not only practised pranayama, I ignored things like constipation. I used to go to the toilet only once in three days. It was very cold in Gangotri, and of course, there was no bathroom. If I had to go somewhere out in the bushes, it was out of the question, because there used to be 5 to 10 feet of snow. I used to open my window and . . . I was so lazy about it. I used to just remain in the room, windows and doors closed.

It was so cold and I used to have my fireplace. The whole day I used to put the fuel wood and the room was full of smoke. I was not only doing pranayama; I was inhaling smoke. I was doing smoking pranayama. That was wrong. If I had been with my guru, he would have said, "If you cannot

manage to endure that cold, then do not do it. Why do you spoil your health?" In addition, I became a non-stop ganja smoker. Nine months I smoked, morning until night and night until morning. The whole day I was having chillum. It was so pleasant. The world did not exist. The agonies did not exist; moksha did not exist. I was all alone in the whole cosmos, smoking, doing pranayama and boiling potatoes adding salt, then making tea with jaggery. That was what I used to do all day.

If I had a proper instruction of a guru, he would have taken me onto that path gradually. On account of that experiment no doubt, I gained internally but I did lose a lot of things. Until that time, I had a photographic memory. One could deliver a lecture and I would type it afterwards verbatim. Even today I can do it but not with that efficiency. I lost that photographic memory. Swami Ranganathananda came to Rishikesh and delivered a lecture on the *Gita*. After he left, I typed it out and compared it with the tape recorder to see how it was. Even the place where he laughed, that too I could remember.

After the Gangotri experience, I lost that photographic memory completely. I am not able to regain it. I have done my best to get it; I am not able to get it. That is a great loss to a sannyasin. If I had a photographic memory, I could read the Vedas to you right now. It would have been so nice; I wouldn't have to struggle so hard. Guru is definitely very necessary on the spiritual path as well as on the ordinary path. Let us accept that as the truth.

What is the purpose of joining prana to apana, apana to prana and prana to prana?

In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Sri Krishna says (4:29):

*Apaane juhvati praanam praane'paanam tathaa'pare;
Praanaapaana gatee ruddhwaa praanaayaama paraayanaah.*

Others offer as sacrifice the outgoing breath in the incoming, and the incoming in the outgoing, restraining

the courses of the outgoing and the incoming breaths,
solely absorbed in the restraint of the breath.

These are not different stages and you can practise either of them. The purpose is to perform the yajna or sacrifice according to the *Bhagavad Gita*. I think there is no English equivalent to yajna. Let me explain what is a yajna. According to the *Bhagavad Gita*, there are many types of yajna.

According to the vedic tradition, yajnas are conducted by four priests. One is called Ritwick, one Hota, another Adhwaryu and one Brahma. These are the four important actors and creators of a yajna. Each one belonged to one Veda. Ritwick belongs to the *Rig Veda*. Adhwaryu belongs to the *Yajur Veda*. Hota belongs to the *Sama Veda*. Brahma belongs to the *Atharva Veda*. Three priests conduct the ceremonies: Ritwick, Hota and Adhwaryu. Brahma does not conduct the ceremony. He is considered to be the supervisor. If there is any mistake in the ceremony or in the chanting of mantras, he will immediately point it out. According to the Vedas, the chanting has to be perfect. All the vedic pronunciation and vedic hymns are not chanted like music, a statement or pronouncement. They have to be properly classified in three swaras: Udatta, Anudatta, Swarita. There are three different plays of sound, just like you have got sa re ga ma pa dha ni sa, the seven notes. You cannot chant it easily. Each and every letter is placed at a certain level of sound pronunciation.

Hota is the person who offers ablation with *Om Svaha*. This *svaha* is the offering of many things collected together, like barley and sesame. Then they prepare a Vedi and a fire pit or *yajna kunda*. *Kunda* means depth. That which is deep, is called the kunda, from where the word kundalini has come. *Kundalini* means one who lives in the depth, in the ditch. Then the fire is lit using two types of fire wood, *aam* and *palash*, mango and flame-of-the-forest. When the fire is ablaze, you chant a certain mantra. At the end of each mantra, you say *svaha*. Everything in the hand must be poured into the fire. This is called yajna.

