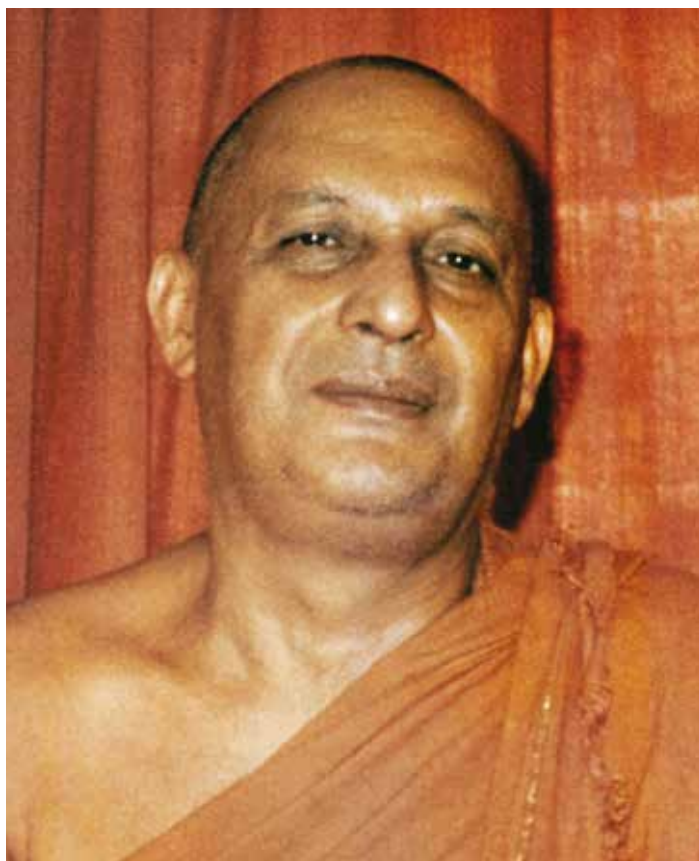


Volume XI

Teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

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Swami Satyananda
Saraswati
Volume XI



SWAMI SATYANANDA SARASWATI
1923~2023
CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

Teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Volume XI

*A compilation of talks and satsangs
given by Swami Satyananda Saraswati
at Ganga Darshan Vishwa Yogapeeth in 1985.*



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

Teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati, Volume XI

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

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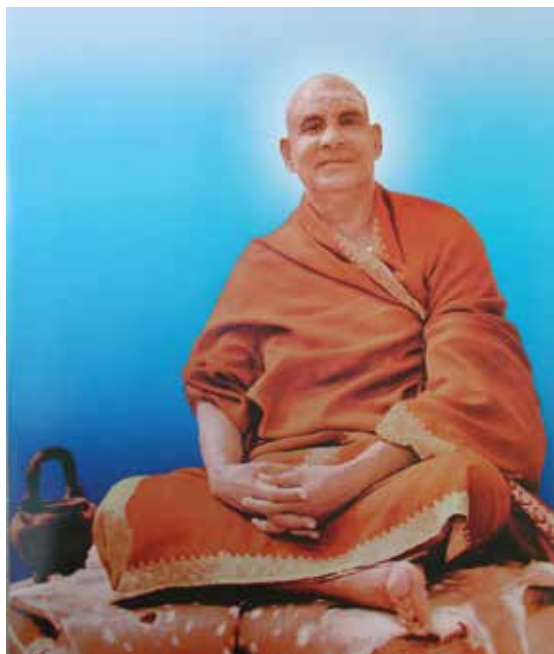
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Dedication

*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

Ashram Life and Yoga

10 October 1985

How can one benefit from ashram life and what kind of life do you expect people to lead at Ganga Darshan?

The ashram culture is a very ancient one. The problems that our society faces today were also experienced by our ancestors many thousands of years ago. Of course, today we say the world has sunk very low – people are thieving, corrupt and dishonest but this has always been so right from the dawn of creation. The law keepers have always found it very difficult to manage the problems of human society, and thus developed various schemes in order to contain the rajasic and tamasic nature of man.

Ashram culture has evolved in this country thousands of years ago. These ashrams were managed by rishis and munis who were people of perception and vision. They were more concerned with humanity than with particular political, social or economic systems. Realizing that unless the tamasic nature of man was contained, it would not be possible to evolve an ideal society which mankind has been dreaming of all along.

As long as these ashrams were intact and their administrators were unselfish and magnanimous, everything went well and this country produced intellectual, spiritual, political, military and philosophical stalwarts. Literature bears evidence, where even medical books on subjects like ayurveda by Shushra, Dhanwantari, Charak and Madhav

were written in excellent poetic form, not just prose. Therefore, ashram culture is not simply a monastic culture. Sannyasins are not monks. The word 'monk' comes from the word 'mono' but sannyasa does not mean that. It means those people who have dedicated themselves for a particular cause and not just exist for the selfish pursuits of family, children, wives or property. It is these people who have to look after the ashrams. *Shram* means labour and to work hard; it is from that word, ashram has been developed – a place where you have to work hard. You have to work hard on both fronts. On the external front, you have to work hard in the kitchen, garden, goshala, factory and so on. At the same time, you have to work on the internal, spiritual front. Human beings face problems on both fronts – the external challenges of money, business, marriage, death and management of the family. These, in turn, create anxiety, anguish, depression, difficulties and worries which everybody is trying to solve.

However, these were not the only difficulties of which our ancestors were aware of. They were also aware of the mind – emotions and passions – and the mental problems which come to you by birth, inheritance, from society and through a process of conditioning. If you do not solve those mental problems, then you either face disasters or do not progress in your life at all.

A man who has no control over the mind cannot control his everyday external circumstances. This mental control is not a type of suppression or injustice to the mind. The mind has to be educated; it has to be carefully enlightened. That is the role of ashram life and its social culture.

You cannot grasp the concept of *akarta*, or non-doership, just by the process of thinking but by the process of living. Here, most of the swamis are totally involved in a particular area of work. Swami Niranjan carries the load of the ashram, but if he has to go to Calcutta, Bombay or America for ten or fifteen days, he just goes with a free mind; he does not carry any problems with him because he has no expectations.

You should try to become part of the rhythm of ashram life, work hard physically with dedicated responsibility, creative intelligence, technical abilities, skills and knowledge which you possess as a businessman, teacher, professor, carpenter, agriculturist or unskilled labourer. You work in the ashram as your family, home or institution – in the same spirit as if the people in the ashram are your kith and kin. After the duration of your stay, you just close the file and move out. Then take the same attitude of akarta to your family, wife and children, work, money and profession. This is the message of the ashram.

Can you speak on the traditional aspect of karma yoga related to daily life?

You should not speak about yoga exclusively in terms of karma yoga, bhakti yoga, raja yoga, jnana yoga or any other yoga. There is just one yoga and all others are academic classifications. Therefore, traditionally, karma, upasana and dhyana are the three important forces within man which must undertake with a well concerted effort in order to evolve the consciousness of an individual.

The disciple practised bhakti for his guru while also studying the Vedas and shastras. Exactly in the same way, karma, bhakti and dhyana must be practised together, not to the exclusion of each other. In ancient days, Lord Krishna went to the ashram of Sandipani to collect *samidha*, fire wood, for the fire sacrifice. We have the legend of Sudama and Krishna and stories of Uddylaka and Arumi. What did the disciple in the ancient times do? He would collect *samidha* for the sacrifice, work in the household of the guru along with others and, at the same time, practise a disciplined life.

Can you speak on the traditional aspect of jnana yoga related to daily life?

Jnana yoga is a form of discrimination in relation to your real nature. When you work in the world and live in the world, many times you forget who you are. You have categories or definitions about yourself. Sometimes you are a male, a

female, a businessman, an officer, a professor, a Brahmin, a vaishya, a shudra, a Christian or a Hindu. These are superimposed differentiating labels which you have put on your personality. All the time you associate and identify yourself with these levels of your existence.

What should happen in the process of jnana yoga is that an effective process of discrimination or dis-identification must take place where you try to understand who you really are. This is important to be able to discover the nucleus of your own existence. Our problems in day-to-day life exist because we have lost awareness of ourselves.

This is the basic philosophy of jnana yoga – that you are not this body which is only a vehicle like a motor car; you are not the indriyas, senses, mind or emotions, not a professor or businessman, a male or female, neither a Christian, Hindu or Muslim. You are the immortal self – *atman*, *avinashi atma*, the indestructible soul. The practice of jnana yoga in the traditional form should be aimed to discover your real self.

Can you speak on the traditional aspects of bhakti yoga related to daily life?

Bhakti means love, but this love contains an important element called *shraddha*, faith; love with *shraddha* is *bhakti*. You may love your guru, disciple, children, brother, sister or wife. It can be just pure love or it can be love with *shraddha*. When love is mixed and synthesized with *shraddha*, it becomes *bhakti*.

What is the need of *bhakti*? The first and foremost thing you must remember is that man has infinite love in him. He wants to love someone and he does; he loves his wife and children, but still he finds that he can love much more. Often, he gets disappointment from his family. Therefore, he begins to love God, a spiritual being, his guru or some higher objects. When he begins to love higher objects he has peace of mind because when you love without *shraddha* there is agitation, disturbance and a lot of frustration, but when you love with *shraddha* there is contentment.

Can you speak on the traditional aspect of raja yoga related to daily life?

Raja yoga is concerned with discipline. You are aware of the importance of discipline in the structure of your family life and society. If you lack discipline, you have a lot of problems. Therefore, the practices of raja yoga in the form of yama, niyama and other levels of ashtanga yoga are necessary to evolve mentally in a disciplined way.

All the elements in raja yoga concern discipline, in different stages and in relation to the human body and mind. These elements, whether they are abstinence from untruth, violence or anarchical sexual relationships, are necessary not only for self-realization, but for other matters as well.

If you have cough, cold, fever or pain, there is also an element in your body called the immune system that helps you to recover. Those with a weak immune system take time to recover, but those with a strong one get well very soon, even without medication. You do not have to take any medicine; you need it only in order to help you when your immune system has run down.

If you have no immune system, it is like keeping your doors wide open with all kinds of your valuable ornaments on the table. Everything will be lost in a few days. In the same way, your body is exposed to death. Why? Because you have violated that very system of discipline which is also a law of nature.

Modern scientists are talking about the laws of nature. They always talk of chemistry, physics, electronics and other laws of nature, but the laws of nature do not merely belong to matter. They also belong to the field of energy, intelligence and consciousness. After all, this physical body, mind and emotions are also subject to certain laws. Therefore, there should be some discipline and that is known as raja yoga.

Raja yoga has a very important place in our society. For instance, in Bombay, people go to bed at 2.00 am and wake up at 9.00 am. Is this good for health? No, definitely not. The laws of nature are fixed and definite, and it is on the basis of these laws that electronics, geography and other sciences

have formed their natural laws. These natural rules are like those of mathematics and scientists have been able to work great miracles using them.

What happens when two chemicals are combined or united? There is a reaction and then a third element is born. Similarly, if your mind is mixed with hatred, do you think nothing will happen? This is only an example. You do not have to go in depth to understand the fact that the laws of nature govern not only matter but everything.

It is said in the *Bhagavad Gita* that nature is both within and beyond. The laws of nature do not exist only in chemistry, physics, electronics or nuclear science – everything in the world is guided by a cosmic law of nature. There is permutation and combination.

According to raja yoga, a reaction takes place when an emotion mixes with the mind. It does not matter whether that emotion concerns violence or non-violence, truth or lie, celibacy or passion, renunciation or self-control. You cannot say that if you speak the truth nothing happens. I am not saying that this is something metaphysical or psychological I am speaking about the laws of nature.

In our childhood, we are taught that a reaction takes place when certain quantities of chemicals are united. Similarly, when a part of violence and a part of the mind meet, there is a reaction. There has to be a reaction. This is an aspect which we have not assessed so far.

Today, most scientific experiments are being carried out on matter and not on the mind. They have been carried out on the mind only in psychology. Experiments are done under the heading of a 'research program' – electroencephalogram, alpha, beta, theta and delta waves which are the reactions of matter and the brain. They have not yet got to the reactions of mind, to the reactions of emotions, passions, ambition or depression.

What takes place within the mind? It happens every day in your own house; you do not need to go searching for such an event to carry out your experiment. In science

and psychology, scientists have measured these reactions by machines and amplitude. A reaction takes place when you speak bitterly, another when you speak sweetly, and if you speak politely a third reaction takes place. If you speak the truth with a pure heart, a different reaction takes place. When a boy is attracted towards a girl, another reaction takes place. Thus mind and its association with various emotions result in varied reactions. This reaction cannot be understood by exposing a human being to the machines. You can see the play of this reaction in your family life every day. This is the subject matter of raja yoga.

Raja yoga tells us that it is important to bring the mind under proper control so that it does not clash with emotions. If you have fine emotions like *karuna* or compassion, charity, mercy, love, forgiveness, humility, the mind has no problem – the reactions are very mild. However, if you have tamasic emotions, anxiety, worry and neuroses, then you must make your mind so strong that when the reaction takes place, it is not the emotion which will create a reaction but it is the mind which will create the reaction.

Can you speak on the difference between children brought up in ordinary society and children brought up in an ashram environment?

I did not marry because I did not want children, but I think that those who have children must know that their children do not belong to them. They are not your children; you cannot claim them either through nationality, religion or the family system. You are only their caretakers or what I would call babysitters! You have no claim on your children; you should not expect anything from them. You just give them good food, whatever you can provide; good games, as much as you can, and no studies – they can study only if they like. If at all you want them to study, you give them studies in such a way that they feel as if they are playing.

We have one fixed rule for children in our ashram, we let them do whatever they want, whenever they want. If they

pluck guavas, we let them; they work, sleep and play of their own free will.

Their life is important to the nation. The nation is a necessity, but not for all; religion is a necessity, but not for all. The truth is within me and I am 'I'. You think the way you choose, but I do not wish to think like you. You stick to your way of thinking, but I want to stay in the ashram of my guru for I want to have my own way of thinking. I shall do whatever I deem fit.

Every person and child should have a personality of his own and the development or evolution of this personality can only take place in an atmosphere of independence.

Children should be exposed to the world right in the middle of the road; boys and girls should not be protected from childhood. If they are not exposed, they would not progress and will develop fear in their minds. Remember dignity and fear are two different expressions or faculties of the mind. Children will have to be exposed – 'this is bad, or that is bad', this is for us. Do not say 'that boy or that girl is bad' or 'do not go to these persons'. Let them go to those places and persons and encourage them to see what happens. Let them be exposed to the situation. When exposed to the natural situations of life, children are destined to become intelligent. No one will succeed in cheating them. Do you get the point?

No boy will dare to tease such a girl; no boy of this type will dare say unnecessary, rude things to anyone. You should make your children daring, and this is precisely the reason why they should be exposed to the atmosphere of today's society.

What is the relationship between parents and children? Kahlil Gibran has written a beautiful poem on children in his book *The Prophet*. He has written exactly what I am saying. The children are born of you but are neither yours nor you; you are to play the part of a babysitter only. But you are not the creator of children. You want to make your child identical to you, but the child should differ from you. If you are a

householder, let him become a sannyasin. If I am a thief, he should become something else.

Children have a very high level of frequency. They can communicate with each other without talking or seeing. There is a type of frequency which children have up to the age of seven. If you leave children free, they can communicate. Dolphins are able to communicate on a certain high level brain frequency. It is the same with children.

How can you say that your children should follow you? How do you dare say that? You are an idiot! Do you want all your children to become idiots? You are unsuccessful; how can you say your children should be successful? You should say, "Children, don't be me! Go your own way."

The children in the ashram and the children outside the ashram should be given an atmosphere of fearlessness and my child should be able to feel that he can bring his girlfriend here in this room and I will not say anything. Such a father is a strong father and such a child is a strong child.



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Satsang

19 November 1985

Swamiji, could you please talk about anger?

I have never controlled my anger, never tried to; I never repented for it, nor did I have any guilt about it, nor did I find any remedy, nor did I search for any. I know one thing. Because of my anger, all my nervous energies have been pushed to one side and on all other sides I have had no problems – greed and other things have never struck the mind, just anger.

Religions do not like these things. If you have anger, passions, hatred or jealousy, all the preachers and the teachers say, ‘Do not have jealousy. Be above hatred and do not harm or injure anyone.’ You should have goodness and virtue. I think by this process you are delaying your evolution. You are holding back your emotions which need to come out. Even though the other members of the family are not happy when you get angry, it is still necessary. In the life of a householder, when you get angry you are disturbing your husband, children or wife. When you are jealous and when you hate, you are making yourself unhappy, unpopular and spoiling your mind. From that point of view, it is definitely not good to get angry.

So, what should one do? In my opinion, all these natural forces must be channelled and sublimated. There are different methods of doing that, not just one. This

channelling takes place by involving yourself in some sort of dedicated service, artistic expression or through art where you can project your hatred, passion and frustration. After all, what do artists do? They only spill their nature in the form of ink and paint. What do poets write? They are only spilling themselves in the form of black and white.

Whether it is poetry, art or service, it is one way through which you can channel your natural emotions. Some sort of channelling has to take place so that you do not suppress your natural instincts. If you suppress your natural instincts because your child, your husband, wife or somebody is getting affected, you will face problems either in your nature, physiological system or your behaviour. If you constantly suppress your natural instincts and emotions, some disease may also develop a respiratory disease like asthma. Cancer may also develop because of suppression. Many physical diseases are expressions of your suppressed natural instincts. So, suppression is not good. Therefore, you will have to do two things at the same time. First of all, you have to ease and simplify the religious views on these natural instincts and ultimately change them.

In order to change those religious views, you have to depend on a different category of teachers because in our century, no teachers are out to tell you the truth.

Christ had a lot of trouble, but today, he is the king. There are billions of Christians, Hindus and others who consider him to be God incarnate or son of God. But just think of Christ nineteen hundred years ago living in Jerusalem and Bethlehem. He moved around with that rotten cloth, walking barefoot with people running after him, little coolies, ordinary workers and carpenters, mostly poor people. Meanwhile, the rich people were saying, 'He is a traitor to the political system! He is saying on Friday you should not do that; on Sunday you should not do that; on Sabbath days you should not eat.' This is what people thought about him.

Christ was charged not on any other account but as a threat to religion and authority. So he was killed. Christ

could not change their religious views. He spoke certain truths which people did not accept; and, therefore, even after his death when his disciples began to preach, they did not change the religious views but only the religious name.

What you are asking is very difficult and what I am saying is not that easy. I won't say that one should get angry because I had a lot of problems with my anger here in Munger. The governor at that time wanted to see me. I said, 'I do not want to see him. Why should I?' I stayed away from his secretary. I am not interested and even now I say the same thing.

The present governor sent me a message saying he wanted to meet me. I said, 'He can come as an ordinary man, not as a governor.' I am not interested in collector, commissioner, governor or income tax official. They can approach me as a swami because that's who I am. Now my speech has become a little more refined, but in those days it was so foul! I said, 'Who cares for that governor! He is an ordinary man, let him come like that!'

But Swamiji, is anger spontaneous?

Now the point is, how much should we suppress? Anger is spontaneous. We do not plan it, but there are many other things like our sex instinct which we are asked to suppress. Our sex instinct is so natural, compelling and necessary. Yet what has society done? They have married you to a man and told you to look after yourself. That is one way they have suggested of dealing with this instinct. Then why should we not create an institution for people who get angry just like they have created the institution of marriage to deal with the problems of sex. At least the majority of people, except for a few rowdies, can manage their sex instincts within the institution of marriage.

In India in the olden days, there was the tradition of *kopa bhavan*, anger room, in every house. When you were angry, you would go there to deal with your anger. You had to do this only in that room, not in the kitchen or drawing room, not while you were driving the car or having a hot cup of tea.

Were you supposed to take along the person with whom you were annoyed?

No, only yourself. What did Kaikeyi do? When she was angry after the injection of Mantara, she went into the kopa bhavan and loosened her hair, threw away all her nice clothes and just lay down. When Dasharatha came to know about it, he went there and said, 'What is the matter with you?' She said, 'I want my son to be the successor to the throne and the son of Kaushalya to be exiled.' He said, 'Fine, I cannot accept it, but I will do it.' Then she came out of kopa bhavan.

And if you want to scold someone?

You will scold the person only in that room. For example, you will scold your husband in that room saying, 'You are a rascal, I'll kill you! I do not want to stay with you. I am going to leave you. Give me a divorce certificate!' Say whatever you like there.

You have to deal with these things scientifically so that you do not injure anybody, not even yourself. They are like the scales of a serpent, part of your life and passions. They will be with you for a number of years; you have to live with them in a very cordial way. Your natural tendencies should also understand that you are dealing with them in a very civilized way, not in a savage way.

I will tell you a story. My father was an Arya Samajist, a strong follower of Swadharmaji. At that time, I was studying in a convent in Nainital. He wanted me to study in a brahmacharya ashram, gurukul. In India, we have brahmacharya ashrams and gurukuls run along traditional Indian ways. The students wear dhotis and have chutiyas, amongst other things. Nobody objected in the family so I was put there for a few days. I said, 'I will see what it's like.' But it was so difficult. The teacher used to ask me to count backwards from 100, 99, 98, 97, 96, 95 . . . up to one, saying it would make my anger go away. That is the way they used to teach. They also asked me to drink water when I got angry but it did not work at all. Of course, I did not continue with the brahmacharya ashram.

I used to learn Sanskrit in one of the Sanskrit schools. The children would get drowsy as the classes were held at night. They used to tie our tuft, chutiya, tightly to help us memorize the shastras. I had to keep my chutiya, my God! Otherwise my grandparents and everybody would get disturbed. So, the panditji used to tie there our tuft and we had to repeat the verses after the panditji.

Swamiji, a householder has to maintain his social reputation. Suppose he does not or cannot wake up easily. How can he do his sadhana or manage to work hard?

Sometimes sadhana is necessary, but up to a certain level. Some people consider worship, meditation, karma or seva as sadhana; some even consider suffering as sadhana and some the sensual pleasures. So, what is the interpretation of sadhana?

You cannot proceed with sadhana unless you are familiar with your mind. Are *kama*, *krodha*, *lobha*, *moha*, *mada* and *matsarya*, passion, anger greed, attachments, pride and jealousy not the characteristics of the mind? If you have no experience of these, how will you be able to discriminate between the various forms of maya? People say anger is no good, but have they experienced it? They all say, 'Do not desire, desires are bad!' But have they experienced them? All preachers of religion talk in this way and that's why you and I repeat it.

Until and unless you have experienced the different characteristics or patterns of the mind, you have absolutely no right to say this or that is bad. You cannot say anger, desire and greed are bad because you do not know them, nor did you have to suffer on their account. Has anger caused you some harm, or has desire caused you unhappiness or frustration or have you received some sort of knowledge?

You cannot renounce anything you consider insignificant with which you have no experience. You get knocks and blows in your daily battle of life on account of your anger, passion, greed, ego or some other experience – that is why the life of

a householder is known as grihastha ashram. It is an ashram, a place where you are making certain efforts in order to clear the passage for self-realization.

Grihastha ashram is a way to self-knowledge of which kama, krodha and the others are the necessary components which keep harassing you; you try to overcome them and at the same time you try to enjoy them. Every effort to enjoy them results in bitter experiences and you say, 'This is the last time; I won't have it anymore!' But the next time you become aware of this fact is when you find yourself in the same situation once again. You may get angry fifty times and still think it is bad or harmful, makes you restless and causes family relationships to deteriorate, but until you realize it, this will continue. The same with passions, greed and ego – you need to realize them too. You will have to realize that these things are not able to give you either peace or happiness in life, only then will you be able to quit them. Otherwise it is very difficult to leave these experiences. To renounce passion is very difficult.

Therefore, every man should spend his life with religious love. Fulfil your wishes and desires but only within the framework of dharma. If you go beyond the limits of religion, you will spill your inner rubbish. If one by one, all of us go on spilling our rubbish beyond the framework of virtue then what will become of our society? This is exactly the situation which is faced by society today. Everything can be achieved within the framework of virtue.

What is God?

This is an impossible question! Up till now has anyone been able to describe God? Even the Vedas, after describing him, say '*Neti, neti,*' 'Not this, not this.' Ishwara or God is not a topic of conversation neither can anything be said about him nor can he be subjected to the intellect.

But there is one thing. When one has the experience of Ishwara or when Ishwara awakens within, one experiences nothing but that and forgets oneself. I, you and he – the first person, second person and the third person – all three

are destroyed. ‘*Aham tvam idam*’, nothing remains; only the experience remains, so the Vedas say. As Kabir wrote, ‘When I existed Hari did not and now that Hari exists I do not.’

What is the meaning of yoga?

This is a question which has been answered by many of the saints – Sri Aurobindo, Swami Vivekananda or Swami Sivananda – and also in the *Gita*. There are four types of yogas based on the general human temperament: dynamic temperament – karma yoga, emotional temperament – bhakti yoga, psychic temperament – raja yoga, and rational temperament – jnana yoga.

In the Vedas they said three – karma, upasana and jnana. These are the three paths they have spoken about, but later they made a little more study about it and thought, raja yoga should also come into it. So basically these are the four forms of yoga.

The literal meaning of yoga is very simple. *Viyoga* means separation and *yoga* means union, connection or meeting point. There are different views on this. Some say that the union between jivatma and Paramatma, between the little self and the Higher Self is yoga. Others say it is when the devotee meets God or when the mind merges in the object of meditation.

There are various definitions of yoga. Raja yoga says, *Chitta vritti nirodha* – blocking the mind is yoga. The tantrics and hatha yogis say, when ida and pingala nadis which flow in the spine meet in ajna chakra, that is yoga. Ida and pingala are the positive and negative polarities in your body which can join or unite through meditation or certain practices. The moment there is union between the two, you will experience a big light, just as it was perceived by Arjuna or Mohammed when he went to the mountain and saw the light. Moses went to Mount Sinai. Many have seen it.

There is a book in English called *The Thousand Suns*. It is based on a particular sloka in the eleventh chapter of the *Gita* (11:12):

*Divi sooryasahasrasya bhavedyugapadutthitaa;
Yadi bhaah sadrishee saa syaadbhaasastasya mahaatmanah.*

If the splendour of a thousand suns were to blaze out at once (simultaneously) in the sky, that would be the splendour of that mighty Being (great soul).

The sloka says, ‘If a thousand suns rise in the sky and shine, what would be the brilliance? The same is the brilliance experienced by a Mahatma.’ Mahatma means a great man with an expanded consciousness; *maha* means great and *atma* means consciousness.

Are bhakti and religion connected?

Bhakti and religion have come to be combined but they are not the same. There has been a sort of mistake and now we are not able to separate them.

Religion is mainly for disciplining society – what is right and wrong. Religion is dharma as we know it in India. What is dharma? Dharma is duty, virtue, quality and propriety; so dharma is primarily for society.

Bhakti is your relationship with God – how you express your emotion, your *bhava* and *bhavana*, and your attitude to God. Whether you consider him as your lord, husband, son, brother, friend, boss or servant is the attitude you have towards God. Everybody has some sort of attitude. Mira had *shringar bhava*, love for sweetheart; Kaushalya had *vatsalya bhava*, love for a child; Radha had *prem bhava*, pure love; and, the gopis had *sakhi bhava*, friendship. These are the different bhavas according to one’s own personality with which one relates to God.

In my case, if you say God is my wife, I can never think about him like that because it is not my nature. I can only think that he is me. I cannot think God is somewhere ‘there’ as Hindus, Muslims and Christians believe. I believe he is in my guts, somewhere within me and sometimes I feel it. There is no difference between him and me. The only difference is that I do not know myself, that’s all. However, that is my

bhava, it cannot be yours. You may believe that he is living in Tirupati, Badrinath, or Baidyanath, that is your bhava.

Bhakti and dharma have somehow become confused with each other because of their association. You can be a dharmatma, a virtuous man, but you need not be a bhakta. There are many people who are very good and virtuous, but they do not believe in God. There are people who believe in God, worship him twice a day, do all the tirthas, but they are not dharmatmas. So it is clear that dharma and bhakti are two distinct paths, yet they can be combined.

What is the purpose of my life? Before I came to yoga I knew that I was looking for something, but I did not know what it was.

You have to ask yourself a question – ‘Who am I?’ and answer it yourself. You have to find an answer to this riddle in the course of time, not through books but by your own intuition, analysis and effort. Who am I? Am I a wife, child, daughter or sister. Am I a disciple? Am I a human being? This is the purpose of everybody’s life and it should be yours too. Even if you are not able to fulfil it now in this life, nevertheless your purpose is to realize ‘Who am I?’

Can you speak on the *Ramayana*?

