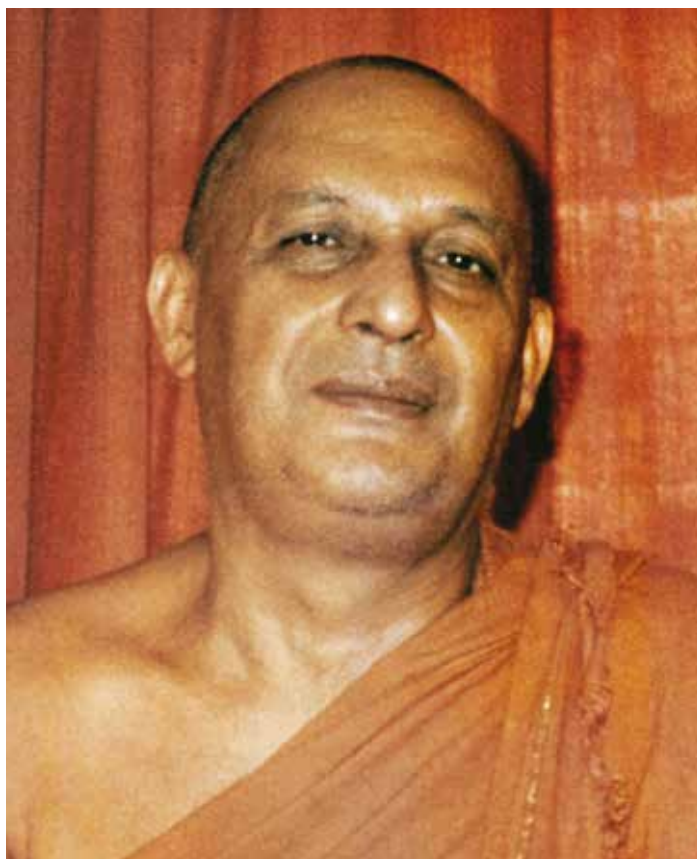


Volume XII

Teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

Teachings of
Swami Satyananda
Saraswati
Volume XII



SWAMI SATYANANDA SARASWATI
1923~2023
CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

Teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Volume XII

*A compilation of talks and satsangs
given by Swami Satyananda Saraswati
at Ganga Darshan Vishwa Yogapeeth from 1986 to 1988.*



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

Teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati, Volume XII

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

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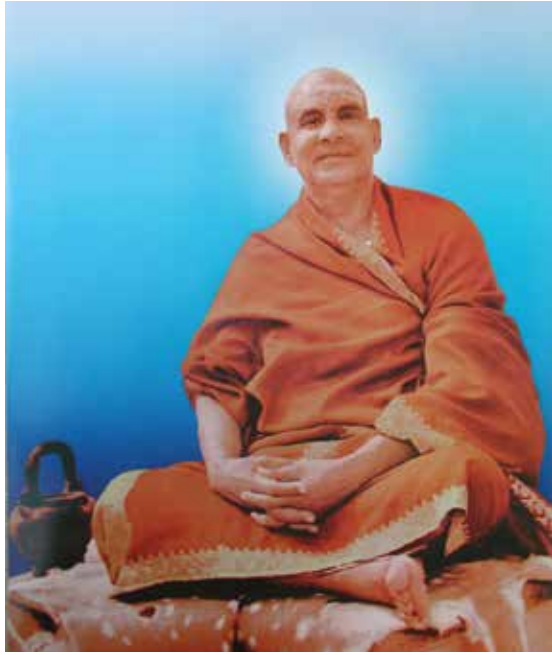
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Dedication

*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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1986

1

Satsang

*23 January 1986, addressing a group of yoga aspirants
of a Health Management Course*

What is concentration?

When you pass solar rays through the magnifying glass they become very intense and powerful. In the same way, in most cases, our minds usually remain dissipated, so we have to manage all functions of the supermind at the same time and are not able to concentrate on a particular thought. The lack of concentration on a particular thought is called dissipation, *vikshepa*, also known as *chanchalta*, restlessness.

When you are able to concentrate your mind on one topic for a given period of time, the mind releases a certain amount of energy. This energy is known as willpower or spiritual power. Some call it *sankalpa*. This is the secret.

Just as radio waves have various frequencies, like ultra, very high, or ultrasonic frequencies, the brain also has frequencies as you have in transistors short waves, medium waves. In medium waves you can get Patna, but you cannot get BBC or some other station. For that you need short waves. These waves relate to the quality of frequency and frequency is the capacity of a thought to penetrate from one body to another.

In order to increase the frequency of the mind, you have to practise concentration. When concentration is practised for a period of time, the brain and the senses, the *jnanendriyas*, are dissociated for the time being. For example, if I am talking to you, I can disconnect this telephone in

order to become free from disturbances. When the telephone is disconnected for the time being, or the doors are locked for the time being, what happens? The brain is isolated. We call it deprivation. You can deprive your mind and brain from external information or stimuli like sound or touch.

During this state of deprivation, isolation or seclusion, the mind releases a certain amount of energy, a material energy, like an electrical energy which can be measured. It is not just philosophical energy or mythological energy. It is substantial, tangible, material energy which can be registered and measured in terms of voltage, ohms and amperes. Of course, it is very minute. This energy then changes the level of frequency and gets connected with space.

That is how one man receives another man's thoughts. There is a connection which happens only when your mind is raised by a frequency.

Is there any particular yoga practice to cure gastric problems completely?

Gastric problems are caused by prolonged thinking. Of course, all the gas problems take place within the intestines, but they are caused by a process of thinking. When you think, it is not only a psychological action or event, it is a biochemical procedure in your body.

When you are afraid of someone, your adrenal glands will secrete adrenaline. When you have passion for a man or woman, your gonads or sex hormones will be acting. When you are very depressed or anxious, your mouth dries up.

When you are thinking and over thinking again and again, on a particular issue like the marriage of your daughter, the discipline of your son, his education or some other problem that is coming up in the family or society, you may think once or twice about it. Sometimes you can be neurotic about it and keep on thinking again and again. That causes gastric problem. Therefore, in order to eradicate gastric problems, the best form of yoga is the yoga of detachment, *anasakti*. That is the yoga which Krishna taught, and you should not be

surprised when I say that yoga does not only mean asana and pranayama. It is much more than that. Asana and pranayama are the foundations, the very preliminary practices.

Yoga is divided into two: the external and the internal. When you start concentrating your mind and the process and flux of your thoughts, it is called yoga.

From the yogic perspective, how does one relate dreams during sleep with one's inner state?

The *Mandukya Upanishad* deals with and explains the three material stages of consciousness. The three states of consciousness are: *jagrat* or waking, *swapna* or dream, *shushupti* or profound sleep. These three stages of consciousness relate to three levels of human knowledge.

When you are awake, you operate your mind and body through the senses, but when you are not awake, when you are dreaming, you operate on the basis of acquired impressions. According to the *samskaras* you have, the quality of dream will be influenced. Some people do have nightmares because their thinking process becomes very complicated or maybe the condition of their body or stomach is also not in order.

If you have any idea about computers, you will understand that there is an upper crust of thinking, willing and rationalization, and this mental process is known to you. There is also an inner crust where a process is going on according to a certain law or system. This inner crust is known as the *antahkarana*. This *antahkarana* is the inner instrument, and when the senses are withdrawn in deep sleep, when the body becomes still and minimum *prana shakti* is used, the *antahkarana*, the inner instrument of knowledge, comes into operation. This *antahkarana* is responsible for dreams.

I am talking to you through speech flowing through my mouth. I understand what I am saying and you can too. This is a mental and intellectual process. This represents the upper crust.

The inner crust, the *antahkarana*, is that into which a counter-influence is being transferred; you are also receiving

certain impressions or information. You are understanding something and you may agree or disagree with my arguments. You are transferring it into your antahkarana. Transferring this into your antahkarana is an automatic process, like when you are typing on the computer; automatically, you go on creating an impulse in the micro-chips. Later on, if you press 'save', it is transferred to memory and stays there unless you wipe it out.

In the same way, the karma, the samskaras, the experiences are automatically transferred into the inner crust when even a little event takes place on the upper crust. For some time, it remains in the inner crust at the level of antahkarana, and finally it goes into the body of samskara where it becomes a seed. The same thing happens to fruits and grain; the plant is grown and the grain is formed. At the same time, the grain is developing a seed as before. Afterwards, it becomes the seed through which you can get many more plants and trees.



2

Satsang

24 February 1986

What practices are best to extrovert an introvert person?

In order to break introversion for a healthy mind, it is necessary to plunge into physical or manual work and avoid deep meditation because sattvic qualities alone are necessary for introvert persons. Only when you have attained a sattvic state of mind, should you become *antarmukha* or introvert. If those who are tamasic by nature become introvert, their mental faculties and capacities to handle situations in life will be destroyed. Therefore, tamasic people should go in for a rajasic life, rajasic people for a sattvic life and sattvic people should go in for an introvert life.

In yogic texts a lot has been said about inner life and outer life, but you must make a distinction between inner life and introvert life. Inner life begins only when the outer life has been properly organized. You can go into inner life only when desires, passions, aspirations and ambitions are organized, and so are your frustrations and disappointments; then it will not create any difficulties at all. However, if you have not fixed these things before going into the inner life, you will find your frustrations, disappointments, passions, desires and your criminality there. You will find everything there, because after all it has come from inside.

What is the role of karma yoga?

Karma yoga is the totality of existence. It is a dynamic expression of man's existence in keeping with the laws of nature.

Dhyana yoga, meditation, is not in keeping with the laws of nature. The reason is clearly written in *raja yoga*, I am not interpreting it. *Dhyana yoga* is anti-creativity because there are two processes: one is the process of creation and experience and the other is dissolution of creation. What happens in *dhyana yoga*? You are dissolving your experiences. You are transcending; you are jumping over time and space, and there comes a time when existence or creation does not exist for you. It is a process of return. They call it *pratiprasavah* in *raja yoga*.

Of course, *dhyana yoga* has got its own importance. I do not deny it, but to equate *dhyana yoga* with *karma yoga* is like preparing one kilo of vegetables and putting in one kilo of salt. Those who want to practise *dhyana yoga* for long hours must understand that they are plunging into something over which they have no control. A practice of meditation for half an hour, in the course of time, changes the biochemical laws of the body. It can be positive or negative. It can change your hormonal balances and just make you an elephant by brain or body. Or it can make you a *siddha* or a Christ. But how many Christs has it made? One in two thousand years. It has created more abnormal people who have gone into the mental asylum.

Karma yoga is the law of each and every thing in this life. Everything is moving: the sun, the stars, the earth, the cosmos, the galaxies, the air are moving all the time, twenty-four hours. Why should you not say that *karma yoga* is the way to realization? That is exactly what has been said in the *Bhagavad Gita* and *Yoga Vasishtha*.

In the *Bhagavad Gita*, as well as in the *Yoga Vasishtha*, the central theme is that you must work physically and mentally and not try to retreat from the work that is lying at hand for you. Arjuna said, 'I do not want to fight.' Krishna said,

‘Yes you should.’ Arjuna said, ‘But why do you compel me?’ Krishna replied, ‘Because that is the law of life.’ Arjuna went on to say, ‘Thereby I will be bound by the law of nature and karma!’ To which Krishna replied, ‘No, karma never binds a person.’ You can give me a list of people who do not work and are lazy, but they are mentally active – full of passions.

Therefore, it is very important for everyone to understand the importance of *karma* – a dynamic life, physical work – in spiritual realization. *Sakaama karma* is when you work with certain desires and motives. *Nishkaama karma* is when you work without motives. These are the two important divisions of karma. As a householder, your work is *sakaama* for your son, wife, husband, children or your family. Afterwards, you learn how to do *nishkaama karma*. *Nishkaama karma* is called *karma yoga* – not karma. *Sakaama karma* is known as karma.

What is an ashram?

The place where a *sannyasin* lives is known as ashram. *Shram* means hard labour where you work physically as well as spiritually. Therefore, in an ashram you must blend both. Ours is a very small ashram, but I know there are ashrams, and I have lived in some of these, where you have to look after the cows, plough the land; all visitors also have to do it. We used to do this in Baldev ashram and there are quite a few other similar ashrams in Bihar. You make a mistake when you separate spiritual life from a dynamic life.

The moment you want to become spiritual, the first thing you want to do is to slowly renounce your participation and involvement in dynamic life, and that is a serious mistake. Retirement from karma and dynamic involvement in life is only permitted for those people who have no desires or passions, who live with minimum food and need very few things, and seclusion is prescribed. It is said only for those people, ‘No more karma for you. Do not involve yourself in the cowshed, with a pick axe or carrying stones from here to there. That is not for you. You just go inside and go in.’

Can you explain the nature of the resolve used in yoga nidra?

Yoga nidra reorganizes the patterns of the subconscious mind. Yoga nidra prepares the mental ground, the mental plane, in which you can then plant necessary *samskaras*, impressions. You prepare the ground, remove the weeds, the land becomes ready. Then you sow the seed according to the season, whether rice, paddy, wheat or maize. *Sankalpa*, resolve, is like a seed. That resolve is very important because whichever seed you sow, you will reap.

In order to make a *sankalpa* in yoga nidra, you should wait for some time. It can mean many years, because if you do not know what you want, how are you going to make a *sankalpa*? You may make a *sankalpa* which you never wanted. It happens to many people, and after a few years they realize, 'Oh no! It was a mistake.'

First you must know exactly what you should become. What is your special quality? Because in the realm of nature there is one truth – there is no person or being without a talent. I am using the word talent, not quality alone.

When I talk about talent, inherent talent, in each and every one, I am talking about everybody, one hundred percent. No person or being is born in this life devoid of a possible talent, but we do not realize this talent because our desires are directed by what we see around us.

Somebody wants to do business because he has seen someone else doing business and amassing wealth. Somebody wants to be an executive, a big officer, because he has seen some officer and he likes that. Our desires, ambitions or plans are not guided by ourselves, but by the external circumstances and situations which we see every day.

What is karma?

Once, I was travelling by Lufthansa – a long flight from Frankfurt to Bogotá, eleven hours non-stop. By my side was a man who took out his cigar. First he called for a drink. They brought the drink, and he took one sip and took out a

cigar and lit it. I noticed that he was taking more time than necessary. He was just keeping the matches close to his cigar. Later I asked him, 'Why did you take that much time?' He said, 'I saw so many thoughts at that time.' After one sip of the drink, while he was lighting the cigar, suddenly he saw a panorama of thoughts, like you see in a forest with green and yellow flowers, trees, birds and animals, all at one time. Normally you do not see it one by one. You see them all at one time. He said, 'I saw a lot of thoughts in my mind and finally all thoughts dissolved and only one thought remained.' That is karma.

The thought, desire or passion which lingers with you day and night – despite all the thoughts which come to you from time to time, that is your karma. That karma you have to pick up and fulfil and that karma you will obtain in this life.

When can we begin to use visualization practices?

When you practise dharana in yoga nidra before you are ready, you will immediately go into deep sleep because dharana relaxes the mind. In yoga nidra, it is important that you do not sleep. So you should start dharana only when you have overcome sleep in yoga nidra.

Can we teach yoga nidra to children?

Of course, you can teach yoga nidra to children, but it is better to equip yourself with knowledge of child psychology, so that you may not fix or implant the wrong impressions on them with the hope of improving them. Sometimes the positive suggestions given to children in yoga nidra beget negative results. That is the law. If you implant positive suggestions in certain children, you will find they are reacting to those in their external life.

Therefore, it is important to know child psychology and teach yoga nidra accordingly. Children's consciousness is very fertile and you have to be very careful with what you give them. Do not brainwash or indoctrinate them. Of course, you can be brainwashed because you need brainwashing.

You can be indoctrinated because grown-up people like to be indoctrinated. We want to believe something, but children, do not.

Children want to play, enjoy life and do everything playfully. If they see a transistor, tape recorder or machine, they will not handle it like grown-ups. They will handle it like a toy and enjoy it. Children have a different state of mind and therefore one has to be very careful while dealing with children.

The second important point, which you have to know, is that there are practices in yoga nidra which are called *dharana*, inner visualization, which can be taught to children.

Does it matter how many different forms of yoga you combine during sadhana?

Man is a combination of body, mind, feelings and intellect. Just as your physical body has iron, zinc, copper and vitamins as a combination broadly speaking, the human personality is a combination of four important factors. Therefore, you do need a blending of yoga: karma yoga, bhakti yoga, raja yoga and jnana yoga. You do need balancing because karma yoga is for the body; bhakti yoga is for the emotions; raja yoga is for the psyche; jnana yoga is for the intellect. So you supply proper nutrition to every aspect of your personality.

Can you talk about mantra?

Whales, dolphins and many creatures communicate with each other at a very great distance and it has been found by recent experiments that whales are able to communicate with each other even at a distance of 50,000 kilometres. These creatures are able to create a sound frequency which has a minimum of zero velocity. When the mind is brought down to zero velocity the frequency goes higher. It is the law of physics, a scientific law. There should be no dispute about this law. When the speed of any object, the speed of the brain or the speed of a thought is brought down to zero velocity the frequency goes higher. This is exactly the purpose of a mantra.

Mantra helps you in bringing down the velocity to zero in a systematic way. It does not allow your mind to drop from high velocity to zero velocity all of a sudden, because it is not possible for anyone to handle this fall of velocity. For example, if your mind is going at a terrific rate and suddenly it drops to zero velocity, can you imagine what will happen? You will become psychotic. You will see so many things which you may not be able to handle. However, if you take the help of the mantra and try to bring down the velocity of the mind, stepwise, gradually, with total control over the process, you can bring down your mind to the lowest velocity and thereby the frequency can be increased.

Human beings emit thought frequencies. Creatures like dolphins emit sound frequencies. I am using two terms: thought frequencies and sound frequencies. Sound frequency is the basic reality of a thought frequency. When a sound frequency manifests on the external plane, it becomes a thought frequency. Therefore, your thought frequencies must be diluted. Your thought frequency must be reduced to a sound frequency.

Om is a sound, not a thought frequency and therefore I will ask everybody not to ask me about the meaning of the mantra. It is a sound, that's all. *Ram* is a sound which has no meaning and so is *Shiva*. *Om Namah Shivaya* is a combination of sounds. That means thought frequencies must cease and sound frequencies must remain, *Om, Om, Om, Om, Om*; and if any thought comes in your mind, you must say no.

I am not talking about psychology here. I am talking about yoga because in psychology they say do not suppress the mind, but I am talking about something entirely different. You have to stop thought frequencies and when these thought frequencies are reduced at a terrific rate you cannot handle them at all. They have to come down to the level of sound frequency in a gradual way. There should not be a sudden drop. If there is a sudden drop from thought frequency to sound frequency, you will become psychotic. You will have to go to the mental hospital.

Therefore, Swami Sivananda says that mantra is the easiest, surest, quickest, cheapest and the best method for higher experiences in spiritual life.

How does one resolve the conflict that the temporal and finite nature of joy brings pain?

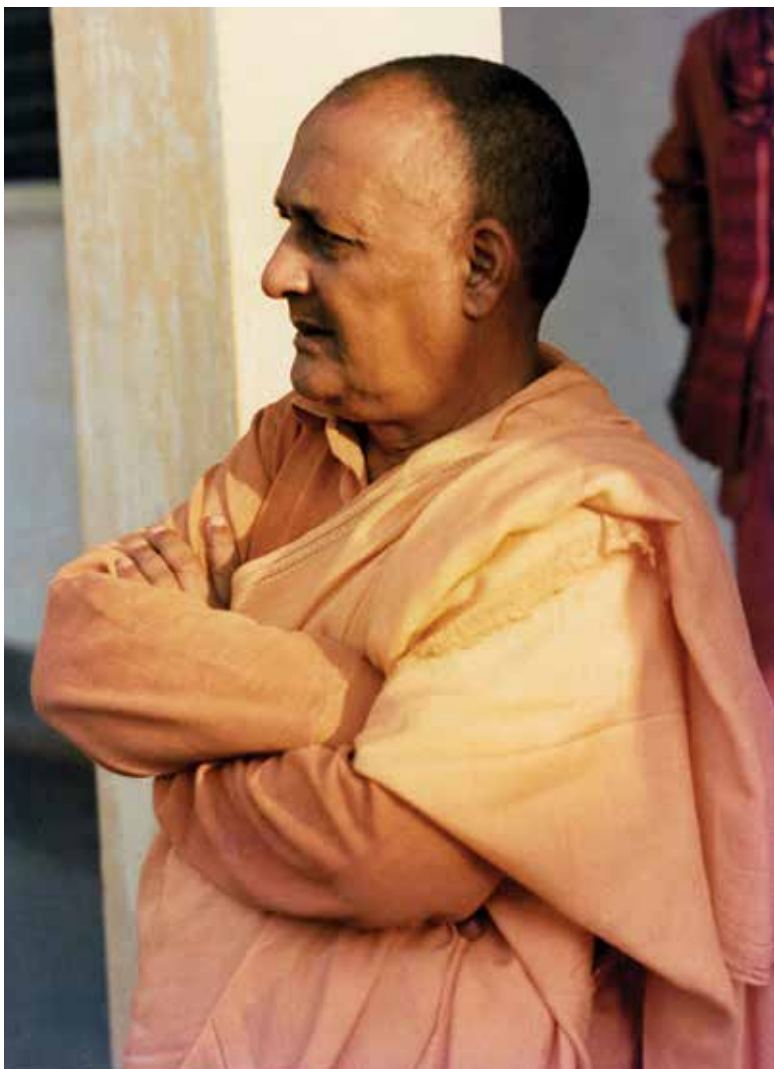
Maya is necessary. Passion, desire and attachment are necessary. They are a part of the cosmic cycle of nature and also necessary for your survival and existence. If your mother did not have maya and mamta for you when she gave birth to you, you would have been dead. If a cow did not have attachment or *mamta*, mineness, the calf would be dead. The survival of the whole of nature, not only human beings, but trees, rivers and mountains all have *mamta*. They too have passions, desires and the same instincts that we have.