The outcome of a yajna is prosperity, purity and health. These yajnas are performed in the days of the Vedas. People used to perform many yajnas, which are not known today like, Jyotishtoma, Somayajna or Pravargahoma. These days people know mostly Gayatri Yajna.

In the *Bhagavad Gita*, the concept is that you offer an oblation into the fire. The fire is going up and your oblation is going down. They meet at one point and the fire consumes the oblation. In the same way, you offer your prana into apana, you offer your apana into prana or you offer prana into prana. The *Gita* says this is yajna. By this oblation a fire is generated. This fire is the awakener of kundalini and knowledge, *buddhi*. Sri Krishna has spoken not only about this yajna. He says yajna can be performed in many ways. Austerity and charity is also yajna.

You give money or help other people, that is also yajna. You perform austerity, practise yoga, do swadhyaya, study scriptures or books, teach others good, spiritual values, that is also yajna. Sri Krishna says, “Arjuna, you can perform many types of yajna like the yoga yajna you are talking about in which one part of your energy is consumed by another part of your energy, and then is converted into higher energy.”



16

Satsang

21 October 1982

Swamiji, would you like to suggest some codes of conduct for us while teaching yoga or treating patients?

I think everybody has common sense. I do not like to preach a code of conduct, ethics or morality because I am not a moral preceptor. I know yoga and I teach yoga. I do not teach about God because that is not my training. I do not teach morality, ethics, whether you drink, do not drink or eat meat. Whether you are monogamous or polygamous, that is your business. You must think yourself as to what is good for you, your body, mind, emotions and finally for your community. The type of life which will be important for you to improve the quality of your willpower is left to you.

You must teach yoga to people first to improve the quality of their physical health. Then you should teach yoga so that they can have something to do every morning as a family. Otherwise you get up in the morning, keep on yawning, put on soap, shave, read the newspaper, listen to the radio and yell at the children; and that is how you are going to spend the whole day.

I think you should get up in the morning, have a bath, sit down quietly, do a few exercises and then your japa and meditation. Then you come out, shave, speak nicely with your wife, children and neighbours. Then you spend the whole day like that. At night also, before you sleep, put your head on the

pillow, do a little japa. Otherwise the moment you put your head on the pillow, you go into fantasies, worries or anxieties. Sometimes you spend half the night with tranquillizers, cigarettes, bidi and going to the bathroom. You must have a very scientific life that contributes to your health and the quality of your mind.

When you meet people, you should talk to them about yoga. Yoga is such a powerful system. Even if you teach yoga to people suffering from cancer and are about to die, it may not cure the cancer, but the moment they begin to practise yoga, they come closer to peace and proper understanding. They may die of cancer in agony or in peace and that makes a difference.

Yoga sometimes may not be able to change the quality of a disease. It may not be able to treat the disease but it will definitely create certain positive influences in your personality, way of thinking and philosophy. You must talk about yoga to anybody you come across in such a way that he is inspired.

When you teach yoga, you must be very careful that you do not destroy anybody's religious beliefs. Even in this twentieth century following the ways of science where matter has been exploded and redefined, where the concept of energy and consciousness have emerged, there are people who are very closed in their religious beliefs, and you have to be very careful. It is wrong to change anybody's religious belief. It is absolutely incorrect to say, 'Your religious beliefs are not scientific.'

Do not destroy the faith of people who are ignorant and attached to the objects of the world. Let them carry on. You should talk to them about yoga in such a way that they do not become sceptical about their own philosophy, which they had been endearing for forty years. You are destroying their entire structure. Whether he is a Christian, Hindu or Muslim, he has constructed that structure for thirty-five years, and today because of your intelligence, intellectual power and hypnotic personality, you are destroying it. That man will be without a support. This is happening throughout the world.

People have lost their identity. They do not know with what to identify because the base on which they are standing and with which they were identifying, is completely lost.