Different narratives of the *Ramayana* have projected Rama in a slightly different way, but everywhere they have projected him as an ideal husband, an ideal son, an ideal ruler and an ideal enemy. When the war was going on between Rama and Ravana, Rama sent Lakshman to the brother of Ravana. Lakshman said, ‘Why should I go? He is our enemy.’ Rama said, ‘No, maybe he is our enemy but Kumbhakarna has got great knowledge; he knows about kundalini; he knows about yoga. You go and learn from him.’

So he sent Lakshman, his brother, to Kumbhakarna who was the brother of his rank enemy. All throughout the story Ravana wants to be killed by Rama and Rama praises and respects him.

What was the controversy with Sita?

A king is powerful. A king has an army. A king has the right to make rules, laws and regulation. But can he do what he likes? I am not trying to defend Rama. If Rama was an ordinary man, a plumber, and his wife was picked up by someone, what would have happened? Would he accept it? Would society allow him?

After the *agni pariksha*, fire test, when Rama came back to Ayodhya, the people of Ayodhya began to say, 'How can Rama keep her, and if he can keep her he is creating a precedent, then everybody will do it. They will say 'Rama did it, so?' Immoral values will be encouraged.

Could he not have gone into the forest himself, relinquishing the kingdom? Did he have to do this duty?

He was king elected, how could he not? Duty is above emotion. There is one thing called *bhavana*, emotion, and another called dharma or *kartavya*, duty. Duty has always to be considered above one's personal emotions. Your relationship with your husband or with your wife is personal; my relationship with my daughter or my parents is personal. As a judge or a chief officer of police, I have to do my duty, not as the husband of my wife, the father of my daughter or the son of my father. Personally I am a son, brother or whatever it may be, but I have a duty to perform – the task that has been given to me and the framework or constitution of that duty is to do it this way and not do it that way.

Rama was their chosen king. He was chosen by the people. For that nobody sat on the throne for fourteen years. If they had any other chosen king, he would have sat on the throne of Ayodhya but the throne remained vacant for him. His younger brother, Bharat, did not sit on the throne. He did not even enter the capital; he remained outside the capital in the village, Nandigram, where he waited fourteen years for his brother to come back from exile.

When these people are expecting Rama to come and adorn the throne, what is Rama expected to do? His relation-

ship with Sita is personal. According to ancient Hindu tradition, the queen is the queen of the king; it is a personal relationship. When he sits on the throne, she is not the queen of the king; she is a member of the *darbar*, the parliament, and he is a member of parliament. At that time, she cannot be considered to be the wife of Rama. She has the political rights of a member of parliament.

As a member of parliament, there has to be some sort of confidence and trust of the entire parliament in her. How can she sit in parliament when people have no confidence in her? It is a political question, not a religious question. Supposing you and your husband are politicians, and both of you sit in parliament. If the people do not have confidence in you, you will have to resign. This is the modern tradition.

You do not have to see any fault in that behaviour because the values in every century, every age, change. They were not the same as they are today; today our values are more or less relaxed.

But Sita stood by Rama through all the suffering in the forest.

He sent her to an ashram, not a bad place! An ashram is definitely better than a palace – only sadhus and swamis – no outsider to tell you what to do. Nobody was pointing a finger at her. As long as she was in Ayodhya, people were pointing fingers at her, but in the ashram she became the darling of everybody. Valmiki was looking after her personally and her princes were born and looked after. At the proper time, the two princes were sent to Ayodhya to give a shock to Rama.

So it was not an ideal society?

In our culture, men were allowed to keep concubines and dancing girls, so how the women must have tolerated all this. There are things happening in a society and things that should not happen in a society. There is an ideal and that ideal is propagated all the time, even though the rulers, kings and many others who could, did violate the tradition

with concubines, prostitutes and dancing girls, but it was not accepted as an ideal.

It is happening in society so we live by it. We do it but if it has to be revalued, reconsidered from another point of view. We won't accept it as it is only the life of Rama which is considered to be ideal. These days everyone is not Rama and not every woman in India is Sita. There are still certain ideals which one cherishes. We are talking about the ideals which one cherishes, but in reality many things happen where the ideals are contradicted.

We call it *Sanatana dharma*, eternal dharma, the values which Rama represents – that eternal dharma is not current in society. From time to time, there are changes. In the last fifty years, changes are taking place and more changes will take place in another thirty, forty or fifty years. Things are going to happen in a different way. In spite of it, people have certain ideals which they cherish and respect, and try to perfect. It does not mean that, if there are certain ideals in a society that become prevalent, everyone practises them; no, people cannot practise them. Ideals are very difficult, but they indicate the destination of a society.



3

Satsang

20 November 1985

Lord Krishna says, that all is the work of nature, and the Lord does not accept responsibility for man's sin or merit.

Yes. In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Sri Krishna says (5:15):

*Naadatte kasyachit paapam na chaiva sukritam vibhuh;
Ajnaanenaavritam jnaanam tena muhyanti jantavah.*

The Lord accepts neither the demerit nor even the merit of any; knowledge is enveloped by ignorance, thereby beings are deluded.

The fundamental and basic *jnana*, knowledge, the enlightenment of every human being is clouded by ignorance. As a result, people are in a state of hypnosis, so they sometimes do good acts and sometimes unrighteous ones.

This is the statement made in the *Gita*, but one question remains to be solved. What is that force which makes us do things and at the same time reap the consequences because that seems to be a reality? We do suffer, do we not? We are suffering and we are also enjoying. We have mixed experiences in life. Therefore, every experience should be a consequence and a result of some event. It is on this basis that the doctrine of karma is enunciated.

The doctrine of karma, which is the fundamental philosophy of the *Gita* and other scriptures, talks about the

law of cause and effect which is logical, not irrational. There is a cause; therefore, there is an effect. What is the primary cause? There is a cause for my sufferings, but that cause also has a cause and this is how the chain of cause and effect continues from the past to the future. When you go back into the past, the cause becomes the effect. When you move forward and talk about the future, the effect becomes a cause. That is how they keep changing. This means that cause and effect are inherent in one and the same action and event. While an action is the effect of an event, the same action becomes a cause to some other event.

Indian minds think about this particular concept in many ways. Sometimes, they thought that there is only cause and effect. Sometimes, they thought about cause and effect in relation to *prakriti*, nature, and there they completely did away with God. That is one aspect of Indian philosophy called *Charvaka* philosophy where the philosophers said, ‘There is no God. There is nothing which we should believe on this basis.’ However, they also had the theory of cause and effect. Although their theory of cause and effect limited itself to just this life because these philosophers of *Charvaka* in India do not believe in rebirth, reincarnation or that type of evolution. They talk about one life – that’s all. But their philosophy was not very convincing.

This particular reply that there is no God and you believe in cause and effect and you do not believe in rebirth seems very illogical. Later, various other philosophies were developed. Out of six systems of philosophy, the first was Charvaka, then Jain, followed by Buddha. The two philosophies that stand out are Samkhya and Mimamsa. I will use the word Mimamsa for the time being and I will elaborate on it later. *Mimamsa* is a Sanskrit word which means analysis, the way you analyze a chemical or any other matter. This analysis is divided into two – Poorva Mimamsa, the earlier analysis and Uttara Mimamsa, the later analysis. The previous and the later analysis belong to the same philosophy. The later analysis is called Uttara

Mimamsa which means Vedanta. In Poorva Mimamsa, there is worship of gods and goddesses and acceptance of their realm of power just as a judge, a police officer, a secretary or an engineer has power. There are zones of power and accomplishment, duties or work. Vishnu is responsible for maintenance; Shiva for disintegration and Brahma for creation. Besides, they also thought about various other gods and goddesses or the powers of nature, prakriti.

However, Samkhya made it very clear that they do not believe in one God but believe in two forces in the universe, which are in constant interaction with each other, Purusha and Prakriti. They said these two forces, Purusha and Prakriti are inherent and omnipresent in each and every speck of this universe – whether visible or invisible. This house is visible. The trees, the mountains, human beings and animals are visible creations; the sun, moon, stars, Neptune and Haley's comet are all visible substances. There are invisible things too that you cannot see with your eyes. In this room there are atoms, electrons, radio waves, electromagnetic waves and maybe many more things which you cannot see but they are there. If you can use a scientific process, you can burn all the electrons in this room. The atmosphere can be completely burned, the atoms, the electrons can burn, if you know the process. By God's grace, we do not have that process in here, so we are not able to burn the atmosphere.

The Samkhya philosophy says that two forces are inherent and omnipresent in each and every speck whether visible or invisible. What do Purusha and Prakriti represent? They are two opposite polarities; they are not the same. Although they are sometimes shown together, like Shiva and Parvati or Vishnu and Lakshmi, their nature, quality, circuits or polarity is just the opposite.

Therefore, when these two polarities are separate there is no creation – everything is unmanifest, in dormant potential. When these two forces join each other like two wires, positive and negative, then explosion takes place. When Purusha and Prakriti meet each other anywhere in this universe, maybe in

this tape recorder or in you and me, creation begins to take place.

The interaction between Purusha and Prakriti creates a stir in the universe and that stir, wave or ripple, whatever you might call it, is *karma* – action, movement or motion. This karma or movement is known by various names. When you say Purusha and Prakriti come together and creation begins to take place, what do you mean by it? What is creation? It is not only the creation of the sun, moon and stars; an act is a creation; a thought, a movement is a creation. You are happy or unhappy, you are laughing or crying, you are sleeping – it is all action. You are attached to this person or you hate the other person – that also is action. Creation does not merely mean the birth of an object, particular planet or galaxy. Your day-to-day life is also a part of creation.

According to Samkhya, the Prakriti aspect has certain illusory or deluding powers. Just like a magician deludes you, Prakriti has a *guna* or quality which puts everyone into a state of hypnosis or primordial consciousness. Prakriti belongs to the primordial consciousness and therefore the whole universe is acting in a particular way; and accordingly, there is a law of cause and effect. According to that law of cause and effect, there is an automatic dispensation. There is nobody in between, no judge, no inspector, no God according to Samkhya which is responsible for dispensation. The act which you have created, the dharma, a sin or a bad act, is a cause which will become effect.

Cause and effect are both inherent in one and the same substance. Cause becomes the effect and effect becomes the cause. Cause becomes the effect just like the egg becomes the effect of the hen and that becomes the cause of another little chick. It is cause and effect at the same time. Exactly in the same way, the dispensation of a karma is inherent in the karma itself. There is no god which is required. If you take poison, you are going to die. God is not killing you, you know it. You do not need to have proof. If you take a dagger and put it in your heart, like the Japanese do in Harakiri, you

are going to die. God is not killing you. In the same way, the actions which we do are dispensed by an individual himself, either in this life or another one.

Vedanta or Uttara Mimamsa is a little different. They said, 'Look here, there is no sin or virtue frankly speaking. You have a society, a culture, a civilization.' Vedanta says, you have got your own identification, your own *moha*, your own values, and according to that particular structure of society, there are some things which are considered good and some bad. You have to suffer if you are going to do the act which your society says is bad. Since your childhood, it has been deeply imprinted in your mind that you are going to suffer the consequences of that action because you believe it is bad. You are setting an effect into motion by believing in the cause and that is how one suffers. Therefore, Vedanta has made it very clear that because of your limited and ignorant mind, you have got certain beliefs that causes you to suffer.

In Poorva Mimamsa or Hindu dharma, it is said, 'Whichever karma you do, the karma is guided by a certain force in you.' These forces are generally considered twofold, devic and asuric. These devic and rakshasic propensities, the qualities in human beings are guided by certain forces known as devi and devata. They guide you to do this; and accordingly, they give you a reward or punishment. Sometimes this Poorva Mimamsa philosophy was not very convincing even to the Hindus and that is why it has failed.

Today, all Hindus believe that you do something wrong and you reap, but still they do not give up the wrongdoing because they intellectually believe it. In reality, nobody is afraid. They take bribes, kill, commit murder and do all kinds of unjust things, even to members of their own family. When you say that a particular devata is creating this and will be dispensing reward or punishment, you should be a little more careful. The mind of an individual is responsible and that mind, unless it is evolved, is going to be within the framework of that avidya.

If one cannot visualize during tattwa shuddhi and meditation, is it just a mental block, and is visualization essential to progress in these areas?

In modern psychology, there is a word called schizophrenia. All of us are schizophrenics or can become so – that element is within us. In modern psychology, schizophrenia is not considered to be a very positive symptom. Schizophrenia and madness are two different things. Schizophrenia, when it is properly guided and worked out, is a very positive virtue, force or faculty.

It is only in the moments of schizophrenia that ego and superego can be split. When they split, you can see things, like a shadow, a dream, pictures in black and white and sometimes in technicolour. It is at that time that your whole consciousness is entering into a whole situation or event. Then if you see that it is snowing, you feel cold and experience the snow.

In visualization, we are somehow not able to deprive the mind of sensual impulses. If pratyahara is not complete, dharana will not be correct, real or perfect. Dharana means you are able to see what we are talking about. This particular state where we are in the moment, where we are aware of sounds and people, is called the waking state. According to science and philosophy, we are living in time. Your whole consciousness, body and mind is bound by time; you are within time. At night, when you go to bed, you are slipping from time into space. As you enter into space, the time span is left behind. When the time category is left behind, the concept of time also changes. You sleep for eight hours, but you do not know it because you have transcended the time zone – you are in space.

For certain experiences, it is necessary that you should be able to step out of time for a while. When you step out of time and enter into space, you have experiences. The deeper you go into space, the greater will be the experiences; and the lesser the time, the better the experiences. Time has to be transcended. I am talking only about the experiences,

not about brahmajnana, because that is yet another transcendence. When you step out of time into space, you have visions, good dharana. You can see things very clearly and sometimes you identify with those experiences so much that duality is completely lost for some time.

About fifty or one hundred years ago, scholars in western psychology thought that schizophrenics are mad people who should be put into the mental hospital. Later things changed; now they have a different view. The psychic phenomena came into consideration. They established the Psychic Societies of New York and London and began to see the difference between a mad man's experience and the experience of a schizophrenic or psychic.

This psychic is a schizophrenic within a framework. I am schizophrenic, but within this limit, and my schizophrenic behaviour is only limited to my spiritual experiences. In external life, in dealing with my children, wife, mother, disciples, property, money, bank, or business I am not schizophrenic; I am an integrated person. However, when it comes to meditation I split myself; that is the point. When you are out, you have to be an integrated person because you have to live in time. You have to adjust with the time factor. If you do not adjust to this time factor, you are mad. Then such a schizophrenic is called a mad person because he does not know how to look after his children, wife, money, bank, or business; he does not know whom to marry or divorce; he does all kinds of funny things. He is called a mad person and a schizophrenic as well.

When you are practising pratyahara, the most important thing is to isolate your mind, brain, consciousness, or chitta. That isolation has to be complete. When we isolate in meditation, it is half isolation, partial deprivation. Total isolation takes place by shutting all the indriyas and bringing down the impulses of the nervous system. The energies flow in a certain manner and have to be brought down by lowering the metabolic rate of the body. If a person lives in complete isolation, let us say for one month, his beard will grow slowly;

his body too will grow slowly as the metabolism has come down.

When you bring down the metabolism, you have to be careful about your food because in a low metabolic rate food produces toxins in the body. That is why many swamis are sick. They meditate for six hours and eat puri and halva. They eat all kinds of rich food and are not able to digest it properly. Going to the toilet does not mean you are digesting. Digestion depends on a balance between the threefold system in the body – metabolic, catabolic and anabolic. There has to be a total balance between these three. However, in the deprivation principle, in the moment of isolation, the catabolic, metabolic and anabolic are brought down to a minimum level. Very little metabolic functions take place in the body and toxins are created. So one has to take care of the diet. When this isolation takes place, dharana begins, not meditation. The practice of tattwa shuddhi is a preliminary practice. It is a very effective practice and has an important role to play in spiritual practices because it purifies the elements. Therefore, the aspirant is not expected to see the papa purusha but to feel it. Visualization may come; it may not come. The particular state where the mind is split into two is alone responsible for all kinds of experiences.

Therefore, all yogis during the practice of yoga are mad people. They go crazy. In India, we have isolation chambers where experiments called bhusamadhi are conducted. Yogis are put under the ground in a cement tank and it is locked and insulated from the top with minimum or no oxygen at all. When you dig the earth you have four walls, a floor and ceiling. On one side they keep just earth, they allow the mud to remain, they do not cement it. So the yogis receive a little bit of oxygen from the fourth side just to survive; but most people do not do that and remain in those chambers for ten, fifteen or twenty days. During the period of Maharana Ranjit Singh from Punjab, one yogi Hari Singh, lived inside a tank for forty days. This is recorded in a historical document and many British people saw it at that time.

In this isolation chamber, they concentrate only on *bhramadhya* and when they do that they see the light, like a star, but much bigger than a star. It is a good light they can concentrate on. It is shining and bright, but not unbearable. That light has to remain steady. They concentrate on that light with *pranayama* or their own preparatory practices. It is not important what the practices are, but finally they come to the light. Only people who are able to develop that light clearly, without any difficulty, within a few seconds can dare to go into these isolation chambers.

This light remains for one, two, three or forty days. They keep on looking at the light and as a result of this total concentration the entire life force begins to move towards one direction. When you have pain, all the forces begin to move towards that direction. So, when a yogi concentrates on the light which he is perceiving, all the forces in the body move to one particular point. As a result, the heart stops; the activities of the brain stop; the whole body is dead. Earlier people thought this was a childish game. In the last twenty or thirty years, many yogis have been exposed to sophisticated scientific observations and it has been found to be true. It is possible that a man can be dead and can come alive once again.

This is the technique of *pratyahara*. What we practise as *pratyahara* is a very simple and ordinary technique. There are many other methods of isolating the mind from the senses. It is said in the *Upanishads* and in yoga books that these senses carry messages, excite and stimulate the brain again and again. Just like the telephone, when it is ringing it will disturb us. In the same way, these senses must be withdrawn first.

Nowadays, in western countries, they have also some sort of *bhusamadhi* tanks, sensory deprivation tanks. They put people inside and connect them to electrodes and other devices. They have found that some people, who go into the isolation chamber come out very unhappy, because they do not see anything there. There are people who have fantastic

experiences like rebirthing inside the chambers. Some of them even had psychic or schizophrenic experiences. There are a lot of books written on the experiences in bhusamadhi.

The only difference is the quality of the experiment. In India, those who go into bhusamadhi are outstanding people who have done a lot of preparation, both physical and mental. In the west the experiments are done mostly with people who do not have any mental, physical, social, or emotional discipline. They just take off their coat, pants and tie, put on the white jacket and get in. Sometimes, they have very frightening experiences. When a yogi has disciplined himself, in other stages of life, he has experiences which are calming, not frightening. They do get frightened at times, but they do not have disastrous, disturbing, violent and horrific experiences. They only last for a short time.

Therefore, pratyahara has to be complete. The *Yoga Sutras* have made it clear that pratyahara can be achieved in five ways: birth, mantra, penance, herbs and various practices of concentration.

Swamiji, how can we differentiate between psychic and spiritual experiences?

It is not easy to differentiate between psychic and spiritual experiences. It depends on the level of your consciousness. We have five levels of consciousness: One, consciousness of the body, two, consciousness of your life, three, consciousness of your mind, four, consciousness of your feelings, and five, consciousness of yourself. These are the five levels of consciousness and each of us belongs to one realm.

In Vedanta, we call these five levels of consciousness *pancha kosha*, the five koshas: annamaya kosha, pranamaya, manomaya, vijnanamaya and anandamaya. Your consciousness may be in pranamaya kosha; you may be identifying with life or the body just like many epicureans and hedonists do. You may be identifying only with your mind; most modern people, particularly Europeans, identify with their emotions and feelings – *manomaya kosha*. You may identify yourself with

vijnanamaya kosha which is the psychic realm. If you have evolved up to the psychic realm, all your experiences will be psychic experiences. If you have gone beyond these five koshas and are in the spiritual realm, in the course of time, all your experiences will be known as spiritual experiences.

It also depends on the country you live in. There are, let us say, five countries. Each country has its own temperature. One is very hot. One is very cold. One is very humid. One is very stormy and one is very marshy. Whichever country you go to, your experience will be according to that country. If you go to a marshy country, you will experience marsh. If you go to a hot country you will experience heat. In the same way, whichever realm of consciousness you have evolved to through various incarnations, the experience you will have will be according to that. If by practice, you happen to develop spiritual consciousness, any experience you have will be called a spiritual experience. In that case, even this external life which you are having now becomes a certain part of that spiritual experience.

That is why for those who have succeeded in yoga, meditation alone is not a spiritual experience. When they talk to people, eat food, sleep or move, it is a spiritual experience. They have said, 'When I see a flower, the moon, stars, my children, sinners, saints, prostitutes, great women, a sattwic man, a criminal or anybody, I see the same in them.' That man has gone to the spiritual realm where every experience is a spiritual experience, even pain, enjoyment, injustice and insult.

Swamiji, how does mantra and other meditations help the kriya yoga practitioner?

Kriya yoga practices, mantra yoga and karma sannyasa also can help. Mantra initiation can be taken by anybody the moment the idea comes to his mind. In due course, the mantra helps not only in concentration of mind but also in setting right, certain wrong matters of life. So far as karma sannyasa is concerned, only those people who can live like

ideal householders should take karma sannyasa. I am not talking about sannyasa. Hindus have divided life into four stages of twenty-five years each.

The first stage is about twenty-five years. The next twenty-five years are another stage of life where you have to watch yourself because the life you will be leading for the next twenty-five years will be according to the passions which you have been holding in your mind, the desires or *ichchha*, the attachments and identifications which are in your mind. You wanted to have a house, you have a house; you wanted to have a wife, you have a wife; you wanted children, two boys and two girls, you have that; you wanted to have insurance, you wanted to have a scooter, motor car and a good job, you have that or not.

These are called *kamana*, the desires: for offspring, for property, money, bank balances, to have a wife or a husband, a man or woman to have sexual intercourse, love and emotion. These are the three main *vasanas*. Some people are special; they have the fourth one – desire for name, fame and power, like Hitler, politicians, Napoleon, Sikander, Alexander the Great. A few people have that other desire but most people do not have it. Most people are struck by three types of desires.

There comes a time when you have to realize that there is no use in chasing desires – enough of it! Let me bring down the speed of *maya*, *moha* and *kamana*, attachments, infatuations and passions. The first reason is you have realized, in these twenty-five years, that sensual desires can never be quenched or satisfied. You can never fulfil or satisfy your desires. It is like pouring petrol in order to extinguish the fire. Similarly, in order to satisfy yourself, you are indulging in sensual experiences and your desires flare up even more. When you realize this, what you are going to do? Are you going to give up the whole show? Or, are you going to retain it, but have a different outlook? Just the outlook is different – the *drishti*, the philosophy, the perception; the act is the same.

You go to the office, to your business, you get money, you purchase things, you go to the market, to films, you get married, you have children, you get them married, you give them education and everything goes on as usual, but the philosophy changes. You are getting out of the slavery of desire. You are only confining yourself to *dharma*, duty. *Ichchha* and *kamana*, desires and passions, sometimes come in the form of duties and say, 'I am the duty, please do me.' Most of us attend to these passions and desires as if they were our duties and obligations, but it is not right, which you realize at a certain age.

Some people realize it at the age of thirty, thirty-five, forty, forty-five, fifty and some people do not realize it until the end. At the end of their life, they say, 'Let me have chicken kebab tandoori.' I know people on their deathbed ask for tandoori. Those people never get it. Karma sannyasa is not for them. They have to wait. They have failed in this life.

Karma sannyasa is for those people who want to remain an ideal householder, discharge all the social, family, religious and spiritual commitments and, at the same time, look after the *maya* which they have created, putting the whole blame on God. You have created and you are putting God into the picture that he has given the children. What do you mean, God has given? You have created it, you know it. When you stop giving false excuses, you realize you want to give a little time to *anasakti yoga*, the yoga of non-attachment, and lead this life not in the spirit of a *sansari*, a worldly man, but in the spirit of a karma yogi like Krishna and Rama.

Rama, Krishna, Gandhi, Vivekananda and many others were karma yogis. King Janaka was a karma yogi. Karma sannyasa must be taken only by those who perform all the functions of life without any impulse of personal desires. Karma sannyasa will help you in your spiritual evolution because if your lifestyle, frame of life, frame of mind or the philosophy of your life is not right, then your sadhana will only reach up to a certain point, not beyond that. You have to come back again for you cannot go further.

A person, who has no philosophy has not eased the tensions of maya and infatuation, and who has not clarified and fixed his attachments, will only be allowed to experience to a certain extent and cannot go beyond. In the *Ishavasya Upanishad* there are mantras relating to this, for example (slokas 9 and 11):

*Andham tamah pravishanti ye avidyaamupaasate;
Tato bhooya iva te tamo ya u vidyaayaam rataah.*

*Vidyaam chaavidyaam cha yasatadvedobhayam saha;
Avidyayaa mrityum teertvaa vidyayaamritamashnute.*

Those who worship *avidya* (ignorance) enter into darkness and those who worship *vidya* (knowledge) enter into still greater darkness.

He, who knows both *vidya* and *avidya* together, crosses death through *avidya* and attains eternal life through *vidya*.

At the same time, if you do not experience *maya* and *bhoga*, if you do not experience deep-rooted attachments and you only meditate, you still won't be able to go further. There is a point where you will be stopped. Therefore, you will not be able to proceed either by the path of *vidya*, *dhyana yoga*, meditation, nor through the path of *avidya*, the path of this world; you have to blend them together.

At the proper time, *maya* has to come in life and at the right time you have to free yourself from it. There is a time and a role of this worldly life in spiritual life as well. This worldly life is not sin. It is a phase of experience you are going through. You are fixing your karma; you are fixing your personality for twenty-five years. Well, it can also be twenty or thirty years but there has to be a time. In my opinion, when you are fifty years and you want to live as a sincere spiritual *sadhaka*, you must fix the aspects of your life properly and live like a *sannyasin* with wife and children. That's all. Then *karma sannyasa* is a good idea for you.

4

Satsang

22 November 1985

Does the potential of males and females differ in terms of spiritual life, either as disciples, or otherwise?

I think women can play the role of a guru very correctly and successfully. That is their potential. They may not be able to create an idea, an empire, win a war or create a political party, that's another matter. Very few can do that, but most women can play the part of a guru.

Women may be spiritual or not. By nature, they have a very intense instinct. That part of their brain is well developed. Sometimes one can also guide others through instinct. That is more likely in the feminine incarnations.

A man has the capacity to utilize his hand, head or heart to make a building, destroy or make empires, destroy or make forests. This is how a man does things. He has a very dynamic life and he needs it. Man has to remain dynamic, but the woman should guide him.

This is an inexplicable thing because you may not be able to understand it if you are not a man. I am a man. I have had enough inspirations in life and they have been very good ones. I can get inspiration from anyone because I find these people have certain guiding factors.

I listen to what the girls are saying and somewhere I get a clue. They speak instinctively and I listen very carefully from the point of view of guidance. When you say something, I



don't analyze your nature. I try to understand what guidance it gives me, so far as accomplishment, doing and creating is concerned. All women have that. There may be a few exceptions here and there.

Is there a conflict between yoga and the martial arts?

In Indian martial arts, the first thing is yoga and then come martial arts. In India, we have so many martial arts. Within ten years you will know it. Indians have one shortcoming,

either they do not want to sell themselves or they do not know how to do it. We have so many martial arts that your karate will not stand anywhere close.

They are such fine arts that you do not even need any weapon or stick. Some of these *pahelwans*, wrestlers, can make their body so stiff that you can go on beating them and the stick will break, but not the body. There are people whom you cannot move.

Ordinarily, they weigh eighty or one hundred kilograms, but if you want to move them they become almost five hundred or maybe one ton. If they lie down, you cannot move them because they have a trick or knack to relate the body with an idea in the mind. If I can relate my sixty kilograms body with the idea of one hundred and twenty kilograms, the body can be influenced.

In martial arts, the mental factor is very important but unlike other countries, in India, martial arts are considered to be a means for spiritual growth. We do not use it for self-defence, nor do we preach it.

In Munger we have fifty akharas. Every morning boys go there, put on a langoti and start fighting. You ask them why they are doing it and they will say, "Ah, I'm doing it for good health." You say, "But for defence?" They will say, "What defence? I do not want to defend; I do not want to kill." The approach is different.

The Japanese approach is different; they use martial arts in order to defend themselves. But the purpose of any art should be non-violence. It should not be violence, because it doesn't pay.

The purpose of martial arts should be to give a healthy standard of body to the young people of the country. They should never be taught to kill. It is against the principles of non-violence. The purpose of martial arts should be to bring man closer to himself.

5

Satsang

23 November 1985

I have seen people who keep photographs when they are expecting a child, or they have something very strong in their mind and then the child does become like that.

That is a very ancient theory. Thoughts, of course, have an effect on the quality of the child. But it is not merely keeping the picture or photograph of the person, it is also the deep-rooted emotional factor of the parents which is very important. Nowadays, a lot of research is being done and I find that parental thoughts do play a very important part.