Sristi chakra, the cycle of creation, is dependent on those things which you people call worldly, or *nashwar*, perishable and finite, temporal and empirical. Soon after the child is born, let the mother leave the child and go away without any attachment – what will happen? You must have attachment for your wife, friend, teachers, for your father and mother and thereby you maintain the joy of creation.

Life is not painful; empirical life is not painful. You must drop this conflict completely. It is not true. If there is a religion which says so, it is not the truth. How can this world or maya be painful? Everybody has lived in maya. I was born from my mother and so were you; so were Krishna, Rama, Buddha, Christ and Mohammed and their mothers took care of them and loved them. There was an attachment. We do have an attachment for our saints and sages. If I think worldly things are the forerunners of pain, it is due to a negative attitude to life. I think life without this empirical joy is pain. The love, the joy which you get from the things of the world is called empirical joy. Without it life is painful and dry.

We have had a few people in history who had fulfilled the purpose of prakriti, but they are quite exceptional. Patanjali has clearly written: Those who have fulfilled the purpose of

prakriti are permitted to get out of it. However, you are not one of them. If you are trying to get out of it, you are trying to get out of a fast running train, only to break your legs. Do not try to get out of this existence and the obligation of karma.



3

Satsang

*25 February 1986, addressing a group of yoga aspirants of a
Teachers Training & Yoga Therapy Course*

What is karma sannyasa?

When you want to start spiritual life, concentrate your dissipated mental tendencies and train your mind, you should seek a mantra from your guru. After that, you can practise mantra yoga which is not very difficult. This is a very important spiritual initiation in the life of an average person.

Then there is another initiation which a householder is fully authorized to take. That is known in the *Bhagavad Gita* as karma sannyasa. In the Vedas it is called *vanaprastha ashrama*. The *Gita* says karma sannyasa is where you live the life of an average householder and discharge your duties, social, emotional and spiritual obligations to your family, to your kith and kin. However, within your own heart, mind and intellect, you live like a lotus leaf in water, untainted, untouched. Nothing affects your mind, although you are interacting with every situation with as much efficiency as possible. This is called karma sannyasa, the path of the *Gita* and the Vedas.

This path of karma sannyasa is for those people who have understood and realized that it is possible to separate karma from bhavana or karma from its consequences. In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Krishna admonishes Arjuna (2:47):

*Karmanyevaadhikaraste maa phaleshu kadaachana;
Maa karmaphalahetur bhoor maa te sango'stwakarmani.*

Thy right is to work only, but never with its fruits;
let not the fruits of actions be thy motive, nor let thy
attachment be to inaction.

You are concerned with the fulfilment of your social and family obligations, and you have to do them. *Ma phaleshu kadachana* – you have no business with the results accruing therefrom.

If this kind of consciousness or awareness dawns in your mind and if you want to practise the life of inner renunciation without affecting the external situations of your life, you should take initiation into karma sannyasa. Putting on geru, putting on a mala or having a spiritual name does not make you a karma sannyasin. It is important that you should realize and understand that an action and its results can be separated.

People feel that whenever you perform an act, happiness springs from the action or *karma*. No. Karma causes pain and can cause pain. Pain springs from attachment to the consequences. The result of the karma is in the form of desire in your mind, and if you can control that desire, if you can control that mental impulse for the time being, and totally concern yourself only with the performance of the karma, you will not experience pain.

If a butcher, shopkeeper, housewife, or anyone gives up karma just because they believe that pain, stress, strains and hypertension spring from karma and therefore they should renounce all the karmas, it is not possible. Even if you want to renounce karma under some wrong belief or notion, it will not be possible for you, as karmas are imposed on you by certain laws of nature. The *Gita* says (13:29):

*Prakrityaiva cha karmaani kriyamaanaani sarvashah;
Yah pashyati tathaa'tmaanam akartaaram sa pashyati.*

He sees, who sees that all actions are performed by Nature alone and that the Self is actionless.

Through the interaction or intermediate agency of the gunas, sattwa, rajas and tamas, prakriti obliges or compels you to act, and therefore the law is that karma cannot and should not be renounced.

If you do not renounce karma and if you do not renounce anything like it, then what is renunciation? What is sannyasa? What is karma sannyasa? Either for a householder or for anyone? They say you have to renounce the desire which is keeping the consequences of the karma, the fruits of the karma before the mind: *shubham*, *ashubham*, *mishritam* – good result, bad result and mixed results, and this is the sadhana of a karma sannyasin.

How does the monthly period affect the body and mind of a woman?

Asanas can and should be performed during the menstrual cycle. It will help in maintaining a healthy balance of the hormonal secretions. The mental or emotional imbalances or suicidal tendencies take place only because the balance is missing.

This imbalance is created by the interaction of various groups of hormones which spring from the posterior side of the pituitary. If this balance can be maintained through proper exercises, asanas, or cleaning of your system then I do not think that these drastic symptoms will ever occur in your life.

The source of prana is in mooladhara chakra. From mooladhara chakra this prana or pranic energy springs upwards through pingala nadi, intersecting at each and every chakra on the way. The distribution of prana takes place from the chakra to the respective zone. From swadhisthana the prana shakti is distributed to the reproductive organs, ovaries, urinary, kidney and bladder; from manipura to the gastrointestinal system, the intestines, the pancreas, the liver and duodenum; from anahata, prana shakti is distributed to the cardiac region and lungs. That is how the supply of prana takes place from mooladhara to different organs of the body.

Can any mala be used for mantra meditation purposes, such as tulsi or rudraksha?

There is a common belief that there are mantras where a tulsi mala should be used or in some mantras, rudraksha. There is nothing like that. However, you must remember all these rules do not belong to sattwic sadhana, but to tantric practices. There are a number of tantric practices about which you do not know. Nor will you read them in any books because they are only given from guru to disciple. Books give a little idea, because we do talk a lot, that's all.

There are various sects of tantra. The Shaivaites have a system called Shaiva tantra; worshippers of Shakti follow Shakti tantra, which is entirely different, the Vaishnavas follow Vishnu tantra, called Pancharatra. There was a time when people used to worship the sun and in these tantric systems worship is well codified.

The tantric poojas do not depend on your emotions, whims and fancies. It is not that if you feel like offering half a kilo or half a ton of flour to Shiva, you just take a bucket and put it there. No, there are rules and regulations, about what should be done, when and that is where the different types of malas come into question. *Rakta chandan*, red sandalwood, is used by Shakti worshippers, particularly for Kali. Rudraksha is used by those who are practising Shaiva tantra. Tulsi is used by the people who practise Vaishnava tantra, Pancharatra, and so on.

Accordingly, there is also discipline about food. Vaishnavas do not eat honey, garlic and meat at all. Shaivas can eat meat, but mostly they do not eat it. Shaktas and Kali worshippers, as a rule, do eat it. So, in tantra, these malas are to be used according to the food and the ritual that you are handling but you are not doing all that. You are doing sattwic sadhana. There you can use a tulsi, rudraksha or a rakta chandan, sandal or sphatika mala. You can use anything you like.

If you are doing *anushtana*, a particular worship of Kali for achieving a particular end or result, whatever it is, you have to use rakta chandan. That is what is prescribed. If

you are worshipping Tripura Sundari or doing the Sri Yantra sadhana, which is a very pure tantric sadhana – Sri Yantra pooja or yantra sadhana or Sri sadhana, it has different names – you have to use sphatika. It is through that crystal or *sphatika* mala that you have to do the japa of the Sridasha Mahavidya *hashakalahari shakalahari*, because the sadhaka is doing the Sri sadhana with a motive in his mind which is not a spiritual motive. It is a worldly motive. He may be doing it for a son or for a lot of money and all kinds of things.

When you do a *sakaama sadhana*, a sadhana with a particular motive in view, and you go to the tantric practices, then the rules of rudraksha, chandan, sphatika, rakta chandan apply. The way you are doing sadhana, as a part of bhakti yoga, raja yoga or simple sattwic yoga – do not at all worry about it.

If you have money to buy a sphatika mala, it will help you for twenty, thirty, forty years. I have had a rudraksha for the last forty years, but tulsi, possibly, I could not have managed to keep. I have a mala which I got from my guru, 1945 to 1985. I have had it for forty-one years. I have not lost it because sphatika is durable. Tulsi is not, nor is rakta chandan or chandan. These are the points which you have to keep in mind.

Why do you teach yoga?

We give teaching in yoga in order to prepare yoga teachers, but the purpose is to promote the cause of yoga and at the same time to help people around you by teaching them simple yoga systems which you have learnt from here. In the course of time, you will have to know more about it, because at this time the whole educational system, the whole thinking of people is poised to accept yoga as a part of education. People have been thinking seriously about it and I am in touch with the policy makers. They have said that they want yoga to be taught from the primary level to the university level. They have also assured me that sooner or later, in psychology and modern medicine, proper text books will be added.

If that comes to pass, your yoga knowledge which you have at the moment will not be adequate, because there are realities about the effects of yoga which only great scientists are able to explain. The great Dr Christian Barnard, from South Africa, who performs heart transplants, once discussed when he was in Calcutta, the effect of siddhasana on the process of suppression of testosterone hormones. It is a hormone which somehow escapes into the blood, passes through the entire cardiovascular system and agitates the heart, and naturally you get a heart attack. Not always, but sometimes when the agitation is beyond your capacity.

To suppress the testosterone, which everybody except a celibate or a brahmachari must be producing, you have to practise siddhasana. It is only an expert scientist like Christian Barnard who could understand how the practice of siddhasana, in which you press two important passages in your genito-urinary system, the vajra nadi and sukra nadi, can be used to suppress testosterone. Vajra nadi is on the top and sukra nadi is behind, below the scrotum. Now you press both these channels in siddhasana in which the impulse travels upwards towards the cardiovascular system.

What sadhana do ashram residents do?

Swamis and inmates here do meditate and study, why not? However, they have dedicated their life selflessly. They have come here in order to serve. That is called dedication, *tyaga*, and it is their contention that through service, their *atma* or the self will be purified.

I have undergone the pains of spiritual practices; I have suffered the consequences of studies and meditation. You cannot imagine which subject I have not gone through. You talk to me on economics; you talk to me on politics; you talk to me on sex; you talk to me on the Vedas. I have read each and every line. However, that has caused pain because it has caused so much confusion about what is right and what is wrong. I have read so much about theology, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism and Vedanta that I got confused.

I did practise meditation, too. I had experiences which I did not want. I did not want them and that meditation came to me spontaneously at the age of six. I was frightened. I had experiences as if I would die. I did not want it, in fact, I went to Rishikesh, not to learn meditation from my guru, but to stop the experiences; it was a reverse process. I did not go to him to learn meditation; it came to me, but when it came to me I could not help it. He told me only one thing – stay, work and serve. I did it. I do get it again sometimes, once in five years. It is death and that is why I do not move alone; I always go with one sannyasin with me. Still I am afraid of it.

It is easy to talk about meditation, and all of you do it, but you do not know what it is and where it will lead you. You go to a land. You are totally helpless. You go by your karma. I did achieve that state of mind.

Therefore, it is important for every sannyasin or every renunciate who has left his parents, his money, property, career and all prospects of life, just to plunge himself in sharp hard work, with a little bit of sadhana. What sadhana is a sannyasin supposed to do? Japa? No. Meditation? No. No sadhana for a sannyasin, because to renounce your lovely things, your people, so many things, is the greatest sadhana. You renounce and see what happens. Renunciation is the greatest sadhana.

Is it imperative that Sanskrit names be used for asanas when teaching in the West?

Sanskrit names should be used for teaching asanas in the West. We have regionalized a lot of things, let us not regionalize yoga. Let bhujangasana be known as bhujangasana, in India, Germany, England, America, Greenland, Australia, China and Japan. Let it be an international word. Let us not try to translate it as ‘the serpent pose’, because the word *bhujangasana* literally means a serpent, but etymologically it does not mean that. *Bhujum angum bechati bhujanga* is concerned with the spine.

Those who have got a defective spine or slipped disc should practise bhujangasana. If you say serpent pose it does

not tell you anything, because a serpent's spinal cord is very small. In order to correct the defects, the organic defects or other defects of the spinal cord, you have to practise bhujangasana.

Everything is regional. Hinduism is limited. Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism are all pockets. Now these pockets are not able to integrate with each other because they talk about the same thing in a different language. Because of this difference of language, the actual difference has come about. Those of you who have studied theology will agree with me that all religions say the same thing. They do not talk about different things but because the language has become different for these basic and fundamental things, whole new sects came up.

Therefore, in technology and yoga, the technical terms should be in the original language. How are you going to translate antibiotics in Russian, Chinese or Hindi? You have to use the word antibiotics because it is a technical word of science. You should not interfere with a science, and if you do so, science will also become a religion and you will regionalize it. There will be the same difference, difficulty, problem, crisis that is happening today.

What Christians mean, Hindus also mean. It is the same thing. They do not mean anything else, but the words are different. I worship Rama. You say you worship God. The funny thing is, it is the same: God and Rama are no different, but since these technical words have been regionalized, problems have appeared, and I do not want it.

Yoga should be known as yoga, not union. Guru should be known as guru, not as a master. Samadhi must be known as samadhi, not as trance, because there is no translation for samadhi. In Sufism you have got *fana fana boltana fana*. However, no language has the correct word which will explain samadhi, nirvikalpa samadhi or savikalpa samadhi.

Do not try to change the technical shape of signs for yoga just like we do not want to change the technical shape of technology. In India, we use exactly the same words which

you use in England, Germany, France or America. You do not want to translate technical, scientific words into Bihari, Bengali or Assami. That would be the greatest mistake that mankind would make.



4

Satsang

*26 February 1986, addressing a group of yoga aspirants
of a Teachers Training & Yoga Therapy Course*

Can you talk about diet?

When we talk about yoga, we talk about a lot of things: yoga for therapy, yoga for concentration of the mind, for awakening of the kundalini, for the development of extrasensory perception and also for final liberation, *kaivalya* and *moksha*. In our tradition in the past, before the influence of Vaishnavism and Jainism, people had a non-vegetarian diet. There are religious sects in India, even now, who do not mind meat and do eat it. I am not talking about Muslims and Christians. I am talking about Hindus. There are religious sects, especially Bengalis, who have a non-vegetarian diet. There are also many sects of sadhus in India who eat non-vegetarian food.

In the vedic period, it was not forbidden. Even some rishis and munis lived off it. It is not a controversial subject. Society has to adjust itself to the limitations, but here we are not talking about the effects of diet on the practices of yoga. The physical body is classified according to the gunas. There are certain bodies, though they look alike which are tamasic, rajasic or sattwic by nature in their inherent quality. Those bodies which are sattwic in nature have different chemical contents and biochemical reactions. If a piece of non-vegetarian diet is introduced in the body of a person whose body is sattwic, his bile secretions and enzymes may not be able to digest it, and it will create a lot of problems for him.

The physical body of a human being, by nature, formation and inner structure is herbivorous, not carnivorous. If you examine the whole of the human body, you will find that nature has created the human body for a vegetarian diet. There is no doubt about it. However, in rajasic bodies the inherent quality like acidity, bile secretions, enzymes, reactions, bowel movements and the thickness of the mucous membrane is sometimes a little bit closer to carnivorous animals.

There are people who are tamasic. You give them basic, stale food, it does not matter. They can eat a lot of achar, pickle, and anything that is fermented. A sattwic body is very sensitive, a rajasic body is less sensitive and a tamasic body lacks all sensitivity. The selection of food should be according to the sensitivity of the person. In yoga there are classifications according to the rules of tantra for tamasic, rajasic and sattwic sadhakas. The sattwic sadhakas are known as *deva*, the tamasic are called *pashu*, animal, and the rajasic are called *vira*, hero. These are the three classifications of sadhakas and the diet is prescribed accordingly.

The best diet for anyone, not necessarily a yogi, even for a sick person with cancer, diabetes, peptic ulcer, for a person having a nervous breakdown or cardiovascular problems, is natural food, straight from the tree to the stomach, because it contains all the energy that it receives from pure nature and the sun. However, since most of the population in India, South-East Asia, Africa and maybe a few other countries have not been able to solve the basic problem of adequate food, it is not possible. If there is enough food, it is much better to do away with food which is cooked in the fire. I can give you one hint that from the very ancient period, there is a system of diet for malignant diseases like cancer, and that is raw food, untouched by fire.

When we go to Europe, for any big seminar, we have a choice of ten, twenty and thirty varieties of vegetarian food and the same is the case in India. The diet that we consume in India and in the West is definitely not suitable for a yogi

or a sick person. A change has to take place in both the East and West.

Can we choose a psychic symbol from one of our visions and does it make any difference if it is two or three dimensional?

A psychic symbol in tantra is called *mandala* and in yoga we call it *ishta devata*. You can choose the symbol of your choice. I want to make it very clear that it is only the mantra that is imparted by guru, not the symbol. Guru mantra and ishta devata are two separate things. The mantra belongs to guru because I give it you, or your guru gives it to you, but the guru will not give you your ishta devata.

Ishta means desire, chosen, from the Sanskrit word *ichcha*. You have to find out your own devata, your own form, I won't tell you to concentrate on Rama, guru, jyoti, star, the moon, or something similar. I can suggest, but the form you will meditate or concentrate on is left entirely to you, the choice is yours.

This can also happen through realizing a particular form in a vision or dream. Sometimes when you are dreaming, you see a beautiful figure and it is very impressive – you can always concentrate on that. These mandalas are one, two or three dimensional. Three dimensional mandalas are called *murti*, two dimensional are the photo, *chitra* or picture. Three dimensional mandalas are definitely more impressive because the mind can adjust itself very easily to three dimensions, as the mind also has three dimensions. The three dimensional mind can fix itself to the three dimensional ishta devata and that is the secret why murtis are worshipped.

God has no form. God is nirakara, not sakara. Whether you call it God, Allah, Rama or Shyama, it is *nirakara*, without form. The ultimate reality, the truth or whatever it is beyond this world, you may call it by any name, has no form and no place. It is called nirakara or nirvikara, and that is the truth.

We are ordinary human beings and we have very impure, incapable minds. We cannot even concentrate on one thought

for a period of time. Then how can we conceive, contemplate and think about the nirakara and nirvikara? Therefore, the concept of *ishta devata* in the form of a three dimensional murti is for the purpose of purification and improving the quality of the mind.

Do we need communication with a teacher?

In the practice of yoga, if you know only a little bit you certainly need a teacher or someone to guide you. However, those who are well versed in the subject of yoga can decide a lot by themselves.

There are various forms of yoga. For example, you must have a teacher for practising kundalini yoga. You cannot proceed without one. Those who practise kundalini yoga must have a guru, not just a teacher, because when you practise kundalini and by chance develop experiences, you will need someone to explain what they are. Otherwise you may get into a state of panic, because sometimes the experiences that follow the awakening of consciousness, or the inner self, may just create a nightmare and disturb the mind. You may be confused and confounded if you do not know what they are. Therefore, at that time you need a guru to help you.

However, by guru I mean a person whose words are final in your spiritual life, and you do not argue with him or question him. I am talking about spiritual life, not family life, your money, property or private life. No, I am only talking in relation to your spiritual experiences. Just accept what he says. Then those disturbing, confusing experiences will calm down.

When we are talking about yoga, we are also talking about many things connected with it. Therefore, there are some areas where you can manage with just an ordinary teacher, *acharya*, scholar or expert. However, there are areas where you do not need a scholar, but a definite relationship with a guru. In kundalini yoga, the disciple is trying to tread that path where he has never been. It is a flight into the unknown.

You are going into yourself, diving deep within the recesses of your mind, piercing the conscious and subconscious mind before passing through the unconscious mind. You are also piercing various koshas: annamaya, pranamaya, manomaya, vijñanamaya and anandamaya. You are piercing from one area of this cosmos to another. It is at that confounding and confusing time when frightening experiences do come. It is not at all pleasant. If you are expecting something very pleasant, please do not be under that wrong impression.