There are many Christians in India who are completely baseless. They do not know what to do, who they are, whether they should marry like a Hindu or whether they should marry like a European. If they want to marry like a European, there are problems. If they want to marry like a Hindu, they cannot because a Hindu marriage is a fantastic and elaborate marriage. The European marriage is also hopeless. It is like a contract marriage and nobody likes it. I would not like to have a contract with my wife. I want her to be with me as long as I live or as long as she lives because love has nothing to do with contract. It has something to do with the soul. When you marry, you marry for your lifetime. It does not matter. Let him be a wretch. Let him be a debauch, I do not care.

This is the Hindu way of thinking. She is my wife; it does not matter whether she is paralytic or a leper. She is my wife. In dharma, I have held her hand. If your child becomes paralytic are you going to throw him out? If your wife becomes a loafer, are you going to throw her out and divorce her? It is wrong. If you are going to throw her out, you are going to throw away another girl also, because maybe that is your nature and not her nature. So the Hindu way of thinking is different.

Christians have been fighting with each other. The same thing is happening everywhere. I have been to Indonesia. I have lived in Japan, in South East Asian countries and also in Greece. We should not destroy anyone's basic faith. That is the respect we have to give. That is the religion of Hinduism.

You should not try to convert anybody. You should not even try to change anybody; you should try to help. Even if a person does not believe in God or is a communist, do not teach him yoga in a way that we may lose communism. Communism is a balanced philosophy; it is good. It is necessary to create a balance. Communism is an idea; why do you destroy it? Capitalism is an idea. Sensuality is an idea.

Spirituality is an idea. Every idea is balancing each other. You should not destroy any idea. You should have respect as we have respect for poison in medicine.

Finally, yoga means Munger. I will tell you why. I know acupuncture, naturopathy and ayurveda. I have manufactured medicines for years together in Rishikesh, but I do not speak even a word about it. Just one thing – yoga because my guru has said yoga and he has not told me anything else.

The institution in Munger is devoted totally to the concept of yoga, but we are very careful people. For me institution is a base; it is not even the means, let alone the end. An institution is being created to facilitate the work of yoga, but to me yoga is also not the end, it is the means. The end is man – his inner light. His outer light is his relationships with object, with pain, with the day-to-day agonies and problems; the fights with his wife and children, the difficulties he is undergoing, his money, his life in sensuality – that is the depth of life which every man is subjected to in some way or the other, positively or negatively. That life is the end. Man has to evolve in the realm of consciousness, mind, buddhi and common sense, so that we may be able to have a little better community of man. Not much better, I am not very optimistic. I am also not a doomsday prophet, but I think a little better is always good.

Invitation

That is what you should keep in mind all the time when you talk about yoga. Munger has to be in your mind. Come to this place every now and then, and particularly please come in 1983, from 1 to 7 November. You are not going to see any posters or invitation cards. I have told all my disciples, no poster will be printed, no pamphlets will be issued and no handbills will be distributed. From first to seventh November is a meeting of all the yoga-minded people, not only from this continent, but from all over the world; people in thousands will come. It is going to be a festival and a meeting; it will not be a philosophical gathering.

I am not going to have symposiums on specific subjects. You can sing, talk or see people. If you do not want to come to the conference, you can do whatever you like, but it is one glimpse of the glory of yoga which Munger will provide.

It is also very important because I was born in 1923. I renounced in 1943. I started this yoga work in 1963 and I will hand over my charge in 1983 to people and let them look after it so that I can dedicate myself to the cosmic institution. I am not against this school or ashram which I created, but there has to be some purpose where I have to transcend the limitations of an institution to dedicate and devote myself to people and not belong to any institution. The work for all will begin from 1983 onwards. This is clear and it will be the period from 1 to 7 November when I will start entering into another reality.

Swamiji, is it true that spiritual practices lead to changes in the physical or chemical structure in the brain cells, thereby leading to different levels of consciousness? If so, why can't we achieve the same by means of drugs?

You can change the chemistry of the body through drugs and you can change the chemical structure of the body through the practice of yoga by controlling the mind, restructuring your philosophy, reacting favourably or in a particular fashion to emotions and passions. In this particular way, you are not only changing the chemistry of the body, but you are also changing the quality of the spirit. It is not enough to change just the chemical structure of the body and the brain cells, because there is something in us which is independent of the brain, mind, intellect and emotions that remains unaffected by drugs.