Swamiji, can you talk a little on Sri Yantra and how to use it in sadhana.

In the sadhana of Sri Yantra, one thing you can do is just keep it and practise the mantra, but the Sri Yantra pooja, the Sri Yantra sadhana is a very elaborate sadhana. It is a tantric ritual belonging to the right-hand side, *dakshina marga* tantra. It is not of vama tantra. As it is the path of dakshina marga, it has elaborate rituals.

I knew one of the disciples of Swami Sivananda who was doing this Sri Yantra pooja many years ago. He was telling me that it takes almost three to four hours to do it. It's not like any kind of ritualistic pooja.

It is definitely not practical or possible for me to teach how that pooja is done because that is not what I teach. From

a yogic point of view, Sri Yantra can be placed in front of you and the Sri Yantra mantra can be practised. Many other mantras can also be practised but it is better to practise the Sri Yantra mantra.

These yantras need not be analyzed or explained. They have an effect on the deeper mind and the deeper states of man himself. Of course, there are many teachers who can teach how to do pooja of Sri Yantra. Most of these teachers are from South India. You will find very few people practising this in the North, particularly in Bengal, Assam, Bihar, Orissa, and certain parts of Nepal, mostly the *vama marga*, left hand tantra flourished.

There was a time when this left-hand tantra was extensively practised, even in Kashmir, the North-West Frontier Provinces of India, but because of the invasion of the Muslims who are very orthodox people, this left-hand tantra sect completely disappeared from Kashmir.

A male considers himself superior to the female.

A man does not consider himself superior, but because a male has strength, he rules. Since he rules, he makes laws in his favour for his own personal life.

In the scheme of creation, we firmly believe that the creator had feminine qualities. He may not have a feminine body or be a female but the creative principle had feminine qualities. This is definite and if Vishnu created, then he must have had some feminine qualities because the masculine quality is not a creative quality.

By all standards, in no kingdom, whether it is the mineral, vegetable or animal kingdom, mammals, reptiles or human beings, there has been any male species who has produced a child because that is not the system at all. Creation is not a male's job. He can help, but he cannot create.

Man is not the creator. It is the female who has the creative faculties whether natural or divine. Therefore, we say Devi is the yoni of srishti. *Srishti* means creation, *yon*i means from where you emerge and *devi* means feminine

God. This is a very ancient concept in many ancient tribes. Harappa, Mohenjodaro had the same concept. The creative principle belongs to the female and that is how females enjoy a superior position.

Is it true that males are stronger than females or can females become as strong as males?

So far as physical strength is concerned, males are stronger but men have always been defeated. We do not know much about the interiors of world politics, palace and parliamentary cliques, but females are somewhere behind most disasters, great things or revolutions. Behind every emperor, thinker, businessman or industrialist there has to be some woman, not necessarily his wife.

In India, you have the marital fire ritual by performing seven circles with your husband, but you may not have taken the eighth one. This eighth one is performed with the person to whom you give your heart. He does not necessarily have to be your husband. He may be your father, your guru or your friend. Love does not only mean sex. Love is to give your heart, and that is the eighth circle.

It is not just the physical relationship that decides your love for a person. You can love a person without having any physical relationship. Love transcends even the sexual relationship. It is much beyond that. Women in any form, whether in the form of a mother or sister, have a very inspiring role to play in the life of each and every human being, particularly in a man who has the capacity to be something. There should be someone who should be able to inspire him.

I personally feel that married life subdues man's innate ability to create. There have been very few people in the world who have been happily married and who have been able to create. It becomes more or less a very small social affair and the part of the wife in this is nil.

After marriage, what is her role? Nothing! She is just your housewife. Her role is not acceptable. She may be working in

some office; she may be earning some money, that's another matter. The role of women is to awaken the hidden potential in man. Look at Shivaji and Zizabai; she exploded the genius in Shivaji. There have been many great examples. In Jaipur, an empress did not open the gate when her husband came back after losing the war. He had to go back and fight. You need this kind of wife.

Tulsidas spent the whole night crossing the river with the help of a dead body to see his wife, Ratna. Ratna said, "Why have you come here?" He said, "Because I love you so much." She replied, "What nonsense, you love me so much! Why don't you love God as much as you love this dirty body? This is a perishable body. How can you love it? Love God!" That changed his whole life. Such wives are very rare.

It means that a woman should be very dynamic herself?

She should be a beloved, not a wife. Cut this idea off; no slave girl! You are your husband's beloved, friend. She is your friend, not your wife. I am not your subordinate and you are not my boss. We are the right wing and the left wing. In all the religious books this is the concept, but we do not practise it.

Swamiji, what is the historical background of the *Ramayana*?

The *Ramayana* has been written by many people. Which *Ramayana* do you mean? The *Ramacharitamanas* was written about four hundred years ago and the South Indian *Ramayanas*, like *Champu Ramayana*, were written much earlier than that. Valmiki's *Ramayana* was written around two thousand four hundred years ago. There are various versions of the *Ramayana* – Valmiki's *Ramayana*, *Champu Ramayana*, *Ramayana* and *Ramacharitamanas*.

They were written in different periods in order to bring home the ideals to people because the *Ramayana* is mainly concerned with social ideals. What type of a society do you expect? How should a king or a ruler behave? What are the rights and privileges of a citizen? Have they any say? Have they any rights? Should a king obey the public?

Of course, the public has to obey him. That remains unsaid, but should a king listen to the voice of the public or not? These are some of the ideals in different walks of ordinary life, social life, with your friends, your enemies, during trials and tribulations that it talks about. How do you remain true? That is the ideal which the *Ramayana* has presented in various forms, especially the oldest of them, the Valmiki *Ramayana* which is in Sanskrit.

This book represents Rama as an ideal man. The Valmiki *Ramayana* does not say that Rama was an avatar or an incarnation of Vishnu. Nowhere does it say so! He only says, *maryada purushottama*, the greatest among men who lived life with dutifulness and proper discipline. That is the life of Rama.



6

Maya

28 November 1985

Can you talk on maya?

If you see an individual, a man, an animal or any of your relatives in your dream and you talk, who is talking, you or somebody else? Who is having this experience? Is your wife there? No, she is not there. You have split yourself in your dream, into yourself and your wife. Now she is talking to you and you are talking to her, but you are doing self-talking. If there is a talker at all, it is you.

In the same way, if your wife is sneezing in the dream, is she sneezing or you? It is you who is sneezing. Because it is said that in dream, meditation or madness, the individual undertakes to act on behalf of many people. You undertake to act on behalf of a motor car, an elephant, a friend, a girl or even on behalf of a little flower which you see in the dream.

It is the maya of an individual mind which attains a particular state. It is called being propelled by maya. Maya is a particular force which is very difficult to explain but on account of that special force an individual assumes many forms.

In many of the bhajans it is sung, 'You are the director of the drama, you are the producer of the drama, you are the actor of the drama; you are playing tragedy, you are playing comedy, you are fighting with yourself.' The whole game is created by you within yourself because of a particular force

called maya. With that maya, everything is happening in the dream or elsewhere.

In fact, even what you are living they call maya. Maybe I am playing the whole game – I am talking, I am happy, I am unhappy. Because of you, I am happy; because of you, I am very grateful. Everything is happening within you.

Very recently I read one of the books published from the Soviet Union. They were talking about these UFO's. I do not believe in UFO's frankly speaking. I think it is a big lie that people talk about. There is no such thing. There is a theory about why UFO's are seen but there is nothing. It is a sort of apparition, a sort of delusion which takes place at a particular angle in the structure of the universe.

The individual is at one point and he picks up an angle and that angle is now influenced or activated by many forces – geometrical forces, geo-physical forces, electromagnetic forces and his mental forces – and he sees it. It is a combination of so many natural forces that seem to come together and you begin to see something.

Could you say that this is a play of light on the object which is reflecting it?

It is a very simple definition you are giving. It is a combination of so many things that happen in which your mental factor is also included, but apart from that we have to take into consideration, not just light and object but the angle of the light and object. Then an apparition takes place and you begin to see things.

I have been reading about this for a long time. The views of these experiences based on maya and how it is possible that an object can be seen and how it is possible that an object can be seen when it is not present there at all. How can the mind assume the experience of an object? A UFO is a very big object and many people have claimed to have seen it. We cannot say that everybody is telling a lie. We have to believe that what they say is the truth, but what is the essence and basis of truth?

An experience, which is not taking place in a concrete field of space and time or within yourself, can be duplicated, can be objectified because of certain natural factors. In the same way, maya can be explained as a natural culmination of these combined forces where you see people and many things although they do not really exist.

They exist maybe within yourself or maybe you are expressing yourself. After expressing yourself, you developed them into different shapes depending on your desires. You desired a son, property and friends. You desired so many things. These desires are within you in seed form and they come out and develop into the form of many people. This theory is also there.

The monistic philosophy talks about it. Other theories talk about God and creation and for them everything is real. This world is real. The other world is real. Everything is real, but they do not say what is their definition of reality. The classical definition of reality is, 'A thing which exists in time and beyond time, within the confines of time and beyond the confines of time.'

Anything that exists is called *Sat* and anything that is subjected to time or to a particular category of space is considered to be non-existent. That is the classical, scientific and philosophical definition. *Asat* means 'not existing'. Just because I see you does not mean that you exist. There is a theory of existence; there is a theory of non-existence and scholars and thinkers have decided it.

What is non-existence? Even if I see you, you still will be non-existent. Perception and cognition is no proof for existence. It has been discussed in Indian philosophical books. In Greek philosophy, it has been discussed a lot. Just because we have cognition and perception of some object does not mean that the thing exists.

What would we define as being non-existent?

Any experience or any object which is limited by time and does not move with time is non-existence. It was, it was

not, it is now and it shall not be later; that is non-existence. Therefore, anything which is existing has to be infinite and if it is not infinite then it is non-existent. That is the classical definition in various philosophies because most philosophers in the East and West have tried to define what is existence.

You are limited by time and I am limited by time. My body is limited by time and your body is limited by time. We live in a relatively particular space. Therefore, from all these definitions and arguments, you are non-existent and I am also non-existent.

In Vedanta there is a very beautiful commentary in a very small Upanishad called the *Mandukya Upanishad*. This Upanishad just talks about the four stages of individual consciousness – waking, dreaming, sleeping and transcendence. It compares the individual with the sound *Om*. It has a commentary by Swami Gaurapadacharya, the grand guru of Shankaracharya, to whose sect I belong. It is said that he has studied Buddhist philosophy.

The Buddhist philosophy is a very extensive philosophy which has got various schools like the Madhyamika school of Nagarjuna or the Yogachara school where the basis of perception is not the object but the mind. I am talking to you and you are listening and understanding. So everything is happening inside. There are many philosophies – Yogachara, Vaibhashika, Sautrantika.

People say that Gaurapadacharya was influenced by these philosophies, having studied them. As a result of these and the nihilist philosophy of Buddhism, he began to comment on the *Mandukya Upanishad*. Finally, he talked about one thing: all these three stages of waking, dreaming and sleeping are contained in the absolute body of the self and not out of it.

Just like a drop of water in the sea is not outside the sea but a part of the sea. The different experiences, which you are having now, will have or previously had, are a part of that absolute and homogeneous self. It is all happening within the cell. Therefore, you should not consider waking,

dreaming and sleeping as different from the absolute. You must consider that these three are a part of the absolute.

There is only one cosmic self and within that cosmic self many things are happening. Gaurapadacharya was influenced by Buddhist thinking and sometimes when we discuss the commentary on this Upanishad people are baffled and do not accept it. They say, 'When we see the whole universe before us and the whole world, the sun, moon, stars and planets, how can you say they are non-existent?'

What do you think of the theory that we are all part of a cosmic whole and that every part of the cosmic whole is in us?

I do not know how we understand the cosmos or the cosmic thing. Do we understand this cosmos or the cosmic thing as something very huge, trillions and billions of light years away or do we consider the absolute self as just a small point somewhere?

Swamiji, can we change our own maya? Can we write the script?

Yes, of course, if you have strength you can change maya because maya is not something very gross. It is the way one thinks, how one desires and what one wishes. It is built up on the basis of your nature and if you can change it you can change tragedy into comedy or comedy into tragedy. If you change your aspirations, ambitions and your thoughts, you definitely change the script, but it is so difficult.

You can certainly write off the karmas. The theory does exist. You may not be able to do it. How difficult or how impossible it is is another matter, but the theory exists that this script can be altered.

Is this the objective of sankalpa?

No, the objective of sankalpa is to change the general nature of the mind. When the general nature of the mind is transformed or changed, then that influences other matters in life. Of course, it is not that easy. We have been talking

about some universal forces, great forces, the origin of which we do not even know. I do not know the source of my happiness or my unhappiness.

The cause of happiness is not you. The reason for happiness is somewhere else. The source is inherent somewhere in the quality of your individual mind. Because of your mind, you are feeling happy or unhappy.

Is it possible to change the course of our karma?

It is possible theoretically and some people can also do it practically, but I think for the large majority it is not possible. The large majority of people are still at a particular place where they are totally helpless. If you are caught up in the mire, marshy land, it is very difficult to get out even if you are a strong man. Sometimes we are caught up in things.

We do want to change or write off some of our karmas but we are not able to do it because basically the thought pattern, the pattern of aspiration or desire has not changed. Many times what happens is that we harbour contradictory thought processes.

Can practices like kriya yoga speed up the karma?

Kriya yoga accelerates the speed of individual evolution. As it accelerates the speed of individual evolution, it evolves individual consciousness and also the mind. Once evolution takes place, the mind keeps moving. It does not remain static at one point with one desire or one aspiration. It has one aspiration and one desire at this moment; but since the mind is moving at such a speed, naturally it has to get rid of some of its aspirations and ambitions to keep on evolving.

Would this influence the karma of those closely related to the practitioner?

If the person practising kriya yoga is strong enough and is able to transmit the energy waves or the magnetic waves, it is possible. It can definitely influence the destiny and the nature of other people.

Do different malas have different properties?

Most certainly they have. In India people do not wear tulsi malas. They do not even use it. They say that only those who are pure vegetarian should touch tulsi. A non-vegetarian does not touch the tulsi mala and therefore while giving mantra diksha and initiation they give the tulsi mala only to those people who have been vegetarian. This is done throughout India.

Is milk vegetarian?

Milk is an animal product but it is vegetarian, in the sense that we do not kill an animal and we do not eat a dead animal. From the other point of view, it comes under non-vegetarian because it has more or less the same effect or same properties which an animal body has. It is an animal product. It has the same hormones. It is not that you should not drink milk. Milk is allowed because it does not kill an animal.

The ancient theory was that all living beings were one family and they lived together many hundred thousand years ago. Gradually, the human beings made a very quick departure from the rest of their kith and kin, the monkeys and horses. They made a very fast departure because man was able to visualize forms and ideas in the mind. He was able to see the thought forces, understand and realize himself within the framework of time and space.

We are aware of time, place and object; animals are not aware. Because of this, man made a very big jump, went out and built up society, houses, systems and laws. Then he found many of his brothers, his kith and kin were creating difficulties for him like mosquitoes, bugs, scorpions, snakes, so he started finishing them off, cleaning them up.

This continued for many thousands of years. It is only thanks to the propagating capacity of animals that they propagated more quickly than they were killed. When birds and creatures in different lands did not serve the purpose of human beings or when they went against their interests, they were finished. Now the human being is coming to a point of realization.

The whole world as a family is more a spiritual or moral issue than an ecological issue. I am not against ecology but we have to direct the ecological forces or the ecological philosophies in the right direction, not because these animals are necessary for our existence, not because these trees are necessary for our existence, not because if there are less snakes there will be more rats. I am not talking from that point of view.

My point of view is to restore the ancient relationships although we human beings have gone very far from our kith and kin with whom we lived thirty, forty, fifty thousand years ago. You lived in that cave and a tiger was living in that cave and a monkey was living on that tree and we were always trying to fight with each other. That is what happened. That relationship has to be restored; that originality of the limited creation of this earth has to be restored so now we must explore or discover the ways of living together.

Is it a question of respect for this other part of our family?

Suppose you left your parents, and went to the North Pole or South Pole and became a great person. Then you found that your parents or your grandfather were a problem for you. So you started destroying them. That has to be stopped because once upon a time we lived together. This cave was mine and that cave was yours. That is how we lived. Because of the grace of nature and evolution, somehow we have made things in such a way that we have gone out of caves, made houses, roads, armies and now computers and laser beams. We have invented so many things. Now we are talking of ecology only in terms of our own interest.

Things are better than they were, but we should not stop at this point. We have to give a new turn to ecology and we should rather use a different word altogether. Our purpose is to restore the ancient relationship. That is all, so that we can live together. We have to find how we can live together, because we are so scared that these animals can destroy us. Why should they destroy us? Is it in their nature or is it

because they are insecure about us or is it that they have lost faith in us?

Mosquitoes just bite, don't they?

If you go out at night in the summer which is a very good season for mosquitoes, people are sleeping outside. The mosquitoes do not even hover over them. There are workers in our buildings who sleep on the veranda at night and mosquitoes do not even sit on their bodies.

They must develop some chemicals to protect themselves.

I do not know whether they have those chemicals, but I know definitely that these people do not use mosquito nets. They sleep anywhere and you will not find even one spot on their face. This is one very simple example. In India there are very dense forest areas where you have tigers, cobras and many other animals. People live in these forests.

Does the tiger attack if he sees the person?

No, he just walks away.

So you think we have influenced the animal kingdom to be aggressive?

We have not influenced them to attack us; we have compelled them because they are afraid of us.

There is a film made of a private zoo in England where the tigers live in a very friendly way with humans.

This is an idea. We do not know how far things will go because many times I am invited to ecological conferences. They asked me to write some articles. I told them, 'Look here, I consider ecology to be the first step towards restoration and after some time you have to change the whole theme, not for yourself.' I know in South Africa a man lived in a snake chamber. In Poona, India, a man lived in a snake chamber. He was eating and sleeping there.

In our soul is there a part which is the same as that of a cow or a snake?

When we live together, we will become friends. We know each other. If I and a cobra live together for ten years, we are not going to kill each other. We will become friends. Because we are not living with each other, the cobra does not know me and I do not know the cobra, so naturally there is a sort of fear or apprehension. There is a kind of feeling of danger because I am not sure exactly what he is going to do and he is not sure how exactly how I am going to react.

Essentially the whole of creation has just one soul, one spirit or one atma. You can call it 'Universal Spirit'. There is one unbroken link that threads all beings together. There is one link just like one thread threading all the hundred and eight beads in a mala. There is something very common which relates all with one and one with all. There is one thread or link – one connected with all and all connected with one.

When all beings are threaded together or united in this particular fashion, there is no question of high or low. Of course, we know that something which is good is good and something which is bad is bad. That distinction is there. But even if it is good or bad, divine or evil, degraded or upgraded, it is one.

Then we are responsible for the whole creation in some way?

I do not think we are responsible for the whole creation. We are related in some way or another to the whole of creation. We are related to each and everybody and sometimes we are influenced and sometimes we influence. Influence is transferred and we also receive a certain amount of influence from others as well. I do not know how much but we do receive something.

How can we learn to live together and learn to overcome aversions?

It depends on how human beings begin to think. We are trying to live and survive. Today it is a question of survival.

It is not so much a question of prosperity. It is not so much a question of philosophy or religion, but a question of survival. If this question of survival continues, I do not know what will be our relationship with the rest of our kith and kin that we left thousands of years ago.

If this question of survival is solved by thinking people, then perhaps we can think how we can relate, interact, live, or understand. I feel the interaction and relationship may not happen immediately because we have gone so far from each other in the last few thousand years that we have misunderstood them.

Those creatures which I am talking about do not have the capacity to understand our motives through reasoning. Their understanding about us will be on the instinctive level. If a dog, a cow, a cat or any animal comes closer to you, it will not be through reasoning but through instinct. You will have to live in such a way that their instincts are influenced; they will behave instinctively because there is no question of intellect and intuition.

In your behaviour with your little baby, what are you doing? You are only trying to go into his instinctive plane. Exactly the same thing will have to take place with other animals and other creatures. It will not take just a few years; it may take many years; it could even take a century or more if we start to think about these things from now.

Animals die quickly, like ten days, twenty days, ten years, twelve years or thirty years. Their generations are faster. Naturally for the generation which has in its instinct that human beings are treacherous, dangerous and not reliable, the racial consciousness (I will use the word for the time being) will shape their behaviour.

Vibrations are also received by animals and human beings on the level of instinct. There has to be some basic or initial ground work to bring animals and humans closer so that they are more within the influence of positive vibrations. Human beings must also think about this.

The killing of animals by means of shooting and hunting games has to be stopped in the same way as the hunting of

human beings has been stopped. Now nobody hunts human beings except for a few stray examples here and there, but no man will hunt after a man and kill him.

Is there such a thing as animal karma?

No. When you have developed your mind and you have been able to relate your existence with time and space, and the ego in you has developed in the form of 'I', and that 'I' is connected with time, space, object and events, then the karmas begin. It is a simple thing. When a baby is born, if he spits on your face or even if he puts a knife in you, the law is not going to kill him because he is a baby. So these animals come under the category of the innocent kingdom because they live by instinct.

Some of these animals are very intelligent. They have waxing and waning forms of consciousness, like monkeys. There is no constant and consistent flow of consciousness. It comes for a split second. They understand many things. Then suddenly there is a blackout. In such animals, there is frequent blackout. In some animals, there is frequent enlightenment. Just as people can think, some animals can think for a split second.

If a dog has been with you for many years, you feel that he understands everything you say.

Yes, but not all dogs. Different dogs can understand different things, not because of your behaviour and proximity with them, but the consciousness is waxing and waning, just like a little baby. It does not remain constant and consistent – it comes for a moment. There is awareness of time, space, object, event, me or you, then it drops and they are again in the blackout.

This waxing and waning also took place in human beings. Thousands of years ago when a human being developed his mind, there was waxing and waning. For a time, he became aware of all and then he suddenly forgot what was happening. The stick was in his hand and he was about to beat somebody and then he forgot it.

7

Buddhism

*2 December 1985, addressing a group of yoga aspirants of a
Health Management Course*

Gautama Buddha said it is our desires and impressions, *vasanas* and *samskaras*, which transmigrate; there is no individual soul that transmigrates. Do you agree?

Buddha was not a philosopher; he was a moral preceptor and that is how scholars accepted him. He never said that he was a religious preacher because for him religions did not mean anything. He criticized religion in the ritualistic sense all the time.

Secondly, he was not a Buddhist. He was born in a Hindu family but he did not subscribe to any religious affiliation. He called himself *Buddha* which means ‘enlightened’ and his disciples called him Buddha, or *Tathagatha*, which means ‘he has come back as usual’. People used to come to him and put a lot of questions like you do in a satsang to me. Whichever place he visited, people asked him so many questions and he answered these independently as the context arose.

A few years after his death, his teachings were put into the form of chronicles. All his teachings were collected and edited in three forms or books: *Sutrapitaka*, the box of sutras, *Vinayapitaka*, the box of prayers and *Dhammapitaka*, the box of virtue. Out of these three books arose four different philosophies in Buddhism. Just as Hindu philosophy has six systems, Buddhist philosophy has four systems: Madhyamika, Sautrantika, Vaibhashika and Yogachara. These

four philosophical schools were developed by later scholars, based on the various teachings of Lord Buddha during satsangs or lectures.

Nagarjuna's understanding of the Self

The author-philosopher of Madymika is Nagarjuna. He is the same person who went to Greece and met with King Menander I. He interpreted the teachings of Buddha that there is no eternal self and no eternity. There is only a point, a moment, *kshana*, and each



moment is followed by another moment and that by another moment and that by another moment. These kshanas in a particular sequence create a process, flow or event, just as the candle flame is burning and there is a process, a flow.

There is an event called the flame, but this flame is a sequence or combination of many moments. These moments could be broken and a gap could be created between two events, which is called *shoonya*. A light is burning and another, then a third, fourth, fifth and sixth. Now there is a sequence: one, two, three, four, five, six, and there is a gap between one and two, two and three, three and four, four and five, five and six. That gap is so short and subtle that unless you increase the gap by a time lapse system you cannot see it, because the whole process is taking place in such a manner that all you can see is the continuity of an event called the flame.

The same thing applies to *atma*, the self of man, or the self of everything. If you increase the gap, nirvana takes place. If you increase the gap between two events and go on increasing it, it is called *shoonyata* or *nirvana*. That is how Nagarjuna interpreted it. It is on this basis that his understanding of

transmigration or rebirth has to be interpreted, because, once you have accepted spirit or the *atma* as a small unit called *kshana*, or point, you will have to interpret *punarjanma* or the theory of transmigration or rebirth on that particular philosophical basis.

The quantum Self

The Hindu philosophers conceived of *atma*, the self as being eternal, infinite and homogeneous, not as a combination nor made out of components. The self, they believe, is made out of no components; it is just one. That is called non-dual. Their interpretation of rebirth will be different based on the infinity of the spirit, whereas Nagarjuna's theory is the 'momentariness' of the spirit. That is the only difference.

Whether the self is a moment, point, *bindu*, or whether the self is infinite, it really makes no difference as long as you are in time and space. And once you have departed from time and space, infinity and a point are not two things. They are two different things only as long as you are assessing them from a relative point of view, but once you transcend the relative mind or relative consciousness, then *atma* is a point and *atma* is infinite. Then infinity and a point are not two different things because you have gone beyond time. It is very difficult and that too is a philosophy. Who knows whether Buddha meant it?

Respect for the Self

I had the Buddhist tradition in my family. My grandmother was a Buddhist and did all the ceremonies. I found that, as a Buddhist, she only understood two things and nothing beyond that from the teaching of Buddha. One, *ahimsa*, not killing anyone was her first thing. Therefore, she always opposed the non-vegetarian system in our family and she also came from a non-vegetarian background. She was a Tibetan, but she became a Buddhist and stopped eating animal food. Her *samskara* has gone into me because I do not even like milk or any of the animal products, like cheese or butter.

The second thing for her was *dharma*, the right attitude towards spiritual realities. *Dharma* is not the ritual of a Hindu, Muslim or Christian. For Buddha, dharma was the spiritual essence of life. These were the two things that she believed in though Buddhism is a vast philosophy, very diverse.

A lot has been written in the Thera books of Buddha on *Boddhisattwa* and the reincarnation of Buddha. The future Buddha who will be coming now will be known as Maitreya. Maitreya Buddha will settle somewhere in the 'Scandinavian' countries. Of course, according to us, the word Scandinavia is not Scandinavia. *Scanda* means 'the son of Shiva' who had six heads. Therefore, we consider all the big islands that side comprise Scandinavia, that is to say, the six heads of Scanda in the sea. That is what we believe. Buddha will settle there; it is not necessary to know where he will be born. However, prior to the birth of Buddha as a human, the Buddhist consciousness or the enlightened consciousness of Buddha enters into different animals, beings, planets and creatures in order to enlighten the whole life cycle of everyone. It is not only the moksha or nirvana of human beings that settles the problem.

When we say 'every being,' we do not merely mean human beings. 'All living beings' also means the nirvana of a caterpillar – of a small creature. The spirit of Buddha was born into many forms called *Boddhisattwas*, not Buddhas, that is, the spirit of Buddha, the essence of Buddha, the essence of enlightenment. There are beautiful stories about the time he was born as a bull, an elephant, a python, how he acted and how he lived.

The desire for life

So, whether the Self is a point or infinite, it makes no difference because according to Buddha, it is the *kaama*, the hidden desire, the *vasana* which is clinging to life, it is the craving which is the efficient cause for rebirth. If there were no kaamas, desires or vasanas, how would there be transmigration? That is the question which king Menander asked Nagarjuna.

Nagarjuna replied that just as fried seeds do not germinate but unfried seeds can when they come in touch with earth, water, air and sun. When the kaamas are not dead, when there is the potential of kaama and desire inherent in the seed, there will be rebirth. However, when the kaamas have been fried in the fire of nirvana or jnana, even though the yogi may be moving and acting, eating and laughing, there will be no rebirth for him. Because there is no potential for kaama, he has become free from desires. That is exactly what Buddha has said in more or less the same way.

Hinayana and Mahayana

Classically speaking, there are many differences between the sciences or the four philosophical systems of Madhyamika, Sautantrika, Vaibhashika and Yogachara. There was also another philosophical system or dimension which was added to the Buddhist teachings much after Buddha called Mahayana.

What Buddha taught his *bhikkhus*, his sannyasin disciples, was known as *Hinayana*, the Narrow Path, the path for a few. And what he taught to his householder disciples was *Mahayana*, the Broad Path, not the noble path but the big way, the highway, that many people could go on. Hinayana is the way where only a few people can go. *Hina* means 'short', *maha* means 'great' and *yana* means 'path'.