Whichever sadhana you go through, whether kriya yoga, sadhanas of tantra or kundalini yoga, if you are sincere and are succeeding, the experiences are not pleasant at first. That *anandam*, bliss, which you talk about sometimes comes later. First, when you go through a treasure house you meet a soldier with a rifle. You do not see the golden gallery. This is how nature has guarded this *jñana ratna*, the jewel of wisdom.

Therefore, when you ask, do we need to have some sort of communication with the teacher, I must make it very clear that it depends on what you want.

Do we need a mala for our mantra practice?

The practice of mantra with mala is very important even if you do not attain concentration of mind. It is natural that when you are practising mantra, the outflow or expression of samskara and karma will take place and should take place. If you take six or twelve glasses of salt water, shankaprakshalana will take place. If you take a purgative or laxative, you must purge.

What is mantra? The etymology of mantra is simple: *mananat trayate iti mantraha*. *Man* means repetition, *manan*, again and again, again and again. *Tra* means freedom, liberation, *mukti*, release. You become free. From what? What are you freeing with the mantra? You are making your karmas free. You are providing an outlet to your passion, your bad mind, your tamoguna, to all kinds of samskaras. After all, there is no harm in this. I am not asking you to kill somebody, but if you are angry with someone, at the time of doing japa

and if you mentally take a revolver and shoot him, you are letting your karma out, you are making it free. One point of shankaprakshalana is finished.

The same is the case with kama and krodha. *Kama* means passions, *krodha* means frustrations, anger. *Lobha* is greed and covetousness. The various samskaras are mostly negative. I mean, when you do shankaprakshalana you never get the French fragrance of Eau de Cologne. Have you ever smelt Eau de Cologne while doing shankaprakshalana? Never! In the same way, when you are doing japa, you will never come across the fragrant samskaras. You will always come across the rotten karmas because they have to come out.

Life after life, year after year, you have accumulated so much pain and frustration. There are so many difficult karmas stored in the computer memory of your mind, in that little silicon chip in the brain. You have to take it out. If you do this expulsion of karma by any other method, you won't be able to handle it. There are very strong methods in yoga, too. Mantra is a very mild homeopathic dose. It expels your karma in such a way that it does not disturb your mental balance.

Mantra is a commitment, a relationship between guru and disciple. That is why at the time of mantra initiation, the guru will only ask you to practise five malas, seven malas, ten malas. If you cannot do these five malas, how are you going to fulfil your commitments to your guru? What do you expect from him and what does he expect from you? If you have not fulfilled the basic commitments and obligations, how can you go further? Therefore, the first condition is to practise mantra.

Second, the mind is not a static substance. It is an ever-progressing, ever-moving substance which is always growing. You are not the same as you were yesterday or a moment before. The mind is like a burning candle. There is consistency in the flame, but the atoms of the flame are moving out at a certain rate, every second. The flame which existed a few moments ago is not the same now. The

composition of this flame is a different atomic structure. Similarly, the physical body does not remain the same and the mind also keeps changing. You can become an atheist, a sceptic, an agnostic or just a sensualist, but your mantra must continue.

This happens in every man's life. In Rishikesh my guru gave me a mantra and told me to do five malas every day. I do them even today because his words are in my mind. I have made a resolve and given my promise to him, so I will always do it. However, in between, I have gone through a lot of turmoil, not pain, but philosophical upheavals because I have been thinking about many topics, both relevant and irrelevant.

There was a time when I was very impressed by Karl Marx. I like his ideas even today, but I am not a communist nor a politician, far from it. I do not want, need or accept it and that is the reason I never went into politics, although I had a lot of chances. I was very impressed by his philosophy. I have also read the entire literature of Dr Sigmund Freud and Sartre. I liked their books. I have read most of the books of Acharya Rajneesh and I liked his ideas, but the person who influenced me the most from the philosophical and social angle was Karl Marx. There came a moment when I said, 'Yes there can be a creation and event without God, because matter is a self-evolving process and is eternal'. This is how I came to many conclusions. I also studied Einstein's view of energy and conversion of matter. Matter is the basis for energy. Energy is not higher than matter; energy is not the basic material. Matter is the basic material and energy is the composition.

With all that, I did five malas of my mantra every day. This is what every sadhaka should do and if you are expecting undiluted, unbroken concentration and spiritual light as early, as quickly as possible, then you do not know the purpose of mantra. It has to be done with the mala; it does not matter where your mind goes. Do not worry about it. You do not have to make the mind retreat; it will come back

by itself. It will go by itself because you are not a swami of the mind. You are subservient to the mind and therefore the mind will come back on its own and the mind will go on its own; you just keep quiet for some time.

Do mantra, *Om Namah Shivaya, Om Namah Shivaya, Om Namah Shivaya*, then think, 'When I get my son married, I need one hundred and one thousand rupees, ornaments, Fiat car, oh no, Maruti is better, Maruti is not good, another expense takes place, it has that colour, I will have that Fiat also . . .' You see these ideas, and then suddenly you come back, *Om Namah Shivaya, Om Namah Shivaya*. Then there comes repentance, 'Oh my God, what am I doing, I do my mantra with these passions, anger, greed, ego and ambition, I don't know what is happening to me.' Surdas said the same thing, *Mo soma kutila khala kami* – Who can be a better rascal than me?

This rotten rubbish must go out of your mind, because you have been accumulating it in your mind life after life, incarnation after incarnation. These karmas are stored and you have not allowed them to express themselves. Religions suppress you. Society suppresses you. Parents suppress you. You cannot do anything you like, so naturally everything is stored. Now at least during dhyana, during sadhana, you enjoy one hour of kama, krodha, lobha and a day will certainly come, I assure you, when you will become free.



5

Heavenly Bodies

2 April 1986

Do you think that Haley's Comet will cause a disaster here or on the whole world? Can a comet have this effect on the earth?

Haley's comet has a very big body. It is many million kilometres long and has its own speed and law of gravity, so naturally some change in weather should take place. In comparison to Haley's comet, the earth is small. Haley's comet is 90,000,000 kilometres long, so you can understand how big it is and how small earth is in comparison. Although the laws are not well known to us, scientists not only go by the scientific laws of force, but also those of radiation. Haley's comet is composed of minute dust particles. It is not a solid body like that of this earth, so naturally these individual dust particles of 90,000,000 kilometres are charged with certain chemistry. If a stone moves from here at the rate of 10,000 or 20,000 miles, or even 30,000 miles a second, naturally it will develop a sort of energy in motion and it will expel this energy. It produces, reproduces and moves. So those radiations will affect the natural cycle of the earth.

I cannot accept that it would affect your destiny and mine. For the time being, I am only talking about the effects of physical laws that Haley's comet can have on this earth, but I have personal experience of comets. Many years ago, I was in Poona holding a seminar, and I had a disciple there

in the military. I had to go to Ahmedabad from Poona. I had made my reservation by train, but he offered me his car from Poona to Ahmedabad. I consider myself an expert in driving a car. I have gone from Bombay to Munger many times by car. Tyre puncture or anything, I can manage it. I have no problem with cars, and I can test them and I know which part is not working properly and check it. I used to keep three cars and move with two. If any car broke down, I would get into another car and tell someone to repair it and bring it.

When I left Poona in the morning at four o'clock and by the time I crossed Bombay and entered the main highway to Ahmedabad, I saw a comet. I do not remember the exact year as it was not much talked about like Haley's comet, but there was a comet, and I saw it twice or thrice in the distant sky. I could not believe it, but that was a very difficult journey for me. I had a tyre puncture, at high speed. Fortunately, there was no car coming from the opposite side, and I took a very quick decision so I did not meet with an accident. Then I had to send someone by truck and get another tyre, so a lot of problems. I did reach Ahmedabad in the evening, completely exhausted. Usually this never happens with me. I never got exhausted, at least in those days driving from Munger to Bombay, Madras or Kanyakumari. Even today there is no problem. I have a very good instinct about car parts. I know exactly which part is not going to work.

We were told not to travel for two weeks.

There are people who believe that a *dhoomketu*, comet, has an effect on everything. Scientifically they do have an effect. This year the summer has come very early. We never had it in March before. Normally, we have good weather in March and need to use *chadar*, sheets, and a *kambal*, blanket. I have also received news from Australia that they are facing a drought situation there, and the government has said that a climatic change would take place.

Somewhere there is a drought and somewhere there is extra rain, some sort of earthquakes or difficulties. It is

natural and scientific because after all a 90,000,000 miles long body cannot leave you unaffected.

During a lunar eclipse, you are supposed to look at it only through a water body, because if you see the moon you will go mad. Is this superstition?

There are many things which are now a little exaggerated, even in religion and science. I won't say it is completely wrong that you should not look at the moon directly, but only at its reflection. I think that it is an exaggerated view. The lunar eclipse takes place when there is a full moon and the full moon has an effect on the human mind, emotions and fluids in the body, just as it affects the tides.

The moon affects the liquid on this earth, the fluid on this earth, similarly it affects the fluid in the brain and the body too, so naturally they are also at high tide. Most people have this experience during full moon and nearly full moon, but that you should not look at it, as it is inauspicious, I believe, is exaggerated.

Do you think it is necessary to fast during an eclipse?

The purpose of not eating food may be right, particularly in relation to the solar eclipse. I am not talking about the lunar eclipse, as I am not sure about it. During a solar eclipse, it is true that when the sun is dimmed or completely covered bacterial propagation is faster. Why? If there is a cloud over the sun for two days, all the wheat or whatever is in the fields, the herbs and plants, get infested by pests in one day. That is why when there are clouds and there is no rain, farmers get very panicky. In one cloudy day, some of the flowers and crops get infested by pests. The same principle holds true here. Of course this is a precaution we need to take to be on the safe side. It is not necessary that if you eat during an eclipse you are going to get infected. But it is much better to follow it as it is based on science. You do not have to be superstitious but understand why. I can eat during an eclipse time and I have eaten a number of times, especially during my childhood. I

did not get affected by it, but it does happen, and it is safer for people who have low immunity. These are facts, but it does not mean that you have to be a sort of fanatic.

These facts about eclipses could not be taught to people in a scientific way, so they were taught in a religious and mythological way. Chandrama, Rahu and Ketu were the heroes fighting with each other. This is how people understood it. They explained these things mythologically and scientists explained it scientifically.

Does the moon influence a pregnant woman?

It can happen that the mother's body fluids are affected due to high tide. You have serums and chemicals in your body. As a result of those chemical reactions, you function in life. Your love, hatred, thinking, decisions, planning, your refusal to do something, your physical movements, dreams, actions or speech are all chemical reactions.

Even now you are understanding what I am saying; it is a chemical reaction creating an electrical impulse. If you try to understand how you understand me, how I am talking to you, why you like or do not like what I say, it is all a chemical reaction. Now those chemicals are in the proper proportion, so proper thinking takes place. If those chemicals become abnormal due to the relationship of the sun or moon, or this or that, your thinking also becomes abnormal. And when it becomes abnormal, naturally it will affect you and your body as well.

It is much better at that time to engage oneself in some religious activities rather than brooding over the moral effects of the eclipse. During the period of eclipse, you must practise mantra. During the eclipse whether one is pregnant or not pregnant, sick or not sick, rather than thinking what to do or not to do during an eclipse, it is better to practise a mantra during the whole eclipse, half an hour, one hour, two or three hours; you only do this. All the mantras, particularly the mantras which the tantrics do for relieving fever, snake or scorpion poison, are done during the eclipse. That is how

the mantras for *siddhi*, for perfection, are started. Try to make your mind more engaged and positive, and less aware of the ill-effects of the eclipse on you.

If you study the extent of the manifest universe, you are baffled. At times you realize, 'What is the use of measuring these with time and space, when millions, billions and trillions of time are nothing.' The time from one planet to another is millions and millions of years.

Do you believe in black holes and the Bermuda triangle where things disappear?

No doubt there is some sort of magnetic force which does bring about these phenomena. There are certain magnetic forces which science has not yet discovered that can completely paralyze the electrical circuits. A plane flies or a motor car moves because it has electrical circuits. You can destroy the plane either by bombarding or disturbing the electrical circuits. Just disturb one electrical circuit and the disturbance takes place by a certain magnetic force. What exactly that magnetic force is has not been known yet, though there are mythological concepts which you may have seen in some of the science fiction movies.

This electromagnetic force can be destroyed by another electromagnetic force that is opposite to that force, an anti-force. That is the secret of the Bermuda triangle, and perhaps the same thing takes place in these black holes though not much has been said about these black holes. Magnetic force, electromagnetic force and anti-force are different. This concept is being worked out by scientists today. It has already arrived in scientific fiction, but I hope it does not happen in reality.

Science has now stepped into another dimension. When you study modern physics, chemistry and biology and go deeper into the philosophical aspect of these physical sciences, you are talking of something else. They talk about the relationship between this time and some other time. You can exist at the same time, but if you can exist in another

time, you will be five years old or you are just about to be born; it is a funny concept. Unless you study these high philosophies of science, you cannot understand them.

So what happens to the soul? It has to be in one of the existences.

You should not confuse anything regarding the soul because the soul is a universal reality. It is not an individual reality. You do not have an individual soul, nor does your sister or guru. The soul, *atma*, is only one. Just as the atmosphere in this room is just one. You are not in a different atmosphere than that of mine or others. Atma, soul or spirit is universal, homogeneous, and it is one. To the soul, naturally, it makes no difference whether I exist here or there.



6

Mind and Matter

4 April 1986

I am a professor in psychology and I would like to find out what yoga has to offer in this field.

In yoga, we start with the mind. In modern science, they start with matter, the laws, constituents, the form of matter and its cause. Here, they start with the mind, the laws and nature of the mind, and how far it can affect the lower life, matter and the individual experience of higher life, the deeper and subtler areas of the mind.

Both become necessary for man's complete existence. For material existence you have to know matter and its laws, but for inner awareness and peace of mind, you have to understand beyond matter. You have to find out the mysteries of the mind that go very far to the extent of atma or consciousness, which is what we talk about here.

The atma? Western psychology knows nothing of this. They have neglected it.

I do not agree completely with you. Western psychology has not yet perfected wisdom. Science is always growing, that of the psychology of the self and of yoga. It has arrived at a point, but that does not mean that it has terminated its search. The search will continue. If it is a religious search, you can use incense and books and all that. There is research where there are no books and no candles. In modern

psychology, there will be brilliant scholars in the future as there have been in the past, like Freud, Jung and others.

In yoga, you need to understand the laws of the mind relative to *atman*, and that *atman* is relative to *jivatman* and *jivatman* again to *paramatman*. I am not talking about God; I am talking about *Paramatman*, the cosmic self, the cosmic entity or the cosmic unity. We do not see it, but there has to be something like that. It cannot just be floating matter in a womb of milk.

There has to be some sort of systematic link between the individual and everything else. Apart from that, the nature of *atman* is pure, imperishable, indestructible and homogenous. It is not involved; it is just a witnessing consciousness. Then if *atman* is like that, how has it come to be bound by circumstances? Why do we feel so unhappy? Why do we suffer if there is birth and death? If the *atman* is not allegorical in philosophy, why does it happen? You have to discover and search to understand how this immortal self dies or appears? How can you say that it is dying?

There has to be another force somewhere in the universe. This must be creating a hallucination, as an experience, or an idea of birth and death, pain and distress, happiness and 'mental problems', as psychology says. If I am free from disease, death and the three *gunas* of *prakriti*, why do I get this neurosis and psychosis? Where do they come from? Do they come from matter? Then what is the relationship of matter with the *atman*? Where does it get mixed up? And where does it get separated?

Psychology will discover more areas of the mind. That will be the relationship between East and West. The East also has to understand that it cannot neglect matter because there is nothing but matter in the whole cosmos. Both matter and the Self are neglected. The East has neglected the study of matter and nature, and the West has neglected the study of the self and the transcendental. That is why meditations have to come into both eastern and western systems, their philosophical systems and psychology.

Do mind and matter stay separate or do they become one?

Vedic philosophy is based on certain utterances of some realized beings who happened to realize something and come to some point. Now, these realized people say different things. It is not the same thing. At one point, they have said one thing, and at another something different.

Samkhyans believe in duality. They say consciousness and matter are separate, and both are beginningless. In the thirteenth chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita* and in the Samkhyan system, they talk about *purusha*, consciousness, not individual consciousness but the cosmic, the community, the whole consciousness and *prakriti* or nature. The same proposal of duality, *purusha* and *prakriti*, consciousness and matter, has also been accepted in yoga. The science of raja yoga is philosophically dualistic.

Vedanta talks about monism, non-duality. But even though they accept non-dualism, they accept the hypothesis of *maya* as an 'X' factor in order to explain some of the happenings in the universe. They have to accept duality, because when they accept an absolute, *Brahman*, the supreme self, the supreme self alone is there and nothing else. Then everything is the expression of that supreme self. The question is, how? Why did it happen? Then they bring in an 'X' factor – *maya*, the illusory power. When these Vedantins talk about *maya*, although it is hypothetical and is brought in to solve the mathematical question, sometimes *Brahman* and *maya*, the absolute and illusory powers, become two independent realities.

However, if you go to the previous part of the Vedas, they talk about gods, millions of gods, divine beings and devas. That is the ritualistic philosophy of the Vedas which makes it very clear that there are so many hundred thousand divine beings. What you understand by 'divine beings' in scientific terminology is another matter, but these divine beings control fire, water, earth, birth, death, this, that and the other. Therefore, everybody must propitiate them.

When you propitiate them, that is called *dharma*. The dharma in vedic philosophy is not religion, virtue, duty or obligations. According to the Vedas, it has none of these attributes. For the Hindus, dharma means to get up in the morning, pray to the sun, take a bath and sit down to pray. If you are a Brahmin, kshatriya or shudra, a woman or a man, on certain days you do these rituals and go to spiritual centres. These particular acts or rituals are called *dharma*. This was the ancient definition. Even today it holds true. In India, if you say, 'She practises dharma', it is because she does all her rituals in the morning, goes for her bath, does her pooja, says her prayers and on Ekadashi she fasts; this is dharma.

There is no question of one reality. It means there are so many ministers, officers responsible for so many things, who are looking after this universe. Therefore, there is no ultimate answer. If a sage, rishi or yogi makes a statement, we say, 'You are right' because he has his own experiences. If you say something else, we believe you, but we believe you only when we know that you are evolved, not because you are a scholar or a thinker. You are your experience, and your experience is different from mine. That is all.

There is a tradition of these rishis who experience through meditation, self-discipline and many other things, and these experiences are known as spiritual experiences. They had these experiences during the process of their discovery of the mysterious side of the universe and very deep matters, such as when we die and recover. Can anybody see that? If you say, you go into the grave and on the Last Day you will be brought back. Any proof? If I say that I will die and on the 13th day I will be reborn, have you seen it? No, these are some of the unknown, mysterious things. Even the existence of God is a funny thing. You cannot just say He is or He is not. You have to find out whether He is or He is not.

Therefore, in the process of finding out these unknown and mysterious things of the universe, the sages contributed their own experience, but these experiences were not identical. No,

certainly not. They said they were not identical because the things they were trying to discover were not very simple things. It is like seven blind people trying to explain an elephant. In the Jain philosophy there is a special doctrine for this, *syadvad*, which means 'possibly it is like this, possibly it is not like this. Possibly it is neither like this nor like that. Possibly it is like this or like that also'. We call it the doctrine of probability, because no individual can say that he has understood the intimate secrets or become the master of the secret – if there is one. Therefore, they say, 'This is my experience'.

Patanjali says, 'This is my experience.' Vyasa says, 'This is my experience.' Christ says, 'This is my experience.' Mohamed says, 'This is my experience.' Moses says, 'This is my experience.' Many other saints and sages gave their own experience. From their experience one thing is very clear; there is something beyond what we are. This is a fact. You cannot say that there is nothing.

The sum and substance of all these great saints and sages is that there is something. About that something, we say different things. We practise yoga in order to be able to experience something beyond the depths of the mind, going into *jivatma*, individuality, and then going beyond. You have to go through a process of meditation where you experience it. It is not that simple.

In the bhakti movement in India, not bhakti yoga but the bhakti movement in India, they make it very clear, 'No, you cannot know the whole truth.' To know the whole truth is a logical fallacy. When you say that you know something, it means you are accepting duality: how can one know the knower? Therefore, do not worry about these things. You just practise your devotion with faith and love and forget everything else.

Is a scientific understanding necessary?

Once, a lady was working in the hot sun outside, so I asked, 'Look here, she is working in the hot sun the whole day and nothing happens to her and if I was working in the sun the

whole day, in a few hours I would fall ill.’ The reply was, ‘Ah, she is used to it.’ That is not the scientific solution. You have to explain that she has a special cooling system in her body which protects the whole system, and keeps her blood, heart, respiration and circulation in order and perhaps we do not have this.