If you take drugs, you can have a chemical restructuring, I agree. You can have depression or elation, whatever it might be in your emotional plane, but there is an inner experience which is neither a mental nor an emotional experience. That experience does not at all depend on previous experiences which you had through your interaction

with life, objects, matters and thoughts. That experience is totally independent.

That experience is not subject to a process. It is there in all its completeness. You have to experience it. You do not have to improve that experience; you do not have to enlarge or evolve the quality of that experience. That *anubhava*, experience, is perfect, even in an ignorant man, a bandit, impure man, dirty man, great man or a saintly man. That experience is the same and not different. That experience cannot be touched and it cannot be had by drugs.

Drugs can go to a point where they can explode parts of your brain and they can take you away from that particular area of experience which is subjected to brain. Yogis, rishis and mahatmas have said that there is an experience which is beyond mind, body, senses, intellect and buddhi – *atma anubhuti*. For that, drugs are not enough. Even yoga practice is not enough.

The *Kathopanishad* has made many statements. The *Kathopanishad* is a beautiful Upanishad which is a dialogue between Yama and Nachiketa. *Yama* means Lord of Death. Nachiketa is a small boy. Nachiketa is asking Yama about transcendental knowledge and experience. Yama refuses to divulge or reveal what Nachiketa requested. Nachiketa insisted. Yama refused and put a lot of temptations before Nachiketa, 'My boy, I will give you many things. I will give you a lot of wealth, a lot of happiness, a long life and beautiful damsels. I will give you many things, but do not ask me about this transcendental experience because it cannot be given to you. It cannot be given to anybody.'

Then this dialogue continues. At one point Yama says that this experience is completely independent of every possible item of human existence. It is the same in all, not different. In order to obtain that knowledge, you will have to restructure your brain, philosophy, way of life, interactions with objects, your love and hate your life as a whole. The quality of your subjective and objective awareness must be changed. The gap between internal awareness and external awareness must be

reduced. This conflict has to be reduced. This is the beautiful dialogue which takes place between Yama and Nachiketa in the *Kathopanishad* regarding *Brahma vidya*, or transcendental experience.

In ancient days, the vedic rishis tried a drink; we have a lot of references about it in the Upanishads. That drink was known as soma. Teachers, gurus and their capable disciples were allowed to drink this soma. With this soma, they used to experience altered states of consciousness. They used to see thousands and thousands of suns, moons, stars, planets and oceans. They used to cross the barriers of time and space. They could see into the future and into the past. They could compose beautiful poetry and do much more.

Later the use and the effect of soma was challenged by some people. They said, 'When you take soma, you go high; you have a sort of exploding psychic experience, but soma cannot give you the experience of truth.' Truth here does not mean the ordinary truth. When we say truth, we mean that which is an eternal factor, is eternally existing, was, is and shall be, and which is not limited by time. That experience you cannot get with soma. Then some of the Brahmins, the intelligent people, thought about it and finally withdrew soma completely. Now you only have a reference to soma in the Vedas, the Upanishads, but we do not know exactly what it is.

In ayurveda, people have done a lot of research in India, Brazil and Africa; many Vaidyas have gone, but the exact creeper has not been found yet. What are the chemical components? What is the first stage of effect? What is the second stage of effect? All that has been described in the Vedas, in ayurvedic texts and in a part of the *Atharva Veda*.

Later when soma was withdrawn, these people, I do not know if they were really spiritual, developed another drink to develop the same sort of psychic experience and they called it baja. The people who used it were called Bajpayee Brahmins. *Payi* means those who drink; so they were the drinkers of baja. Somehow this particular drink did not become very popular.

One thing that continued to be very popular in the spiritual circle of India for thousands and thousands of years is ganja and dhatura, cannabis Indica and cannabis sativa.

The seeds of dhatura are added to ganja; you then take a chillum and have it. Then you destroy the normal passage of consciousness of 'I am thinking', 'I am going in', 'I am feeling bad'. This is the normal passage of consciousness. You start at one point and you keep on moving, but when you take dhatura that point is destroyed completely.