Buddha's teachings were divided philosophically into four and as a religious sect it became two: Mahayana and Hinayana. Nalanda, about one hundred miles from Munger, was the teaching centre for Hinayana. Forty or maybe sixty miles east of Munger was another centre called Vikramsheela, the centre of Mahayana. Hinayana was a much bigger centre. We have archaeological findings now by the government of India. They have excavated the whole Vikramshila University. It was beautiful with air-conditioned rooms and chambers. This was the centre of Mahayana where they added the tantric dimension to Buddhism and started to practise Sahajyana and Vajrayana, which have been considered to be the downfall of Buddhism.

What are Sahajyana and Vajrayana?

Vajra means a particular nerve in the physical body which runs on both sides of the sexual organ. In the male body, it joins in the testicles. In the female body, it joins in the ovaries. The word for the feminine nadi is *sahaj* and for the masculine nadi it is *vajra*. These are the names of the nadis. So, for females it became known as *sahajyana* and for males as *vajrayana*, the path or practices related to sahaj nadi and vajra nadi.

People started to practise hatha yoga kriyas and practices which were propounded by the Nath yogis, the Nath sect. Matsyendranath was the guru. His disciple was Gorakhnath. His disciple was Jnaninat and his disciple was Nirvrittinath. Nirvrittinath's disciple was Jnaneschwar. Jnaneschwar himself did not belong to Nath Sampradaya, he belonged to Varkari Sampradaya. He established the Varkari Sampradai.

Hatha yoga practices like khechari, vajroli, sahajoli, amaroli, uddiyana, and many other asanas and pranayama were included. Yoga was introduced in Nalanda through this, where all the practices were mostly Hinayanic. Milarepa belonged to the Hinayana sect. His guru Marpa and Tilopa belonged to the Hinayana sect.

Do you consider Vajrayana as part of Hinayana?

No, it was a part of the Mahayana sect. Milarepa belonged to the Hinayana sect not Mahayana. Because his guru, Marpa, was a graduate from Nalanda University, and he taught the practices to Milarepa. This Mahayana sect underwent a great change, more or less a metamorphosis. So much so, that after some time the graduates of Vikramsheel University were saying what the Hindu tantrics were saying. So the difference was reduced. They started practising things like *pancha makara*, the five elements: madya, mamsam, maithuna, matsya and mudra.

They brought in *Devi*, the feminine deity aspect, Tara and other yoginis. They brought in male deities like Amitabha Buddha, Avalokteshwara and other things like gods and goddesses from the Hindu religion.

Amitabha Buddha became a very famous sect, so much so that even now if you go to Japan, in the very big temples you will see people sitting chanting *Amitabha Buddha, Amitabha Buddha, Amitabha Buddha*. That is the only mantra they recite in Japan.

The rise of Buddhism

People are the same. Hindus, born of the Hindi race and system who found the inadequacy and incompleteness in their own religious structure which became too difficult and unnecessary, and wanted to know something more than religion, tilted towards Buddha. It is a very simple thing.

Whether you are a Christian, a Hindu or a Muslim, you will always try to tilt towards that particular philosophy where you find you can have some sort of concrete experiences. After all, what is the purpose of religion? The purpose is not to create a band of political followers. Religion means you are trying some sort of way or method in order to have a higher and sublime experience.

So Hindus started to follow Buddha. After his death, Buddhism became like a sect because there were so many people following it. This happens in every country every time. Then the political powers become inimical to these philosophical events. Samudrabutha, Kaniska and many other kings came and started playing with these things. They organized themselves and created Mahayana and Hinayana and this philosophy and that philosophy.

Then came Ashoka, the grandson of a Greek lady. Chandra Gupta married Helena from Greece, the sister of a famous military general. Chandra Gupta was a very powerful king in his own time. From what I have read in the Greek chronicles and other papers, he used to be very cruel and powerful. From Helena in the third generation, was born Ashoka. He was fifty percent Hindu and fifty percent Greek and a very cruel king.

One day, when he started to massacre the whole of Orissa, he had to face a small girl of about six or seven. Three

hundred thousand soldiers died in front of his eyes and that is a big number. That changed the whole philosophy and aspirations of his life. The girl gave him a good lesson and he became a Buddhist.

Exporting religions

After him, the whole of the Buddhist cannons and systems were reorganized and exported. He was such a powerful king. He had special monasteries for bhikhus and bhikunis. His son, Mahendra, became a Buddhist monk and his daughter, Sanghamitra, became a Buddhist nun. Sanghamitra went to Afghanistan, Iran, and many other places. Some people went to Tibet, China, Japan and South East Asia.

When religion is exported, its quality has to be changed. You have to change the design of anything whether it is a machine, a motor car or a computer according to the country where you are exporting it. It was a very big export, not just an ordinary one. He meant it and he did it.

During the last years of his life, he opened hospitals, grazing grounds and water places for animals. He had hospitals for birds and would punish people who hunted birds, so much so, that he made it compulsory for a unilateral ban on arms. Ashoka did not even allow a spear to be manufactured. He did not allow poisonous chemicals to be made. He said that they were dangerous and should not go into the wrong hands.

Historical consequences

I am talking about nineteen hundred or two thousand years ago. There was a total ban on the manufacturing of weapons. That is the reason why Hindus do not like Buddhist teachings. They like Buddha but they do not like the teachings. We like Ashoka and we respect him because he was a great king, but a king has to understand other things much better than his emotions.

The personal emotions of a king have no place in the administration of a nation. He was not farsighted and after

him there were invasions after invasions. Hoards came from Afghanistan, Kazakisthan and Iran, Indians could not resist them because they did not have the weapons. There was nobody who knew the science because for about one hundred or one hundred and fifty years manufacturing them had been completely banned. That is why Shankaracharya, the founder of the sect to which I belong, was vehemently opposed to total disarmament. He said no.

People did not even know how to make poisons or spears. The science of manufacturing swords and gunpowder was completely banned. We were in touch with China who had gunpowder. Two thousand five hundred years ago China knew about gunpowder and it came to the west through Marco Polo. Marco Polo brought two things from China, one was gunpowder and the other was spaghetti. Spaghetti was not Italian originally; it was a Chinese dish.

The main thing with Shankaracharya was philosophy. He fought on philosophical grounds. Buddha said the self is transitory, but Shankaracharya said it is not transitory; it is infinite. He made a very clear difference. He said, 'No, if the self is transitory then it is not the self, because the very nature of the self is *Sat*, *Chit* and *Ananda*, existence, knowledge and bliss. If it is not existence, knowledge and bliss, it cannot be the self. Supposing you bring a piece of gold and I test it and find that it is not gold but brass. It looked like gold, but it is not gold. It is brass. What is brass cannot be gold and what is gold cannot be brass. In the same way, what is infinite cannot be transitory and what is transitory cannot be infinite.

If desire motivates all our actions, what happens to people when they reach the point where they have lost desires? What moves them to act?

Most people have desires, almost all. There is hardly anyone who is without desires, but sometimes experiences in life and the way the human mind and brain reacts to that situation means their desires are suppressed. They go into the background. They feel shy in coming to the surface.

Such people apparently live as if they have no desires but they have a sort of distaste for each and everything. If you talk about acquiring a house they will say, 'Oh no, I don't like the idea.' If you say they must have a business, they will say, 'I don't want it, I don't think about it.' They really don't think but there was a time when they were thinking about that and many other desires of different types. So there is a type of person who has desires but they recede into the background because of peculiar situations.

Because of age, possibly?

It can happen to very young people of twenty-four, twenty-five. I have seen boys and girls of twenty-two who have lost desire. It is a peculiar mental set-up or maybe a particular physical interaction in the body chemistry. Something happens to them and some of them even go insane. These young people go insane because they do not want to express their desires.

Desire is a very normal action of the brain. Not having desire is not a normal action of the brain. The brain is a progressive object, always progressing, leaving many primitive things behind and developing new areas of experience and cognition, and acquiring new items. Every time it learns new things, the person desires new things. A hundred years ago you thought about acquiring a good horse or a good horse cart. Now you are thinking of acquiring a good car. After a hundred years, you might even desire a small two-seater plane. The desire is the same but the objects differ. That is called 'normal' and people who do not desire are not normal.

What about people who seem to have got burnt out?

Physiological interaction and psychological processes go hand in hand. You cannot say everything is somatic or everything is psychic. Everything has to be psychosomatic. The only difference is that sometimes the psychic becomes the cause for physical reactions, and sometimes physical

reactions become the cause of a psychic feeling. If you are drugged, you have a certain feeling – that is psychological. If you have pain, are happy, agonized or worried, you have certain chemical reactions in your body. There is nothing which is just somatic or only psychic. Every effect whether mental or physical has to be psychosomatic.

People are unhappy because they have not fulfilled their desires. The craving is there. Apart from desire, there is craving which can remain even in a person who has been drugged or whose frontal lobes have been erased by an operation. When the person is not able to desire, plan or react, even then craving is there. Craving is an instinctive quality and it has to be with you whether you are intelligent or not intelligent. Even in small babies and children, you can see the symptoms of craving. That craving is very important.

There is a well-known story. Rama invaded the empire of Ravana. Ravana was a Brahmin but he was known as a monster or devil and he had ten heads. When Rama and Ravana confronted each other, there was a big fight. Rama went on attacking Ravana, chopping off his heads one by one but he could not kill him. By the time he was able to chop off the second head, the first head would be alive again and it was a very disappointing affair.

Then Vibhishana, the younger brother of Ravana who had sought refuge with Rama because he had been insulted by his elder brother, told Rama, “Look here, this man’s ten heads cannot be severed and he won’t die because he has a small portion in the body where there is a drop of nectar. His entire system is connected to that drop of nectar. Even if you chop off his heads, they will grow again.”

Rama asked him what to do. He said, the only thing you can do is to burn the nectar which is in his navel and then he will die. Rama said, this is funny. How can that happen? Vibhishana replied, as long as you have craving, it does not matter if you kill desires, they will come back again.

It is not the suspension of desires which is important. It is the suspension of the primitive instinctive cravings which

are so subtle that you do not know what cravings you have. No, nobody knows what cravings he has.

Analyze yourself. You will never know what your cravings are because it is a very subtle influence. Just as in this room there are radioactive waves, electromagnetic waves, but you do not see that they are here. Likewise, craving is also a very subtle phenomenon in human life. You cannot do anything with attachment.

That is where many times we make mistakes. We try to overcome attachment. Most people who have become a little spiritual, wise or who claim to be wiser first try to fix their attachments. It is a very natural reaction of the human mind. They are making a mistake because attachment is not something which you can destroy. It has its roots in craving and that craving is essential nutrition for man's creation. If there was no craving, you would not have lived. You would not have grown.

But how do you go on if you do not want anything?

There is a way. Even if you do not know you have desires, still you can have desires because you have tried to conceal them due to your peculiar psychological make-up. Everybody does not have this condition but most people do.

However, there is a state called desirelessness which does not come by trying to be detached. That desirelessness comes not by a negative method by renouncing, trying to avoid or bypass the things of life, mind and body; instead, you have to realize some sort of wisdom or cosmic link. Somewhere, you have to discover some link. Now we have no way to get the link. We only know from books that there is a cosmos, some universal and invisible thing, but we really do not have a clue.

Once you are able to have a little glimpse of the atma, an idea of this infinite, horrifying, terrible creation or cosmos, things begin to happen automatically – cravings subside, desires stay low.

Have you realized in deep contemplation or meditation that the individual 'I' is not an individual, but rather, 'I am a

unit of that homogeneity'. Just like a little nut and bolt of the car is a part of the car. We call it nut and bolt, but it is not just a nut and bolt; it is also a part of the entire automobile. 'I am not just a unit.' Somehow one gets a clue. It is not intellectual but a wave of experience comes to many people and many great scholars.

The famous French mathematician, Pascal, saw a fire burning in front of him for two hours. He was not a religious man or a mystic, although every thinker, mathematician, painter, poet and musician is a mystic. How can you be a musician without being a mystic? How can you be a mathematician or a scientist without being a yogi? They have to be yogis, not by sect but by personality.

For two hours Pascal saw the fire burning in front of him and he was lost in the fire! He clearly says that it was not his imagination or his own mental make-up, it was as real as any object – like this table in front of me. After that fire disappeared, he wrote in his diary, 'Oh God, why have you gone?' He was very sorry after this experience. When the awakening takes place and it comes to an end, depression begins in the physical body. He was so depressed for many days after he got the link with the cosmos.

It can come in many ways. There was a German saint, Martin Luther, to whom the Pope sent a notice, 'You withdraw what you say or else you will be executed!' He did not withdraw and his execution was ordered but he died one day before the execution. He used to say, 'I am absolute!' and this is something which the Church would never accept. He felt one with the whole.

But if all is one, there is only one 'One'.

There is, but there are so many other factors which have to be considered along with this theory of oneness too. There is a state called desirelessness and this desirelessness is of many types. I saw in my lifetime one person, Ramana Maharshi, who lived without desire. I observed him for at least ten or fifteen years. He was not concerned whether he ate or not, or

about his own self. He was desireless. He had not suppressed his desires; he was above desires.

Then I lived with Swami Sivananda, who used to tell me to keep tea, coffee, blankets and many things. He said, 'Give it to anyone who deserves it.' My nature was different; I had a room and I did not keep anything with me for the rule is that a sannyasin should keep the minimum. Although people do not really follow it, the rule for a sannyasin in India is that during the period of his sadhana he should keep minimum requirements and not even one thing extra.

That is what I used to keep, but he said, 'No keep minimal requirements for yourself or use the minimum, but keep things for others.' This is another form of desirelessness. One form of desirelessness is – do not desire at all, neither for yourself nor for others. The other form of desire is – do not desire anything for yourself, but you should desire it for the sake of others. Then it is not desire.

But it is still wanting something for other people.

No, how can you say having compassion and mercy for other people is desire? It is not desire. Desire is only that which is guided by selfishness. If there is no selfishness, if there is selflessness, then it is not desire.

It is still a motivation, isn't it? It makes people act in a certain way?

Yes. Therefore, if you want to overcome desires but are not able to, you should try to make your desires as selfless as possible because to become desireless like Ramana Maharishi is not possible for all. And if it so happened that many million people become desireless like Ramana Maharishi, there would be chaos because balance would be lost.

At the same time, you cannot underrate the greatness of desirelessness. How to achieve it? Swami Sivananda said that you can achieve desirelessness by developing selfless desires which you do not call desire. You can call it compassion. In that case, the desires, which you are making for me or for

others and not for yourself, will gradually, one by one, help to purify your mind because it is detachment. You do not have to detach yourself from helping others. You do not have to detach yourself from a person who really needs your help, but you have to detach yourself from the petty desires to which you are attached so much. There is no doubt about it, you have to do it!

Swamiji, is the desire for enlightenment somehow an impediment?

For enlightenment, we do not use the word desire. The particular word is *mumukshu*, meaning the one who wants to liberate himself, the yearning for liberation. When you are aiming for liberation you forget desire. However, in the beginning you can always make this desire, in order to help you to continue your sadhana.

When your sadhana has arrived at a certain point and you are having a little bit of experience, you should become desireless. You should not have hopes. You must drop that idea which you had in the beginning in order to get enlightenment in sadhana. When you have established yourself, even the desire for enlightenment must go. Sadhana alone should remain; the craving for enlightenment must go.

We are taught this particularly because when we do sadhana and experiences come to us we become neurotic. We follow them; we want to understand them; we are very much concerned and obsessed with them because they are so pleasant. The mind has to be withdrawn from those experiences. Even if experiences come, you do not have to chase the experiences. You do not have to be obsessed by them. They will come, but you must only think about sadhana. Usually that does not happen. When you are practising something, one experience is followed by another, and that by another, and that by another and your mantra is gone. You have already lost your contact with the mantra. You are now having contact with a series of experiences.

That is why it is said that once you have established yourself in the path of sadhana you should try not to hanker after enlightenment. When a thorn has pricked you, you take another thorn and take out the thorn that has pricked you and throw away both. You do not maintain the other one. There is also another example in the *Mahabharata*. First of all, you should try to conquer falsehood by truth; and finally, you should renounce both. That is supposed to be an ideal state of life.

What is the purpose of religion?

Bring man closer to the visible man and closer to the invisible man. That is the one purpose of religion, nothing else.



8

Brahmacharya

3 December 1985

Could you tell us about brahmacharya, particularly in the context of tantra?

Brahmacharya means 'roaming in highest consciousness, absolute consciousness'. *Brahma* means 'supreme consciousness' and *charya* means 'to roam'. That is the literal meaning but it has always been used for celibacy – abstention from the sexual act in thought, word and deed.

Some people believe that abstention from the act itself constitutes brahmacharya; others interpret it as the desire which you have to be free from, not the act alone. There is a combination of interlinking between a desire and an action. If someone has a desire and has not acted, they say, he has already acted; and those who have no desire but somehow have acted, have only acted. There are also religious schools who say that thinking, acting, talking and feeling all come under the act of celibacy. They say the sexual act is of eight types, which means the actual act being one, talking to the opposite sex another, and so on. These are religious interpretations.

In tantra, the whole affair takes place between husband and wife. In India, if any family member just wants to do tantric sadhana and picks up anybody, it is not possible. If he or she wants to pick up somebody else, other than their own husband or wife, it is totally impossible. If it is possible,

it cannot be a tantric relationship; it can only be prostitution. Everything happens between husband and wife.

The first element of brahmacharya is no ejaculation. Involvement in the act is not at all assessed, weighed or analyzed; it is only ejaculation which should not take place. Secondly, the female partner should not become pregnant – that is also a part of brahmacharya. So she has to practise amaroli for at least one year prior to the actual involvement of the act. The practice of amaroli is meant for this.

Thirdly, the tantric act of maithuna between husband and wife who are the two spiritual partners should not be based on passion. If a man wants to have the sexual act with a girl, he has to have passion. If there is no passion, the idea itself might not come; there might be a little attraction but actually the act cannot take place. However, in tantra it is said no passion, not only no passion but your passionate temper has to cool down. There are many types of appliances, the most famous form is the smearing of ashes, *bhasma*, to the whole body. There is also reference in many places to applying oil profusely – not a little bit of oil but so much that if you touch the body it is greasy. These two things present a person in a very non-passionate way. Whatever passion you have, you look at the person and it just cools down! So this is also brahmacharya because your mind is calm and quiet, tranquil, not ruffled by passion because the cause for passion is not there.

This act has to take place only between the people who have practised sahajoli, vajroli, moolabandha, uddiyana, even nauli and they also have to know the breath systems, inspiration and expiration. They have to synchronize absolutely as if they were one. The movements of the act and the breath have to synchronize with each other so you are more concerned with the counting and synchronizing of the breath.

The days of practice are also suggested; you cannot practise on all days. For example, when a tragic death has taken place in the family where you are also a little bit

involved, you should not practise. Then there are many days and times also when you should practise. It is sometimes in the middle of the night.

In hatha yoga, it is said that you should also be able to reverse the process of energy which takes place in the practice of vipareeta karani mudra. When you are not allowing the *bindu* or the drop to go to mooladhara chakra or yoni chakra, but it comes back, then this is called holding the bindu and holding the bindu means brahmacharya.

Therefore, we have a two-fold definition of brahmacharya. One is the religious definition of abstinence in thought, word and deed; I should not even think about anyone. In tantra this is not there if you have your own husband or wife, accepted socially according to the laws of the land or traditions of the country. In the West, it is possible but people have not at all gone deep into it. They have either just equated brahmacharya with abstention or they have equated tantra merely with the sexual act. They have not talked about passionlessness.

There is another point – one-pointedness. I will give you a very gross example. In the evening or at night when it is dark and you want to read some book, you put on the light not because you want to look at the light but in order to read. Therefore, the purpose of this particular act is something other than the act itself. The act is only a sort of putting on the light.

It has been found that out of all the pratyahara practices of yoga and tantra, whether it is raja yoga pratyahara, bhakti yoga pratyahara system, jnana yoga or any other yoga's pratyahara system, this is the most successful pratyahara act. With this, you can remain engulfed in one state of consciousness without being disturbed by any other form or idea. At least for ten, fifteen or twenty minutes, you are able to confine your mind within a particular area where no other thought interferes. This is the only practice.

After this, there are other practices not as successful as this, like pranayama, by which you can control the mind.

Therefore, the practice of concentration must be at your beck and call. Concentration means to hold an idea, object or feeling within the mind for a particular period of time – that is called *dharana*. What experience are you having at that time? You are having some kind of experience which may be dependent on what we call the interaction between the senses and the idea or the senses and the object – some experience is taking place. Either it is a mild, pleasant, breaking, or an explosive experience, some experience is going on. You experience that experience at your centre.

Your centre has to be either *brumadhya* or *anahata*; it cannot be *mooladhara* because the experience is already taking place in *mooladhara*. The gross centre of experience is *mooladhara*; you have to withdraw your mind from there. Actually, you do not have to withdraw your mind from there because you have already practised *dharana* for a very long time prior to your present practice of *tantra*. So, you take your mind away to your centre and experience the experience which you are experiencing; you feel the experience at a higher centre and not at *mooladhara chakra*.

This is *brahmacharya* according to *tantra* where you neither lose your passion nor your *bindu*, neither does the girl lose her *ojas*, nervous energy, nothing. This relationship and practice has been spoken of in different books; and accordingly, different systems have been created. The first is *vedachara*, acting according to your *dharma*, your social laws and the instructions of the *Vedas*. The *Vedas* have instructed very clearly that up to the age of twenty-five you should observe *brahmacharya*, celibacy – that is the Hindu teaching. After twenty-five, you marry because that is the *dharma* and that is not only for progeny and pleasure, but for your spiritual evolution. That is called the injunction of the *Vedas* – the central teaching.

After twenty-five years of married life or householder's life, you disconnect yourself – no more physical relationship, nothing – just live like two individuals trying to progress towards the spiritual path, *dhyana*, *samadhi* or *sannyasa*.

Therefore, the relationship between husband and wife in relation to tantric practices will be considered according to the laws of the Vedas.

The second is *vamachara* or *vamamarga* which is translated as left hand tantra. The first is called vedic *marga* or path in which you take care of the social acceptances and rejections. After all, every cult, religion, form of worship or prayer has to receive the acceptance of the people with whom you are living. After all, you are not alone. Whether you live in England or India, there has to be some sort of respect for acceptability and rejections. So vedachara is what you do according to the injunctions of the scriptures, the Puranas or Bible. This is the path which has been given, now you do whatever you like. You may practise tantra or mantra. We don't care because society has accepted it.

In *vamachara*, women of certain types have to be taken in, not all. Their names are indicated in books written many years ago and the situations, professions and the type of people have also changed since then. If they say washer woman, you do not have washer women in England, so how will you find one? You have to re-interpret that idea because it is only certain types of people who are qualified because of their mentality, innocence, unsophisticated philosophy or something else. That is called *vamachara*. The third system is called *kaulachara* which means whatever is going to happen has to happen within the framework of the family; you do not go outside.

According to these three types, you can divide the whole world, particularly India. The land of *kaulachara* is in the north of Bihar on the other side of the Ganga. Bengal and Orissa were the origin of the system of *vamachara*. Kashmir, South India and other provinces like Gujarat were the centres of *vedachara* once upon a time.

When the Muslims invaded the country, they used these things to undermine the respectability of the people. So the Hindus withdrew from performing these practices openly because any act which causes political danger should be

avoided by a yogi or anyone else. Therefore, a yogi has to avoid such circumstances as much as possible. If he cannot do it, just make it a secret practice, or confine it to a closed group of individuals.

Tantrism was a private practice in India practised through initiation. When Buddhism became a great movement in India and developed its Mahayana religious system, it started a big institution about sixty miles east of Munger where they practised these practices more or less openly. People knew about it and thousands used to go there.

As a result of that, there were a lot of objections. A lot of voices were raised in India at that time saying, 'An individual has every freedom to practise anything, but not an institution.' I am talking about the Hindu mind. For example, I smoke opium or ganja. It does not matter, but if I make all the people in the ashram smoke, society will not accept it. The same thing exists also in European countries. If you smoke nobody cares, but if you start asking all your disciples to smoke you will be in trouble.

The people in the Vikramshila University were openly preaching this like Rajneesh in Oregon. What Rajneesh says is not wrong or whatever the Vikramshila people, Mahayanis, were saying was not wrong, but right and wrong has to be in the interest and within the framework of the social consciousness.

So, these Mahayanis had a lot of difficulties here. They were completely wiped out because if you want to practise anything for attainment of higher consciousness, you do it. Who stops you from doing it? But do not disturb others because there are people with diverse sensitivities. Everybody is not the same. You may not be sensitive, but another person may be sensitive or have different values and you may have your own. How will your values coincide? In a country where there are millions of people, you cannot expect everyone to accept your institutional ways.

The Mahayana growth was the main reason why Buddhism was wiped out of this country. There is no doubt that

there are people who practise it even today. I practised at the age of eighteen or nineteen for six months. I had a guru who taught me. There is nothing to hide; nothing to conceal. After all, when you learn something you have to practise it. You try to involve yourself in all the adventures, why isolate only one adventure?

You do it with the utmost sense of responsibility and without the desire of enjoying, of experiencing the climax or orgasm, with calmness and quietness, the mind centred in anahata chakra or bruhamadhyā, acting the act, and transcending the act.

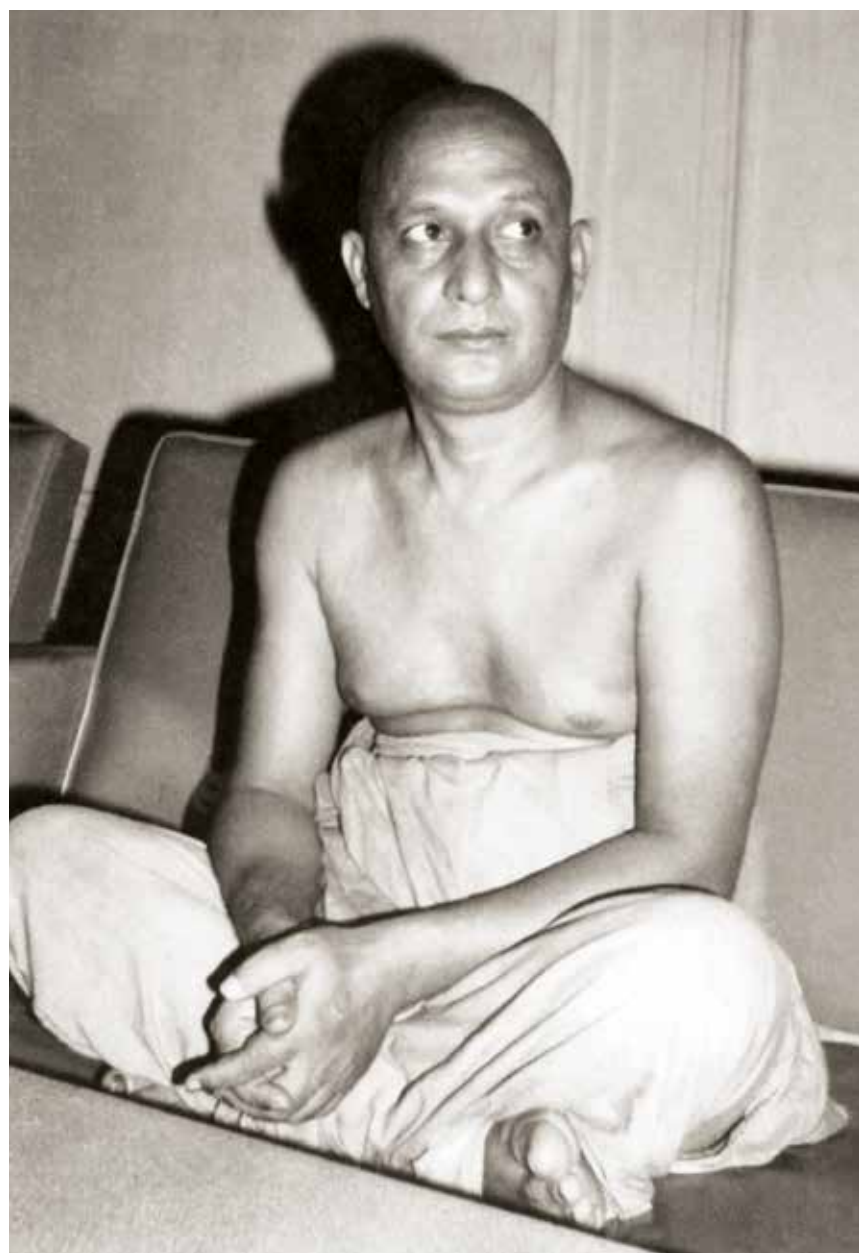
That is called brahmacharya because your mind is constantly roaming in absolute consciousness. You are only aware of Shiva; you are only aware of Brahma; you are only aware of the bhavana. You are not aware of the act. You are only using the bulb because you have to read the book. The act is only the means. It is a tool and by experience it has been found that this is one act where man can for a particular period of time lose himself and remain one-pointed. Why not utilize this for a higher flight?