In the same way, what is the scientific explanation of anxiety, passion or anything else? I am talking in terms of the physical body. What changes take place within the body itself? In this chemical setup, in these sympathetic and parasympathetic actions and reactions and levels of energy, many other things have to be understood. It has to be determined if something has gone wrong with the hormonal balances in the body. Does anxiety cause some sort of blockage, or does it affect the adrenal glands, or do adrenal problems cause anxiety and neurosis? I get anxious on account of something, naturally the adrenal gland is affected, and some sort of block takes place and the blood pressure rises high or other symptoms can come about. Maybe adrenalin is secreting on account of some other fault in the body, and for no reason I become anxious. I just find a cause for the anxiety although the anxiety is merely born of a biochemical reaction that has taken place in my body, either because of my faulty physiological system or because of something else.

Could you talk about awakening?

In hatha yoga particularly, we talk about *nadis* or flow. The Sanskrit word *nadi* means flow, like the flow of the river or a flow of air, a breeze – anything that flows. Blood and energy can also be a flow. These nadis are distributed throughout the body. It is these nadis we talk about in acupuncture. In hatha yoga, we talk about the nadis which are responsible for the supply of life energy and mental energy throughout the body.

This mental energy is definitely an energy force and pranic energy is life. They work together. If there is no

prana, there will be no sense knowledge. If there is no life in you, you cannot see flowers; you cannot hear music. If you have no mental energy, you will be like a dunce, just living, not experiencing a flower, not experiencing sound, not experiencing a feeling – nothing. Somehow they have to work together and when there is some difficulty in working together, diseases take place.

In philosophy, they say that the mind operates through the *jnanendriyas*, the sense organs, and the *pranas* operate through the *karmendriyas*, organs of action, like the feet and hands, speech. These nadis are stretched throughout the body but in hatha yoga, particularly through kundalini yoga, they have come to the conclusion that within the framework of the spine there are very subtle flows. When we say ‘subtle’, it means we cannot see it through the eyes. We have to use very sophisticated, sensitive instruments to register the flow of force passing between the higher centre, the brain and the lower centre, which is near the reproductive system. There is a relationship between these.

There are very subtle nerves within the framework of the spine. Out of those, three are spoken of: ida, pingala and sushumna. The whole of kundalini yoga and all of hatha yoga is based on these three. These three nadis represent three forces. Two forces are material and one is spiritual. The life forces relate to external life, daily experiences, earth, and the eternal, perceptible cosmos. The spiritual force is called sushumna and the purpose of all yogas, whether it is bhakti, jnana, raja, hatha or karma yoga, is to awaken that third force.

You have experiences when there is awakening in sushumna. In order to awaken this sushumna nadi, in order to awaken this central nervous system, this central nadi, you have to plug both the others; you have to plug the pranic and mental force. Pranic force is power. Mental force is concentration. By concentration, you plug all the mental experiences of seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, feeling or hunger. You plug them for some time. For half an hour, just

stop, no feeling, just the pranic flow – that is pranayama. So when you plug your mind, your life and suspend it for some time, it begins to show some sort of suffocation. Sushumna nadi, that particular dormant nadi, becomes suffused and, as a result of that, the awakening takes place.

Once it begins to awaken, you have experiences and those experiences are sometimes very good, soothing and pleasant, but sometimes they are very awful and terrible, and total disorientation can take place.

The same practices can lead you to this. You plug the mind – stop. You plug your breath, and sushumna begins to awaken. Then you are into the experiences. Then you see fire, like the French scientist, Blaise Pascal, who saw fire for two or three hours. One evening he was studying and suddenly he found fire in front of him. He saw it! For two hours the fire remained there and then it disappeared. After the fire disappeared, he began to cry. He said, ‘My God, why have you left me?’

Many saints have these experiences like Saint Teresa of Avila. She was a great kundalini yogini. She suffered and suffered because I think she did not get proper guidance. Saint John of the Cross went through the same thing. He did not get guidance. Like that many yogis have had difficult experiences.

In my opinion, it depends on the purity of mind. There is some thought; there is some reason in the mind. There is some reason in one’s life which can be the basis of a kundalini awakening that is an unpleasant, inconvenient and terrible experience. Even if the same event of awakening of sushumna takes place, your sushumna may awaken and her sushumna may awaken, but she may have convenient and pleasant experiences whereas you may have terrible nightmares. Why? Does it mean that your total existence is affecting the process of experience? Your total existence means the totality of your experiences, the totality of your ambitions, totality of your passions, totality of your inherited karmas from your father and mother. This is molecular genetics.

The gurus have said, 'It is safer for a kundalini yogi to first purify the different elements of life: maybe food, maybe sleep, sex, work, money, attachment and detachment.' You have to do some sort of correction somewhere. Not just in one place; you have to correct yourself in different places. Not to the extent that you become a recluse, but to some extent so everything becomes very systematic. Food, drink, duty and you have to be disciplined, then you won't have these nightmares. There are some people who are born with a very sensitive sushumna and get some awakening at a very early age; others have to do their practice, and the central practice is pranayama. The most important practice, maybe the one practice, is pranayama.

Breathing in and breathing out is not pranayama; stopping the breath is pranayama. In order to suspend the breath, you have to take in and take out. Stopping the breath is not that simple because when you stop the breath, you are creating a very great change in your heart, lungs, oxygen system and more particularly in your brain. You are influencing the brain; you are influencing the nervous system. You are also influencing the metabolic, catabolic and other processes in the body. You must know how much pranayama you should do according to your limited karma or limited personality.

I think practically everybody should do pranayama and that is why in India pranayama practices were ordained at the age of seven. So when you start pranayama at an early age, you go slowly, very gradually, like a clock. So that by the age of thirty, thirty-four, forty-five, fifty, fifty-five you can go into higher and deeper practices of pranayama where you can hold your breath and do all the bandhas. Experiences will come. You must take time.

7

Krishna, Avatars and Christ

5 April 1986

What does the dance of Krishna with the gopis signify?

The dance signifies something more than just the act of dancing. Not only dance, music also signifies something, or when you are worried that also signifies something. Every action of Krishna signifies a deeper truth about his personality.

The gopis used to only see Krishna, nobody else. That was the depth of their awareness, bhakti, devotion and prayer; that is what is meant by love. It is so true and sincere. You can arrive at the highest point of experience.

People talk of avatars as supernatural beings, but is it not a normal process, what we call a human being in a much improved form?

No, not an improved form but a completely different one. There is no question of your mind or body improving. There is a light in everybody and that comes out. It is not the light of buddhi; it is not the light of your ordinary discrimination; it is divine light. A totally different personality projects in that body. The person lives a normal life because he has to by the laws of nature.

It is true that the avatar does come, but that is not important, destruction is not important, but a sane society is important. Even if there are only fifty thousand people in the world with sanity, it is much better than four billion fighting

with each other with rifles and guns in Beirut, Afghanistan and Punjab.

There is a sect of people who say that Christ was never crucified.

No. Christ was crucified but he did not die on the cross. He died in India in Srinagar. This is a fact. The man who looks after the tomb is a Muslim, called Nabi Hasan. Christ's tomb is in Srinagar and has been authenticated by many scholars. He survived the cross and was given proper treatment in Israel. After he was taken out from the grave, he met some of his disciples. They call it his resurrection. He knew India and was respected in this country. Even now we are prepared to do pooja for Christ and build his temples, provided Christians stop making us Christians.



8

Gayatri Mantra

9 April 1986

What is the Gayatri mantra?

The Gayatri mantra is: *om tat savitur vareniyam bhargo devasya dhimahi dhiyo yo naha prachodayat*, which means ‘I meditate on that great light, the light of the rising sun. I meditate upon the light of the rising sun, (not the midday light) who is the greatest among all devas’.

Om bhur om bhuvaha om swaha is the three-part Gayatri, Gayatri with three feet. There are seven-part Gayatris: *om bhur, om bhuvaha, om swaha, om mahaha, om janaha, om tapaha, om satyam*.

The light of the rising sun is considered to be superior and the best. There are so many lights: moonlight, even sunlight has many types of light, like evening light or twilight. ‘I meditate on that light and may that light illumine my intellect.’ This is the symbolic meaning, of Gayatri mantra.

It is a mantra from the *Rig Veda*, and it is known as *Brahma Gayatri*, not just as Gayatri. Gayatri is a *chhanda*, a meter in vedic grammar. There are many chhandas: Gayatri, Trishtubh, Anushtup, Pankti and Jagati. Just like meters in poetry, these meters have certain rhythms, and in Sanskrit there are meters in which verses are to be composed. Gayatri is one of the meters and in this meter there are Gayatris of all the devis and devatas, not only this one. There is Shiva Gayatri: *tat purushaya vidmahe maha devaya dhimahi tanno rudra prachodayat*. Then

there is Surya Gayatri, the Ganesh Gayatri, Vishnu Gayatri, Lakshmi Gayatri and Durga Gayatri. This is Brahma Gayatri, which means it is talking about *Brahma*, the Supreme Being.

In Indian philosophy, Brahman means the absolute *Paramatma*, the Supreme Being. Here *savita* means the rising light. This is being compared to the external sun. In the early morning, the light that comes prior to the rising sun is called *savita*. Exactly in the same way, when you meditate you first see light at ajna chakra, illumination inside. That is called *savita*. This *savita* is also known as *savitri*.

The light of the sun just at the moment of rising and after that is not *savita*. It is some other light. The light of the sun at different times has different names. Evening sunlight when the sun has set is not called *savita*. Or the light emanating from the clouds when the sun is behind the clouds, enveloped in them, is also not called *savita*. It is only the light of the sun just before and at the moment of rising. Here the sun does not mean this external sun, but it means the sun of the self, *atma-jnana*, self-realization, moksha or samadhi – the light. So, this mantra is referring to this particular light of self-realization.

‘May that light illumine our intellects.’ They have written intellects. They have not used the singular number; not one buddhi but many *buddhis*, intellects. It means that everybody has not only one buddhi but many buddhis; not only one knowledge but many kinds of knowledge. It is a very simple thing. Supposing there is a big warehouse in a town, it is in total darkness and I have a torchlight, I would have to go and see the contents, item by item. If I want everything to be illumined, the torchlight will not do. I would have to put in a big floodlight. In that way there are many buddhis, intuitions or instruments of knowledge in everyone, and if they all are illumined, then you become very intelligent. That is why this mantra is good for students. That is the meaning of the Gayatri.

There are many books on Gayatri, like the *Gayatri Maha Vijnana* which tells us how to practise it. It is a very ancient mantra. There are fundamentalists in India who say that girls

should not practise Gayatri. It is not my view. They say if you practise Gayatri you must have the *janeau*, the sacred thread, and you cannot wear that if you have the monthly cycle. However, now we do not think like this because we know that menstruation is not an unholy thing. We do not consider the monthly periods as something unholy. If it is unholy, then going to the toilet is also an unholy act. There are so many unholy acts like that, why only menstrual periods?

Second, why should girls not wear the sacred thread? Parsee girls wear a sacred thread. *Kusti* is also *janeau*. Now when a Parsee lady can wear one why cannot Hindu girls? You cannot say that Parsees do not get menstrual periods. They do get them, and they do not mind eating beef because their religion does not object to it. In spite of that, they wear a *kusti*. The *janeau* custom is a very old custom in India. It used to be given to the child at the time of his going to the gurukul. That *janeau*, the shaven head, the *dikshapatra*, initiation letter, *langoti* or *kaupen*, loincloth and the Gayatri mantra was his letter of introduction to his guru from his parents. Based on that he would be admitted.

Parents used to get together and say, "Now he is seven years old. He should go to learn something. He has played enough." They would shave him, make him grow a chutiya, wear a *janeau* and give him the mantra. They would take away his dhoti and give him a *kaupen*, *langoti* and *dikshapatra* and send him to their guruji, who lived four, five or six miles away. On the way, he would beg for food called *bhiksha*. It was a custom to give him food because they knew that a brahmachari was going to the gurukul.

Sometimes the gurukul would be two or three hundred miles away. There are stories where a *brahmachari*, or a student, came all the way from the south to the north to study. Shankaracharya came from Kaladi in Kerala to Vyasa Guha in the Himalayas to learn the Vedas. How did he do it? He walked. That is how things were. They would get *biksha*, and that was their *nishan*, their mark, that they were bona fide students, not imposters. That system cannot continue

anymore because now the method of admission is entirely different and the entire system has changed. The high school system has replaced the gurukul system. Today, janeaus or Brahmins have just remained formalities, just a mark of allegiance to your religion. The same is the case with the chutiya. It does not really play any part in your educational or academic life. There used to be this system that Gayatri was ordained to a child at the age of seven or eight.

The sacred thread ceremony means one is bound by a vow. Until seven, children can play freely but after seven or eight years, they should follow some discipline. When the boy would go for education or for any sacrifice, he had to have that janeau. It meant he had been initiated.

Swamiji, if there is no harm in going to the temple in the middle of a menstrual period, why did they start it at all?

It is a very simple process. How can a woman having her period walk? You are talking about the 20th century. I am talking about the 1st century CE or even earlier when the rules were made. Those rules were made many years ago during the period of the Vedas and the *Manusmriti* – at least, 3,400 years ago. Now in the 20th century, women still follow this practice.

I have seen my aunty when she had her period. She would not have a bath or anything of the sort. After four days she had her first bath and after the fifth day she had the final bath and drinks of cow's urine. Somehow I cannot accept it because I do not see any reason for it. When a girl is undergoing the period of menstruation, it is a play of nature, *prakriti*, her physical nature; it is the period of ovulation. There could be certain emotional setbacks due to fluctuations or the influence on the nervous system.

You feel different and maybe even depressed.

When any hormone enters into the bloodstream it causes a storm. It can be from the thyroid, adrenalin, thymus, pancreas or pituitary it can be any hormone. There are many groups of hormones. The moment any hormone enters into

your body it makes a change. It enters into your blood vessels temporarily, so the change is for a short period. Sometimes some hormones do continue for a long period. From the gonads, sex hormones, testosterone enter into the blood vessels and flow for half an hour, one hour, before they are automatically wiped out and metabolized. In some cases, for boys and girls of thirteen, fourteen or fifteen years of age, the sex hormones enter into the blood vessels and continue for days together. They go mad.

When a hormone enters into the body, it causes a momentary stunning effect in the biological or biochemical system, and that affects the inflow in the sympathetic and parasympathetic system. That is precisely the reason why they have given a little care to the menstrual cycle and the period of ovulation, but I also think it is wrong. You can always counteract the emotional turmoil caused by the menstrual period by exercise, by total engagement and pre-occupation – not merely occupation but pre-occupation.

Often those four or five days, and a few days prior to that, are very exhausting.

It is because you are not used to exercise. If you exercise every day, you won't be exhausted because exercise increases the metabolic process. The whole system is being metabolized and the things which are unnecessary are catabolized or thrown out.

What is the way to succeed in spiritual life?

When you have an innocent faith without any intellectual enquiry, it always succeeds. It is very hard to have that kind of faith. Only a few saints, sages and mahatmas had that. There are sadhus who are intellectuals. On the other hand, there are those innocent sadhus who think like little children. Swami Sivanandaji was one of them. His mind and emotions were like a child. He was both, a doctor and a sadhu. His buddhi was very mature. His intellect was grown up but his emotions were childlike.

Swamiji, can you speak on Shiva?

Shiva's descent was direct. In the case of Sati and Parvati, the descent was like you and me. They were born of a certain family and parents. That is the first thing about Shiva.

Parvati lived with him as his disciple, not as a consort. She wanted to know and asked Shiva: What is life? What is sadhana? What is the cosmos? What are the elements? What is birth and death? What is pooja? What is God? What are goddesses?

She asked all the questions about truth, life, religion, prayer, rituals, siddhis, dharma and adharma. There is no topic which has not been touched in tantra, and there is no topic on which Parvati has not questioned Shiva and Shiva has not answered. Now what did he teach? He taught a philosophy called *Trika*, *tri* means three. He taught *kram*, step by step, to those who were not very evolved, like sadhakas. To those who were already on the path, he taught *spanda* or to feel the vibrations of the mind, buddhi and the self. To the elevated sadhakas he gave direct teachings, face to face.

The main philosophy of Shiva is called Shaivism. There are three stages. First step is the pooja path or *dvait*. Then comes the meeting point between dualistic and non-dualistic or dvait and advait. After this comes pure advait, where there is no path, no pooja, no god, no goddess, nobody's aarti, nobody's pooja, and no one's prayers. Everything is my own self.

It is a philosophy which talks about the realization of the highest consciousness in a man called Shiva. The Shaiva tradition has got many cults in India. Tantra yoga is from the Shaiva parampara, the Adinath, Matsyendranath and Gorakhnath traditions. It is a very strong tradition. The most important thing he said is that it is not the actual pooja, system or process which is important, but the worship of Shiva just with innocence and without much fuss.

You can always accept Shiva as a person, a guru or a symbol. He is a symbol, a person, a guru and a system. He is very powerful. His adventures have been more than anybody

else's expeditions and his achievements have been more than anybody else's.

Shiva never meditated less than a thousand years. He lived like you and me, but he was born from nowhere. He was a guru. He was a swami. He was a god and a powerful one, but you cannot equate him with yourself, me or anybody else, because we are born by a different process. He was an avatar.



9

Bhagavad Gita

*26 April 1986, addressing a group of yoga aspirants
of a Teachers Training in the new Main Building*

What is the evolution of consciousness?

The evolution of consciousness is a total fallacy, logically and philosophically. There is no such thing as evolution of consciousness. According to the Vedas, Upanishads and every tradition throughout history, we come to the conclusion that the spirit is ever-effulgent. The evolution and illumination of consciousness and enlightenment of the spirit is illogical.

What you should talk about is how to rend asunder the veil, because the *avidya*, *maya*, ignorance caused by prakriti, by association and identification with material impositions, has caused this self-effulgent Self to be misunderstood. Therefore, in order to realize this in himself, the most important thing an aspirant can do is to destroy maya.

What is the basic philosophy extolled by the *Bhagavad Gita*? Which is the most important chapter?

Every word, every statement and stanza of the *Gita* is important. But everything does have a nucleus. Haley's comet has a nucleus; a leaf or piece of metal has a nucleus. In the same way, the nucleus of the *Gita* is known as the *bija*.

The second chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita* is known as *Samkhya Yoga*, the yoga of proper understanding, and it says (2:47):

*Karmanyevaadhikaaraste maa phaleshu kadaachana;
Maa karmaphalahetur bhoor maa te sango'stwakarmani.*

Thy right is to work only, but never with its fruits;
let not the fruits of actions be thy motive, nor let thy
attachment be to inaction.

Your rightful boundary is the fulfilment and accomplishment of a duty, nothing beyond that. The result, the outcome, the consequences and production are none of your business. If you are worrying, you are an idiot. If you limit yourself to the performance of karma and the accomplishment of duty, *karma* and *dharma*, you will rise to the highest pinnacle of spiritual nature.

However, those who think about the consequences and results are tossed like a shuttlecock from this end to that, they never rest. They get hypertension, blood pressure, diabetes and other problems. The greatest mistake that man has made is that he has not understood the role of karma in life.

Karma is an expression of man's total energy, of that great instinct, intelligence and intuition which he has and all of us have. Express it in the form of karma as an engineer, painter, carpenter, shopkeeper, housewife, as a swami or labourer. People are suffering because they work for an end. It is true that you are a physical body and therefore you need to survive in the realm of matter and prakriti. As such you work and get a little pay, two thousand five hundred, three thousand. But what should you concentrate on? Why do you work and for what? That is the essence of the teaching of the *Gita*. From the first chapter to the end of the eighteenth chapter, only one topic is discussed: how to perform karma to express yourself totally and utilize this tool for the evolution of the mind and for the improvement of your situation in life. The first sloka of the *Gita* (1:1) states:

*Dharmakshetre kurukshetre samavetaa yuyutsavah;
Maamakaah paandavaashchaiva kim akurvata sanjaya.*

What did the sons of Pandu and also my people do when they had assembled together, eager for battle on the holy plain of Kurukshetra, O Sanjaya?

The reply to this sloka is the last sloka in the last chapter (18:78):

*Yatra yogeshwarah krishno yatra paartho dhanurdharah;
Tatra shreervijayo bhootirdhruvaa neetirmatirmama.*

Wherever there is Krishna, the Lord of Yoga, wherever there is Arjuna, the archer, there are prosperity, happiness, victory and firm policy; such is my conviction.

Where there is a karma yogi like Arjuna fighting without worrying about the consequences, under the order of his guru, Krishna, Yogeshwar Krishna, a man of brilliance and intuition, with brilliant capacities, who can handle the most confusing, difficult and treacherous situations in life, there will always be victory. These qualities must be combined. Where there is prosperity, there is victory, success and glory. What do you need in life? Prosperity, victory and glory. In order to achieve these three, you need a combination of the qualities of a karma yogi and raja yogi or a poorna yogi. That is the central teaching of the *Gita*.