In the last 5,000 years or more, there are many more experiments which have been conducted regarding spiritual experience. When Buddha came 2508 years ago, he challenged the entire thing. He said, 'No soma, no ganja, no Upanishad, no metaphysics, nothing. Even God is not necessary. You just live this type of life and sit like this. Do not do this; do not do that and you will have that experience.' Thousands and thousands of people in this province of Bihar followed him like a hypnotized community.

When Lord Buddha used to move, it is said in *Venu Van*, about 100 miles south from here, 500 bhikshus used to move with him. Ajatsatru, Bimbisara, the father of Ashoka the Great, used to go almost every day to him. That was his influence and impact. He taught them *anapanasati*, something more or less like yoga nidra, relaxation, and vipasana, ajapa japa or antar mouna.

His contemporary was Lord Mahavir, one of the twenty-four prophets of the Jain system. Another contemporary of Lord Buddha was Patanjali, the author of the *Yoga Sutras*. There are four great people who were born during that period in India: Buddha the Siddhartha, Mahavir, Patanjali and Panini, the great grammarian of Sanskrit.

They threw a complete challenge to the established structure. As a result of that, the Nibhanga, Avadhoota, Naga and many other sects of fakir and abhanga completely disappeared. They used to remain naked, put on ashes, smoke chillums, sit down and put the langoti on thick ropes. They used the thick ropes for the accomplishment of

brahmacharya and all kinds of funny things. Buddha said, 'No! They are all external signs'. He said, 'Tune the sitar, neither too low nor too high'. If you tune your sitar too high, the strings will break; if you tune your sitar too low, it will become very absurd. That is called *madhyama marga*, the middle way.

Buddha's disciples became atheist. Buddha did not deny God, but he was silent about God; yet it was always misunderstood that Buddha was an atheist. His disciples construed it that way. It was necessary for Indian people who are deeply established in *astekyam*, theism, belief in God. It was very difficult for people to believe that you can live, think and do sadhana without God. I know that in India people can never think that anything in spiritual life can happen without God. So later it became very difficult for Hindus to eschew this philosophy which was propounded by the disciples of Buddha. Whether Buddha was theist or atheist is a matter to be decided later, but Buddha never denied God; he was quiet about it.

After Buddha came a line of acharyas like Shankaracharya, Ramanujacharya, Nimbarkacharya, Madhvacharya, Yamunacharya and Anandacharya from the north and south; they were talking on how to obtain that experience and started preaching, 'It is not enough if you meditate, practise ethics and morality to be a good, loving and compassionate man'. It is a purposeless philosophy because if you are good and do not believe in God, why should you be good at all.

When you want to be good, you are practising a type of morality, but that morality must have an object, a base, a philosophy. If I love you, what for? Just because I love you, no. Goodness, *ritam*, rules, *satyam*, truth, morality, ethics, virtue must be practised with a certain logical philosophy. Shankara said, 'Why do you meditate? Why do you want to attain nirvana?'

Then a new system came called bhakti yoga. This bhakti yoga movement started with great force in the ninth century in India and it continues unabated to such an extent that

during the period of Mirabai, Chaitanya, Sant Hari Das, Tukaram, Namdeo and many others, it attained enormous proportions that people used to become mad with ecstasy. Mirabai used to sing the name of Krishna to such an extent that she completely forgot all norms of society.

People, who are merely dealing with drugs, are passing through the elementary phase of experience. Later generations and seekers will have to discover another method. These discoveries have already been made in India for thousands and thousands of years. The different movements are nothing but the different philosophies and ways of life based on different stages of that one experience. Brain cells can be influenced by drugs, but it is better to maintain tranquillity and inner experience, even if it is mental without any drugs. Drugs may give you composure, tranquillity, but in the course of time, they will affect your genetics. They will affect your brain cells and tissues. Maybe in the course of time you may lose some of your brain faculties. You may find LSD, ganja, bhang, heroin to be wonderful, but I don't think they are.

What would the experience of a dying man be?

It is different according to the level of consciousness. For those who are attached to the mundane things, death is very painful. They do not want to die. For those who have realized that death is a point from which they can progress and get better opportunities, death is a matter of happiness. For those who have been facing a lot of problems and have not been able to cope with them, death is a very good sleep for they can just forget about them.