When a small baby starts expressing itself, what is its level of consciousness?

In nine months, it has undergone the evolution of many million or billion years, which the evolution of life on this planet has undergone from the time when the first fungus was born.

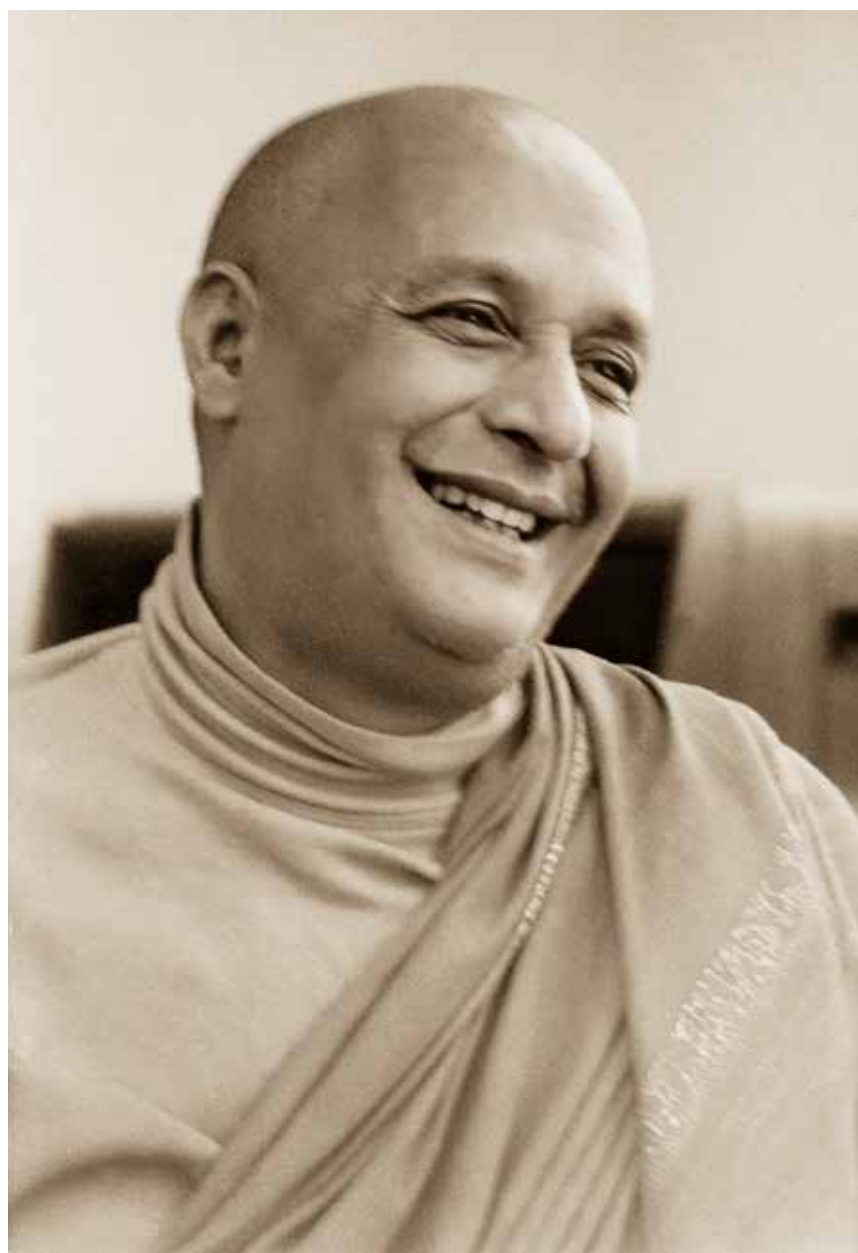
A child is actually passing through the entire cycle of evolution from a single cell amoeba to this state, physically and mentally. The child will be living on the plane of instinct. All the laughter, innocent smiles, wailing, weeping, crying, shouting and jumping, even the child's speech is instinctive. He does not think.

That thinking comes at different ages, either at five, six, seven, eight, or nine. In India, we have fixed that period of departure from instinct into intellect at seven or eight years. When the pineal gland begins to decay, a little bit of self-









awareness develops in the individual and it is at that time that the most important samskara, the mantra, is given.

In human beings, the most important thing is the witnessing self, not the acting self. You find in all intelligent animals the acting self, sensual acts and physical acts. There are animals which are as intelligent as human beings but only for a short time. They just become aware; they just come out of that instinctive stage and for a very short time, they become aware of their existence, of themselves in relation to time, space and object. They know and then it wanes.

Even in human beings it happens. A child does not develop this self-witnessing consciousness all of a sudden. It comes to him for a short period, then it wanes; then it comes again and again it wanes. As he grows, and if nothing wrong happens in his life, then this will grow more and more and the waning will be infrequent and become less. The mind which I have is continuity. When I was a child, I was instinctive. When I grew up, I became aware of myself, the ego, then I forgot it. Now I have the same mind but the consciousness has changed. My ego is the same. I have not changed my ego or my personality; I have not changed the nucleus of my existence. The jivatma is the same but the awareness has become different.

If I want, I can practise my awareness in different dimensions – I know that I know that I am talking to you. This is called the witnessing consciousness and this can happen only when the ego is separated. You can use the word ‘ego’ or you can use any other word. With this the individual relates consciously with time, space and events in relation to himself. A dog sees you running, that is all. It does not relate your running to itself. But when you walk, I can relate it to myself because I am the knower that you are walking. I am the seer that you are happy; I am the seer and I am the knower that you are not happy. I am able to relate my consciousness with you through a process of cognition.

There is perception and cognition. In some cases, there is only perception and no cognition. In some cases, there is

perception and cognition both and in some cases there is perception, cognition and analysis or rationalization at the same time. That indicates the maturity of *manas*, mind, chitta and buddhi.



9

Satsang

3 December 1985

When you die and want to donate parts of your body, does it affect the karma of the person who inherits it?

No. In my opinion, destiny is not that rigid. If you have to be blind, you shall be blind. There is no such law of nature. Let me make it clearer. A man is blind and he dies. He could not get eyes because medical science could not discover that particular law of nature by which he could get eyes. In the case where somebody is able to discover the law of nature, it is possible that the cornea can be transplanted from one person to another and the blind person can see.

Here, the person has not destroyed the logical formation or process of destiny, but he has added a new dimension to a man's life. Thereby, he has added an amendment to the rigidity of destiny. Maybe, after a few years, you may be able to keep a man alive for two thousand years.

The point is that we are not playing with destiny or the law of nature. We are working within the framework of nature. Nature is a process where there is a lot of potential and possibility, but no intelligence. Nature is a law, a system; it has no individual intelligence. It is inert, *prakriti*. Purusha is intelligent. *Prakriti* or nature is not intelligent. That is the point.

Therefore, nature keeps on moving as it is unless somebody reveals its law to somebody else, like the scientists have

been doing in many ways. So, they discovered the laws of nature and by discovering the laws of nature, they fixed the rigidity of destiny. Therefore, it does not really mean anything. Man can live for two thousand years. It is possible. The physical body can become immortal. We do not wish for it, but it is possible.

People recite mantras after a person dies for thirteen days until the soul is reborn. Does it have any spiritual effect or is it just religious?

You have put me in a very difficult situation. You know my views about religion. There was a time when people in this country knew the mantras and through those mantras they used to alter the events of life. Now they cannot do it. Even when there used to be war between Rama and Ravana and others, they would use mantras. By remembering the mantra, they used to invoke the Shakti, like the agni anushthana. You can call it psychic warfare or mantric warfare. I think it is possible although we do not see it today. Therefore, this can be said to be purely religious and not spiritual.

Then the mantras do not actually help the departed soul?

These mantras are only repeated for your consolation, not for the consolation of the departed. The man who has left the body is going to be reborn either according to his own karma or he is not going to be reborn at all, but I doubt that your mantra or your prayers will reach him. I call it religious superstition. The departed person will only go according to his karma.

What if you die reciting God's name?

There are people who recite God's name because they know they will be saved. If you have desires, you do not have to do it because desire is a part and parcel of yourself. With the desire to sing the name of God all the time and have devotion for God, naturally you will be born with that feeling.

However, you should remember that the last thought in man's life is the same thought which he has been harbouring,

keeping in his bosom, nourishing, cherishing, wanting and imagining throughout his life.

Can we make our last thought our sankalpa?

Yes, you can but you must also remember that many times, when the last moment arrives, you usually lose that amount of self-control.

If one repeats the mantra, goes into meditation and prays not for the sake of the person who is departed, but ties up the loose ends of this relationship?

That is perfectly all right but a departed man is gone – that's all!

Is there anything in our psychic field which will make a difference to the person who is departed?

For a departed man, nobody can do anything and those who do it, do it for their own sake, not for his sake. Many people, thousands and millions of them, offer flowers and do many rituals after the soul departs, but they do it for their own psychological problems. After the departure of the jiva from the body, the departed is reduced to a seed state, just like the big mango tree is reduced to a small seed.

What is the triggering point that a particular womb gets chosen? What triggers the seed to start growing again?

It is his own desire which he had during his lifetime, the main desire, the last desire, the ultimate desire. When he was leaving the body, when the body was dying, the last desire becomes responsible for the first reincarnation.

When a person is dying, does he know that it is his last moment?

Everybody knows but does not want to know it. There is a story in the *Mahabharata* called *Yaksha Prashnaha*, the question of Yaksha. Yaksha is asking a question to each of the five Pandava brothers but they were so arrogant they did not

reply and so they fainted. While going through the forest, Yudhishthira, the eldest brother, comes to him, and Yaksna says, “Reply to my questions before you fill up your drum with water for your mother, only then will I allow you to take water”. The first question was, “What is the most surprising thing in this world?” Yudhishthira replies, “Almost every day, in the morning and evening, we see people dying but those who are not dead crave for immortality”.

Can the jiva choose his mother?

There are two types of jiva: the *yogi jiva* who has placed his consciousness in yoga and the *bhogi jiva* who has placed his consciousness in the pleasant things of life. The individual souls, which are prone to sensual desires at the time of death, become unconscious and do not decide where they go after death, which realm they enter into or which womb they go to.

There is another agency which decides for them. They cannot choose their parents because they have not done anything in their lifetime. They have only been running after the shadow.

If you practise yoga and if you are able to meditate at the time of death, you can withdraw your mind from outside and place your mind in the atma, the jyoti, light or whatever. You just remain there. That person, when he leaves the body, will leave with three-dimensional consciousness, he can choose his parentage, his mother and situation. Not everyone can do it. Most are like shuttlecocks; come and go; come and go.

Tibetans know when their time is coming and they spend the last year or a year and a half just preparing for it.

I have studied these things and I always take them as a religious tradition. Because when you have decided one thing, that action produces an equal and an opposite reaction. Then where is the question of bringing in the mantra and prayer?

The ultimate thing has been said, even by the Buddhists and everyone else, that the law of action and reaction is equal and opposite and that law is like granite – stern, unalterable.

If I live in Tibet and I know that I have half a year, I can spend it preparing for departing.

Yes, what will you prepare for departure?

I would go by my intuition; I don't know what my intuition would tell me.

You have prepared for sixty-five, seventy-five or eighty-five years, what can that half year do? I have always had this problem with everybody. I say, 'You have been making a house for eighty-five years. It was made in the local style or Dutch style. Now the last half year you want to turn it into a Burmese style house. It is not possible!'

You cannot change the structure of man's karma. It will influence you and the course of actions. I am talking about something which applies to everyone. There may be a few souls here and there who may be an exception to this law. There are people who have gone out of these laws but they are only a dozen or so; they are not a few thousand. There are people who have just done it.

Whenever we do anything, we know the end result of most of the karma yoga that we do. So, in a way it is expecting that result. So then how is that action karma yoga?

No, it is not karma yoga. It is karma. Karma yoga is that particular karma in which you have withdrawn or you have renounced hope, expectation and your self-involvement in it. The karma which I do I do for myself. How can that be karma yoga?

It has to be done in the spirit of karma yoga, not for the sake of the fruit. If you own a business or have your own family, you do have hopes and expectations. That is not karma yoga when you expect something. If it is positive, you are happy. If it is negative, you are unhappy. Then, how can it be karma yoga? When you feel that compassion, mercy and grace are your duties or maybe helping others is your duty, it is karma yoga.

10

Upanishads and Puranas

4 December 1985

Could you please explain a verse in the *Keno Upanishad*?

The subject matter of the *Keno Upanishad* is 'By Whom'. If you do not give the title *Keno Upanishad* but an English title, it would be 'By Whom'. The word *keno* means 'by whom', so this is an Upanishad which deals with the question, 'by whom?' The first sloka says (1:1):

*Om Keneshitam Patati Preshitam Manah Kena Praanah
Prathamah Praiti Yuktah; Keneshitaam Vaachamimaam Vadanti
Chakshuh Shrotram Ka U Devo Yunakti.*

By whose will is the mind directed towards its goal? By whose order does prana proceed to perform its duty? By whose command does a person utter speech? Who directs the eyes and ears to their respective sensory objects?

Like that there are questions, 'By whom?' and then the reply is given. The reply is given in relation to the mind and pranas. 'He who cannot be thought by the mind, but through which one knows about the mind, know him to be the ultimate truth and not this, what you worship here in this world.' This is how the translation of a few verses go, 'He who is not attainable through prana and whom the pranas do not know, He is the absolute self and not this that you worship.'

There is a very simple question that comes to everyone's mind – 'who directs the mind, the speech and the life-force?' One can easily say that the senses bring the stimulus and the mind receives that stimulus and then directs the senses. This Upanishad says, 'The senses, *indriyas*, have a very limited capacity. Speech has its limitations and the mind also has its limitations. The senses are capable to a certain extent, but they are not complete and therefore, if we say that the senses and the mind are autonomous, it is not true.'

There is a parable in the *Keno Upanishad*. A yaksha or an invisible being appears and asks the fire and the air to burn or blow at a blade of grass and they cannot do it. That means, in order to prove that even a blade of grass cannot be moved by the power of the senses and the power of the mind, there has to be some other agency behind the senses and the mind. That particular force, power or agency is the directing cause. He is the director. It is through his direction, his monitoring that the senses, the *pranas* and the mind work, and then everything works and happens.

This means that the senses, the *prana* and the mind are not the directors. They are only actors; they are acting; they do not monitor. Each and every sense, each and every *indriya* has its own inherent quality, like the eyes can see, so perception, seeing is the quality of the eyes; audition is the quality of the ears. Similarly, with the other senses. They will perform the quality which they inherit only if there is a commander or director. It is something like this – the fan cannot move if there is no electricity, the tube lights do not illumine if there is no electrical current. In the same way, if the monitor or director is not there, the senses are inert, incapable and inefficient.

At the end of the parable, when the fire and air could not burn, blow at the blade of grass, or do anything to it, a beautiful lady appeared and said that she was the monitor. Here the appearance of the lady is what we call the highest cosmic force in an individual represented by the lady, Uma Hemavati. Then she gives her instructions.

Sri Aurobindo's translation is very difficult and the language is mystical. Of course, it is not wrong but it is literary and academic. The best translation is by Shankaracharya published by the Ramakrishna Mission. That is the only authentic source, as far as commentary and meaning are concerned, because in the Indian tradition each and every word has to be interpreted with a back-dated reference.

If you interpret any word as you understand it, that is not acceptable. Even with a particular word, if you give your own meaning, you have to mention the source from which you got this meaning. Then there are certain sources in philosophy, only certain books which are considered to be the reference books. Not everything that we write is a reference book. On the basis of what is written in those books, the Upanishads have to be translated and commented upon.

So you have to be an expert to read them?

In India, we do not really read the Upanishads directly. Prior to the study of the Upanishads we first have to study the mythological part, the Puranas, like the *Ramayana*, *Srimad Bhagavatam*, *Mahabharata*. These are all stories about fighting, love, quarrel, marriage, hatred, cruelty and passion. The Puranas are very big books – twenty thousand verses, fifty thousand verses, one hundred thousand verses. Most Indians know those stories through which we obtain entry into the mystical meaning of the Upanishad.

Maybe it is rather typical of the western mind to want to go straight to the point, without really working through it?

No, it is not typical of the western mind because the western mind is much more analytical and systematic than the Indian mind. I do not think that it is the western mind. It is just some sort of modern mind that wants to jump into the Upanishads or start with the Vedas. The western mind is not like that. The western mind analyzes an object at the grassroots level whether it is philosophy, chemistry, physics, biology, or anything. Each and everything is dealt with in

detail and it is a very progressive system. You cannot say, that they just jumped at the theory of relativity. It is some sort of new mind, nowadays. In India or Japan, modern people anywhere are a peculiar race. They just want to become multi-millionaires overnight, without undergoing the courses in business, economics and management. They just want to make money overnight. It is a peculiar tendency. The same thing with samadhi; they just want to practise direct, straight samadhi! That is why they are thrown off.

We understand and know very well that for every kind of knowledge you have to start with the basics. For knowledge of language, music, painting, carpentry or stitching, you start at the basic level. The same thing applies with *brahmavidya*, the science of the absolute. If you start from the Upanishads, you will be confused because the concepts are not clear by philosophical example. The philosophical truths must be demonstrated, revealed or interpreted through stories. Let me tell you about the story of Radha and Krishna.

Krishna was born in Mathura when his parents were under house arrest. He escaped on the night of his birth across the Yamuna river to some other village. Then the king, who wanted to kill him, had all the young children killed. It is a repetition of the story of Jesus birth in the Bible. The attempts to assassinate him were very frequent!

When Krishna was eight or nine, he had a girlfriend and her name was Radha. She loved him very much because he used to play his flute and she would go into a trance. This friendship developed between them and they are remembered together to this day. In India, we always say Radhe-Shyam or Radhe-Krishna. They were not married. They did not live together. They were together only during childhood because Krishna left that settlement when he was thirteen. After the age of thirteen, he did not meet Radha at all, but they loved each other for the entire lifetime. When he left Vrindavan, Radha was very sorry about it. Krishna went to Mathura, the place where his parents were under house arrest and released them because they were the real rulers. When he left, he gave his flute

to Radha and said, 'I sang for you and now I will not sing; I will not play the flute anymore.' After the age of thirteen, fourteen or fifteen he never played the flute. Childhood was the time when the love was intense between Radha and Krishna.

After he left Vrindavan he remained in Mathura for some years. Then he had to leave Mathura, too, because it was invaded again and again. He left for the western part of India, Dwarka, where he established his own settlement and kingdom. He married eight girls, one after the other. This is a very simple story which we read every day. Kartik Poornima is very closely associated with the life of Krishna because on that full moon night he made a *rasa lila*. The children used to dance and every cowherd girl who danced with Krishna would feel and see that she had one Krishna by her side. This is the story, how far it is true remains to be seen.

When we come to the Upanishads and philosophy these stories explain things to us. Krishna is to be identified with consciousness, *purusha*. Purusha has its two counter parts called *prakriti*, nature, the cosmic nature, not just ordinary nature. This cosmic nature again is two-fold: one is the cosmic nature responsible for creation and dissolution, for whatever is happening; and one is the indwelling presence in each and every living being. This means that nature is present in each and every object and consciousness is also present in each and every object.

The law of the lower cosmic nature, which is responsible for creation and dissolution, is made up of eight tattwas, not five. These tattwas represent the eight counterparts of Krishna, explained by the word marriage. Marriage means coming together, living together, interacting together, merging into each other and supporting each other; that is the meaning of marriage. When two things come together you can say that is marriage. The stories explain things to us so that when we read the Upanishads it becomes easier for us; we understand them through stories.

Then we also have music, singing. Most of us sing songs by outstanding saints, not just poets. We like poems, but so far

as the truth is concerned, we do not believe in poets. We believe in saint-poets like Tulsidas, Mira, Kabir and many others. There are hundreds in India who have written songs and their songs are sung by different people from north to south. In Uttar Pradesh and Bihar *Ramacharitamanas*, the *Ramayana* are very famous. As you go to the south of India and to Maharashtra, people have Gyaneshwara, Tukaram, Nam Dev and many other great saint-poets and their songs. These songs are not just simple songs. They are on the lips of everyone. Most Indians know hundreds of these songs. We start from childhood and as we grow, these songs tell us the meaning.

There is a song which talks about the higher stage of bhakti when you become intoxicated and get a different experience altogether. In one song it says, '*Pile, pile, hari nam ka pyala*', 'Hey! You should drink the cup of God's name.' 'You drink it yourself and then you give some to others and become intoxicated.' These are two lines from the song.

There is another song by Mirabai which talks about the ascending of kundalini. It says, 'When will my darling come? When will my husband come? When will my lover come? I am waiting for him and my eyes are on the path, the road that leads to my house, to me. I know that when he comes I will hear his footsteps. I may not see him, but by hearing his footsteps I will come to know that he is coming.' Now what are those footsteps? When somebody is coming from outside, how do you know? You do not see him; you hear the footsteps. How do you know that higher consciousness is dawning on you? There are certain footsteps and these footsteps are experiences. Then again she says, 'I climbed every floor of the house, not once but many times, and I am expecting him, but I do not know when he is going to come.' These floors relate to the states of consciousness, they do not really mean the first, second and third floors of a house. They are the *chakras*, the planes of consciousness or the different lokas.

When we sing these songs, they make things so clear to us that sometimes people do not even ask me to explain them. Those who have a systematic teaching do not ask many

questions because they already understand. In the story of Rama, his wife is kidnapped and he has to fight, which tells us all about what happens in man's life when he is trying to tread the spiritual path.

The Ramakrishna Mission's translation of Shankaracharya's commentary is nice, but you will have another difficulty; it may or may not be possible for you to pick up some very subtle things. Number one, these Upanishads are explained not only by Shankaracharya, but by many great teachers and each teacher has his own philosophy. We have many such philosophies. One, the absolute self is only one and everything is his appearance and not different from him. Appearance is not different from reality; reality is the base for appearance. Appearance and reality are not two things; they are one and the same.

However, some people say, 'This is not true', and they found their own logical fallacies. Another acharya says, 'Just as the sun is shining and emits its rays in the form of light, although it has sprung from the sun, it is not the sun. In the same way, this individual self is not God, but the spark or transmitted light of God.' There are different shades of philosophy in India because we do not believe that the definition, explanation or answer for a question is just one. What you have said is all right, but I won't accept that you have said the last word.

For example, one lady says something and maybe she is right because she is brilliant and she has done a lot of austerities. She has purified herself. She has renounced things. She has a strong mind. She is unselfish. She is not doing anything for herself – so the explanation which she gives may be all right, but I won't accept that she has the last word on it. That is the problem with Indians. For us there is nobody so far who has given the last word on reality. We think that there are different aspects of truth, but we do not know if the truth has so many aspects. It is only your speculation when you say truth has many shades; truth has many spectrums. You have not seen it.

How can you know which aspects of nature are the truth, are the One?

We decide it in a different way. You must do something in order to render your mind more capable, sensitive and deep, finer and purer, whichever way you want to do it. Whether you believe in an abstract God or a concrete God, an idol God or guru, you just render your mind pure and more capable so that your cognition will be flawless.

Just as a man with eye problems, with jaundiced eyes or cataract cannot see the object as it is. When a man's mind is impure and assailed by passions, his cognition of the object cannot be a true cognition. In order to have true cognition of the object, it is necessary to render the mind that is, the third eye, pure. Otherwise, whatever definitions you hear from others, you just study and accept them. After all, we believe in one thing. If you are making scientific statements in physics, you have to be a qualified person. If you make statements about economics, you have to be a qualified person in economics. Everybody cannot and should not make statements about economics. And even if one makes them, you are not supposed to believe it.

In the same way, saints and sages, let us use the word gurus, may say a thing, but before they say it they have to qualify it. Now the qualification of a guru is not how much he can explain, but how much he can experience. You can explain things by going through one thousand, five hundred and thirty-three books; however, you cannot experience through books. In order to experience, you have to lay open your life, expose it to different disciplines. You have to expose your body, mind, intention, aspirations, beliefs and taboos to different disciplines and these disciplines are sometimes difficult and cannot be followed by many people. We should believe only those people who have managed to follow, accomplish and fulfil those disciplines.

This is where the West has not got the right attitude because modern people in East and West are now trying to know the truth while not wanting to lose what they have.

Light and darkness cannot co-exist. In the same way, desire and desirelessness cannot co-exist. That is precisely the reason why all the saints, including the Christian, Muslim, Buddhist and Jewish traditions followed strict discipline. You will know if you read the stories of how all great saints lived.

Saints have no religion. Saint Francis had no religion. Christ had no religion; Christ was born a Jew. I am born a Hindu. Buddha was born a Hindu. Moses was born a Jew. But they outgrew all these denominations. Even if they have a denomination, it does not matter. Saints have followed certain difficult disciplines, displaying strength of mind and body, because one cannot display the strength of mind and body without fulfilling the discipline. When we know that a man's body and mind are so strong that he can survive under any circumstances, we believe such a man. He is outstanding and this is the definition of gurus.



11

Satsang

4 December 1985

Can you tell us something about sankalpa?

Man is born with a sankalpa. Everybody has a sankalpa in him. I am not talking about desires. You want to have children. You want to have them educated and get them married. You want to have a lot of money. This is desire, your wish and what you want. Man is born with a sankalpa, but does not really know it. In order to know what your sankalpa is, you have to wait patiently. During that time, you should try and discover your own sankalpa – the one you really have. It takes time but once you have discovered your sankalpa it works wonders in life. It is a very fulfilling experience.

Everybody is on the scale of evolution. At a particular point of evolution, everybody has a sankalpa which they want to attain in life.

Does one know that one has a sankalpa?

No. If one has a birth analysis or if one is brought to the point of hypnotism and is made to speak again and again, then one can compel the person to speak his sankalpa. Sometimes it happens. Many years ago there was a sannnyasin here. She was about twenty-five and she was doing very well. However, one day many years ago when I was in another ashram, I gave her a session in hypnotism and she said, “I want to go back and marry.” In real life she was entirely different, she was

very disciplined. When she came out of the session, she did not know what she had said. I made her grow her hair and purchase a sari and all the necessary things. One day I called her and said, “I am going to give you a present.” I gave her the present, informed her parents and sent her back. That was her sankalpa.

The construction of the human mind is such that the originality of the mind cannot be realized. This is because the mind is extremely brainwashed and indoctrinated by the society in which you live, by the culture you follow, by the religion you believe in or by the values which you endear. We have created our own pigeon holes from our local life; and therefore, we are not able to reveal our innate desire or our innate, inherent sankalpa. We do not know it. Once you are quiet, the mind becomes quiet and disturbances are removed. Then you can have a glimpse.

Do you think we know it best when we are children, when we are very young?

Children are also brainwashed and programmed. We are all programmed people. The more civilized we are, the more programmed we are. If the de-programming has to start, we will be able to realize our own sankalpa.

Do you think that we waste a lot of time chasing after things we do not really want?

It is not important what we want today. It is important what our government wants. It is important what our system wants. It is important what our society as a whole wants. It is not important what you want; your wanting has no place. You are not a free individual. You are only given a sort of hallucination that you are free, but you are not free. I mean political freedom is a farce; economic freedom is a farce. You have got your own cobwebs from parents, religion, society, political gurus, friends and maybe from your own idiosyncrasies. You have to get out of that, you have to be the deeper man.

Swamiji, can you speak on yantras?

Yantras in my opinion are geometrical formations of certain universal forces. I am not talking about the natural forces like electric waves. There are invisible forces in nature which are beyond the reach of the human mind. Therefore, if you have to invoke them or explain them, you do not know how to present them. One of the ways which the mystics and occultists have found is that of geometrical diagrams. It appears that in the higher or the greater and deeper reality these forces actually have a form. This means that geometric formations or *yantra* represent the actual form of an invisible and supramental force or forces.

Shiva is not a god. *Shiva* means auspiciousness and it is indicated by an oval-shaped stone – a monolith black in colour. This particular stone is not made. It happens that these oval-shaped stones, or *Shivalingam*, become visible. They come out from the ground, from underneath the earth.

A few years ago close to Munger, a farmer was ploughing his land like every year. One day his plough struck against some hard stuff. He dug and found the top of a Shivalingam. The Shivalingam was about three metres long.

We have twelve important Shivalingams. One is in Pashupatinath, in Kathmandu, Nepal. Another one is in Rameshwaram at the southern corner of India. These Shivalingams are the visual manifestations in the form of a mandala, not yantras. A mandala means a particular object that has various forms in which it can reveal itself. It can reveal itself in the geometrical form as yantra or in the form of a Shivalingam or maybe in an actual human form. We call it anthropomorphic. Sometimes in animal form called therianthropic or half animal and half human form. They do not really exist and we read about them in books of mythology, religions and mysticism. In Egypt, they have figures which are half animal and half human. They indicate the form of a particular force in the universe.