Do not be idle. Do not renounce karma even if you are a sannyasin, even if you have millions and billions of rupees. Even if you have thousands of servants, even if you are an emperor, king, president or prime minister. But do not become an agent of the consequences of karma, because every karma bears three types of results: *ishtam*, *anishtam*, *mishritam*, *trivaidha*, *karmana phala* – whatever action you do, either you get what you desire, or you get what you do not desire, or sometimes you get both of them. Mostly it is the *mishritam*, for nobody gets only what he desires and nobody gets only negative results.

After this Teacher Training Course, how should we best utilize the knowledge we gained?

I do not consider this Teacher Training Course to be that important, sophisticated and technical. This is a very simple course which will enable you to teach a few people around you and help them, that's all. However, if you have to acquire more knowledge about yoga, it will be necessary to read a little more than what you have learned here. Asanas, pranayama, mudras, bandhas form a very small part of hatha yoga, and yoga is not just hatha yoga. It is much more than that.

You should first try to teach what you have learned here to the members of your family and friends who are very close to you. In case you are interested in furthering your studies in yoga, you will have to find a place where you can learn. In India, we have many yoga ashrams, not just this one. There are many ashrams in India with good, capable teachers; some of them are eminent and some are not. They know and can teach you not only hatha yoga, but also the science of bhakti yoga, raja yoga, jnana yoga and various other forms of yoga. You must keep your knowledge and your senses open. This country has many simple, unassuming and unambitious people, who can give you proper direction in the systems of yoga.

In this Teachers Training Course, you have been taught asanas and pranayama, mudras, bandhas, yoga nidra, ajapa japa and a few lessons in therapy, that's all. Do not try to handle difficult cases. Do not say that yoga can cure cancer. No, we do not make such mistakes. Do not talk about cure and treatment. No, yoga does not cure; it is not a therapy; it is a way of life and it does not cure a disease; it cures a patient.

Those who are young can keep on changing their yoga asanas as they are moving towards perfecting the postures, so that in the course of time they will be able to do the most difficult and intricate postures like the scorpion pose, *vrischikasana*. Grown-ups must fix one set of practices for themselves and continue with that without changing.

What is the specific yogic treatment for the rehabilitation of depression and neurotic and psychotic behaviour, and has any research or documentation been done on the effects of such treatment?

Asanas and pranayama do have a very great impact on depression and have helped many, not only in India but elsewhere too. Ashram life itself provides you with the way of life through which you can overcome depression. A person suffering from depression must come out of his own mind. He should avoid introversion and live with others. Therefore, interaction in the form of karma yoga and in the form of duty is as important as the yoga practices. The practice of bhastrika, hatha yoga kriyas and a few other techniques, help in treating depression.

The *Bhagavad Gita* is not a religious book at all. The first chapter is *The Yoga of Depression*. Arjuna tells Krishna, ‘Sir, my skin is burning and my mind is getting confused and I see everything negatively, I cannot bear it, (1:28 and 29):

*Seedanti mama gaatraani mukham cha parishushyati;
Vepathushcha shareere me romaharshashcha jaayate.*

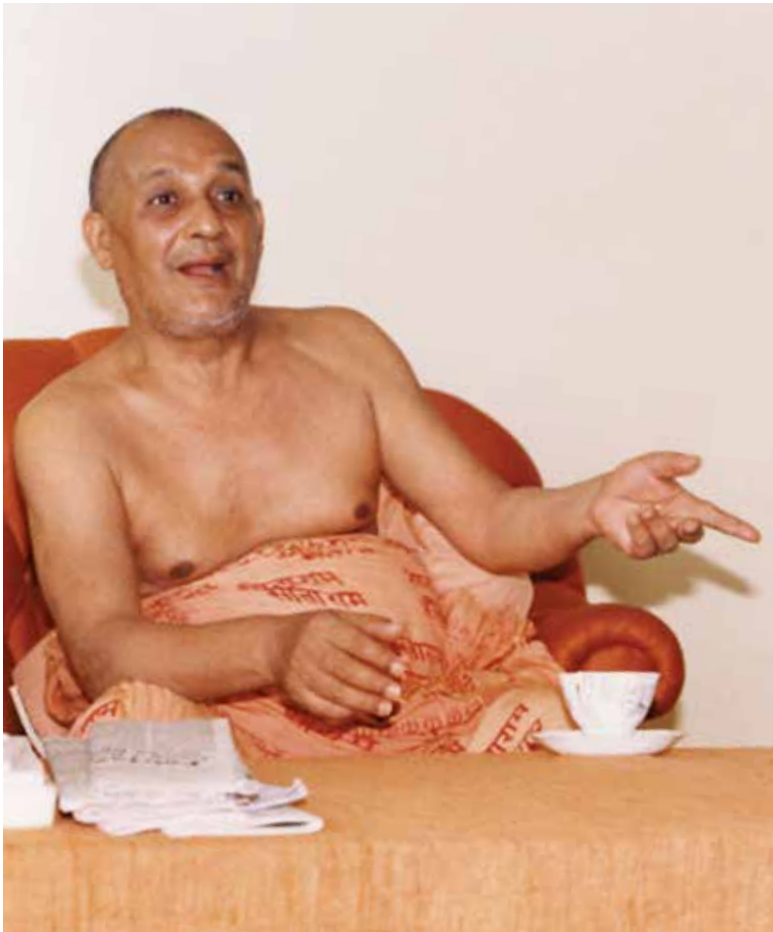
My limbs fail and my mouth is parched up, my body quivers and my hairs stand on end!

*Gaandeevam sramsate hastaat twak chaiva paridahyate;
Na cha shaknomyavasthaatum bhramateeva cha me manah.*

The (bow) *Gandiva* slips from my hand and my skin burns all over; I am unable even to stand, my mind is reeling, as it were.

He enumerates all the symptoms of depression: you perspire, your skin burns, you begin to tremble and all the negative thoughts come into your mind. The idea of death, that your son or wife or someone will die, or some thief will rob you, or the house will collapse, are all symptoms of depression. The seventeen other chapters of the *Gita* are in the form of a treatment of that depression.

You should not overlook this because depression is not a simple disease that can be treated by a few tranquillizers. Tranquillizers will give you relief for the time being, but it won't last because depression is basically related and connected to the type of personality which you are projecting. It is an expression of yourself, the type of person you are. A man who is suffering from depression must go out, work physically, talk to people, laugh and take an interest in important external things.



10

Some Good Advice

24 May 1986

When the vibrations and feelings of the people nearby disturb and mislead one, what should one do?

Many people do feel that certain individuals have negative vibrations and as a result of those vibrations, there is a certain amount of suffering. In my opinion, this is superstition. It does not exist at all. Therefore, it will be better for the spiritual aspirant to completely transcend this idea.

Does the divine power work silently behind all actions?

Nobody knows anything about divine power. This is a concept. A man must fight all the time, for anything and everything. That is the law. You cannot just sit down quietly because there is a divine power working, or there is something like fate or destiny. Whether it is sickness, disease, accomplishment, success, desires, ambitions or passions, whatever they are, if you want to acquire them, you must fight for the achievement of those as long as you can. Do not depend on any force or any person. There is no power higher than you and no God different from you. This is what a wise man should think.

We have always been taught that there is someone who is superior to us. Nobody has even shown us who that superior being is. Everything is a concept. Nobody has seen. He is beyond speech, beyond mind. This is a funny answer. There is nothing which is beyond me. I am not able to reach that

height, but I will be able to reach somewhere! Therefore, do not depend on any power other than yourself. You, as a human being, have every power to accomplish through the long course of evolution.

You have come to a point where you can exercise the mathematical equations of your mind to solve the problems of your life. Man has made everything as far as I know. If you are a bit clear in your mind and if you read the history of the last five or ten thousand years, you have to conclude that you have made everything. Therefore, why do you want to imagine or postulate an imaginary being superior to you?

Monday is the day for *pithru shakti* or the paternal force, Tuesday is the day for *matri shakti* or the maternal force. Has it any basis and any support of the siddhas?

All these things are religious concepts. If you believe it, do it. But if you ask me, these are mere superstitions. There is no such thing in the universe, because what you believe, other people do not believe. It will be much better for you to compare your beliefs with the rest of the world because the philosophy and the concept which you believe in should be universal, and if it is not universal it is not the truth.

Monday is this and Tuesday is that, that is the day for Hanumanji – these are all Hindu concepts – Christians, Muslims, Sikhs, Buddhists and Jains do not believe this. What is the use of believing in things which are mere conjectures? Go by objective evidences. Not only with regard to this particular concept.

Should one try to cross one's limitations or stay within them?

One should always fight. That is the central teaching of the *Bhagavad Gita*. There is a conclusion drawn in every chapter – *tasmaat*. What does *tasmaat* mean? Just as you have 'therefore', at the end they say, *tasmaat*, therefore. That is called the conclusion. Wherever the conclusion has been drawn, the word *tasmaat* is used. It is used by Krishna

everywhere when replying to Arjuna, “Therefore, oh son of Kunti, awaken and arise and decide to fight.” “Therefore, O Partha you must fight.” One should never accept limitations in the name of destiny, or as an ordainment of God or a higher power. Man has to overcome his limitations. If you study the science of evolution, you will agree with me that man has overcome limitations.

The human body is an outcome of a constant struggle for over 8,400,000 yonis, years or yugas of different species. Which means, there is a common cause, whether it is a beetle, reptile, mammal, bird, mineral, vegetable or anything in this world – the source is common. If you want to study this from the scientific point of view, you do it. I am making it very clear that man has come through struggle. As such, you should not accept anything. Total acceptance of anything is incorrect. The Koran, Bible or Vedas cannot be final. No, nothing is final. Nothing is the last word in the history of man’s struggle against natural limitations.

Is it a must to have only one God for worship to reach the goal or can we worship as many gods as we find emotionally attractive?

You are asking the wrong question. First of all, either there is only one reality or there is no reality at all. There cannot be many realities. I mean the universe is homogenous. Everything is just one. It is not many. How can you see many gods and goddesses? Energy is one; consciousness is one; matter is one. Matter, energy and consciousness are not three. They are manifestations, transformations or formations of each other. Milk becomes curd; curd becomes butter and butter becomes ghee. They are not different. In my opinion, you have to walk on this path on the basis of Truth.

The Truth is one, called by various names. You are called ‘father’ by your son; does your wife call you father? By your father you are called ‘son’. Some call you uncle, nephew, grandson or cousin. Who are you? Are you so many or are you just one? You are just one, ‘I am one’.

Emotionally you may be able to and are permitted to link yourself with that reality, but to say that there are many gods and goddesses is nothing but foolishness. It is ignorance and you will reach that conclusion. It is said in the *Bhagavad Gita*, and in all your vedic texts that there are not many gods.

How can we use yoga nidra to help us remember mathematical formulas, economic equations and other theoretical aspects?

First, you must be able to practise yoga nidra. In yoga nidra, you should not sleep. You must remain partially conscious. You must live in the subconscious state of mind for some time. You perfect this first. Later, in that state, you practise dharana. This dharana is called visualization. This is the practice in which you can actually visualize your mathematics, sciences or whatever.

I practised yoga nidra with Swami Nirranjan when he was about two or three years old. He lived with me, so when he would sleep I would read the *Gita*, Upanishads, the Vedas, even modern sciences and their theories, including those of Einstein, Max Plank, Newton and everything else. He knows all that. I also tried to teach him a lot about electronics and he knows that too. He was not exposed to these things externally because he did not have the chance. But he knows.

In yoga nidra, it is possible to implant on your mind the knowledge of economics, mathematics, science, religion, philosophy or you can choose to make your life sublime. The most important thing is you should be able to develop that state of mind which we call *yoga nidra*, an intermediate state, when you are neither waking nor sleeping.

11

Dasnami Tradition

26 June 1986

Swamiji, what are the characteristics and particulars of the Dasnami Order?

Adi Shankaracharya was born in Kerala in the ninth century. He organized the monastic traditions in India which existed even before him. Many years before his work the monastic tradition in India was three fold: Vedic, Buddhist and Jain.

Ashoka was a great emperor of India and the grandson of Chandragupta who married the sister of a Greek commander-in-chief, Helena. As a result of that, Ashoka was a mixture of Indian and Greek blood – a very brilliant man. There is no doubt that Ashoka was a very brilliant emperor, and he was very cruel as most conquerors were. He conquered Orissa and massacred millions of people; however, that changed his heart and he became a Buddhist. He established a very systematic and organized Buddhist monastic tradition throughout India, Lanka, Tibet, China, Japan, Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Teheran and many other far off countries.

Soon after came Shankara and he found that the Hindu monastic traditions were not properly organized, so he founded the tradition of organization known as the Dasnami sannyasins. Those sannyasins who lived in the hills were known as *Parvatam*, those who lived in places of pilgrimage were known as *Tirtham*, those who were learned in the

scriptural traditions were known as *Bharati*, those who were very brilliant, who had genius, were known as *Saraswati*. I belong to the Saraswati tradition. Those who lived in big cities like Kanchi, Avantika, Ujjain, Hardwar or Rameshwaram were known as *Puri*. Like this also there are Giri, Vanam, Ashramam – all the names were according to the situation or place where the monks were living at that time. These monks were given just one duty – to teach the oneness of life, the oneness of reality and the oneness of everything – that is called *Vedanta*.

The Vedanta philosophy was expounded by Shankaracharya and he asked his disciples to preach it. It says the whole universe, seen and unseen, *vyakta* and *avyakta*, manifest and unmanifest, is one, not two. Do not say purusha, prakriti or jiva, jagat, atma; say only One and He becomes many. He based his philosophy on the Vedas and Upanishads and it is a monotheistic philosophy. You can find the religion of Islam, Christianity and the vedantic philosophy talking about the same thing. They are all monotheistic rather than polytheistic, pantheistic or parentheistic.

There are so many views. Some say God is transcendent, *Paratparabrahma*; some say God is pantheistic: Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, Devi, Durga, Rama, Krishna and many other gods; some say God is transcendent and God is immanent. God is present in all creatures and also transcendent which is called parentheism. Shankara says God is one, whether pantheistic or parentheistic does not matter. All the *devis* and *devatas*, all the gods and goddesses, all the living beings in creation, all the solar systems in the universe are just one. Absolute reality is One. There is no second reality and that is the philosophy of Vedanta.

He also says, *Brahma Satyam Jagat Nitya Brahma Satyam* – The absolute is the truth. *Jagat nitya* – *Jagat* means appearance and appearance is false. *Jivo Brahma na aparaha* – The individual soul and the Absolute Self are the same, there is no difference.

It is for this philosophy that Shankara established the institution of Dasnami sannyasins, and it was this vedantic

philosophy that his disciples preached. I belong to the Saraswati tradition which starts from Sringeri near Mysore in the South. The Dasnami sannyasins have four centres called 'Maths'. Joshi Math is on the way to Badrinath; Puri is near Jaganath; Dwarika is in the West and Sringeri is in the South.

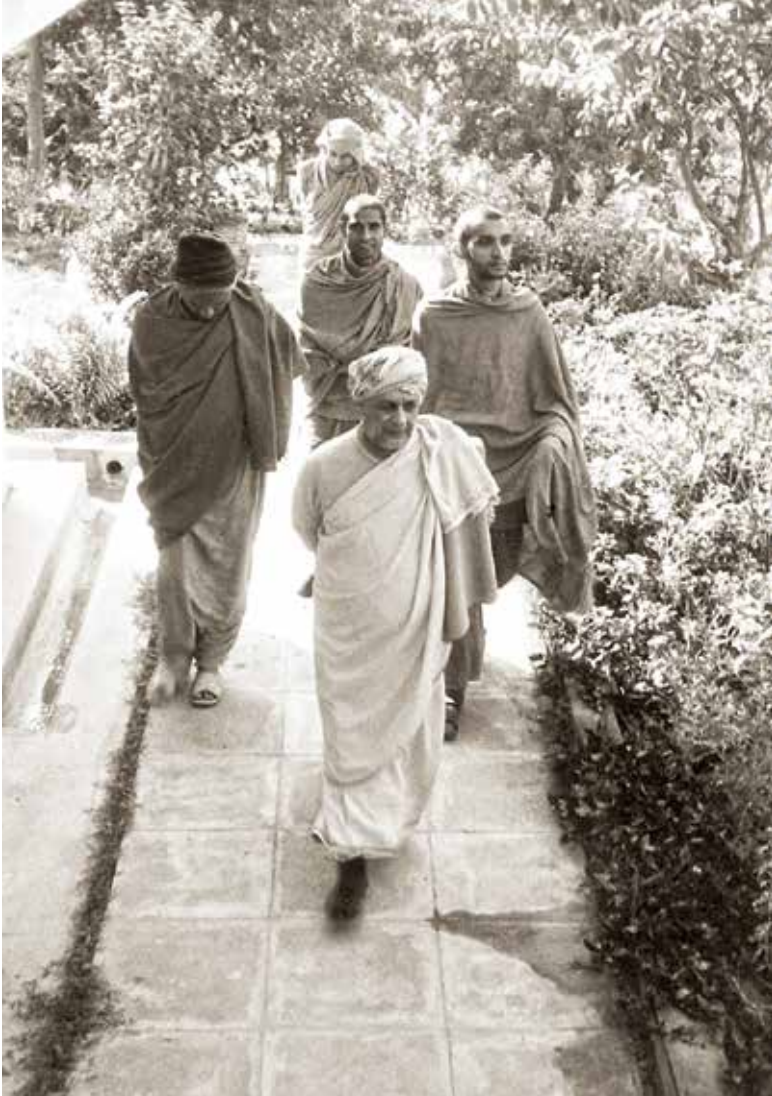
This monastic system has been organized in such a manner that none of us are allowed, expected, trained or qualified as politicians. We do not support any political party, nor do we have any political ambitions, and therefore the politicians in India can never catch us. I have millions of disciples, Swami Sivananda has millions of disciples, Shankarcharya had millions of disciples all over the world, but during the elections the politicians could never use us as we were not taught politics and therefore were not qualified.

We learn Sanskrit, science, history, geography; everything is taught except politics. It is the one thing about which we do not know anything, at all. Any swami who wants to go into politics, run for elections or make oblique statements against different parties will have many problems. How can we realize or attune ourselves to that Truth, Paramatma? How can we be spiritual, concentrate the mind, practise yoga and improve our own selves? These are the duties that have been accorded to us and sannyasins should not cross that boundary.

What does Yajnavalka say? What is the opinion of Christianity on God? What is the opinion of Saint Teresa, Saint John of the Cross? What is the opinion of Mohamed, the Sufis or Taoists? Can we compare Taoism and Vedanta? What did Plato say? We discuss all these intellectual, philosophical things regarding the discovery of truth, because sannyasins always tell people that the main purpose of a human being is to become spiritual and to search for his soul.

Man has lost his soul. There is no doubt about it. You are aware of your body; you are aware of your mind: anger, passion and greed, raga and dwesha, but are you aware of the Self? You have a concept of anger, passion and compassion, but have you any concept of the Self within you? Do you feel it? No. It means that you have lost your Self; you have lost

your soul. So every man must develop some idea, concept, imagination and feeling about that Self within. That is the duty of a sannyasin and for that purpose these Dasnami sannyasins are organized.



12

Climax and Anti-climax

27 June 1986

The religious philosophy of the Hindus, Christians and Muslims has always denounced riches, name and fame. They say it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter heaven. Hindu philosophy, Orthodox Christianity, Muslim philosophy or Buddhist philosophy always talk about self-imposed poverty, penance, *titiksha*, endurance, and *tapasya*, austerity. That is good. I do not have anything to say against it because it is said by great men. I do not want to criticize it, but at the same time, it is a fact that on account of the influence of this philosophy in India and in the West, people have remained impoverished and unhappy for centuries. The West came up only after it changed its relationship with the Christian religion. When western people changed, they did not renounce religion, they are Christians still, but they stopped practising the extremes of religion. The same should happen in India, too.

People should remain in whatever religion they belong to, but should not practise extreme systems of philosophy. Too much of religion in life is not good. As such, the whole majority of people – millions and millions of people have to see things in the perspective of reality. Why should we not ask young people to work for name and fame, for money and power?

They must get satisfaction in full. They must have ambition to rise high in worldly life. You may call it 'worldly'.

They must achieve the worldly things first. Only then do they have a right to renounce. What is the use of renouncing when you do not have anything? You should renounce when you have a lot of ambitions and passions. Therefore, renunciation must follow great achievements. Buddha renounced when he was a prince. Yes, that is renunciation, because he had everything.

In society also there has to be a thesis, antithesis and synthesis. There has to be a tug of war in this society. There has to be a class conflict as society does not grow without that. There has to be a conflict between religions, philosophies and ideologies. The progress of society depends on that. First there have to be clashes, then there has to be a classless society.