There are two types of beliefs which are not merely confined to religions but more to individuals. One is that after death, there is no survival of consciousness, so death is the final chapter of man's pilgrimage. Another belief is that after death consciousness survives, and therefore death is not the last chapter of life; it is just one chapter. For the first category of people, death is painful, but not for those who believe they will continue to survive.

At the time of death, most people enter into a realm of experience. Many people have been interviewed about their experience and have been put on record about who died and how they came back to life once again. The investigating scientists have worked on it.

At the time of death when the pranas are withdrawn and the soul or spirit leaves the body, the individual enters into a state of experiences which are more or less very common. They are not different. One experience is that they enter into a dark realm where they do not have any idea of direction out of fear. They feel that they are moving onward at a tremendous speed and do not know which way they are going. That is one type of experience. The *Ishavasya Upanishad* has made a passing reference in Mantra 9: *Andham tamah pravishanti* – they enter into utter darkness.

Another type of experience, which most people have after the pranas are withdrawn, is the spirit leaves the body and the person is declared clinically dead. After that, he enters into the realm of light, enlightenment, effulgence everywhere. In that area of light, he does not see many objects, but he feels that some invisible direction is there and he is unconsciously, unknowingly following that direction. In the *Bhagavad Gita* it is said (8:24):

*Agni jyotirahah shuklah shanmaasaa uttaraayanam;
Tatra prayaataa gacchanti brahma brahmavido janaah.*

Fire, light, daytime, the bright fortnight, the six months of the northern path of the sun (northern solstice) – departing then (by these), men who know Brahman go to Brahman.

People who know or who have known the Absolute, Great or Supreme reality, when they leave the body, first have the experience of dawn, then white light, and the direction is northward. This is the experience of people who are the knowers of Brahman. There is a statement in the *Bhagavad Gita* (8:25):

*Dhoomo raatristathaa krishnah shanmaasaa dakshinaayanam;
Tatra chaandramasam jyotir yogee praapya nivartate.*

Attaining to the lunar light by smoke, night time, the dark fortnight or the six months of the southern path of the sun (the southern solstice), the yogi returns.

For people who have been living a spiritual life, but have not been able to complete and accomplish it, they first enter into a smoky experience when they die. Then they have the experience of a dark night, then of black colour, *krishnaha*, not the white colour. The direction is southwards. They feel that they are going down and down and down. Whereas in the previous death, people had the experience that they were going up and up and up. That is how north and south is understood in the realms of spiritual life. The people we are talking about now finally go to an area where there is *chandramasam jyotir*, dim, feeble moonlight, as if it were the second or third day of the dark fortnight. After entering into that realm, they come back again into a mother's womb. *Nivartaka* means about turn, returning (8:26):

*Shuklakraishne gatee hyete jagatah shaashwate mate;
Ekayaa yaatyanaavrittim anyayaa'vartate punah.*

The bright and the dark paths of the world are verily thought to be eternal; by the one (the bright path) a person goes not to return again, and by the other (the dark path) he returns.

This is the third statement, white and black or *krishna*. These are *gatis*. *Gati* means movements and experience of movements, experience of the mind, experience of consciousness or experience of the spirit. *Shukla* means white. *Krishna* means black. White light and black darkness are the two paths or the two experiences for the people who are born into this body and this world. This experience is not confined to one type or race of people; it is for all. Whether you are a Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Zoroastrian, Communist or an

atheist, it does not matter. The experience is the same for all, *shashwate mate* – thought to be eternal.

The conclusion is that if you go through one path, you do not come back. If you go through another path, you come back. Here coming back means reincarnation. You are born again and not coming back means becoming one with the cosmic spirit – *ekayaa yaatyanaavrittim anyayaa'vartate punah*.

There are many categories, not just one category. Not only bad people come back, but also good people come back. Good and bad in spiritual language is called *papa* and *punya*, sin and virtue. The people who do good deeds come back because they have a residue of karma. Even if they want to accomplish good acts, accomplish virtue or practise dharma, it is also desire and the potential in their consciousness, so they have to come back.