In the last fifty or one hundred years, a lot of knowledge has been revealed about the vast physical, visible, tangible

universe. However, we should also know that a lot of this universe is in total darkness, still unmanifest. The whole universe has not yet come into manifestation. One part of the universe is manifest like the sun, the moon, planets, solar galaxies, nebulae and asteroids which we know through science. There is a part of the universe which is much larger than what is visible and which is unmanifest, in perpetual darkness. In the universe that exists in perpetual darkness, what can you expect to have? Nothing.

In the universe there is matter and energy. Sometimes matter and energy are together; sometimes this energy is free from matter; it just moves. They are called the forces of energy. Matter and energy are the two things in the universe. Matter contains energy or is the gross form of energy. It also happens in this universe that invisible forces just go this way or that way. How are you going to picture those forces and what is the form of that force? That exactly is yantra.

Swamiji, how should one use a yantra?

There are many ways of using the yantra. One very popular way of using the yantra is just looking at it, not through the mind. The mind is involved only a little bit. You have to use your eyes and simple awareness, the awareness of a child, not the awareness of a grown-up man. We have the mind, thinking, intellectual logic, understanding, common sense, so many things. Use none of that. Just see the yantra like an innocent child and be aware the whole time – just awareness and seeing. That is how we use yantra.

So that force is very present?

That force exists. We also put a yantra in a small casket and place it underneath the building in the foundation. I made a Sri Yantra out of copper and put it in the foundations of the Ganga Darshan Main Building when I laid the foundations in 1982.

How do we mark the passage of time in India?

We write the Gregorian calendar year and we write the Indian year both. We use three years, the Gregorian calendar, the solar year and the lunar year because Indians believe in two systems, the lunar and the solar: solar for the purpose of counting the days, lunar for the purpose of deciding the accurate and exact position of the constellations and stars which most Indians know. We know where Venus is today; we know where Jupiter is today. Most of us know the position of the sun and the position of a particular star in relation to Jupiter or Venus. We have to practise it almost every day, like a ritual. The ladies are perfect in it. They know that today the moon has lost one phase. The moon has fifteen phases. Sometimes it has thirteen as it loses two phases.

Swamiji, are samskaras worked out in any particular order or is it a random affair?

Samskaras should be worked out by expressing and living them. Secondly, samskaras can be worked out by going deep into pratyahara, dharana or dhyana and then transforming them in the form of visions. When you have not lost your individual ego and are still in the level of duality, and you enter into the stage of pratyahara or dharana at that time, you have a lot of visions and feelings. It is nothing important. It is only a transformed version of your samskaras. You are expressing your samskaras in that form. This can happen in the state of pratyahara, dharana, in deep meditation and in the earlier stages of samadhi. The deeper you go the greater is the fixing process of the samskaras. These are the two important methods.

For the third method, you must impose upon yourself some sort of hardships voluntarily, then the whole mind gets a jolting and all kinds of things come out of the mind. The mind begins to express the things during this period of hardship. This hardship is known as *tapasya* or penance. This is a negative process.

Alongside, if you expose yourself to satsang and accept the ideas of *vairagya* or detachment, selfless service and

compassion, then they influence the quality of the samskaras. It means you are now adding positive samskaras. So first the positive has to overcome the negative. After the negative has been eliminated the positive should also be eliminated. In the scheme of self-realization, even the positive samskara is a bondage and obstruction. Everybody becomes content by eliminating the negative samskaras by replacing them with the positive ones. However, if you want to go deeper into spiritual life, even the positive samskaras have to be withdrawn.

Most religions say that you should live life according to the canons, the laws of religion, and thereby you will be at ease, relax your samskaras and be happy. Spiritual cults influenced by the modern psychological thought of Freud and other branches of psychology have influenced many spiritual thinkers like Krishnamurti, Acharya Rajneesh and others, a little bit myself too. We feel there is some truth in it, so why not accept it. Psychology is not a yoga cult, but if there is something nice why should we not accept it for the good of the people? Therefore, many of these people who have been involved in spiritual teaching have added psychological processes or the modern psychological philosophy. They say that it is also the truth. Let us see which is the best one.

Is it possible to mix a little bit of psychology with yoga techniques?

You do not have to mix. There are only two things. All the religious philosophies of Hindus, Muslims, Christians or Jews say just one thing, 'Control your mind, control your thought. If a bad thought comes to you, stop it, do not think it.' Psychology says, 'Think it.' Religions as a whole do not do any research. Most religions are content with what has already been said. They do not want further research which is relevant to a changing pattern of society.

Today, our boys and girls are very weak. If you ask them to control their mind and thoughts, they will go mad. Hinduism is four to five thousand years old. Zoroastrianism is also old.

Christianity is about nineteen hundred years old and Islam is fourteen hundred years old. Now at that time when the teaching was given, the entire backgrounds of the social, political, economic, including the sanitary systems were different. Markets were different. Food, languages and the exposure to maya were different. Now the exposure to *maya*, to temptation, is plenty. Even an ordinary child has access to maya. Everyone has access to maya. Therefore, we must remember that what we are telling people is not a religion to believe in, but something that will help them.

It has been proved beyond doubt that when a man is in a tamasic state there is no question of his being able to control the mind because he is gross. He does not understand it. When a man is rajasic, there is no use asking him to put a brake on his speed. You may change the gear that is another matter, but you cannot apply the brake in the high speed of aggression, whether it is in the West or in the East. After all, the Japanese, Europeans and Americans are a fast race and India is becoming a fast race. This means the mind and desires are also moving at a terrific speed.

At this time, if we speak to people in the spirit of religion, as a Hindu, Muslim or Christian, it will be disastrous. It may serve the purpose of a few people at the age of sixty or sixty-five that is another matter, but the young people will go insane. They have to be told that when in meditation whatever thoughts come in the mind, do not stop them at all! They may be thoughts pertaining to compassion, mercy, cruelty, murder or impurity and sex. It does not matter. Let it come, see it, and practise your mantra, that is all. Do not stop thoughts because when you stop them you are going to see them again and again in the form of visions.

So we had better let them out to let them go?

Let them come out from the subliminal, the subterranean part of your mind to the upper part of your mind in meditation and in your daily life according to your interaction with the people. Modern psychology has to accept the most important

practical elements of yoga because we have accepted it. They do not accept it because they have closed minds. Psychologists are very good people; they do accept the importance of yoga, but psychology as an academic science does not talk about it.

I think it is beginning to move now.

No, psychologists are all right because they are individuals and they believe in yoga. I am talking about a classical science. They have to accept it because there are practical things to consider. When they give drugs and injections, you cannot just say it is psychology; it is psychophysiology. They have to add some of the salient points of yoga, particularly hatha yoga. Some of the good and bad thoughts come to our mind on account of the deteriorating and rusty condition of our body. It is a biochemical production. Sometimes a thought, a passionate thought, a worry or an anxiety could just be due to a biochemical disturbance in your physical body.

Swamiji, is intuition a siddhi or is it not a siddhi? Should one use the judgement of one's intuition or should one not?

Intuition is a state of perfection of mind. When your mind becomes one-pointed, when it can very easily discard what is not necessary, when it can retain what is necessary and it is not disturbed over small matters, then it is called a perfect mind. When the mind becomes perfect and is properly disciplined, the performance of the mind is called intuition. Its performance will be more accurate and true and from this some kind of siddhis arise.

The Sanskrit word siddhi is generally understood as psychic power, but it does not mean that. The literal meaning of *siddhi* is perfection in any art, not only in yoga. You can attain perfection in pottery, painting or music – all that is called siddhi, perfection. Most people use the word siddhi for psychic power because when the mind has become perfect its performances are sometimes very astounding. As the mind becomes more and more perfect and one-pointed, its

performances are great. Decisions are accurate and guidances are perfect; that is called intuition, *pratibha*.

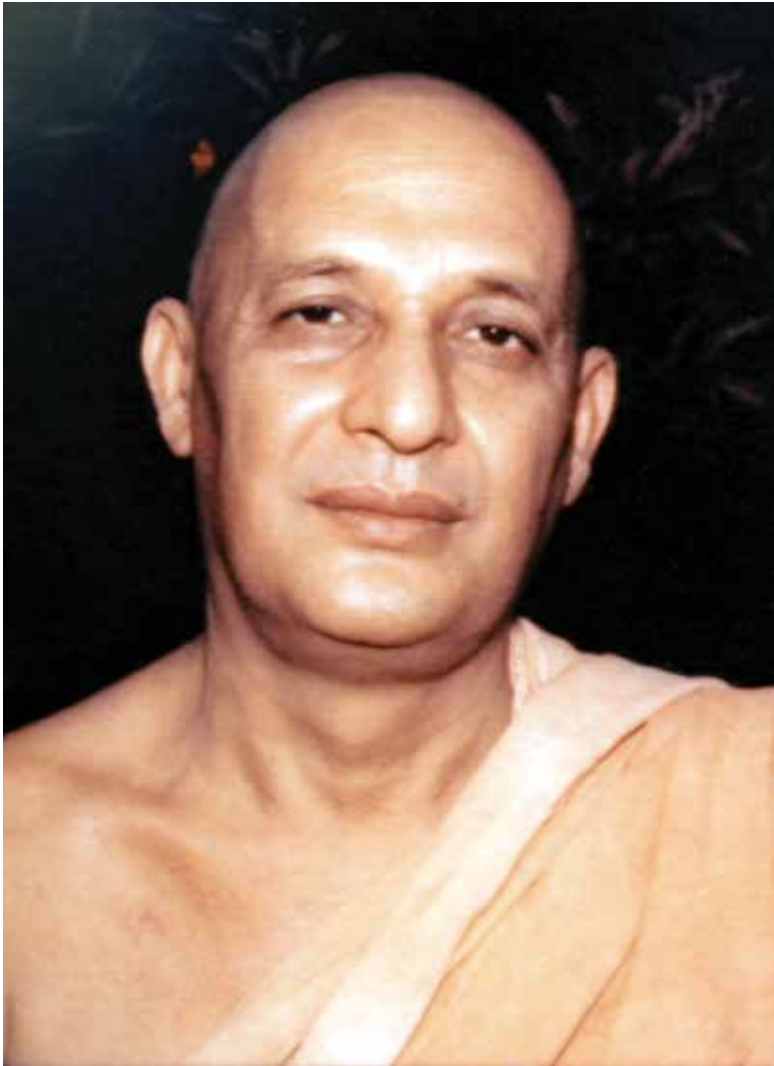
Intuition has various stages. Just like a college consists of many degrees, intuition has many stages. Intuition is not just a point that you have arrived at. You have entered into the domain of intuition. The mind sometimes works on intuition, sometimes on intellect and sometimes the mind depends on instinct. Instinct, intellect and intuition are the three levels through which the mind works from time to time. Except the mind of a great yogi, all others, even if they are highly developed, does not always work on the basis of intuition. Their mind keeps climbing up and down from intuition to intellect and instinct. Many of our behaviours are just by instinct. Sometimes we think with our intellect and sometimes it is spontaneous. Sometimes intuition also fails and that failure is disastrous. It has failed many good people and even great saints.

Should we use intuition or buddhi in our business?

Intuition should never be used for material wellbeing. I am of this opinion. Whatever material wellbeing you want to attain, use your intellect. You can make your buddhi more efficient to deal with the material problems of your firm, factory, business or family. Use your intellect. Intellect has enough capability to deal with the problems of the material side of society. For that, you do not have to use intuition because I tell you again the purpose of intuition is to reveal all those processes of the universe about which we have no link, trace and idea. We do not know how to search. If you want to decide whether man lives after death, how are you going to decide it? How are you going to decide if there is God? We have only read about it in books – maybe it is right, maybe it is wrong.

How did Christ die? It was a tragic death. The deaths of Krishna and Rama were tragic deaths. Whether it is Christ, Rama or Krishna, they did violate some of the laws of nature because they were the masters of power. They should not

have done it. They may have done it, but I am not going to do it in order to become popular. No! I will be popular by my intellectual attainments, not by my intuition. My intuition is my private property and I use it for myself and for my knowledge about those things which I do not get from books.



12

Satsang

5 December 1985

Can you tell us the story of Jnaneshwar, who wrote the beautiful commentary on the *Bhagavad Gita*?

Jnaneshwar was born of a sannyasin. After marriage, his father went to Kashi-Benares and there he took sannyasa from a very famous sannyasin.

The chief of that ashram happened to go to Aranya, a famous and ancient centre near Poona. While he was there, a lady came to him and touched his feet. So he gave her the usual blessing that is given to married women – ‘May your conjugal life be happy and may you have children.’ However, that woman said, ‘This is not possible, because my husband has become a sannyasin. I cannot live with him anymore and we cannot have children.’ Then the sadhu asked, ‘Where is your husband?’ She said, ‘He is in Kashi.’ He asked ‘Where?’ She said, ‘He is a sannyasin.’ He said, ‘But there is only one sannyasin ashram in Kashi and that is mine.’ She said, ‘Maybe, he is there.’ He said, ‘What is his name?’ She said, ‘Vitthala.’

The sadhu went back to Kashi and met that man. He said, ‘I have told your wife that her conjugal life will be happy and she will have children’. He asked, ‘How can that be? How can a sannyasin revert? According to the dharma, a sannyasin cannot revert. If my children are born from her, they belong to no caste.’

It was very difficult, in those times, particularly for those who belonged to the rigid caste system. Anyway, he had to come back and live with his wife and have children. He had three sons and one daughter. The eldest son was named Nivrittinath, one of the successors in the hatha yoga tradition of Matsyendranath, Gorakhnath. The Naths were the founders of the hatha yoga system. Nivrittinath became the fourth in the line of succession. He was a very brilliant boy. The second son was Jnandev, the third was Sopandev and the fourth child, the sister Muktabai, did not survive.

As it was against the tradition for a sannyasin to return to family life and bear children, the Brahmin priests ordered both parents to commit suicide while the children were still very young. So they grew up as orphans and outcasts. Nobody wanted to look after them or help them and they had a lot of troubles and difficulties, especially Jnaneshwar.

You know for a Hindu Brahmin, it is regarded a shame if he does not get initiated at the age of seven or eight. That initiation with the sacred thread is imparted to all Brahmins and it has to be done properly.

None of the Brahmin priests in the village were prepared to give these children the initiation. They said, 'On what basis do we do it? There is no provision in our system for children of a sannyasin. Which group do they belong to?' During the time of initiations, there are certain names you have to chant in order to give your identity. You have to say father of so and so and son of so and so, brother of so and so and belonging to this caste. Father's name has to be chanted twice and not only father's name but he has to pronounce the name of his *gotra*, the lineage. When one has a certain gotra, one comes from a certain blood line. Once you become a sannyasin your name becomes different. So there was all that trouble.

Jnaneshwar died at the age of thirty-six. He entered into a cave and took samadhi. He wrote a beautiful commentary on the *Bhagavad Gita*, called Jnaneshwari. It is a balanced commentary. In it, he talks about kundalini yoga, asanas, pranayama and all the yogas because basically the *Gita* is a

book on yoga. That is what is written after each chapter of the *Gita*.

The *Gita* has eighteen chapters and each chapter has a title which ends with yoga. The first chapter is Vishad yoga, the second chapter is Samkhya yoga. All the eighteen chapters are known by eighteen different names on yoga. Therefore, we have to accept that *Gita* is basically a text on yoga.

Many commentators have considered the *Gita* as a textbook of philosophy, particularly Shankaracharya, Ramanujacharya and Madhvacharya. When they write a commentary on the *Gita*, they write with their school of thought in mind, Advaita. At some point in the *Gita*, there is a problem, because the *Gita* always speaks of one reality, not two. There is a problem in the thirteenth and fifteenth chapter. In the thirteenth chapter, it is clearly said Prakriti and Purusha, both are external in the universe.

This goes against the vedantic school of thought because Vedanta says, *Eko brahma dwitiyo nasti* – There is only one supreme reality, not two supreme realities. That is the vedantic doctrine. There is only one supreme reality and there is nothing other than Him. That is, in the universe there exists nothing other than that reality. That is the vedantic thought: *Eko brahma dwitiyo nasti neha nai nasti kinchana* – There is no diversity or multiplicity. There is only unity in the universe. That is the school of thought of Vedanta, but the *Gita* says (15:16):

*Dwaavimau purushau loke ksharashchaakshara eva cha;
Ksharah sarvaani bhootaani kootastho'kshara uchyate.*

Two Purushas are in this world, the perishable and the imperishable. All beings are the perishable, and the Kutastha is called the imperishable.

Then Sri Krishna also says (13:20):

*Prakritim purusham chaiva viddhyaanaadee ubhaavapi;
Vikaaraamshcha gunaamshchaiva viddhi prakritisambhavaan.*

Know thou that Nature and Spirit are beginningless;
and know also that all modifications and qualities are
born of Nature.

Prakriti and Purusha both are *anadi*, without beginning and end in the universe, and both of them are external. The *Gita* is talking about three types of purushas, the perishable, the imperishable and the silent purusha. First it says one and then talks about three purushas. Shankaracharya wrote an extensive commentary, harking back in time, which is the work of a genius. Ramanujacharya also faced the same problem. You do not find that difficulty in *Jnaneshwari* because Jnaneshwar just gives the commentary. Where it is Samkhya, he talks of Samkhya. Where it is yoga, he talks of yoga. Where it is Vedanta, he talks Vedanta. Where it is *dvaita*, dualistic theory, he just explains that. He does not have a preconceived idea about the school of thought. That is the best commentary I can say.

Lokmanya Tilak wrote a scholarly commentary but it is one-sided. He only talks of karma yoga. He thinks the whole *Gita* only talks of karma yoga. The *Gita* considers karma as the basis of life and therefore, everybody has to do it, but you have to do it in the spirit of karma yoga. In order to make one's karma, karma yoga one has to practise bhakti and other things too, only then can one develop the spirit of karma yoga within oneself. Otherwise, it is not possible. So that is a very lopsided commentary.

Shankara, Lokmanya Tilak, Gandhi and Vinoba Bhave have written commentaries but they are very ethics and morality oriented. The *Gita* does include ethics and morality. Krishna talks about satya and charity. He talks about many other things but that is not the only point.

Swami Sivananda's commentary is plain. It is a good, spiritual commentary. It is not a scholarly commentary, but it is the easiest, perhaps, that I have come across. Swami Sivananda does not insist on his school of thought. He just explains what Krishna says, but he uses spiritual terms, that is all.

There are people who say that the *Gita* has a bija mantra, that the basic philosophy is a seed philosophy. Some say, it is in the second chapter and others say it is in the eighteenth chapter. The second chapter says one needs to be concerned only with the act. One has nothing to do with the outcome of the act or action, and therefore, one should not be the medium or the agent of the results or consequences. Other people say that the eighteenth chapter says that after having renounced or transcended the qualities, properties and behaviours of the mind and senses, one just needs to surrender (18:66):

*Sarvadharmān parityajya māmekaṁ śaraṇam vraja;
Ahaṁ twā sarvapaāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi maa śhuchah.*

Abandoning all duties, take refuge in Me alone; I will liberate you from all sins; grieve not.

Can you please tell me what yoga, tantra and mantra are and what is the subtle difference between them?

If you want to understand yoga, then you will have to read many books on it. It is not that easy to explain because you have to know karma yoga, bhakti yoga, raja yoga, jnana yoga, hatha yoga and mantra yoga. There are other minor forms of yoga too which we usually do not talk about. There are also different systems of tantra. Vedachara, Kaulachara and Vamachara are the three main important branches of tantra.

Mantra is a part of tantra. It is not a different school of thought. In tantra, you have got yantra, mantra and mandala. These three systems belong to tantra and are to be used during tantric practices, whichever form of tantra you practise.

Of course, hatha yoga is one simple form of preliminary yoga which is very important. But in order to know about yoga, first of all, one has to know why one practises it. People practise yoga for various reasons: some practise yoga for therapy, some for peace of mind, others for the development of their mental capacities and some for spiritual purposes like experiencing samadhi.

However, yoga is not just practising asana and pranayama. There are other forms of yoga where you have to do the practice only with the mind, just by a process of *manan*, contemplation, *shravan*, listening. You do not have to do pranayamas or any other things, just do manan, contemplation, reflection.

These different forms of yoga are suitable for different types of people. Everybody cannot practise jnana yoga. Finally, all these yogas are helpful in the awakening of *kundalini*, the basic energy in man, the higher energy.

The brain is at the top and it sends all the messages and all other activities downwards. But at the bottom, inside the yoni, or in the shukra nadi, is the hidden energy in everyone. To awaken that energy and make it go upward towards sahasrara chakra at the top is the main purpose of all yogas and tantra. Yoga and tantra have a basic objective, awakening of kundalini shakti and that is also the purpose of mantra and yantras.

It is also said that kundalini is like a big banyan tree having its roots upwards and branches down. It is a tree in sirshasana – an inverted tree. This has been clarified in the fifteenth chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita* (15:1):

*Oordhvamoolam adhahshaakham ashwattham praahuravayam;
Cchandaamsi yasya parnaani yastam veda sa vedavit.*

They (the wise) speak of the indestructible peepul tree, having its root above and branches below, whose leaves are the metres or hymns; he who knows it is a knower of the Vedas.

He who knows this tree knows exactly what it is. In this tree, one has to start from the top and move towards the bottom. The top is at the bottom and the bottom is at the top.

This is the indication in the fifteenth chapter of the *Gita*, which is known as *Purushottam Yoga*, the yoga of supreme consciousness. Here, you have to ascend or you have to start your journey from the top of the tree which is at the bottom.

You have to ascend from top to bottom and at the bottom is what you call the lower parts of your body. The roots of this tree are the highest part of your body – the brain. The various branches and leaves of the tree refer to various organs and nadis in the body. There are three main nadis and ten major ones. In all, there are seventy-two thousand nadis which go from top to bottom and bottom to top.

This is the process and in consonance with the laws of nature you have a mind. The mind has its seat in the brain, upper part, and from there the mind operates through the senses and controls the whole body. This mind is called the empirical mind, the lower mind or the ordinary mind, and it has limitations.

It can only function in connection with the indriyas and not without. Your mind can see only if you have eyes. If you have no eyes, you can't see. You can hear only if you have proper ears, not otherwise. If your senses are not efficient, this mind does not function very well.

However, there is another mind but it is not yet manifest in us. It is called the supermind. Sri Aurobindo, Aldous Huxley and many others used to call it supermind. You can also call it superconsciousness, higher mind or cosmic mind, but in yoga we call it kundalini. The simple name is kundalini.

We can give it any name because it is a force and has no particular name. Perhaps the nearest name is kundalini, but it has many other names like kundalini, sarpini, phani, naga or bhairavi. These names belong to a particular force, shakti.

This shakti is dormant, just as oil is dormant in the sesame seed, just as fire is dormant in the wood, that force is also dormant. It is not in action. So, there are practices for awakening this force, not just one but many hundreds of thousands of practices. One of these practices may suit you and me and the other practices may suit somebody else.

Out of these thousands of practices, some are practical for the current times, in our century, and some are now impractical and cannot be done by most people, like the

practices in *Mahanirvana Tantra* with all the tantric rituals and pooja path. Therefore, saints, sages and gurus have simplified them and these practices are yoga and tantra.

In yoga, particularly, we start with hatha yoga, go on to raja yoga, and if it is possible, have a little touch of bhakti yoga. Karma yoga has to be the basis of all. This is the basic practice.

In tantra, however, there are very difficult and funny practices. Sometimes, these practices in tantra are not in accordance with social traditions. Some of these tantric practices can also cause difficulties with the religious beliefs of people. There are certain religious beliefs people have which are so deeply ingrained that sometimes some of the practices of tantra do not have any meeting point with people's beliefs. Therefore, these tantric practices have to be given only to a few, not to all. Tantra is for select candidates.

But on the path of yoga, there is nothing objectionable. It accepts many of these religious and social beliefs. Whichever practice of yoga one may do, one has to try to keep just one thing in mind. There is a point where the mind has to be transcended and you have to become one-pointed. The individual ego and consciousness is withdrawn for some time. People use various things for this purpose.

In olden days, they used to take a drink called soma. When they took soma, they would get high and meditate. For some reason, soma was withdrawn and now nobody knows what it is. Later, people started using ganja to practise meditation. Apart from this, there are many ayurvedic herbs, natural herbs that will create a change in your biochemical structure and give the experience. But soma, sulfa or any other *vanaspathy*, herb, is only considered to be of little help. After all, introducing a chemical change in one's body does not transform one. It is only a change, that's all. In yoga, one tries to change the whole structure of consciousness, rather than the structure of matter.

In the ultimate sense, is the universe finite or infinite, manifest or unmanifest?

A part of the universe is finite. This is said in the *Rig Veda*. A part of the universe, cosmos or *srishti* is a part of what is created and is manifest. The whole universe is not manifest. This is the conclusion of the Vedas and this is going to be the conclusion of science, too. You will see.

One form of creation is a *vyakta*, gross in outlook or active, and the other aspect of creation is *avyakta* or indirect. One part of the universe is manifest and the rest of the universe is unmanifest.

That particular part of the universe that is manifest is finite; it is not infinite. The visible universe or the universe which has come into manifestation, which has come into light, is finite. It has a beginning, a centre an end and it is limited by time and space, and is not beyond them. Beyond that the rest of the universe is invisible, unmanifest. It is shrouded in utter darkness. But who has known it?

That is the question in the *Rig Veda*. How do you know? As far as observing the finite universe is concerned, there are astrologers, astronomers, scientists and observers in the past and present doing it. There were scientists in Italy and Europe. In India we have great scientists and mathematicians like Aryabhatta and Varahmihir. They counted the stars for their whole lifetime and wanted to make a catalogue of heaven. But no one, as yet, has been able to map out the unmanifest dimension of the universe.

How is the law of karma understood by the higher consciousness?

Good acts reap good results and evil acts or bad acts reap bad results. How does one know it? Do you have any proof? How do you know that good acts reap good fruits? How have you come to this conclusion? Once one does an act, the act enters into an invisible area, an invisible domain, and after some time one sees the result. How does one connect the act with the result? For that one needs a special mind to observe.

When one is able to awaken the kundalini, there is the emergence of another kind of consciousness and that consciousness is not barred by time and space. It can function in any dimension, the empirical dimension and also the transcendental dimension. That is called intuition. That is called *prajna*, *jnana*, enlightenment. That state has to be arrived at and that is not difficult. It can happen sometimes on its own. Many people develop this transcendental consciousness or this limitless consciousness without doing anything.

What is the story of Nachiketa?

This mind is very limited. Its perceptions are erroneous and incomplete. Therefore, one should try to develop a higher type of consciousness, which does not depend on the senses, but on experience.

There is a story from the *Kathopanishad* which explains this. Nachiketa was the name of a young boy. He had some sort of difference with his father and his father said, 'I give you unto death.' So it is said that Nachiketa transcended this mortal consciousness and went to *Yamaloka*, the land of *Yamaraj*, the lord of death. He stayed there for three days and three nights, after which Yamaraj appeared. As Nachiketa had been waiting for him for three days and three nights Yamaraj gave him three boons.

One of the boons Nachiketa asked for was, 'Does the consciousness survive after death?' to which Lord Yama said, 'Don't ask that question because this question will not be revealed even to the great people.' However, Nachiketa insisted. Finally, Lord Yama had to give him the knowledge about eternity, infinity and the survival of consciousness after the death of the body.

The details of this actually is nothing significant. It talks about the experiences of that young man. It is not necessary to say or prove that Nachiketa went to heaven, because there is no such heaven at all. There is no planet or universe where Yamaraj lives. However, at the same time Nachiketa did go somewhere else.

Death means two things: one the death of the body, and second, death also is when one has departed from the mind, from this state of consciousness, but not from the body. It happens in meditation. One does not depart from the body but departs from a particular mental state.

The same thing happened to Nachiketa. He did not die physically. He was in the body, but his mind transcended its consciousness and he began to experience. What was that experience? It was of a man who comes to him and says, 'I will give you three boons. Ask me for three boons.'

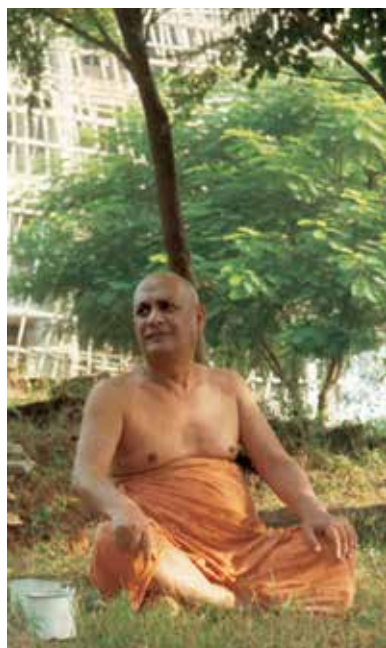
He asks for one, two and three boons. For the third boon the man says, 'No, I will not tell you the truth.' Nachiketa says, 'You have to tell me the truth.' Yamaraj says, 'My boy, I will give you gold and silver and anything that you ask for, please do not ask me this question.'