For every individual who reaches the zenith of success, there is an anti-climax. What has happened to the West? Anti-climax. Western people are working, aspiring, ambitious, passionate, exciting, conquering and colonizing, and now they are becoming spiritual. It is a natural reversal of the procedure. You have to go to the climax and then come down. Do not come down half-way. When you reach the climax of prosperity, success, money, comfort or enjoyment, then later you will not say, "I did not get anything from this." You automatically turn towards the spiritual path. The realization of spiritual aspiration should be a spontaneous and automatic process of reversal of the whole procedure: climax and anti-climax. That is how the civilizations must work.

We should not brainwash our children to become spiritual at the very beginning of life. No, it is wrong, and I do not believe in it. You should not make your children religious dummies and puppets. They should be given a lifestyle, but they should be taught to succeed in life. They must run and run and run. That is called the race. They must keep running. That mad race will ultimately turn them to the spiritual path.

Swami Sivananda used to say, "When you get knocks and blows in the daily battle of life, the mind is automatically

turned towards spiritual things.” Then comes viveka and vairagya, disgust for worldly things and the desire for liberation, *moksha*. This is how the whole civilization has to work. There is no use making people puppets.



13

Shankaracharya and Kriya Yoga

15 October 1986

Addressing a group of kriya yoga aspirants

Can you tell us something about Shankaracharya?

Shankaracharya is the name of a brilliant sannyasin who was born about 1,000 years ago in Kerala, the western part of southern India. He renounced when he was eight years old in search of a guru. Then he found his guru in a place in the Himalaya region a few miles above Rishikesh. He stayed with him for eight years. During this period, he studied the vedic, vedantic philosophical texts, and at the age of sixteen he wrote outstanding commentaries on the Upanishads and philosophical books, which are considered to be the best by eastern and western scholars even up to this day. He was a yogi and he was also a great scholar. He moved throughout India discussing with scholars as to what is the nature of this universe, what is the essential or the basic process of creation. How is the individual being related to the cosmic being, and how can one purify oneself, how can one release oneself from the natural ignorance and experience enlightenment?

The philosophy he taught is known as the monistic philosophy, Advaita Vedanta which has its origin in the vedic literature, the Upanishads. With all the material situations in society, the political and social upheavals, the Indian mind has always been thinking about the most difficult questions: the creator, the process of creation, the nature of the universe, the nature of the individual soul and the form or shape of

consciousness. What is mind? What are the senses? How do you define a real experience called objective experience? How do you define a subjective experience? How do you define a hallucination or illusion, and how do you define spiritual experience?

Shankaracharya organized four major centres in India and handed them over to his sannyasin disciples. One is in the Himalayas about 120 miles from Rishikesh, called Joshimath Badrinath; the second is in the western part of India, in Dwarka; the third is in the eastern part of India, where you have the great temple of Jaganath Puri; and the fourth one he established in the South near Mysore, called Sringeri. These are the four chief centres. Besides this he established minor centres: one in South India called Jiveranum and one in Kashmir.

Wherever he established the centres, he gave his disciples a crystal lingam and he instructed them to perform devotion, worship and meditation on this crystal Shivalingam.

The Shivalingam has a very important place in India. The Shivalingam was also well known to the people of the Latin American continent because historians and archaeologists have found temples in Mexico and in other parts of Latin American countries which have the same Shivalingam. It is not being worshipped today. In European countries also the worship of Shivalingam was well known prior to the Christian civilization or Christian religion. In the Vatican they have a nice Shivalingam which is kept in the museum, one of the greatest museums in the world. The people from Eritrea and Yugoslavia used to worship the Shivalingam.

It is considered by scientists now that the missing link of consciousness between animal and human being could only be traced by a sudden psychological and psychic accident. A monkey can be trained to some extent. He may know how to smoke. He may know how to use knife and fork. But even if you train him for one thousand years – much more than you train your children – I do not think that they can ever permute and combine like human beings. The biological

evolution of man as pronounced by Darwin cannot be established. There is a missing link and this missing link has to be properly explained. This monolith structure of Shivalingam has a magnetism and an influence on the psychic being, whether one is a monkey or a man.

There is a beautiful book *2001 Odyssey* written by Arthur C. Clarke. He has postulated that a monolith structure did create a psychological excitement or structure in the depth of consciousness of evolved animals, and as a result they began to have visions.

Unless you have certain visions you cannot have an idea. For example, there is a monkey, a chimpanzee or an ape. Supposing a monkey starts having visions that he is picking up a stone and throwing it or taking a stick and beating another animal. This kind of vision is a special quality which is related to the subconscious and unconscious mind. The conscious mind operates through objective channels. The subconscious and unconscious mind operate through psychic channels which are revived by visions. These visions should not be termed as hallucination or illusion. They are the product of the deeper mind.

In meditation you may have a vision that a river is flowing upward or a part of the earth is cracking into two. It may not happen at all, but then you cannot dispose of this experience just because it did not happen. It did happen in the depth of your mind. You did see some figures. You did see some pictures. You did come across a certain dimension of forms. That may be the fourth dimension. Or that may be what we call the marks of the three dimensional object, but it does happen. Anything can cause a vision, awaken your subconscious mind or penetrate deep into your unconscious and from there it can just explode. The nightmares, the terrible experiences one sometimes has during higher meditation are explosions that come out from the unconscious. The experiences, *samskaras* or influxes that spring from the depth of the unconscious are very great, fantastic, powerful, and of course disturbing.

This Shivalingam is venerated in India and we consider that this monolithic structure carries around it a powerful field of energy which can awaken the inner potential and experiences. So wherever Shankaracharya went, he established a Shivalingam, although according to the tradition of sannyasins, we worship Narayana or Vishnu, not Shiva. Sannyasins say, *Om Namo Narayana*, they do not say, *Om Namah Shivayah*, however the Shivalingam is to be worshipped. That is the main thing.

When Shankaracharya was born about 1,000 years ago there was a very great spiritual movement in India. I would even call it an ethical and moral movement initiated by Buddha. Buddha was from a royal family. He had certain questions and enquiries. He renounced. At the age of thirty-six, he came to what is now Bihar near Gaya and lived with a guru. Finally, he practised meditation by himself and attained enlightenment. After enlightenment he moved in Bihar and convinced people about his teachings. The people of this state were greatly drawn to him. After his nirvana his disciples organized conventions, seminars, edited his teachings and then his teachings spread to Tibet, China, Burma, Thailand and of course to all South East Asian countries and to the Far East to Japan.

After about 700 years, his disciples created two giant universities in this state, one was Nalanda about 100 miles from Munger. It was the university meant to train Buddhist monks belonging to the Hinayana sect. Buddhism has two sects: *Hinayana* and *Mahayana*, the shorter way and the wider way. Then about 100 miles east from Munger was another giant university called Vikramshila University, where the Mahayana Buddhism, the tantric Buddhism and similar philosophies and teachings were given.

Then came the emperor Ashoka who was the grandson of a Hindu king and a Greek girl, Helena. Chandragupta, who ruled India, married the daughter of Silucas, Helena, and their grandson was Ashoka. He was a very cruel king, a very angry, powerful dictator, and he conquered many

kingdoms. Finally, he was converted to the idea of Buddha – non-violence. He erected Ashoka Pillars all over India, made of solid rocks. These Ashoka edicts were his teaching of non-violence, of how the king should live and how the people should live. He organized the Buddhist Federation. When Shankaracharya came Buddhism was at its highest peak.

The problem in India is we can accept every philosophy, moral, ethical, metaphysical, spiritual, tantric or yogic, but when a philosopher, teacher, preacher or guru remains silent or if he denies the ultimate substance, you may call him God, Shiva, Allah or any name, Indians cannot accept it. In this country, we believe right from the beginning that the source of creation is not nature. Nature is the instrumental and efficient cause, like a potter makes the pot from the clay, but clay is not the pot. It is the potter who makes the pot from the clay. Who is the potter? Shankaracharya came and the problem arose. I am talking now about very abstract and philosophical problems. Buddha said nirvana which means total void, nothing and nothing. Ultimately everything is nothing. Shankaracharya said, 'It is not possible, logically that the ultimate of this whole creation, the ultimate of everything should be nothing. From nothing something cannot emerge. A simple logic. You are there. Certainly you have a mother. You cannot say that you do not have a mother. You cannot say that you do not have a father.

So Shankaracharya held discussions with the Buddhist monks. He was a very young boy about 17 or 18 years old, and all the Buddhist monks came to discuss with him. What is moksha? What is liberation, emancipation, salvation, samadhi or nirvana? Finally, these Buddhist scholars became his disciples because he explained that from nothing something cannot arise. You must realize and discover that beyond any object there is an idea, beyond the idea there is an experience, and beyond experience, what? You cannot say that beyond the experience there is nothing. Beyond experience it is called enlightenment, samadhi, emancipation or moksha.

Shankaracharya organized the order of sannyasins in ten groups and we belong to the Saraswati order. I belong to Saraswati order and my tradition has emanated from Sringeri, the fourth centre he established in the South.

Kriya yoga has so far involved a fair amount of auto-suggestion and imagination. How does this process help to open up parts of the brain that are not functioning?

First of all, I should tell you that I have nothing against hypnosis, autohypnosis or autosuggestion, but certainly the effects of kriya yoga cannot be put into that basket. For one simple reason, in autohypnosis the brain waves work on alpha pattern, in kriya yoga the brain waves do not work on alpha pattern or delta pattern, they work on theta and beta pattern.

One of my disciples in Scandinavia is Swami Janakananda. He is Danish and has a centre in Copenhagen and Stockholm. He is a very keen researcher and has done a lot of research. When you do any practice, which has the elements of hypnosis or autosuggestion, the brainwaves show intensity of alpha and finally delta. When you go into deep sleep, which means the brain, the nervous system and the body are acting on a different type of metabolism, a different impulse or different effect is taking place in the physical body. There is nothing wrong in it because people do need hypnosis and autosuggestions in order to improve their habits like smoking. There are elements in raja yoga, which are parallel to hypnosis especially the fifth stage, *pratyahara*, withdrawal of the senses. The word 'hypnos' comes from the Greek word sleep. Naturally in sleep conditions the delta waves are there, certainly not theta and beta waves.

When you practise kriya yoga, you are not dulling your senses. You do not retire or relax your senses. You are not influencing your sympathetic, parasympathetic or central nervous systems, not ida, pingala or sushumna. The awakening of sushumna is the major factor related to kriya yoga. Ida and pingala are the two nervous systems in yoga which can be understood in the context of the sympathetic

and parasympathetic nervous systems. One controlling the *karmendriyas*, the motor organs, another controlling the *jnanendriyas*, the sensorial channels, the sense organs. Then there is the third nadi, sushumna nadi. Awakening of sushumna is the awakening of the central nervous system. When the central nervous system begins to operate, then naturally it is related to the brain and the brain begins to operate.

Kriya yoga should not be equated with hypnosis even though we do accept the immense benefit which we can reap from the practices of hypnosis and autosuggestion. When we practise kriya yoga, we are not practising autosuggestion because we practise moola bandha, shambhavi mudra, uddiyana bandha, vajroli mudra and ujjayi pranayama. These are not subjective practices. These are the practices which are objective and have a direct bearing on our physiological structure. Moola bandha has its physiological effect on the body. Similarly, uddiyana bandha, bhrumadhya, shambhavi mudra, nasikagra mudra have a physiological effect; and therefore, when a person is practising kriya yoga, if he is subjected to scientific investigation, all the brain wave patterns will slow down and come to alpha level. That is the perfection in pratyahara. Gradually, while the alpha pattern is operating, the brain waves change into theta. In deep meditation, when you are practising meditation for ten, fifteen or even thirty minutes, theta patterns begin to emerge from alpha waves which means that after having obtained a perfect, relaxed state of body an awakening is taking place. This awakening is not taking place, when you are restless.

When you are disturbed, your mind is wandering; you are restless; you are anxious; you are worried about things; some sort of awakening can also take place. You can become angry, violent or extra active, but here first relaxation is obtained – physical, psychological, emotional relaxation, relaxation in every part of the body, maybe even the heart or the nervous system. When that relaxation is complete, the awakening begins and the brain shows theta patterns. Kriya yoga should

be considered as a method of awakening not as a method leading to autohypnosis.

Even if the above process leads to strengthening the power of concentration, is it possible that realization of the self – which is the aim of all these practices – is also one big imagination, that is a hypnotized belief, that what we have realized is the self?

Kriya yoga is a practice in which you are mobilizing the untapped forces in your body. *Kriya* means mobilization. Within this physical body there are elements, biological, physiological, psychological and other elements which in biological or secretional form can be awakened by the practice of kriya yoga.

If you take LSD (please do not take it!) what happens? The consciousness alters because LSD has affected the chemical system in the body. By affecting the chemical and nervous systems in the body a certain experience is caused. If you take marijuana which is much lighter, you will have that experience; and therefore, even without practising one-pointed concentration, it is possible to have deeper experiences. That is the basic hypothesis of kriya yoga. This is the basic difference between kriya yoga practices and other yogic practices.

I am not belittling other practices of yoga. They are useful for many people. They sit down to concentrate and when a thought comes, they say, 'Get out! No, I don't want you!' No sound, no smell, no touch, no memory, nothing, just the object: fire, flame or trident. This is called concentration. When the mind becomes focused on one object that is called concentration. That is raja yoga which emphasizes concentration. Gradually you limit the field of your experience from multiplicity to one-pointedness. Kriya yoga has nothing to do with concentration or if at all, very little.

The primary hypothesis is that it is possible to obtain a state of mind where the consciousness can alter without

concentration, but by using certain chemical structures and forces in the body. Pranayama, ujjayi, khechari mudra, vipareeta karani mudra help a lot. It has been seen that in certain postures surplus secretion of adrenalin can take place or in some postures thyroid secretions. In some cases, other secretions can take place. A lot has been written on this by many doctors and scientists. There is a beautiful book published by Transcendental Meditation. More than three hundred doctors with their own faculties like neurology, gynaecology have written articles on the effect of mantra and meditation on the skin, the metabolism, anabolism, skin resistance, kidney, spleen and allergies.

When you are practising kriya yoga, you are not just concentrating, but you are using certain methods by which the existing potential of chemical hormones, endocrine secretions can be obtained and the body can undergo experiences. So this is not hypnosis or autosuggestion.

The purpose of kriya yoga is to awaken, evolve, create or develop a higher quality of awareness. Unless you have a microscope you cannot see the virus because they are too microscopic. Unless you have a telescope you cannot see the distant stars. In the same way, if you do not have that higher awareness, you cannot see, you cannot experience, you cannot understand the higher self. In order to realize the higher self, *Ishwara*, the supreme spirit or atman, to have the experience or vision of that transcendental reality, do you think this mind is sufficient? You cannot even hold a tragedy. A little problem comes and your mind cannot hold it. When boiling water is poured into a glass, it will break into pieces. There are certain emotions and I do not think that many of us can hold. We just break. You need to have a different type of mind, a different type of awareness. That microscopic awareness, that powerful awareness, that penetrating awareness, that intellectual awareness can only manifest after the awakening of kundalini. Awakening of kundalini is not the end of spiritual life. Awakening of kundalini is the means. It is acquiring a microscopic vision. It is acquiring a telescopic

awareness. A very fine quality of awareness is required to apprehend that transcendental wave or that transcendental form.

With this mind which we have now, even if you are a peaceful man, even if you have no disturbances, still it is not possible because this mind has limitations. It is limited by time, space and object. Our mind is conditioned, is limited by time factor, space factor and object factor; it cannot go beyond time, space and object. Time, space and object is something very far from transcendental reality which is timeless and beyond time. Time, space and object are the categories of the material form of object, the material form of creation.

In the evening after kirtan I feel a desperate need to talk with others. I feel as though I will go mad if I am by myself. Can you explain this?

Why explain this? It happens to everyone. Remember that you are only doing it for a week. It is not even a very long period. In Christian and Hindu monasteries there is also solitude, being by yourself. Solitude means just yourself and nobody around you, not even a member of the family just peeping through the door. Just stay alone and study your mind. When you are talking to people or interacting with people, you cannot study yourself, because you are extrovert, and they are engaging you and you are engaging them. When you are all alone by yourself, one hour, two hours, three hours, you can gradually see the functions of your mind, the modifications of mind, then self-analysis, contemplation and self-investigation becomes easier.

What is contemplation? How can you contemplate if you are not in solitude? A *sadhaka*, a spiritual aspirant, must find one week once a year, when he should retire in perfect solitude. That is perfectly natural, not unnatural. The way we are living is not natural. Go somewhere and stay there. Close yourself in the room. Have a small oven or gas cylinder, cook some vegetables for yourself and then read some nice books.

Do asana and pranayama or kriya yoga. One week just by yourself. Do not see any face, even your face in the mirror, and you will find that you will know a lot about yourself – of course not very much.

In India the tradition is that in the month of April and October, Hindus worship Devi, the divine female, Durga, Lakshmi and Kali. For nine days they do uninterrupted japa mantra, nothing else. In the morning at four o'clock they get up do a bit of asana and pranayama and practise their mantra, one hour, two hours, then a break of walking for half an hour. Then again they sit for two hours; then they break after two hours – half an hour walking – then light meals – no grain, no pulses, only fruit, milk, sago, barley like this, or boiled vegetables for nine days. They do not shave; they do not cut nails. They sleep on the floor on a blanket or good carpet; the rich people do it, poor people do it, even the very rich people do it. Those who are multimillionaires they also do it. They do not go to their wives or husbands. They do not associate much with the family. The younger ones look after the family during that period, all the business transactions, everything. This is going on at the rate of nine to ten hours a day of japa, and what little time they get, they do some spiritual reading, so that it can keep them spiritually alive; and after nine days they are back again as a normal householder. They shave, cut their nails, change their dress and go back to foam mattresses.

Likewise, you should do this when the temperature is not too harsh, too cold or too hot, but moderate. Solitary seclusion for some time is very important for psychological growth. It is a psychological healing practice, and one week is nothing.

14

Two Questions

*26 December 1986, addressing a group
of yoga aspirants of a Teachers Training Course*

Is there a state of final evolution? Do you reach a point where you have absolute fullness or is there always more and more, neti, neti?

Neti, Neti. Infinity has no terminating point. You know what is infinity? You know mathematics? Infinity has no ultimate point. When it has an ultimate point, it cannot be infinity. Then it is finite. Infinity is continuity.

The purpose of an individual soul should be to experience, for a single fraction of a second, that 'I am all', or 'All is I'. That's all. It may take any number of births. It does not matter and those incarnations can work out like at the snap of fingers, just as a little fire can destroy barrels of petrol. A little fire can burn a mountain of cotton like this, in the same way, when the actual experience begins to come, the incarnations are destroyed. The time gap is contracted. This is the hypothesis of everybody.

Does a yogi have to be active?

One has to make a clear difference between the restless mind and the active mind. A yogi can exist, can play his role as a yogi with an activity of mind. Vivekananda was not inactive. I am not inactive. Mahatma Gandhi was not inactive; Christ was not inactive.

A yogi can be a householder; a yogi can also be a sannyasin, because yogi is a quality of one's soul. It has

nothing to do with the order of life, you are a householder and I am a sannyasin. I can be a yogi and you cannot be a yogi – this is wrong. Anyone can practise and become a yogi.

This decision has been made in the *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Yoga Vasishtha*, and common sense also says it: one must have a proper balance between karma and jnana. Just as a bird has two wings to be able to fly. If it has only one wing, it cannot fly. So you need karma and jnana.



1987

15

Guru, Initiation and Unity

1987

How does one communicate with guru? By mental wavelength, pranic practice or any other method is difficult as city people live a hectic life and at some moment they lose prana. How can one get it back and maintain contact?

In order to maintain contact with someone who is far away, one needs to control the frequencies of the mind. It is not just the thought which you can transmit, you have to communicate with your guru by improving, changing, adjusting and regulating the frequencies of the mind. It is almost the same way you are tuned into AIR and then you want to listen to BBC. You change the wavelength and frequency. Then you must have a greater amount of control over your thought patterns, especially during the period of meditation. You know that in day-to-day life, when we are faced with problems, due to lack of experience we lose control over the mind and so we experience emotions of sorrow, elation and happiness.

During the time of meditation or any other act which leads to meditation like japa, you must be able to handle the wavelengths of the mind right from the beginning. If you are thinking of *Om*, Guru or Krishna and you find suddenly something else is happening in your mind, it means that the tuning is not thorough. This happens to all of us. It is as if you are tuning in to BBC and suddenly you find

other sounds, like music, side by side. The mind should be trained to think only one thought. If other thoughts come in between, you must understand that it is another wavelength which is interfering with that one.

Now what do you do? You have to tune your mind properly so that you are only thinking of *Om* and not all that rubbish and whatever is unnecessary. It is through this process that you train, regulate and increase the frequencies.

You know I have heard of dolphins. Even at the distance of ten to thirty miles if one dolphin is in danger, the other dolphins get the news. They are adjusted to certain frequencies which relate on the subtle plane, the *shukshma loka*; and therefore, the two dolphins though at a great distance from each other are connected. The same happens with crows. Much research remains to be done. Scientists so far think that animals belong to a lower kingdom and human beings to a higher. So far as technology is concerned they do. The crow will not be able to produce an atom bomb.