How do they come back? Those who have been sincerely practising yoga or spiritual life in their previous birth, but have not been able to accomplish perfectly and are somewhere in the process and on the way when they die; they are known as *yogabhrashta*, incomplete yoga practitioners. *Bhrashta* means break where yoga practices were broken. Just as you go to a school and suddenly your studies are interrupted; the yoga practices are also interrupted. This interruption can take place at five levels – the level of annamaya kosha when you are completely gross, pranamaya kosha, manomaya kosha, vijñanamaya kosha and anandamaya kosha.

These five koshas denote the state of the evolution of a yogi. Even if you are practising kriya yoga, japa yoga, any kind of yoga, your evolution need not be very high. You may be a yoga practitioner, but your soul may be at a grosser level on account of the progress of consciousness. When you are practising yoga at the annamaya kosha level, in the next life you will be born in pranamaya kosha.

In short, one category of people comes back; another category of people does not come back. One experience is of light and the other experience is of darkness. Yogis, ordinary people, virtuous, compassionate, generous people, dacoits,

bandits, all types of people, millions and millions are born in the next body according to their previous accomplishments.

What is Satya Yuga and why is this period called Kali Yuga?

According to ancient tradition, the span of this planet, this earth and its people is divided into four. The first division is called Satya Yuga which has a duration of 432,000 years. The next cycle is called Treta Yuga, twice the length, so 864,000 years. The third cycle is known as Dwapara Yuga, twice as long as Treta Yuga. The fourth one is Kali Yuga, the present one, which is twice the age of Dwapara, which roughly comes to about 3 million or maximum 4 million years out of which 5,060 years have passed.

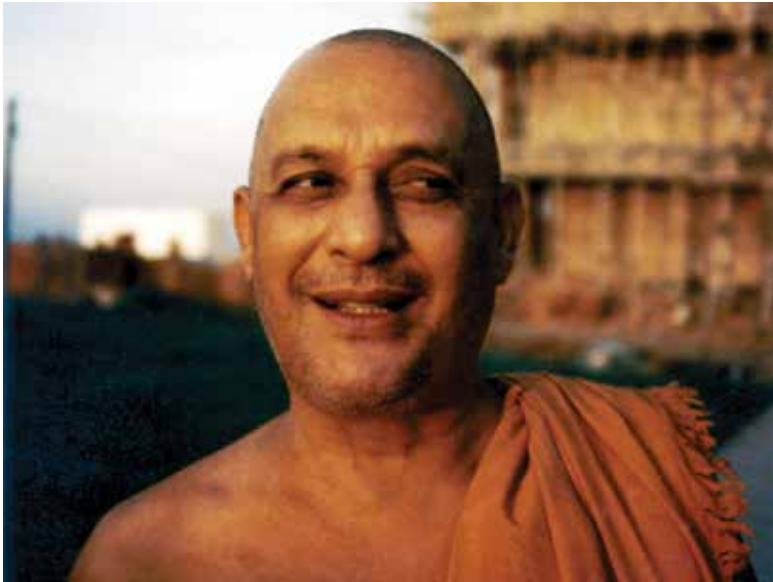
Hindus keep a very clean record of this. Not the government, but every day in the temple when pooja is performed the worshipper says, 'Today, at this particular cycle or *manvantara*, in this particular part of the country, on the 6th day of the moon or 5th day of the moon and 2,562 years after Buddha, 5,066 years after Krishna, one million and 30 years after the birth of Rama.' Now they have added Gandhi also, so they say, so many years after the death of Gandhi, I, Swami Satyananda, in the temple of Krishna, today at this time offer this worship for the fulfilment of the following wishes.' So this calendar cannot be wrong. There could be some mistakes, here and there, but they cannot be completely wrong.

Satya Yuga, Treta Yuga, Dwapara Yuga and Kali Yuga are considered to be four cycles. When these four yugas are repeated four times, that is called a *Chatur Yuga*. One Chatur Yuga is one day of Brahma. When you have finished millions and millions of years, that is only 24 hours of Brahma. I can believe it, yet it is very hard to explain the relationship of time. In Satya Yuga, man was very innocent. His needs were few and his views about God were not sophisticated. His morality, social ethics and philosophy was without taboos and complexes. He behaved in a very natural way.