Nachiketa says, 'No, no, what am I going to do with gold and silver, damsels, palaces, kingdoms and horses? Please just tell me this. Some say that the soul survives and some say that the soul does not survive. Since you are the lord of death, you come here and go back to the manifest world, hence you should know it.' All these things happen within your own self.

Please read *Markandeya Purana* and you will know how a young boy Markandeya entered into the stem of a lotus in order to attain immortality. He remained for many thousands of years in that stem. That is how the story goes. These events are not of our current times, not even one thousand years of this calendar, but many thousands of years ago.

It is an interesting story related to yoga. Of course, the actors are exhilarated, and it must be that way because exhilaration is one of the beauties of poetry. He entered into the stem of a lotus leaf and remained there for many ages. Death could not touch him there. He remained immortal.

When I say ages, I do not mean this time. I mean the time of that dimension, not the time here. It might have been only one year here or it might have been fifty thousand years. I do not know because time in this dimension and time in that dimension are not the same. It is not written only



in the Vedas; even modern scientists talk about it. Time is relative and as one goes further into space or away from space, the equation of time changes.

This has been the main problem for us in India. In order to solve this problem and give a proper answer, the scriptures always insist that you must have experience. Scriptural knowledge or book learning from the Vedas, Upanishads, Puranas is not enough. One has to have that experience and this experience can sometimes continue for days together.

Swami Muktananda, who is no more now, from Ganeshpuri, a disciple of Swami Nityananda, has written a book, *Chitshaktivilas*, the Dance of the Power of Consciousness. It is his autobiography. He writes that when he entered into his own self, he entered into a new universe. He said, 'I entered into myself and I saw a different universe and the universe in which I lived a short while ago did not exist there. Nothing existed there.' 'Nothing' denotes that the place was beautiful, there was no pain, there was just peace and that state remained with him for eleven days as he went on seeing it.

He says, 'In that state, I sit here, but I remain within myself. I leave my touch, my relationship, my association with your time and space. When I enter inside, I enter into a new world. Thereafter, I have no attachment and am not sorry for having left all these things behind.'

13

Satsang

10 December 1985

Are hallucinations and visions all rubbish?

For some time, it is all rubbish, but it is encouraging rubbish. It does not carry any solid meaning, but it is the basis, that is the foundation. After some time, the same things continue, but it is no more hallucination. Then it has a meaning, a message, an idea or an order. Then one can rely on it.

Can one see the difference and know when the change takes place?

Yes, of course. Even if you know how to interpret it or how to understand it, you know it. In the beginning it is hallucination. The instructions do not have any relevance to the realities of life. After some time, when the instructions come to you and as usual, you ignore them, only to realize a little later that you should not have because the event happened. You have ignored the instructions but you should have attended to them. When these things happen once or twice, then you know that now your visions have some meaning and give deeper clarity.

In the beginning, when it is hallucination, you know it is hallucination. So you continue to regard every inner experience as ordinary without having much to do with the realities of life. However, after some time, the purpose and quality change, the quality of the experience, the visions

change, rather the outcome changes. Maybe, once, or twice it happens, but because it was not happening regularly, you just ignored it. But a little later, after one week, fifteen days, or a month you suddenly remember this is what I knew, I knew this was going to happen. Oh, this is the man whom I am meeting now, but I knew that I was going to meet him. When you realize this, quite a few times, then you have a different attitude to your inner experiences.

Would these experiences be difficult to handle for married people, householders?

No. For those who are married and who have experienced conjugal life, who have faced anger, greed, jealousy, love, compassion, pity, they can handle better.

However, if your life as a householder, wife, husband or daughter-in-law is not very happy, sexually, emotionally and family-wise too, from the side of your parents or in-laws, then, perhaps, your experiences are very difficult to handle. This means, if you have been able to handle anger, petty-mindedness and all of the mental manifestations which you have had as a wife, then you can handle these experiences too. But, if that particular person, man or woman, is not able to handle their experiences in daily life, they will not be able to handle any other experiences and will have difficulties.

Is it never a blissful experience, is it always a difficult experience?

It starts with a terrible bliss. There is so much terrible bliss that the body contracts. It is exactly the same experience as the climax experience in sexual life. It continues for one, two, three minutes. It is terrible bliss and sometimes is unbearable. We want it. It is the same thing. That is why I always equate the two experiences. After about half a minute, you want to have it. It becomes unbearable. Everything, the whole body, contracts internally and externally. Each and every limb becomes something like rigor mortis, or an epileptic fit.

After such a high, is there later a deep depression of some kind?

Yes, there is a deep depression. After that you want to talk, eat or sleep. It is a funny stage like insomnia, anorexia, restlessness. Sometimes people can even have the idea of committing suicide; there is no reason, no unhappiness, it just comes like a wave.

So if you do not have the guidance of your guru, you could be completely lost at that point?

In yoga, from alpha to omega, it has to be guru; whatever relationship guru and disciple have father and son, brother who also can be guru. Nivrittinath, the eldest brother, was the guru of his younger brother, Jnaneshwar. Sometimes the mother can be the guru; sometimes the wife can be the guru, like Sarada Devi of Ramakrishna because she used to take care of him. Sarada used to look after Ramakrishna. Swami Nityananda of Vajreshwari, the guru of Muktananda, used to look after him for some time.

Looking after the guru means making hot water, cold water, washing the clothes and saying, 'Please eat something.' If you ask your child, 'Please eat something,' you are forcing him to eat. He doesn't want to eat but because you are the mother, naturally, he will oblige to some extent if not fully. However, if you tell him, perhaps, he will not eat anything.

How can these experiences be handled in western countries?

That is the problem that I am also facing and many other sincere gurus also must be facing. Previously, these things happened mostly in India. In India somehow or the other the arrangements were there. Second, the social structure like marriage, husband, wife, family, children, everything was kundalini reoriented. It was in alignment with kundalini processes. That is how the family was structured – how they should live, what they should do, the relationship between father and son. So, if anything happened, the situation in the family itself was congenial.

Even now in the villages, there are sessions which are held where people who are nearly ready or whose kundalini is prone to awakening have such experiences. These sessions are guided by the person who can bring the awakening and withdraw the same too. They are very innocent people. They are not professors or scientists. They are villagers.

On certain occasions the villagers gather, men and women both, maybe fifty, sixty people, in the night at ten, eleven o'clock; then they have this awakening, not all, two or three of them. When this awakening takes place, the symptoms are difficult. There are violent symptoms and jumping. Something happens automatically. The men jump up and down like a monkey and make a Ho! Ho! Ho! sound. Finally, the man is controlling him through the beat of music. It is to be controlled by the beat of music and then he is brought down. It is a very primitive beat of music, not exactly the fine sort of thing. The whole thing is based on the time gap.

When you make two strokes, there is a gap between two sounds. There is a sound and there is a gap in-between and this gap is to be shortened if you want to make him high. And if you want to bring him low, this gap has to be lengthened. It becomes high and then it comes down and there is a small drum like instrument, a damaru, which is supposed to be a very personal thing of Lord Shiva, is beaten.

After that he is thoroughly tested. Whether it is awakening or a fraud. There are many people who can do it. Then burning coal is put into the hand, with the flames. He takes it and throws it and his hands are quite clear. Many people get burnt also. It depends on the state of their consciousness. If it is consciousness throughout, they will burn. If something is really happening, it will not burn. This is the second test. The first test is the dancing which is very difficult dancing. Any strong man will collapse in a few minutes.

The third one is they have a chillum where they put the ganja. The whole chillum is filled to the brim and he has to finish it in one go. Next, he is asked certain questions: questions on clairvoyance, telepathy and quite a few things,

not psycho telekinesis, but two or three types of questions. They ask him, "We want to ask you some questions, 'Who are you'. He has to say who he is. He cannot say his usual name of the body. So, most Indians believe that a soul has entered in him. That is the general concept that some soul has possessed him now. Now, when you say some soul has possessed him, either a soul has come from outside and has possessed you and you have been replaced for the time being. And second, consciousness has awakened in you and it has replaced you, now it is possessing you. It can mean both. You can use any expression, but you are now possessed and your original egotistical personality has been replaced for the time being. You are no more aware of your name, form and sex, man or woman, or whether you are of white or black origin. Nothing.

For about ten or fifteen minutes, he is asked about sickness, theft of property and many things that belong to the world. The answers are accurate, but sometimes they are very offensive. If somebody asks, "This lady or gentleman is sick, what is your suggestion?" They reply, 'Suggestion? You are not living the right life. What suggestion do you want from me? Let him correct his life and then come to me. I will tell him what to do.' This kind of offensiveness. Sometimes, the man or the soul, directly says, "Who you want? You have no son and how many sons have you killed?" Straight away, "How many children have you killed?" So, usually such people do not even go to him because they know that he will reveal all the secrets. In India there is not much difficulty with these things. If the same thing happens in the West, there would be a lot of trouble.

That sort of life happens in the West Indies.

Oh, yes it does. Modern education has also done a lot of harm to these people, who are by nature the conductors. There are some people who are conductors. They do not have any power themselves, but they know how to conduct and we have lost such people, because now they have to

look after their economic needs. There is so much economic competition; all their mind is there.

What about people who are indulging or experimenting with many drugs for many years?

Dr Timothy Leary was doing experiments on everything and Ramurti Mishra was his colleague. They were good friends. Dr Timothy Leary and Dr Ramurti Mishra, of Monroe, New York, used to do all these experiments in his ashram and he was deported in 1967 or 1968. For many years, he could not go to America because of this problem. He was deported and I met him in 1968 in London. Dr Ramurti Mishra is a very congenial swami, a learned man and has done a lot of work and his grasp of science, occultism and mysticism is great, but somehow I feel, it has been detrimental to his karma and body too. I saw him when I went to America in 1982.

He is one person who I know personally. Rajneesh has experimented with many strong drugs for many years, maybe twenty or thirty years. I believe that it has interfered and affected his physical health and also the philosophical process of intellect, called logic.

That philosophical process has to be logically linked because we have to explain some of the non-intellectual matters to people. When we explain these non-intellectual or intellectual matters to people, sometimes, I think, we miss the link and we only stick to the truth. I believe that a yogi who has not taken drugs is a more logical philosopher than somebody whose philosophy is influenced by his personal relationship with the drugs.

It will affect his body, naturally, because your body runs on chemicals and plants. You can see a change in biochemical and bioplasma. When you take a little alcohol your blood pressure immediately rises. It becomes 120; it becomes 82. So when alcohol or for that matter anything else can increase or decrease your blood pressure, it can also increase or decrease the pressure level of the nervous system.

It can either excite or depress your nervous system. With the depression of the nervous system, the liver also undergoes a change and many other organs in the body, including the heart.

Even if you are a yogi, if you are not dealing with the problem of mind or consciousness, through the mind or consciousness but you are employing an external agency like sex, drugs and other things in order to deal with the problems of mind and consciousness, then there is going to be some sort of change or effect on your karma.

The ancient books and ancient traditions are not against drugs. We do not speak against ganja. We do not talk against maithuna. We say that if you are using solely these methods to deal with the problems of mind and consciousness, you are influencing your consciousness via the nervous system, the chemicals in the body or in the hormones. Once, there is a disturbance in the chemical and hormonal level of your body, maybe this disturbance may become a routine for life.

Could you speak on the *Ishavasya Upanishad*?

In society there are four categories: the brahmin, kshatriya, vaishya and shudra. Spiritual sciences never go by these classifications; they have three or four classifications. We can call tamasic people, shudra. Rajasic people, no matter which caste, country or religion, are always rajasic people. The third category is called sattwic purusha who is supposed to be the highest spiritual category of an aspirant.

The *Ishavasya Upanishad* is the last Upanishad, the last chapter of the *Yajur Veda* and begins (1):

*Om ishaavaasyamidam sarvam yatkincha jagatyaam jagat;
Tena tyaktena bhunjeethaa maa gridhah kasyasvid dhanam.*

All that exists in this ever-changing universe is the abode of the Lord (in which the Lord resides). Enjoy whatever the Lord gives you. Do not covet, for whose indeed is wealth?

All this movement in the world, which is moving at a terrible speed in the universe, is permeated or pervaded by Isha through supreme consciousness.

The second line of the same mantra says, *Tena tyaktena bhunjetha ma gridhah kasyaswid dhanam*. Therefore, everybody should realize this truth that everything in this world is pervaded and permeated by one supreme consciousness, and you should enjoy everything in life and not covet what does not belong to you.

The last mantra is (18):

*Agne naya supathaa raaye asmaanvishvaani deva vayunaani
vidvaan;
Yuyodhyasmajjuhuraanameno bhooyishthaam te nama uktim
vidhema.*

O Agni! Lead us to prosperity along the auspicious path. O God! You are the knower of all our actions. Please remove the sins of our crookedness and deceit. We repeatedly offer salutations to you.

From these two mantras, you can understand that this Upanishad is not talking about the social caste divisions, but is talking about the natural divisions in the field or the dominion of evolution – sattwa, rajas and tamas.

Also, there are some other mantras in the same Upanishad if you go through it carefully, about vidya and avidya, sambhuti and asambhuti. There is a set of six mantras in the Upanishad which deal with karma and upasana – neither through karma nor by renunciation can you achieve that consciousness. This supreme consciousness cannot be realized by one who has either renounced karma or who is involved in karma. By karma you can only visualize darkness and by renunciation you experience much deeper darkness. Therefore, an aspirant should blend these together. There has to be a blending of karma and renunciation. This is one set of mantras.

The second set of mantras says, neither by meditating on a form, nor by meditating on the formless do you arrive

at realization, because if you realize on the form you will experience darkness, and if you meditate on the formless you will experience much greater, denser, darkness. The aspirant has to blend both, the sakara upasana and nirakara upasana, because by sakara upasana he will be able to transcend some of the disturbances of the mind and by nirakara upasana he will be able to experience the *amrit*, the nectar, the immortal.

In the Vedas, the upanishadic tradition and in the traditions of India, there has always been a constant debate whether one should perform karma or renounce karma. This has been a constant dialogue during the vedic period, pre-pantheism period, pantheism period, post pantheism period, Gandhian period, even to this day. The *Bhagavad Gita* is discussing the same thing. Arjuna says to Sri Krishna, “Sometimes you ask me to do karma. Sometimes you ask me to renounce karma. What exactly am I supposed to do? You are confusing me so much.”

This has been one subject that has been discussed whether for self-realization, the perception of God, becoming a supreme being or for spiritual evolution. Should you have a link with your karma or should you break your link with karma? I think up to this day this question has not been answered properly. Swami Vivekananda says, ‘Do work,’ but he renounced his family. Buddha says the same, but he renounced his kingdom. Shankaracharya talks about karma yoga without *swabhava*, without selfishness, but he himself left his mother at the age of eight. If renunciation alone is not the way, then why did they renounce and come to this realization.

Gandhi did not renounce. He did not put on geru, but virtually renounced everything. He even renounced his wife. If renunciation was not a necessary qualification for this higher experience, why did they do it? There has to be a proper understanding as to your own self first, only then you can say something about karma.

Christianity and Hinduism, in particular, laid a great emphasis on renunciation, purity, penance, a rigorous and

disciplined life. In Islam, the Sufis and spiritual leaders had these concepts but they did not emphasize as much as Hindus and Catholics who emphasized renunciation, abstention from enjoyment of the external pleasures, *vishyadvasana*.

There was a time when the entire Christian population were very simple people. People of the western hemisphere have involved themselves in karma so much in the last hundred and fifty years that now there is a tendency in them to renounce. They have not renounced completely. They do not live like St Francis or other saints, but nevertheless, there is a tendency of renunciation.

Total renunciation it is not possible. Renunciation in some form or the other is a very important element. In the ultimate analysis, we will find that renunciation is more practical than enjoyment. Renunciation of clothes, of any type of food, of any kind of dress or fashion is definitely a better way of enjoying life. I do not know.

What is renunciation? You renounce that thing which you love most and is hanging and dangling in front of you. Renunciation of action, relationship or enjoyment need not become a permanent factor of one's life, but one has to practise renunciation in some form or the other to strengthen the quality of the mind.



14

Satsang

11 December 1985

Swamiji, have you ever met Paul Brunton? What do you think about him and his ideas?

I have read his books. I have not met him although I was in Tiruvannamalai at the Ramana Maharshi Ashram for a long time. His appreciation of Ramana Maharshi is not accurate, that's all I can say. In many of his books, he starts with meeting some magicians or some miracle men. Those who have been abiding in the Self, who have attained a very high spiritual state have nothing to do with magic or miracles. For them the whole world is just a drama. It is like a big long dream; so why do anything with it?

The philosophy of Ramana Maharshi was a most sublime philosophy and there was no place for a second reality. Of course, he did not speak much; or rather, he did not speak at all. He did not hold any conversations even with Paul Brunton. He only knew Tamil, his mother tongue, and he hardly spoke to anyone. If questions were asked or problems were put to him, the only reply he gave was, 'Who am I? Keep on thinking that.' That was the one reply he gave to all. 'Who am I? You think that, that's all.'

It is not possible for any ordinary person to assess someone who has gone beyond nature. Like they say only a Milton can understand Milton, only Shakespeare can understand Shakespeare. In order to understand Ramana Maharshi,

one must have a little spiritual insight into things, which Paul Brunton did not have. He had the enquiring mind of a westerner, of any intelligent person. An enquiring mind alone is not enough to assess the depth of such a person. If he is doing some miracles on the street then we can understand, or if he has written a number of books, we can assess him. However, Ramana Maharshi never lived the type of life which we can understand. He did not write any book; he did not give any lecture. The whole day and night he used to lie down and keep looking at *shoonya*, or the void, like *trataka*. He did not look at anyone. How will you understand such a man?

Swamiji, in various books of various traditions we read that during the period of menstruation, women are forbidden to go into the temple or the kitchen. Do you think there are any reasons, scientific or otherwise?

I will tell you my views on it. When women are in menstruation, from the point of view of science and common sense, they are not unholy and there cannot be any two opinions about it. She is not unholy. Menstruation is a natural process which is taking place in her body and naturally we should see that nothing disturbs it: either heavy work, exposure to chill and cold, involvement in sexual affairs, or emotional and nervous breakdowns.

It has also been seen that prior to menstruation, during menstruation and sometimes a little after menstruation, there is some sort of psychological change, disturbance or psychological tremor that can happen to some women. Some people have a lot of emotional seizures and some have very simple ones; some get a little upset; some get annoyed. So those factors have to be taken into account. In ancient days, in every society, the woman had to do a lot of work in the family and outside. It became necessary that some sort of method should be found where at least during those five or six days she could get complete rest. I think our ancestors could only manage it by saying that she was unholy. That was a way and I think they knew that she was not. There is no

question – she can go to a temple, she can go to a swami, she can do worship, she can do anything. I don't think that there is anything wrong, the only point is some people may not be able to handle the psychological or emotional problems arising at that time.

From time to time in olden society, a lot of taboos about so many things arose. Those taboos had some sort of relevance to their period because people could not think sensibly. Now we have understood what menstruation is, whether it is loss of blood, change in hormones or cleaning of the uterine walls.

It is important that this hormonal cycle should be understood to be a very natural state, a condition in a women's life and there is no religious or spiritual function which she cannot perform. There are priests, mullahs, pandits and high priests who have always been men, not women, because they thought, 'How can she be a priestess or a guru if she becomes unholy for five days?'

These were the concepts of the people and they have become so deeply engrained and embedded in the mind that it will take quite a few generations to wipe out those taboos, not only about this hormonal cycle, but also about many other things. There are thousands and millions of beliefs in different areas in our human society. They have to be properly understood and superstitions regarding those beliefs should be wiped out in total. Man must accept the truth, as truth, no matter how dangerous it is. I know truth is dangerous, but if we are trying to discover the truth, behind everything, we have to understand it as it is.

How do you handle small children?

I have never had children. I am not an authority on it. When I used to work in hospitals, sometimes I used to look after the children as a babysitter for one hour a day. In Rishikesh there was a hospital. Sometimes I was on duty two or three hours a day, giving them milk, cleaning them or playing with them.

However, I think that we are born not to be a slave of the social system. We have created a social system in order

to survive and make life smooth. Society cannot be our end; society has to serve the individual. The individual has created society for himself; society has not created the individual.

An individual has to be an individual; therefore, it is the duty of parents to allow a child to express himself independently or spontaneously as much as he can. If the child is a rowdy, let him be rowdy! This is what I believe. Your experience may be different because you are a parent. If he is passive, let him be passive; if he is aggressive, let him be aggressive; if he is arrogant, let him be arrogant. A child should be allowed to express his inborn nature, which he will do anyway. If you suppress him now, he will do it when he can. He may do it after twenty-five, thirty years or maybe when he attains the age of fifty or fifty-five, but he will do it because the inborn nature and qualities, the *swabhava*, will project itself. A child is born with a trait, with an inborn quality and with a stamp of karma either from his parents or from his previous birth, whichever you believe.

Parents must behave with children as they behave with friends, then only children will speak the truth and care for you. Obedience is caring. If you obey me, it means that you care for me. In order to get proper care and attention from their children, parents must not do anything which will destroy the element of friendship in the relationship. And if your child tells you the truth or acts the truth, although it may be very obscene, you must accept it. When they are children, whatever they do they do in innocence; they are called *nirdosh*, faultless.

When they come of age and do the same thing, you cannot call it faultless because what they do will affect society, the surroundings, family or people close by. So let them do all sorts of things, as quickly as possible, so that they can exhaust their inborn nature during the period of innocence when their actions cannot create a disturbance in the surroundings.

I tell all the swamis here the same thing – you will have to be truthful to me and I too will have to be truthful. All my swamis, the older ones who have been here for eight or ten years, know how I live and what I think and they also tell

me the truth. I help them mentally or emotionally. I am not going to tell them what they should do and what they should not do. What business have I to tell them what they should do and what they should not do? When they make a mistake, they will correct it in the course of time. Everybody has to correct himself; everybody has to clean after himself on his own without any external intervention.

Should we not channel children into singing, music, or something like that, shouldn't we encourage them?

You don't have to. Children come with many superb qualities. We all came with superb qualities. You and I both came with great qualities but our society destroyed that. It is now that we are finding so many interesting things. Society is a great barrier in man's spiritual evolution because you create an institution for a purpose. Society becomes your purpose; the institution is your purpose. Why are you doing all this? For society! Damn society!

Society is a means. Individual enlightenment, individual growth or individual progress, in the form of knowledge or experience is the goal so that the individual may improve his physical, mental, emotional, intellectual, intuitive and divine faculties. He has to grow and his growth has to be natural. It has to be based on the qualities with which he was born with. If you are born with the quality of an artist, why should you just keep on working like a coolie?

In the same way, society gets us married. Many people are married before they are able to decide whether they should get married or not and only realize after three years that they have made a mistake! After a few months they say, 'Oh, what have I done?' The experience of marriage is a happy experience only for a few people, not many. Many people carry on this marriage institution. I am not talking against marriage, but I say that when you get married it is important that the chap is convinced he needs it, wants it, and should have it, so that he doesn't have to say after three years, 'Ah, I should not have done it.'

Is the energy coming from the chakras and are the chakras charged again?

I will explain. There are two forms of energy for maintenance as well as for operation. One is called prana and the other one is called *chitta*, consciousness or mind. These are the two forms of energy which are supplied by the ida and pingala nadi systems to various organs in the body. According to modern science, the sympathetic and parasympathetic nerves distribute the nervous energies to different organs of the body. The diagram would be more or less the same as the one for ida and pingala. The distribution of the ida and pingala energy, the mental and pranic energy, takes place through the six chakras.

However, apart from these six there are many other minor or mini chakras. The distribution of electricity takes place from the main station, then goes to a pole and from there to a meter. The science of acupuncture is also trying to tell us the same thing with the system of meridians.

Dr Hiroshi Motoyama in Tokyo, Japan, has been working on the meridians and the mini chakras in a very scientific way. He has even worked on the first and the second parts of pawanmuktasana. The first part of pawanmuktasana and the second part of pawanmuktasana were subject to scientific investigation in his lab in Tokyo. I visited him three years ago and we are in touch with each other. He found that pawanmuktasana has a very systematic effect on various meridians in a particular order. He has written a book on pawanmuktasana and its scientific evidence and effect on the meridians.

The ida and pingala nadis distribute the chitta and prana shakti to all the organs of the body through the major chakras, then through the smaller chakras, the mini chakras, the meridian points or cut-points. These are different names and it is necessary that we understand the whole thing in collaboration with the science of acupuncture. These two forms of energy are known as ida and pingala, surya and chandra, Ganga and Yamuna, Yin and Yang or hot and cold.

They have a system and an order based on the science of swara yoga, which is based on the movements of the moon – not the solar movement. Both the right nostril and the left nostril, according to the science of swara yoga, have a rhythm, called bio-rhythms. The two nostrils represent ida and pingala or the pranic and mental force. This means for a certain period your pranic force is shut and the mental force is flowing; and then the mental force is shut and the pranic force is flowing. This rhythm changes in the bright fortnight as against the dark fortnight. If the dark fortnight is the time for shutting the pingala, in the bright fortnight it is the time for opening the pingala – it is natural.

Sometimes this bio-rhythm gets disturbed. Ida keeps on flowing for three hours, four hours or five hours. As a result, you feel mentally drained; you cannot remember; you get mental tensions, mental fatigue. If ida keeps on flowing for three hours, the inner body temperature will go down; the metabolic rate and all natural rhythms will slow down for three, four or five hours. In the same way, if pingala keeps on flowing for four, five, six hours or maybe the whole day, you will feel physically tired; your digestive system will be upset. There will be a lot of bile secretion and pressure on the heart because pingala is the *garam nadi*, hot nadi. Ida nadi is the cold nadi. Pingala operates through the *karmendriyas*, the sense organs of action; ida obeys the *jnanendriyas*, the sense organs of knowledge. That is how the distribution goes – the source of energy.

Every individual, you, I and many others, we look more or less alike. Many people have the same nationality or the same religion. Sometimes thousands and millions have white faces, black or yellow faces. We look identical and it seems that we are the same but it is not true. If individuals were to be judged from the point where they stand in the chain of evolution, no two individuals will be at the same point. We are different which means that the awakening has taken place and this awakening stuff is at some point or the other. It may be a little above mooladhara or it may be above swadhisthana or it may

be in swadhisthana. The distance between mooladhara and swadhisthana is only one finger or two fingers, but we are not talking about the physical distance, but the spiritual distance between swadhisthana and mooladhara or the spiritual distance between swadhisthana and manipura. The spiritual distances that really matter are very great. It can take years; it can take incarnations.

It is from that point where you have already evolved that the energy is flowing. You support your life. You cannot say that it is from mooladhara, manipura or anahata. Yours may be flowing from anahata, supporting your life, supporting your mind and supporting your body. As a result, you may be an artist, a poet, a scoundrel or a renunciate. After all, you have your individual values which may not entirely differ from mine, but they may not be entirely identical to mine. You are slightly different from me, but you are different. This difference is millions of years of difference, thousand and thousands of years.

The chakras do not produce energy. They are the links. They are the junctions through which the energy is distributed to the physical body, to the mental body and to other bodies which we have. We are merely talking about ida and pingala, the mental and the pranic forces. According to yoga science, there are also many other forms of energy which are dependent on other nadis – Brahma nadi, chittra, alambusha, kuhu or visheshini. There are ten main nadis and beyond ida and pingala there is sushumna.

If your sushumna has awakened a little bit naturally, it is an entirely different energy altogether. The pranic energy supports your karmendriyas and the mental energy supports your jnanendriyas, but whom will this sushumna energy support? Sushumna supports the spiritual awakening, the spiritual philosophy, the spiritual knowledge or the spiritual understanding because the functions of ida and pingala are already destined, designated. Sometimes it does happen that, after the awakening of the spiritual energy, the karmendriyas and the jnanendriyas are influenced a little bit.

In the same way, brahma nadi, chitra nadi and the other nadis are connected with the hemispheres of the brain. Ida is connected with the right hemisphere and pingala is connected with the left hemisphere. Sushumna is connected with the whole brain. Likewise, all nadis must be connected with some part of the brain. Therefore, the energy which flows through the chakras and which is connected by these nadis springs from the yoni, springs from the source, springs from the point where you are standing today in the term of evolution of your life, and that is the simplest explanation I can give.

Ida and pingala are connected in mooladhara, but they join each other at every centre. If the source is from mooladhara, it is mooladhara. And if it is manipura, it is manipura because they meet at each and every point. However, if the awakening of kundalini takes place and the awakening of sushumna has not taken place, the energy will pass through the nadi which is flowing at that time. If ida is flowing at that time, it will flow through ida; if pingala is flowing at that time, it will flow through pingala. Then it will create disturbance. It is a must that sushumna has to be awakened and the chakras have to be awakened before the awakening of kundalini takes place. That is why hatha yoga is stressed so much. Otherwise what is the role of hatha yoga? Just doing a little asana for self-realization seems to be irrelevant, but it is not because the awakening of sushumna is only a subject matter of pranayama.