I noticed during my years in Rishikesh, monkeys just get to know what is happening at any distance. Some say it is through some external signal, but I found it was not so. After I read about dolphins and other creatures I thought about the experiences of myself and my guru and the experience of my disciples and me, I came to realize that there are those unseen and invisible wavelengths of the mind that can be tuned and plugged into the atmosphere. There is a matrix, a field that connects similar frequencies. Suppose I am thinking of you, my mind has to be connected with a field and you have to be connected with that field, like a wireless, telephone or electricity.

Bhakti yoga

For that purpose, one-pointedness of mind has to be achieved. In order to achieve one-pointedness there are raja yoga methods, kriya yoga, pranayama and so on. The swiftest and sometimes most immediate is through bhakti yoga. I mean the yoga in which you are using your emotions, *prem yoga*.

Often it happens with mothers. When the children are away and something happens she knows it; they belong to the same frequency because of the love she has for the child. Extreme love of a mother maintains a similar and uniform range of mental frequencies. There are many examples of this.

In this bhakti yoga you employ your natural emotions, and emotion is something which every *jiva*, every individual, has. You cannot say you do not have it. You may say I do not believe in God. That is another matter. I have seen that many times faith in God is more intellectual than emotional, especially the God who belongs to a religion, we believe in intellectually. Even if one does not believe in God, it does not mean you have no emotions. You have hatred, jealousy, strong emotions, positive and negative. You are sensitive and sentient, which is a positive proof that you have that force within you, and you are using and expressing it in a different manner.

In bhakti yoga there are various forms of expression of emotions which they call *bhava*. Bhakti is a form of bhava and bhava is an attitude. Yashodha had one type of bhava for Krishna. Hanuman had another type for Sri Rama and the gopis had yet another for Krishna. You can channel your emotions through one of these bhavas. It depends mostly on the nature, the structure of your personality. *Dasya bhava* is the attitude of a servant; *sakhya bhava* of an intellectual friend; *vatsalya bhava* is maternal affection; *madhurya bhava* is of romance, like the gopis and Radha had.

These attitudes help you to regulate your emotions, which helps you to streamline your mental consciousness or mental energy. Then emotions are brought forward and with their help you have certain bhavas, then union between guru and disciple can take place. I am using the word union because often the word union is not understood. It is thought that just as we are united today, this is union. This is external union. Union is when you are constantly aware of the object which you cherish, which is dear to you and is always in your mind and you become one with it. This is called union, *ekatmata*.

It is not only for a saintly person or a virtuous man. It can be for anyone, even a vicious man, a wretched being, even if his daily life is not proper and disciplined or if he has addictions in life. A person of any standard can communicate with the guru.

There is a beautiful story of a swami who had an ashram and opposite to it was a prostitute called Ganika. He was always looking out of the window and cursing her. This Ganika used to listen to kirtans sung in the ashram from her window and she would wait for them to begin. After they both died, they were brought to the court of Yamaraj. Yamaraj ultimately gave judgment – Paradise for the lady and hell for the sadhu. The swami said, “All my life I have been practising yoga and she has been hunting after men.” Yamaraj said, “It is not that. It is the area of emotion, the attitude of consciousness. It is what you are aspiring for that makes the difference.”

The people who are living in the city are not all saints. Even if you want to be saints you cannot be. There is maya all around you which is a part of Vishnu and Narayana and not an enemy of theirs. It is not possible for you to stick to the strict rules of spiritual life, but some things you can do. You can streamline your emotions at least for one or two hours, like Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Mirabai and the Sufi saints. Develop that kind of bhakti, which Ramakrishna had for Kali and you will find that the guru with whom you are trying to have union is not very far, but is a part of you and is well within you.

How does taking karma sannyasa or a spiritual name help in one's spiritual progress?

When you are taking karma sannyasa or a spiritual name that in itself is a step further. Unless that idea comes into your mind, you will not think of taking them. Everybody has a name and this name we have for convenience. That is not our real name. In ancient days they used to find the real name by consulting the *rasi*, *lagna* etc. and they used to find

the quality of the person, whether he was predominately fire or earth. The spiritual name is the name of your spiritual consciousness and the present name you have belongs to your outer personality by which people know you as Mr. So and So.

Karma sannyasa

Karma sannyasa is a big and very great step towards liberation of the individual from ego, not liberation from oneself or oneself from one's worldly connections. In the *Bhagavad Gita*, it is said, you do not have to renounce your duties, your obligations nor anything which can contribute for the good of others. *Shubha karmas*, positive, auspicious karmas, should not be abandoned. At the same time a dispassionate, philosophical attitude should be developed. That is karma sannyasa.

If I am going to Calcutta and I put my car in your garage, is that then your car? No, but still you take care of it. Your children, the people you love, property, money duties in society have to be considered in the same light. A fine day comes when you have to renounce these things compulsorily. You have to. So our relationships with each other, everything in the world has to be properly assessed and understood.

Many times, on account of *avidya*, ignorance, attachment and personality problems, you do not understand the proper type or angle of relationships. My mother is my mother. Of course she is my mother, but the way I understand my relationship with her or any other family relationship is not correct. The way I involve myself in understanding the type of relationship I have with them is wrong. There is a philosophical error. It is there on account of the quality of my personality. This correction when it is made takes you to karma sannyasa.

Karma sannyasa is a type of training when you are trying to understand your relationship with each and everything in the world, and in this you include everyone. You do not exclude anybody. You do not criticize or denounce, you respect everything, but you have to recognize and understand

the fair value. Suppose there is a piece of glass and you think it costs 10,000 rupees. All the time you are thinking of the 10,000 rupees and that they must not be stolen. I say, “No. it is not worth 10,000 rupees, but 5 rupees! Keep it on the table.” Overestimation of our relationships with people and the things of the world makes us householders, *grihasthas*. Once we have a proper understanding of the people, objects and events of life, we are enhancing another area of duty, fulfilment and realization. That is called karma sannyasa.

In the olden days, this karma sannyasa was called *vanaprashta ashrama*. We had four ashramas: brahmachara, grihastha, vanaprashta and sannyasa. They were the four stages of life, not only from the point of view of self-realization or spiritual realization, but also from the practical point of view. After all, the sages knew that when a man is fifty, if he is still loaded with worries and anxieties, he is going to get a heart attack and nervous breakdown. It is much better that he takes to karma sannyasa or vanaprashta ashrama. In the olden days, there were places they could go and live with their wives. They lived the life of rishis.

In the olden days, there were great rishis like Vasishtha, Arundhati and Agastya. These rishis lived with their wives, led simple lives and had their children and their own tribesmen. If they were extraordinary kings, leaders of the community and politicians used to come to them for guidance. They did not aspire for this; they aspired for a spiritual life. They wanted to know what lies beyond karma and gratification. When you are totally satisfied with the objects of the world, property, prosperity, love, affection, family, eminence and so on, you wonder, ‘Is there anything beyond it or nothing?’ Is self-gratification the ultimate destiny of man? I do not think anyone will accept that.

I know that self-gratification and pleasures are the inevitable experiences of human life. Even animals may get gratification though they may not understand it. They also run after comfort. You see the dog on the veranda. When it is cold he will come in and crawl under your bed. He does

not want pain; he wants comfort. In the same way, a human being tries for gratification, comfort or pleasant experience. He wants good friends, no enemies, does not want disease or death. If God has granted him all this, will he not aspire for anything else?

What is beyond karma? Sannyasa is beyond karma. That is exactly what is going to happen in the western countries. Now they are crossing the border of karma, and as they do so they will not enter into the field of renunciation, they will enter into a field where karma and tyaga go hand in hand. *Karma* means involvement and *tyaga* means renunciation. When involvement and renunciation meet, that is called *karma sannyasa*.

It has nothing to do with orthodox concepts like becoming a vegetarian or non-vegetarian, a celibate or non-celibate or that you have to speak the truth at all costs. Everybody has to speak the truth or be good at all costs, not only a sannyasi or a householder. These rules do not form a prerequisite of karma sannyasa. Whatever you are, with the same quality and content of your personality, you just enter into a new area of philosophical understanding of life – that is karma sannyasa.

Spiritual name

Now concerning your spiritual name. I had a friend many years ago whose name was Mr Wheatfield. He was my father's superior officer. He was a superintendent of police. I was very close to him. Many times I told him, "Please change your name, you are not a field of wheat." He was a very kind man who loved children. He used to gather them and talk to them. He hardly ever took any step against a subordinate, whether they took bribes or not. He did not even know that there is anything in the world called corruption. This was in the 1930s or 1940s. So I told him to change his name; someone suggested Mr Fox. These funny names exist.

I met a girl yesterday called Pinky. I asked her, 'What does it mean?' I told her I would give her a good name like Pooja or Arati, a nice name. These names ultimately become a part

and parcel of your mind and your personality. In the course of time, they become a reminder that you have to be that.

My name is Swami Satyananda. Many times I thought to take pleasure in speaking the truth. I did and that led me into much trouble. When I was in Rishikesh ashram I was a disciple, a worker, a senior worker, sometimes the most senior. I called a spade a spade. On account of that I was not popular; so I could not be blissful in truth. At the same time, I could not understand how truth could be so bitter. It should be *ananda*, bliss, not *klesha*. Swami Sivananda was also a truthful man, but he was very sweet. I was not sweet, only truthful. One day he said to me, “*Satyam bruyat, priyam bruyat* – Truth should be spoken but in a pleasant manner, people must understand, accept and listen to it.”

All these years I was thinking how to be truthful and sweet. Now I am trying to practise a little bit. So the spiritual name that is given to you by your guru is something you must meditate on, and try to be that in this life, even if only for a few days before death. Even if you can do that much, I think the purpose of the name is fulfilled.

Negativity is stronger than positivity. How can we achieve balance of mind and emotion in our hectic city life?

Negativity is *asura* and positivity is *deva*. These are the two tendencies in every personality. There is a constant unending conflict between these two forces. In this life, the previous life, not only in this physical body and mind, but in external nature there is a constant and unending conflict. If this conflict ceases, there will be no progress or evolution.

Many times people ask, “Why did God create evil?” That is a very simple question from very simple religious people. “He should have created only good, because He could do it. If he is the Almighty, why does he not destroy evil?” Evil has a place in the scheme of evolution and creation. Negativity in your personality has a purpose in the scheme of physical, mental, moral, social and spiritual evolution. If you are always positive (of course this is impossible) from the beginning of

childhood, I do not think you will go any further than being an idiot. You will be just there.

Negativity is changed with hyperactivity. Negativity is rajoguna and positivity without negativity is tamoguna. When the positive nature and negative nature clash with each other and finally negativity is set aside and positivity wins, that is sattwaguna. In Samkhya philosophy, tamoguna and sattwaguna look alike and are pictured as almost the same. When you are in yoga nidra who knows whether you are sleeping or are internally awake, in tamoguna or sattwaguna. When you have closed your eyes in padmasana, God knows what is happening inside! They look alike, their external robe or manifestation is the same. Both look like idiots from the outside – tamoguna is a real idiot and sattwa is apparently an idiot; only the person from the inside can know.

Positive and negative samskaras in your personality should be given a proper chance to balance each other. From tamoguna you move to rajoguna and from rajas to sattwa. There is no direct transition from tamoguna to sattwaguna. Tamoguna has to be balanced and rajoguna will manifest. Rajoguna has to be conquered by sattwaguna.

When you realize you have many negative qualities, instincts and traits you should not be sorry about them. They have their place and an important role to play. They are an asset in the scheme of your spiritual evolution. However, you must maintain the conflict and keep the struggle constantly alive. You should never think God should destroy evil, or guru, or a greater spiritual, political or any other power should descend and destroy evil. Evil cannot be destroyed; it is a landmark, a milestone on the path of your evolution. It will always be there.

What is evil? You have passions and you consider that as evil. You hate people, you want to be cruel and kill. You call it evil. Maybe I say it is okay. These so-called diabolical and evil tendencies go hand in hand with man's evolution for a very long time, up to the stage of *jīvamukti* when one is totally liberated.

If you have ever contemplated the *Bhagavad Gita*, you will come to understand and realize that it was narrated to a person who was totally blind, Dhritarashtra. Second, it was taught to a person who was also blind, Arjuna. He did not have knowledge. All the eighteen chapters are entitled yoga. The first chapter is called *Arjuna Vishadyoga*. *Vishad* means despondency, depression, dejection. Could depression be yoga? Yoga means a method of evolution of the self. Is dejection and depression a way to spiritual evolution? The *Gita* says yes!

When you get angry, what do you do after that? Just imagine that you are terribly angry, you lose your temper, say so many things, but later what do you do? You say to yourself, “I am not going to do it again.” You are trying to balance. This balance is called *sanyam*, control. That is yoga. How can you say that anger and passion do not form a part of spiritual life? I know that when you are accepting negativity you are walking on the razor’s edge. You have to be very careful. You may fall this side or that, but after all, you have to walk, and the Upanishads say that this is the razor’s path. In the *Kathopanishad* there is a beautiful mantra: “The spiritual life has negativity in the left pocket and positivity in the right pocket. When the negative is too much over you, close the left pocket and open the other. Balance both.” Total *sattwa* leads to *tamas* and total *rajas* is destruction. They have to be balanced by each other.

There is bad as well as good karma. Does one need to exhaust good karma also?

Yes, when a thorn is pricking you, take another thorn to remove it and throw away both. It is said in the *Mahabharata* that what is truth must be used to remove untruth, and finally that also should be abandoned. The dualities of good and bad are true as long as you live in the world of duality. Once your mind is full of peace, you have realized the deepest nature, and from time to time you realize unity with other living beings, then you do not see this duality. When your

child shouts you are so happy, and when someone else's child shouts you say, "What manners that mother has taught the child!" With your child you are judging everything on the basis of the unity between him and you. You have realized that unity, even if he steals money, it does not matter, but with the other you have not realized the unity. He is he and you are you, and even if he does not shout you will see some wrong or evil in him.

In order to see goodness in the world, it is very important that sometime or the other, the vision of unity with each and every being and with everything should be realized. As far as I understand, that realization is not intellectual. What I am saying to you and what you are understanding is intellectual. There is a realization, and understanding when you go deeper not through psychoanalysis or introspection, but suddenly, the mind which is conceptualizing duality drops and another quality of mind emerges. It is something like when you have drunk whisky or champagne, at that time your entire perception changes. You are the same person that you were two hours ago, but everything has changed. There is some change that takes place in the area of awareness, feeling and emotion. It is the same change which takes place when you have got heightened passions, negative or positive; when you are with someone or want to enjoy something, you have heightened emotions.

That type of awareness takes place in total quietness. At that time, you begin to feel a similarity between yourself and a donkey. Eknath was a great Marathi saint. He went to Gangotri, the origin of Ganga, in the Himalayas. From there he brought water to bathe the idol in Rameshwaram. It is a Hindu tradition. Now people do it by train; in those days he walked. He was in the area of Rameshwaram when he found a donkey who was dying of thirst.

What did he do, can you imagine? He just put the clay water pot down. The Ganga water which he had brought thousands of miles to give abhishek to the Shivalingam, he gave to the donkey who was dying of thirst. All the

pandits were angry with him. They said he was a *chandala*, an untouchable, he did not have dharma. He had polluted everything. What happened to Eknath? He realized the truth that the donkey was more important than the Shivalingam. He must have realized that; he was no fool. He transcended the ordinary religious aspirations and emotions we have for Shiva, Radha, Krishna or guru. He realized that unity with the whole universe, not only the donkey. The donkey was part of it. He must have experienced oneness, *ekatma*, with the whole universe; and, in his experience, he must have seen that the donkey was part of that oneness. He thought, 'If it is part of universal existence, why not give him water?'

This is the type of oneness and unity one achieves. There the notion of good and bad does not exist. It is about truth, about actual reality. We live in a world where there is duality. There are currents and cross-currents, *raga* and *dvesha*, likes and dislikes, in this world. A wise man should live with realization, think with realization. At the same time, he should realize the *lila*, the play, of the cosmic being.



16

Satsang

*10 June 1987, addressing a group of yoga aspirants
of a Teachers Training Course*

Should a yoga teacher take the initiative to make others interested in yoga, or teach those who come with a genuine interest in yoga, because then the receptivity will be better?

The responsibility of a yoga teacher has become more important and greater than it was a few years ago. Even now there are people, at least in this country, who feel that yoga is just a physical exercise and has much less to do with self-formation and social renaissance. It does not merely deal with the conscious mind, but with the subconscious and unconscious mind as well. You will realize that yoga deals not only with the body, but also with the mind. You will be convinced that the practice of yoga can go much deeper in the reformation of yourself and society.

Therefore, the role of a yoga teacher is a stupendous one. One has to take up this work very aggressively, in true earnest. It can definitely be made a profession, but there has to be honesty, sincerity and total devotion in this profession. In the developed countries many problems like drug abuse have been tackled very well through the practices of yoga. In Australia, yoga teachers are allowed to teach yoga in prisons. In England, children who are suffering from multiplesclerosis, MS, are taught yoga by many of our teachers and teachers of other traditions, and they are greatly benefited. Yoga teachers must realize their contribution to society as a whole.

Before beginning to teach, is it better to first master what is to be taught or begin teaching and in the process achieve better command?

It is more important for a teacher to know all about yoga postures and pranayama theoretically. Only if you are going to be a demonstrator do you have to master all the asanas. Vrischikasana and halasana will take a long time and many of you will not be able to do that. A doctor does not experiment with all the medicines he has to prescribe. A yoga teacher has to know the science. One should acquaint oneself with all documents which provide the scientific approach to yoga and I believe is the only thing needed.

Many yoga teachers feel that they should be masters first, however, it is something like the post. The postman who gives you a money order of 25, 30, 50, 100 rupee, every day, does not need to be a millionaire. You cannot ask him for his bank balance just because he gives you a 100-rupee money order. He could be a pauper. So, as a yoga teacher you may not be able to do vrischikasana, halasana or many other acrobatic postures. It does not matter, but you must know the science and the system of diagnosis. When a person comes to you with a particular ailment, you must find out his mental structure, whether he is psychotic, neurotic or normal. What kind of a person is he? Does he need halasana or does he need pawanmuktasana? Where does his disease originate from? This is what you must study.

I shall be studying in the USA and might give yoga classes there. What aspect of yoga should I concentrate on teaching?

If you are going to the USA, it will be much better if you make a thorough study of yoga because in that country the interest in higher yoga is much greater than in hatha yoga. Of course, there are hatha yoga classes going on everywhere in the United States. There may be many thousands and most of the yoga teachers and institutions, almost all the ashrams and gurus in India are represented in the USA. There is total

representation because it is a country where new ideas are always accepted and tried out.

Moreover, Americans are also having their own problems of affluence. As much as poverty has problems, affluence too has problems. These problems cause stress, strain, cancer, mental disease and many other things. So they have been exposed to all the swamis and all the philosophies from India – Swami Vivekananda, Swami Chinmayanandaji, Vedanta, *Gita* and the philosophy of the Upanishad. Classes are conducted in all the universities. Swami Rama lives there from time to time, teaching the scientific yoga, studying yoga as a science. What happens to you when you do pranayama? Maharishi Mahesh Yogi who teaches Transcendental Meditation has thousands of centres and big books on meditation.

Therefore, it won't be easy for you to establish yourself as a yoga teacher. As soon as you enter that country, you will realize they know much more than you do. It is because when you are thirsty you are in search of water, but if you are not, you do not even know where water can be found.

What is the form of God? Is it an experience?

I am talking about yoga; I am not talking about religion. Who is God – what is the form of God? Is He the creator of the universe or is He the universe? A lot has been written, spoken and thought about it. Therefore, you will find it very hard to survive in the United States as a simple yoga teacher. If you want to survive in that country as a yoga teacher, it will be much better to make your inner life yogic, because without the mental capacities or the experience of union, oneness with your deeper self, you may not be able to have an impact on Americans who have read many more books about yoga than you have, even though they need to learn yoga.

They have to work right from morning to evening like a clock tick, tick, tick. The husband is not sure about the wife and the wife is not sure about the husband. Parents are not sure about their children and children are not sure about

their parents. These are some of their social, psychological and cultural problems.

Much more than that, a person who has plenty of money has more problems than a man who does not have any. Even our own rishis and munis in India say that poverty, which is being hated today, is a very important necessity for a spiritual person if he has to reach the higher goal. It has been said in your shastras, in the *Gita* and Upanishads, that a camel can pass through the hole of a needle, but not a rich man. Therefore, you cannot imagine the problems of the rich and affluent.

People in India must be thinking, if I had about 100,000 dollars, which an American usually has, what would I do? I would get my daughter married. You do not know, before your daughter gets married that money will create so many problems because money comes with a curse. Remember that! Money does not come with blessings. It comes with a curse. Except for a few people, who are *tyagis*, who are unselfish, renunciates, charitable, dedicated and do not expect any reward for themselves, money comes with a curse; it comes with evil. Americans are suffering because of that and therefore they have gone deep into yoga and philosophy, occidental and oriental mysticism, occultism and other traditions. You can find everything there.