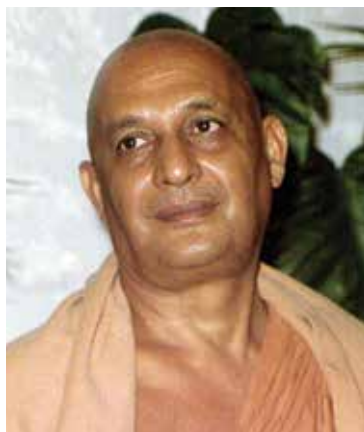
By the time Treta Yuga came, man became a bit shrewd and full of desires. The instinct of exploitation entered. By

the time it came to Dwapara, he became very crooked, selfish and violent. For the sake of his wife, property and kingdom, he would kill anyone. In Kali Yuga, you can even kill a man if he has stolen your watch. You can kill a man if you hear from somebody that he has been talking against you. You can do anything today. That is how the whole mental structure has been changing throughout the four ages.

In the four ages, there were many *sadhanas*, spiritual practices, which were propounded. In Kali Yuga, the saints say, bhakti is the easiest way. In Dwapara Yuga, dharma was the important way. In Treta Yuga, *tapasya* or austerity was the greatest way. In Satya Yuga, it was the perfect life. So there are many more things not only yugas. Hindus believe in the manvantara. Manvantara is a cycle which controls many yugas. Manu is supposed to be the in-charge of that manvantara. All the Puranas like the *Srimad Bhagvat*, *Skanda Purana*, *Vishnu Purana* and *Shiva Purana* have details. At the end of the *Srimad Bhagvat* and the *Mahabharata*, you can find all the details of manvantara.



Swami Satyananda was born in Almora (Uttaranchal) in 1923. Drawn to spiritual life from an early age, he left home at the age of eighteen, and in 1943 surrendered himself to Swami Sivananda in Rishikesh who initiated him into Dashnami sannyasa in 1947. He served his guru for twelve years, perfecting every aspect of spiritual life. Thereafter, he travelled throughout the Indian subcontinent as a wandering ascetic.



Realizing the need of the times as scientific rendition of the ancient system of yoga, he founded the International Yoga Fellowship in 1956 and the Bihar School of Yoga in 1963. During the next twenty years, Swami Satyananda hoisted the flag of yoga in every corner of the world, consolidated BSY into a foremost institution of yoga, and authored over eighty major texts on yoga, tantra and spiritual life.

‘Satyananda Yoga’ became a tradition which combines classical knowledge with experiential understanding and a modern outlook. In 1984 he founded the Yoga Research Foundation to synchronize scientific research and yoga, and Sivananda Math to assist the underprivileged. In 1988, at the peak of his achievements, he renounced everything and adopted kshetra sannyasa, living as a paramahansa ascetic. In 1989 Rikhia was revealed to him, where he came to live and performed higher vedic sadhanas in seclusion. Receiving the command to provide for his neighbours in 1991, he allowed the ashram to help the underprivileged villages in the region. From 1995 onwards, he performed a twelve-year Rajasooya Yajna with the sankalpa of peace, plenty and prosperity for all, and in 2007 he announced the establishment of Rikhiapeeth with its mandate to ‘serve, love, give’.

Swami Satyananda attained mahasamadhi, a yogic accomplishment of discarding the body at will to become one with the universal consciousness, in 2009, in the presence of his disciples.



The satsangs of a realized master are a gift that inspires and blesses all who receive his wisdom and grace. From the 1960s to the 1980s Swami Satyananda's extensive international touring yielded a wealth of spiritual teachings spanning a vast range of subjects. Renowned for their depth of insight, clarity and compassion, the eternal truths revealed in these satsangs are presented in this comprehensive set of volumes *Teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati*, for the upliftment of seekers everywhere.

Teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati, Volume X is a compilation of talks, question and answer sessions given by Swami Satyananda at Ganga Darshan Vishwa Yogapeeth in 1982. Mainly during the Kriya Yoga course for a group of Italian aspirants and teacher training courses, he answered questions in a direct and simple manner, filled with deep knowledge and wisdom. The stories from his personal experiences inspire seekers to maintain their own effort as they embark on the spiritual path.



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