Why do elderly people feel tired and depleted?

For people who have not thought properly or have led an ordinary life, old age is really tiring, exhausting and everything gets depleted because ida and pingala nadis both will not be able to sustain the body because they have been overused and not been replenished. After all, in your physical body there are battery cells at different points; they have to be recharged from time to time as you do with solar batteries. So when you charge, then some sort of photosynthesis

happens – exactly as you charge your physical body when you do pranayama. When you concentrate on a particular point with ekagrata, concentration or dharana, there is also a process of charging.

These little glands or batteries which you are born with have to be charged from time to time by various methods. When these batteries remain charged, old age is no problem. Morarji Desai is getting on well. Gandhiji was very healthy at the age of eighty. There are many people at the age of ninety, who can do shopping. There is no problem. And there are people who at the age of fifty or fifty-two become incapable because the energy has to be replenished by certain practices and the source of energy in your body has to be kept intact.

Even if you have energy, sometimes the conductors, the link or the carriers are not there. If I have a generator but I don't have a cable what will I do? The nadis get shattered due to worries, anxieties, passions and so many factors day in and day out. We are all working unnecessarily and we don't know how we work when we are thinking, when we are running, worrying, angry or amidst raga and dwesha. How is it happening? These things are expressions of *shakti*, energy, which are wasted. That is why people, when they are old, get depleted.

Swamiji, is it necessary that the chakras develop in succession or any chakra can develop at any time?

They can develop at any time. If you concentrate and do sadhana on the awakening of anahata chakra and you do not do anything else, it will awaken, but you will not be able to handle it properly. It is safer and better to awaken the chakras in a particular order because the experience of awakening in mooladhara is very staggering sometimes. It is a basic event. It is a major event and as such, if you are able to manage it, then manipura and the other chakras are not going to be difficult because the experiences coming out of other chakras are milder than mooladhara. Mooladhara is a very difficult experience and everybody cannot handle it. It is terrifying; it

disturbs the whole being, but once you are out of it everything becomes calm and quiet. There is no problem after that.

What is involuntary human combustion, where people have blown up within a few minutes and all that is left is ashes?

It is possible that heat can be generated. There have been a few cases in history when people have done it. Turning the body into ashes and turning the body into light is something which you have to accept. After all, Christ went to heaven in his body, what was it? You cannot say that he just returned like that, like you see on television and in films.

The great saint, Mirabai, went into the temple and disappeared; she became light. There was another saint, Kabir. We do not know whether he was a Hindu or a Muslim; we do not know anything about him. When he died, his body turned into flowers and Hindus and Muslims who were his disciples divided the flowers half and half. Everybody had respect for and faith in him. They wanted to own him and when his body turned into flowers, they distributed it half and half.

Chaitanya, the great saint of Bengal, whose cult you find flourishing in America chanting *Hare Rama, Hare Krishna, Krishna, Krishna, Hare, Hare* disappeared in the temple.

We can safely say that matter converts into light. It is possible. It is a scientific fact. Matter can be converted into light; matter is convertible into energy and matter is convertible into heat. After all, matter is not homogeneous. It is a composition of many things. Out of these elements, one important element in matter is the nucleus; and every matter has a nucleus. Matter does not only mean a solid thing. This nucleus is responsible for the happenings we are talking about, involuntary combustion or turning the matter into light particles or into precious flowers. This nucleus, which is the centre of every being and of every matter, explodes only when time and space, the two opposite polarities, meet each other.

By the word centre we do not mean the mathematical centre. The centre is that particular point where the oppo-

site polarities meet. According to the science of nuclear explosions, the opposite polarities meet each other at the nucleus. In a nuclear bomb it is the nucleus which is exploding. It is not the periphery of the matter; it is not the body of the matter, not even the sphere of the matter, but it is the core of the matter. It is the core of the matter, the nucleus of the matter which can explode only when time and space meet. What is time and space? Time and space are two opposite polarities of your mind. And when these two polarities meet at one point, that is called meditation, concentration.

Swamiji, is there any link between metaphysics and the spiritual world?

When we say the word 'spirit' we always mean an experience and when we say metaphysics we always mean a sort of understanding of the whole process or whatever the process it is. Metaphysics is not an experience – it is an explanation of an experience or rather it is an analysis of an experience. It is a presentation of an experience in the form of understanding. A person who is a metaphysician may not be able to experience what he is writing about. He will be able to understand what he is writing. A spiritual man may not be able to write, but he knows what he knows. He experiences. The difference between theory and practice is exactly the difference between a spiritual person and a metaphysician.

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Satsang

12 December 1985

In the case of long-term coma, is it better to allow the person to die? Do you think there are still lessons to be learnt by the soul even in this unconscious state?

I think there are certain stages where the consciousness does not evolve. It just stays there because it does not have any interaction with the process of knowledge or with the events of life. It is in a state of what you call rigor mortis. Sometimes you can also undergo this type of rigor mortis at will.

Swamiji, if we take on hardships onto ourselves, do we in any way affect our karmas which we have to experience?

I think so, but there are different types of hardships. So far as sufferings are concerned, I think it is better to fight. One should not make any agreement or compromise with sufferings. One may bear them, that is another matter, but one should be making a constant effort to avoid sufferings.

There are types of sufferings and hardships which people undergo with a higher purpose. Many scientists, saints, rishis, munis, expeditionists, mountaineers, leaders or even astronauts undergo hardships in life, but these hardships do not mean anything to them because they have the goal before them. When people went on mountaineering expeditions to the north pole and south pole, it was difficult in those days. Now things have become much easier.

Marco Polo went by silk route to China. It is not easy to go by silk route from Europe to China; it is hardship but he had a goal in mind. Rishis and munis go to the Himalayas, isolate themselves, take just frugal meals and live on barely nothing without wife, children and family. That is also hardship but they have a goal in view. Therefore, it can be said that people who have a definite goal in their mind, they do not mind hardships to achieve that goal. Not that they like hardships. Nobody likes it. Nobody should even invite it, but while you are pursuing the goal you come across many hardships. Some people break down in the middle and a few survive.

There are people who believe that hardship is good and one must accept it, particularly religions believe this: Hindus, Muslims, Christians and others, suffering and suffering. Suffering for what? If you do not know what you are to achieve, then there is no use suffering. There is no meaning in undergoing suffering and hardship and then trying to pursue a goal.

During the process of attaining that goal, you might even enjoy things. You may have nice comfort or difficulties. You may be left on icy mountain peaks without a sleeping bag, a cigarette or a brandy; it does not matter – that is suffering. So it is more important that you have the goal which you will pursue. If you do not have a goal and sufferings come to you and you accept those sufferings, they will destroy you. They have destroyed many people; they have also destroyed many civilizations.

It is true that one has to have some sort of training, discipline or orientation in hardship, but one should not make any compromise with it.

**What do you mean, one should not make any compromise?
Don't sufferings purify the soul?**

You are a businessman and you do business. You decide to go to Calcutta to start a business. You have a lot of difficulties with money, workers, the government, with papers and hardship. You have not really invited them, but you are only

pursuing your goal of a business or industry. You wanted to make money or produce something nice. It may be a selfish motive; it may be a very selfless motive; it may be a very enterprising motive. Whatever it was, you underwent that hardship, it is all right, bear it. It is not called compromise, bear it, it is natural.

However, if you have no goal and you are suffering for some reason, you are quarrelling with your wife, with me, your mother, or you may be squandering money or undergo physical, economic or social suffering, and you don't do anything to overcome that suffering, do you really believe that suffering will purify your mind, your heart or soul? It is not true. Sufferings without goal take you to the very dark areas of human life and evolution. You do not have to opt for suffering; they come your way.

There was an American who lived about thirty-five years ago. He was a big textile merchant. He used to purchase cotton and sell it. Somehow his stores burnt down and he lost his business. He became a pauper over night. He went back to his village and sat down for some time.

One day he read in the newspaper that in the northern part of America, there were places with the possibilities of gold deposits. The government was encouraging agencies to find out more about it; that was all. He went to the market, purchased a meter, a jeep, his rations and whatever he needed and went to that area. He had a lot of hardship in the mountains. Finally, he did find the gold deposit because his meter showed where everything was. When he was returning, being the only one driving he could not manage and fainted on the way. The patrol parties picked him up. He became a millionaire after three days selling his discovery. That is hardship. He was even at the point of death. This is one simple example. There are many examples of great warriors, saints and expeditionists.

You have to have a purpose and the purpose has to be a goal which you are after. It is said in the *Subhashitam* sloka: *Manaswai karyarthi na ganyati dukham, na cha sukham* – He who

wants to do anything for the world should not feel sadness or happiness, but should remain unaffected. He does not even recognize pain and pleasure.

Those who are suffering on account of lack of intelligence are not going to get anything spiritual, I am sure about it. Only those people can purify their mind, open the doors of perception and get in touch with the deeper parts of the mind through suffering, who are dedicated to a goal. It could be a spiritual goal or it could be a non-spiritual goal.

In India, there is a story of Laila and Manju. Laila was the name of a beautiful girl. Manju was the name of a beautiful young man, and they loved each other. He wanted to possess her and how much hardship did he go through! There was another couple, Shiri and Farhad, who loved each other. The father of the girl said, 'Okay, you can marry her. I don't mind, but you have to make a waterway from this place to that place before sunrise.' The whole night the fellow was digging, suffering hardship, but you know the goal was there.

There are many tribes, many people in the world who are suffering today. They may starve and live without clothing, but their suffering won't give them any emancipation or purification.

When you compare the effect of asana with physical exercises which are being taught, what is the difference between them?

Physical exercises work more on the muscular systems and the effect of asanas is more on the subtle quality of the body, like the nerves, nervous system, endocrine glands and the nervous or electrical impulses of the body.

Asanas were discovered by the rishis through observation and reflection. The postures were adopted from certain animals like the fish, the cobra and crocodile – *matsyasana*, *bhujangasana*, *makrasana*.

It is not possible that an animal during his animal incarnations as a fish or a monkey is acting on a particular system of the body. Or rather his body is evolving through

a particular process, because evolution takes place when an interchange or a change takes place within the structure. This basic structure has to do with the physical qualities which are again controlled by certain basic glands. If you remove those glands or transplant some other glands, the shape of the body will begin to change; the behaviour of the animal will begin to change.

Let us say, we are existing for one or two million years in the human body. During this time the human body has been exercising a particular gland. We are exercising the adrenals, thymus, thyroid, everything, but we have been using one gland, especially the pituitary, by a little bit of thinking, more thinking, excessive thinking, by using permutations, combinations, and by using our knowledge about object and event. We have been using the brain for the last two million years. It is called human asana. If you use your brain for another one or two million years, maybe you will become something else, your structure will change. Either the pituitary will undergo an undergrowth or there will be an overgrowth or maybe your intelligence will change. Your body will undergo a little bit of change. Maybe the future human being will not have a beard at all. I am just giving an example.

During their incarnation, the fish, monkey and snake have been operating on one particular basic part of the body. Of course the whole body comes into action, but they have been exercising upon one particular gland or particular quality. Exactly that happens when you do asanas. When you do matsyasana you are working on that gland. The same gland that the fish were operating during the *matsyavata*, the fish incarnation. This is the basic difference in my opinion between other exercises, sports and asanas.

The word asana does not mean exercise. *Asana* means posture. Whether you are sitting, lying, standing, vertical or horizontal, that is called position. When you achieve a particular position, it is your asana. There is a movement between your natural posture and that posture. That

movement could be called exercise, because you are moving the body and you do not call that asana. You change yourself from one particular posture of the body, the natural posture, to bhujangasana or matsyasana, and remain there for two, three, four, five or six minutes.

Exercise has got its own benefits that works on external systems like muscular, circulatory, respiratory systems and to a greater extent the digestive and excretory systems. On the nervous system, it has very little influence. Nadis have a particular quality of taking the message of the body to the brain. Like electrical impulses they carry the messages like a telegram, sometimes it is faster and sometimes it is a bit slower.

However, that can be regulated through asana if they are combined with pranayama. If the asana is not combined with breathing, pranayama, then the effect on the nervous system will not be there. It is like breathing which connects the body with prana. Without breathing, the body and prana cannot be connected. So in exercises the nervous system carries very little message to the brain whereas in asanas it does.

Is the idea of *ahimsa* or non-violence realistic in life?

If you want to destroy your enemy now, *ahimsa* is not the way, but if you want to destroy your enemy in the course of time, live and survive, then there is no better way than *ahimsa*. *Ahimsa* is the key to survival of the community, nation, people or race. No matter how wrong the other party is, do not violate and do not destroy. If you destroy them today, they will destroy you after three hundred years, they won't leave you. Even if there is one man alive, he will come back again. That is what history has taught us.

The word *ahimsa* is a very negative term. *Himsa* means violence, the prefix 'a' is the negative of violence. So *ahimsa* means non-violence. Some thinkers like Gandhi, Martin Luther King, the American philosopher Farrow and many others have said that love could be the positive expression for *ahimsa*. In India we have not used a positive word for it; we always use the word *ahimsa*. The positive word is *karuna*,

compassion, *daya*, mercy, but we do not use it. We always use ahimsa to indicate violence by a negative assertion, asserting negatively, to give weight to it. Compassion does not explain the negativity, the cruelty.

When the freedom movement was going on, there were a few people in India like Netajee Subhash Chandra Bose. He said, we will take back India by force. He left India, went to Afghanistan, then to Germany where he met Hitler. Then he went to Russia, from there to Japan and finally he came to Burma. He organized and recruited many thousands of young Indians in the Indian National Army. He became the Commander-in-Chief. He said, 'I don't believe in ahimsa I take this weapon and fight'. He was a very great man, not an ordinary man; he was a big star in Indian politics. Even today people like to believe that he is alive in India because they have so much love and respect for him.

There was a great difference between him and Gandhiji on this point and many others. As a whole the Indian thought does not subscribe to himsa. To be violent is one thing, but to have a philosophy of non-violence is something else. You must have a great philosophy even if you are not able to practise it. Maybe after a few generations, your children might practise it, because truth should always be told, even if it is impractical.

Truth must be carried on traditionally. The word ahimsa was first uttered in the Vedas. Then it was given great importance to the young prince who was born two thousand five hundred years ago in India. His name was Mahavir. At the time he was to be married he just ran away from the altar of marriage. He said, 'No.' In India only after certain ceremonies are performed is the girl your wife, not prior to that. Prior to that particular ceremony, he just left and went away. He used the sloka *Ahimsa parama dharma* – Ahimsa is supreme virtue. There is no virtue higher than ahimsa according to him. His philosophy went to extremes; he said, 'You should not even have to kill an ant'. People believed in him. Many intellectuals believed in him.

So what happened? Once, a king of a particular place was travelling from one town to another town, and his palanquin was being carried by four carriers. On the way one carrier fell ill. So they picked somebody whom they met, who was strong and stout, and said, 'Hey, come and take the palanquin.' The man happened to be one who believed in Mahavir and *ahimsa parama dharma*. So while he was carrying he used to look that he did not trample on an ant. These palki carriers have a method, swing-swing, swing-swing, so that they can bypass the way when something is there and they have a speed, six, eight or nine miles an hour. Now this man is not swinging. He is only looking that he won't be killing an animal.

This became a very important movement in India two thousand five hundred years ago. It became such a strong movement that, even to this day, his devotees do not drink water or eat anything after sunset. They do not light a candle. And in the night, even now in the twentieth century, they have a broom. They have a broom with them all the time. When they go, they clean the path and then they walk. That is called Jainism.

It is a very well-respected tradition of India and the Jain people are absolutely vegetarian. The whole state of Gujarat used to be vegetarian, and also Rajasthan. There was a time when both these provinces had no meat shop. The Parsis arrived in Gujarat port from Iran some eighteen hundred years ago because they had fled due to wars and trouble. The only condition that was put by the native king was that they should not eat meat.

Sometimes the people who believed in ahimsa forgot what it really meant. Whether it means love and compassion for living beings, human beings, or all creatures, whether it is love within the heart for all. Mahavir used to say you must feel love and unity with all living beings as if they are your people and not anybody else. What right has a human being to think that he is a different being or a different species altogether? We were animals quite a few thousand years ago. Somehow we made a departure, and now we think we have

the right to kill. We think we have a right to destroy, and we see the rest of the living beings as totally useless.

In later years, king Ashoka invaded Orissa and killed many thousands of people and his people were also killed. One day a little girl gave him some wisdom and he became a Buddhist and began to preach ahimsa.

However, the Indian thinking is a little bit different. We say that it is good to practise ahimsa. It is a great virtue. There is no greater virtue than ahimsa, but when you have to confront a person who does not believe in ahimsa, what will you do? That was the point where Hindus disagreed with Buddha. They said you can teach ahimsa and people should not eat meat, kill anybody unnecessarily or damage any property, but when invaders have come to your door and they do not believe in ahimsa, what are you going to do? Are you going to sit down with the slogan of *ahimsa paramo dharma*? When Ashoka returned from Orissa and converted himself on his own, then in the course of about twenty years, he turned the whole country into unilateral disarmament. The whole country was disarmed. There were no manufacturers of fighting weapons. You could not even manufacture a small knife. You could not manufacture poisons; that was his order. When this happened the rest of the people of India, particularly Hindus, opposed and said that it was wrong.

Then the country as a whole realized that ahimsa was a very good word and one had to respect it, but it had its limitations because the invaders who came from the north-west region could not be checked. Indians could not check because they had nothing. The invaders came with fire and gunpowder and we did not have anything to fight because of this unilateral disarmament under the name of ahimsa.

It is a good word but one has to be very careful with it. It is a very powerful word and weapon. Only the wise people can handle it. Cowards cannot handle it. You must have an atom bomb in your hand and then you must talk about ahimsa. Ahimsa should act as a deterrent force. You should not show that you are weak.

16

Satsang

28 December 1985

Addressing a group of yoga aspirants from Italy

I do not know how to assimilate what I have learnt at the ashram?

Anything you learn only becomes clear if you practise it, and if you do not practise it, if you just try to understand it through the mind, then many times you will experience confusion. This happens to medical doctors. If they do not practise, they lose their grip over the subject.

Yoga therapy is something which is quite new and therefore there will be some sort of difficulty. If you have the basic knowledge of modern systems of diagnosis and modern medical theories, it may be much easier for you. It would be easier for a medical practitioner who has studied medical science to understand yoga therapy.

I was thinking to start teaching yoga. Now I find many limitations and I feel a little bit of doubt. Can you tell me what to do?

There is only one thing you should remember – practice makes you perfect. You should start teaching the group of students that you will have. As you go on teaching, you are practising your knowledge and in the course of time you will become perfect.

There are many good books on yoga therapy and a lot of research has already been done on it in India, America,

Australia, Japan, Holland, Czechoslovakia and many other countries. These researches are classical, academic, and on each subject many people have done different research. On meditation itself there are so many researches, because there are various systems of meditation, like mantra meditation, chanting meditation, sound meditation, hatha yoga meditation through pranayama. All these meditations have different effects on the body. As you go on teaching, it will become clear.

What can I do to regain the willpower when it is lost?

The secret of willpower is a one-pointed mind. It is a very simple scientific principle. If you concentrate the rays of the sun through a magnifying glass it can burn paper, a piece of cloth or anything. If you remove the magnifying glass, it cannot do anything because without magnifying glass the rays of the sun are dissipated. When they pass through the magnifying glass, they are concentrated.

This is a scientific principle which is used in many fields in science. In the same way the radio waves, the high frequency waves are created by the principles of fusion or concentration. Our mind is always dissipated. When you are able to concentrate, the dissipation is annihilated. Therefore, the secret of willpower is concentration.

When the mind is drawn one way and then another way, how can you make the mind stronger?

If the mind pulls you very strongly, you should follow the mind for some time. When you follow the mind for some time, the mind returns. This is the nature of the mind. If you try to control the mind, it will try to run away. If you allow your mind freedom it will not move.

Passions and desires disturb the mind. On account of passions and desires you have frustrations which again disturb the mind. Therefore, when passions and desires come into your mind, there is no problem; you follow them for some time and then the mind will stop at some point and return.

You should never fight with the mind. You must make the mind your friend. If it thinks good things, you should be happy. If it thinks undesirable things or dirty things, still you should be happy. When positive thoughts and negative thoughts come into the mind, you should not fight with the mind. Usually this does not happen. When negative thoughts come to your mind you become panicky. You say, 'No, no, no,' and then you have a very bad feeling and feel guilty. 'Oh, my mind is very bad and dirty,' this is what you think. When positive thoughts come into your mind you are very happy, and you will say, 'Oh today is a very nice day, my mind was very happy.' Which means some day you like your mind, some day you do not like it. It means sometimes you love yourself and someday you do not love yourself.

You develop two sides of the mind. One side you love; another side you hate. The whole life you go on doing this because mind is a very great force. You cannot take it by force; you cannot train the mind by force. It is like an elephant – you have to make the elephant your friend, that's all. If you get angry with your elephant, it will crush you. The same with the mind. All great things throughout the world were done through the mind.

Therefore, a yogi or a yoga aspirant must have a healthy mind. You should not hate your mind. You should not endure your emotions and you should not abuse yourself. You should not criticize yourself. If my mind thinks negative, it is all right. If it is positive okay. This should be the attitude of a yogi.

A yogi or yoga aspirant does not deal with the mind through religion. In religion there are good things and bad things. Christians, Muslims and Hindus say that this is bad and this is good, but in yoga it is not like that. We treat this mind as a force which is projecting through the senses. This force is projecting through the brain and therefore you should not criticize your mind.

This is how a yogi should practise yoga. If you sit for meditation for half an hour every day, sometimes your mind

is full with useless thoughts, sometimes you are dreaming, sometimes you are one-pointed, sometimes you do not like what you are doing. These are different responses, pre-dispositions and reactions of your personality. Sometimes we are very unhappy about it because we expect samadhi, concentration every day. It is not possible. Sometimes it is possible, most times it is not possible. In the beginning there are twenty-nine days with no success, one day with success. After some time twenty-five days no success – five days success. The twenty-five days become twenty, fifteen and the five days become ten, fifteen, twenty. This improvement from one day to five days and ten days can only happen if you are not unhappy about your failure. You have to decide how long you will sit, so you decide half an hour. Sit every day and in the course of time everything will change.

When Buddha experienced enlightenment, he was restless a few moments before. In the morning he went to take bath in the pond. He was very hungry because he had fasted for many days. Then a young girl came to offer porridge to a particular tree, because Hindus believe that every forest has a presiding deity, *devata*. So she came to offer the porridge to that invisible deity of the forest. She saw this young man frail and weak. She thought that he was the devata of the forest, she gave him the porridge and he drank the whole bowl.

The same night he got enlightened, but a few moments before enlightenment his mind was very restless. The negative forces tried to delude him. Many siddhis came to him. He rejected everything. *Siddhis* means miraculous powers. He said, 'No I don't want it.' The same happened with Christ when Satan tempted him. He did not heed the temptations of Satan. So even at that height you have Satan.

You will have to learn how to live with your mental weaknesses. You will have to accept what you are. Whether you are a good swami or not a good swami, you have to accept it. Only when you accept yourself, everything becomes okay. When you do not accept yourself, when you are guilty, sorry

or depressed about your unsuccessful yoga, the problem is there. The problem is not the mind, the problem is in mooladhara, the kundalini. If you awaken it, everything is okay. If you do not awaken it, everything is ordinary. Each one of you must try to find the method of awakening.

It is necessary for all of us whether sannyasins, karma sannyasins, yogis, yoga aspirants or disciples to have a better quality of life. The most important thing is that whatever you are, if you can handle kundalini and start a little vibration in it, things are all right. The purpose of all sadhana, the purpose of all the practices is to awaken the dormant, sleeping kundalini.

Does hatha yoga contain other practices besides shatkarmas?

First of all, I am going to do fundamental research on hatha yoga practices. There are many forms of yoga and research on all those yogas will take quite some time. When different types of people in different age groups, nationality, gender, practise *bhujangasana*, cobra pose, what happens inside the body? What changes take place in the body in cobra pose?

What changes take place in the hormones, the nervous system and other systems of the body? Is it the same in everyone or is there a slight difference? If an old man of eighty and if a young man of eighteen are practising cobra pose, will the result be the same? If a sick person and a healthy person both practise *bhujangasana* will the result be the same, or will it be different? If you practise *bhujangasana* after another asana, will the result be the same? The same will be done on all important asanas, pranayama, mudra, bandha and shatkarma.

That will be the open research, but there is some private research I will be doing which is not for the common people. Does *bhujangasana* create an effect on the kundalini body or does *vipareeta karani mudra* have an effect on the kundalini gland? Do these asanas affect kundalini and if they do, how? Do they do it by accelerating the blood circulation or by creating a new balance in the endocrine glands? Does the

nervous system send some kind of electric impulse to the kundalini body?

These are some of the things which I will be doing here. I have come to the conclusion that meditation is difficult for most people. Through hatha yoga practices awakening of kundalini can take place. This is my conclusion. Asana, pranayama, mudra, bandha, shatkarma can influence kundalini, even if you do not meditate. The research which we will do here will be twofold: the physiological and spiritual effects of hatha yoga. The first one is for the general public and the second one will only be for my disciples.

I like books and we will have a very good library. Books on Hindu occultism and the pre-Christian occultism in Europe, the pre-Colombian occultism in the South American continent and in Africa. So we will have books on occultism, mysticism, spirituality and science. I will be giving subjects to the residents and they will study books and then do the writing.

Thirdly I will do some social work. Social work means medical aid. I am preparing for it and hope to have the inauguration in 1987.

Swamiji, will you tell us something about the future work at the Ganga Darshan Ashram?

Hatha yoga begins with shatkarmas, that is the first step. Then asana and pranayama, mudra, bandha. Pranayama, bandha and asana have to be combined. A good practice of pranayama should be done because you have purified your body through hatha yoga shatkarmas.

You can practise a lot of pranayama. Pranayama does not mean breathing. It means stopping the breath. When you stop the breath, it is called pranayama. *Pooraka* and *rechaka*, inhalation and exhalation, is not pranayama; it is a way to pranayama. When you stop your breath that is called pranayama. And when you stop your breath you must practise mudra and bandha. If you do more of pranayama your body must be pure. If there are impurities in the body

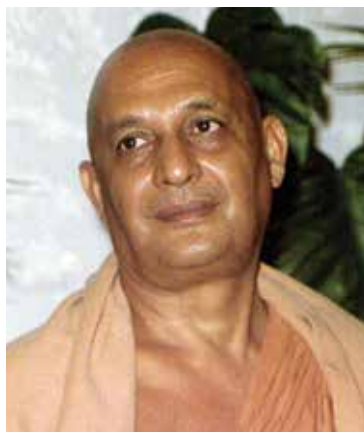
then pranayama will throw it out by force, and then you can get sick. With a purified body through shatkarma, you start practising pranayama.

Then when you stop the breath, you must know how long to stop the breath. When you stop the breath, you must give a form or a symbol to kumbhaka. The best form is the light. When you stop the breath, you stop your mind. As long as you are holding the breath, you must visualize the light. That is very important. Whenever you do kumbhaka, you must visualize the little light. If you are not able to visualize the light, then you should practise trataka for some time. You must practise trataka on a candle. You should not practise trataka on very big or sharp light. It should only be the mild light, like a candle flame.

In *bahiranga kumbhaka*, external kumbhaka, you have to practise uddiyana, which means you should be able to practise sahajoli. When you practise sahajoli, uddiyana or nauli, the apana force goes upwards. It is the force of suction. In order to be sure that the force is reversed, yogis suck water, oil, liquid butter either through the male organ or the female vagina. It is not a practice. It is only a proof. How do you know that apana vayu is going up? When you are able to suck water, oil, heavy liquid butter or small granules of mercury, your apana vayu is going up. It is a proof. When the apana vayu begins to go up, awakening of kundalini begins.

Hatha yoga is the easiest way; there is no doubt about it, but it needs very good physical preparation. For those who are careless about their body hatha yoga will not give the result and they can practise raja yoga or nada yoga, but the body is not pure. Some people have a good mind and a bad body and some people have a good body and a bad mind. Those who have a pure body can practise hatha yoga, but those who cannot purify the body because everything is confusing should practise raja yoga, nada yoga, or other mental yogas.

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.

In *Teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati, Volume XI*, Sri Swamiji illuminates the enquiries of aspirants not only on the bigger questions of the purpose of life, but also provides practical advice on how to live harmoniously with your family and community, raise children, deal with anger, control desires and even to coexist with the animal kingdom. Sri Swamiji's satsangs of 1985 will guide an aspirant to maintain a sturdy course on the luminous path.



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