My parents are very narrow-minded and scared that yoga is entrapping me if I go beyond asanas. How do I deal with them without hurting them and should I tell them about what I do in yoga?

When you live with your parents, it is much better to have cordial and amicable relationships with them because it is our *parampara*, tradition, to have great respect and reverence for our parents. If you think they are not right, you must be sure they are not right because sometimes we children and youngsters become arrogant. Our parents may not be educated or they may be less educated and we may be graduates or post-graduates, so we take it for granted that

they don't know very much. In fact, education has got much to do with your approach and attitude to your elders and the people you respect.

After all, your parents may not like your deep involvement with yoga. There must be some reason for it; it is true that in this country yoga has brought passivity to many people. They have become less dynamic, even sadhus. Yoga does not mean that you should not earn. Yoga does not mean that you should not involve yourself with the affairs of life, grow, progress or become dynamic. Many people practise meditation but it is like hypnosis. Slowly you dull the mind; the mind becomes slower and slower. You cannot think fast and that is why your parents might be scared.

Also when you practise yoga, at once you bring in many things like vegetarian diet, not drinking, not having sex, brahmacharya. Many things come too fast in your mind. Oh, they are there; I do not say they are not there, but they have to come in stages. You cannot start practising yoga today and tomorrow you become abnormal and a total puritan. No, if you become abnormal, you go to the mental hospital.

There has to be a proper, normal attitude to life. After all, in the life which we are living as householders, we have certain passions, desires which we are born with. We have brought those desires with us, therefore, we have certain responsibilities to those desires. We have certain obligations to those passions because passion for anything is a part of *prakriti*, nature. You cannot just shelve it. It is something like the pigeon. When it sees a cat, it closes its eyes and thinks the cat is no more there. No, you cannot close your eyes to the realities of your mind and to the realities of yourself.

That is where our parents feel, 'My child may become a sadhu and fail to fulfil the obligations of nature'. If you do not fulfil the obligations of nature, your progress is delayed. For example, if I am going to America, and I go to the airport in Delhi and I suddenly realize that I have left my passport in Munger, what will I do? I have to come back, I cannot go. In the same way, fulfilment of desire, of natural, family,

community and national obligations are as important as your spiritual obligations.

That is where many people are not able to make it. We do accept that in yoga purity is emphasized, brahmacharya, refraining from alcohol and a pure natural diet is necessary. If you practise yoga in Munger and then go back and say to your parents from today no masala, no meat, no fish, there will be a lot of quarrels in your family. Then instead of bringing peace to your family, yoga will be creating a lot of tension. When you and your family are in tension, how can you spread peace? Therefore, there has to be some sort of sharing of others' views as well. That is a part of the yogic path.

How can I become your disciple? At what stage will you give me my sadhana, personal mantra and spiritual name?

I do not make disciples. People do make me their guru. The river does not go to the thirsty person. The thirsty person has to go to the river. If you go to the river and you find that I have enough material to help you, I will give it to you. If you find that I do not have enough material to help you, find another river.

I want to pursue the highest states of yoga, but I still want to pursue my education. Please advice.

You can do so. There is no harm, but if you wish to pursue spiritual life, it is much better to do so as early as possible. Even as you churn the curd before sunrise, one should expose oneself to spiritual adventure while one is young. That great path you are talking about is an adventure.

Certainly sages and saints have spoken much about it. There are hundreds and thousands of lines, poems and statements, but when you go into that spiritual life, you will find yourself all alone in total wilderness and you won't really know what is in store for you. People who are young can channelize their passions and nervous energy and by the time they become middle-aged they will have a good and profitable spiritual experience.

17

Satsang

*12 June 1987, addressing a group of yoga aspirants
of a Teachers Training Course*

**I have no desire for any sort of sensual pleasure whatsoever.
Is there something wrong with me or am I fooling myself?
What should I do?**

This physical body and mind are a creation of three gunas: sattwa, rajo and tamo guna. We are a khichari, a mix, of these three gunas and therefore, if anybody claims that he has gone above sensual pleasure I think he is wrong and therefore you are also wrong. This physical body is a construction of myriad elements. *Prakriti*, nature, creates this body and mind with the synthesis and integration of natural elements.

Samkhya and Vaisheshika are two important Indian philosophies. We call them secular philosophies, not sacred or religious philosophies. In Samkhya, they talk about elements in nature: matter, object, time, space and causality. Vaisheshika philosophy talks about atoms, molecules, electrons and the concept of time.

If you study these philosophies, you will learn one thing: the *pancha tattwas*, the five elements, gradually evolve from each other. From *akasha*, space, *vayu* evolves; from *vayu* or air, *agni* or fire evolves; from *agni*, *apas* or water evolves and from there *prithvi* or matter evolves – and then body and life – of a man, vegetable, an animal or mineral.

As such one should remember that sensual awareness is the quality of life. Now what is sensuality? It must be

understood very well. Experience, conceptions, knowledge, cognition gained through the five senses is called sensorial. You can see me. You can call it sensorial because eye is a sense, *indriya*. You are listening to me, that is another sense, another *indriya*. With each *indriya* you are having an experience: audition, vision, touch, taste or smell. These are the sense experiences.

When these sense experiences become more acute, when you love music too much, you may not call it sensorial, you call it sensual. When you excessively like any sweet like *rasgulla* or *shrikhand*, you may not call it sensorial, you can call it sensual for it is not the normal knowledge, perception or cognition.

Every human being must go through the natural processes of life, called *ashrama dharma*. The whole life is divided into four categories. The early life, twenty-five years, then the second stage, the third stage and the fourth stage. In the first stage, you prepare your body, intellect, knowledge and senses. In the second stage, you put them into practice. You bring up a family; realize what anger, passion, worry, anxiety, fear and what failure and success is. Then you begin to realize something beyond matter, not because you have heard it from your religious books, but because it has become your experience in life. You have been going through the ups and downs of life, trials and tribulations, and you are trying to come to a logical conclusion about life. Why is there pain, suffering, success, enjoyment? Why am I here? These questions do come to everybody sometimes in life.

Then you realize something different than yourself, something different from what you have seen. You may call it God, you may call it Guru, you may call it Rama, you may call it *atma*, *cosmos* or you may call it anything. After that your attitude to life may change. That is called the third *ashrama*.

Like this you have to go through the natural processes of life. These natural processes are definitely the obligations which have been put on everyone. It is your obligation to marry. It is your obligation to produce children. It is your

obligation to love a man or a woman. It is your obligation to love your children. There are many other social and family obligations which relate to your own development. Unless you have undergone those developments and those experiences in life, there is no need to talk about higher life. For most people who do not understand life, passion, anger, jealousy, fear, worry, depression, elation, excitement, perhaps their knowledge about higher reality is just intellectual.

The concept of higher life, divine life and spiritual life is not a logical concept. It has to be an outcome of the total experience which you are having in your life, the experiences perhaps you do not even want. That is why my guru used to say, "Pain is a crucible into which nature throws a man whenever she wishes to show in him the sublime superman." In each and everyone there is a higher reality, and that higher reality cannot be comprehended unless you go through the normal channels of life.

There have been a few exceptions but I do not think you come under those exceptions. Buddha, Shankara and quite a few others – not many; you can count them on your fingers. They are just a few people who come once in an age. In one yuga, one or two people have just descended down. For them there is no rule. For them there is no call because they are not a matter of evolution; they are not a subject of evolution; they are not subjected to the law of evolution. They descend.

There is a difference between us and an avatar – *avatar* means the higher reality descends in human form. Therefore, Shankaracharya even at his early age renounced. Buddha renounced his wife. One should not renounce one's wife after marriage. If you have married, carry her with you even if you take sannyasa it does not matter. No it is wrong. Buddha did not do wrong because he descended. Likewise, for great people who were not an outcome of evolution, there are no rules, no code, no limitations, nothing. They can renounce or they can marry. They can do what they like, but we should not think that we can follow them.

How can yoga help in decreasing excessive depression and inferiority complexes?

If you are allowed to use 2 kv meter so you can draw energy equivalent to 2 kv but put it against a big plant which needs 40 HP, what will happen? The voltage will go down. Your bulbs will not shine properly. Exactly in the same way, you have a limited amount of energy and on that limited amount of energy you are putting an excess load. Thinking, worrying, remembering, love, hatred and many other things which are the characteristics of the mind put a lot of load on that energy system. As a result of that the voltage falls and that is called depression.

Depression belongs particularly to the nervous system because it is through the nervous system, sympathetic or parasympathetic, that the energy flows to every system in the body: circulatory, excretory, respiratory and digestive. Now if you are putting an overload on your mind and your body by excessive work, excessive eating, excessive activities of life, your nervous system will ultimately fail.

In yoga, those people who are suffering from depression should remember one thing. They must maintain an extra work tendency and they should relax with nature, not with television, not with films, not with dinners and tobacco and all that. Go to a mountain. Go to a very simple village, where there is no air pollution, where there is no sound pollution, where there is no social pollution. Maybe there is dust. There is a difference between dust and pollution. There may be dust in a village or you may not get a nice cottage to live in, but the silence, quietness and simplicity; the music of the birds, the cows and the horses returning in the evening and the dogs barking in the middle of the night is something which has much to do with the nervous system.

The people who suffer from nervous depression should try to do physical work. They should not do hard physical work, manual labour, but they should keep their body moving. They can sweep the floor, wash their clothes, and remove the cobwebs from the ceiling. They can re-organize

their things in the family or join their wife and children in cooking, bringing water. So many little things they can do.

People suffering from depression must remember that they should not retire in seclusion. They should not isolate themselves from their family and friends. If they are addicted to alcohol or nicotine, to animal protein and dairy products, it is better to stop them for a period of time. Of course, in this life there is nothing which you have to renounce but it is always good when you are suffering from dysentery not to drink milk – everybody knows that. It does not mean that milk is bad. Milk is good but you should not drink if you are suffering from typhoid or paratyphoid; you do not take curd, lassi or buttermilk.

In exactly the same way, protein is necessary for the body. But for the people who are suffering from nervous depression, it is much better that they consume whole cereal, whole dal, urad dal, channa dal, mung dal, whole grain like wheat, barley, vegetables and fruits. These are the four items which I have cited: grain, cereals, vegetables and fruits. No dairy products because they have sometimes very high calorie value. You have to restrict the calorie value for the time being because the more calorie value you have, the more excitement and passion you have in the body. So you restrict them.

Go to any ashram which is close to your town and live there for some time. I even suggest ancient traditions, which are being practised in Thailand even now. For fifteen days you retire from your family life, minimum up to a period of six months or one year depending on the possibilities. Live there just like a sannyasin, simple life with minimum personal needs and self-imposed poverty. Not because you are poor, you are a very rich man, but you impose poverty on yourself because poverty is a spiritual quality. That is how you overcome depression. In your present social structures, a poor man is a very ordinary and socially disqualified man, but that is not true in spirituality.

Regarding the inferiority complex – go out of your family for some time. Live with different people, meet everyone;

whether you are rich or poor it does not matter. Meet the beggars, shopkeepers, bureaucrats, politicians, thugs, thieves, everyone.

You should visit important places of your town, your district and state. You should do some, *padayatra*, moving on foot and meet people, because when you are doing padayatra, you have to ask for water, food, shelter and where the evening dharamshala is going to be.

So this is how you overcome the complexes. Even superiority has to be overcome, not only inferiority. Where exactly is the line of demarcation? Nobody knows. So when you meet people you will be so natural with them whereas if you try to overcome these complexes by an intellectual rational process, it becomes more and more acute and you won't be able to get over it.

I personally know quite a few people who have had that complex. That is one of the reasons why sannyasins are asked to go on parivrajak life. After spending a few years in the guru's ashram, they are asked to move out, beg for their food, sleep wherever possible. You must see nice places. Go to Calcutta and see all the important places; you can see beautiful museums, the Kali Temple. You can go to Jagannath and see the Puri temple, and then go to the South, wherever possible.

It is possible. If you think that these things are not possible for a householder, then you have not assessed yourself. Because when we undergo suffering we run to Delhi, to Vellore and many other places and spend money. People even sell their ornaments. Why do this? You consider this as a premium, like you pay for insurance every month twenty-five rupees. It is the premium which you are paying for happiness in life. This is my suggestion to everyone.

Which asanas is one advised to do to put on weight?

About height I cannot say anything but I know one thing. You have to read about Lord Mahavir and Buddha. When he was doing tapasya he was just like a skeleton, yet in all the statues of Buddha we find fat! You see in order to become

fat you have to slow down the metabolic rate of your body. In order to slow down the metabolic rate the inner body temperature also should fall. The inner body temperature is a very important thing on which a lot of experiments have been done in the West and in the East. I have a very good associate at Benaras Hindu University (BHU), Dr Urupa, who has done a lot of experiments on low body temperature.

If your inner body temperature falls, your food must also be simple, it minimizes the capacity of digestion. Your digestive capacities become very slow. You cannot digest meat, mutton, fish or egg, even dairy products will be difficult with low body temperature.

If you want to become fat, try to meditate every morning and evening, just sit down and do not move the body. Let the mind move. I know it is very difficult to control the mind, but it is not that difficult to control the body. Just sit down for fifteen minutes, twenty minutes, no movement in the body. The temperature will come down, certainly it will come down, the metabolic rate will fall down. It has been experimented. After that do not go in for a heavy diet – vegetables with minimum spices like haldi, dhanian, a bit of salt. Sometimes you can have a little bit of oil or greasy things, then certainly you will get fat.

I was a very lean and thin person up to 1967. So lean and thin that people used to pass remarks about me. They said, “Swamiji you are a yogi and you should be radiant, but you look so sickly.” I was never a sick person; I was a very strong man. I could carry the whole bag of salt, one bag of salt from down and up. Physically I am very strong and I could fight with four or five people and just put them to the dust. Ah! Even now I can do it. We used to have a lot of wrestlers; I threw them all around. You could put one lemon or apple on my belly and I could carry it for kilometres, it would not fall out. There was a ditch there. I did not have to practise uddiyana because it was always uddiyana!

Then in the old ashram in Munger I stayed in one room for six months. I made an underground room for myself, and

for six months I did not come out. There I stayed and from there I managed the whole ashram because I was all alone in those days. In three months I just bloated and bloated.

Does yoga promote the idea of celibacy?

In raja yoga, there are eight graded stages of growth of individual consciousness. These eight stages are known as ashtanga yoga. The first being the lowest rung of the ladder, yama. Then number two; niyama, then asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana and samadhi. These are the eight rungs in that ladder.

The first one is called yama. *Yama* means self-discipline, with the five important items of observances. The first one is *satya*, truth. The second one is *ahimsa*, no violence. The third one is called brahmacharya about which you have asked me.

In India in general and in the vedic tradition in particular, brahmacharya is defined. A householder, who lives with his wife according to the laws of nature and the laws of dharma, is known as a mini-brahmacharya. He is also a brahmacharya because he has been exerting discipline upon himself, and he is not trying to violate the laws of nature in relation to his behaviour with his wife. That is called brahmacharya. Hindu dharma talks about monogamy – *ek patni vrat*, the vow of having one wife, and *ek pati vrat*, the vow of respecting the husband. If a person follows this discipline, he is considered as great as a brahmacharya.

Brahmacharya does not mean celibacy. Celibacy means refraining from sexual contact with the opposite sex. *Brahma* means higher consciousness. The word brahma is always used for higher spiritual consciousness, and *brahmacharya* means a life in higher consciousness. When your mind is roaming and dwelling in a higher realm, in higher consciousness, you are a brahmacharya. If your mind is dwelling in the field of the senses, the *indriyas*, and chasing sense objects, that is not called brahmacharya; it is the opposite. In yoga, brahmacharya is seen according to the status of a person, so merely refraining from sexual contact is not brahmacharya.

There are two important aspects in the fulfilment of brahmacharya. One is psychological, philosophical or mental. Your mind is always thinking of higher things. You may be thinking of spiritual life or you may be thinking about art, poetry, music, service to humanity and so on, and not at all thinking about sexual contact. That is called the positive aspect.

Then there is the physiological aspect. The body produces hormones according to the laws of nature. These hormones, if they are not expelled, create a lot of difficulties in the body as well as in the mind. For example, if the testosterones are not properly balanced or not eliminated they will interfere with your heart. As such, in hatha yoga there are certain *kriyas*, certain practices, which are to be done in order to control these unwanted hormones related to gonads and sex hormones. Siddhasana is one of them. By constant practice of siddhasana for a few years, you will be able to obtain the necessary condition for observing the physiological side of brahmacharya.

Then comes vajroli kriya, a very important kriya in hatha yoga which is to be practised in two different ways. Those who take to the practices of vajroli at a very young age, at the age of twelve, thirteen or fourteen, they have their practice. Those who did not know about it and who want to practise it from the age of 25, 30 or 35, they have to practise vajroli mudra in a different way. Through the practice of vajroli the bindu is retained. It is said in the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* (3:88):

*Evan samrakshyed bindum mrtyyun jayati yogavit;
Maranam bindupatena jivanam bindudharanam.*

Therefore, the knower of yoga conquers death by preserving the bindu (semen). Release of the bindu means death; conservation of semen is life.

What is bindu? *Bindu* is the basic element, the basic substance. It is not semen. Bindu is the basic substance which can be related to the hormonal process in the body. This hormonal

process ultimately transforms certain chemicals of the body into the form of semen. A householder or one who is not a householder should know how to retain, control or handle this hormonal process. Therefore, in yoga, brahmacharya is not suppression. No, it is not just turning the mind away from women or turning the mind away from sexual fantasies. It is controlling the basic thing; it is rectifying the basic mistake. It is setting the correct process in life.

There are many other truths one has to learn. I know that every householder who is married or every youngster who is not married, but wants to maintain the purity and chastity of mind, also wants the body to remain pure. Even if you want to be a celibate, or want to be free from sexual fantasies by diverting your mind or by some sort of practices, that will not do. No. The physical body is doing its process from the age of 12, 13, 14, and by 15 and 16 your body is producing an entirely new group of hormones. These hormones are assimilated with the processes of the body. How are you going to stop that? You cannot say, 'I am a brahmachari', because the very process of brahmacharya within the body, within the physiological frame of this body, cannot be obtained unless those hormonal processes, which lead to puberty can be effectively controlled.

That is the reason that many boys and girls who want to practise brahmacharya have a lot of trouble with the mind. Sometimes they become too introvert. Sometimes they become violent. Sometimes they become too abnormal and sometimes they become too sick.

In yoga, this endocrine or hormonal secretion is known as *retas*. That is why a brahmachari who has succeeded in brahmacharya is known as an *urdhvareta yogi*. *Urdhva* means upward, but here it means reversion. When the hormones come from the upper part of your brain and they start to reach down to the lower complex, they have to be retained. This is a concept in yoga. In kriya yoga, you practise a particular kriya called vipareeta karani. *Vipareeta* means urdhva. *Vipareeta karani* is a process in which the prana and

the apana vayu, which move in opposite directions, are made to move towards each other.

This is a very important topic. One should not misunderstand and think that brahmacharya means refraining from sexual relationships. Many times there is a lot of tension between married people. One has to understand properly that the physiological processes and psycho-emotional processes have to be brought under control through certain kriyas.



18

Yoga for Children

*15 June 1987, addressing a group of yoga aspirants
of a Teachers Training Course*

When is the best time for practising yoga for young school-going children? For how much time should we practise yoga daily?

Children need not be told they should practise yoga. Psychological experiments and a lot of observations have brought out this truth – children imbibe everything from their parents and elders. If you do your yoga regularly, your children will practise it on their own, and children are always guided by laws of nature.

There is a natural law which controls and guides everything, not only in children but also in the fabric of the whole universe. Every chemical, physical, mental or emotional action has a law. Just as you have laws in mathematics, similarly there are psychological, emotional laws. These laws are known by various names, ‘laws of nature’; or the ‘doctrine of karma’ as you call it in philosophy, whether you believe it or not is another matter. Children are guided by those laws of nature. When that law permits them they will start practising yoga either at the age of six, seven, eight or even ten.

Parents are always concerned about their children and this concern is guided by attachment. We are always over-impatient because we have funny ideas of perfection; we have funny ideas of progress and very limited ideas about the

development in children. The way you want your children to develop is a very limited way, a very narrow way because you are narrow – you cannot think very much. Your mental capacities are not broad. Your ethical values are very restricted and narrow. You are not aware of the law of nature. Most of you have formulated the social, moral and the ethical laws on the basis of your own whims and fancies.

As such, your idea or your plans about teaching yoga to your children cannot be accurate. It can even be wrong because if you teach your child yoga at the age of six, let us say surya namaskara and bhujangasana, his structure will be disturbed and the hormonal processes may be accelerated. You may be putting an undue strain on the thyroid glands and naturally your child at the age of twelve might become like a football or may suffer from hyperthyroid or hypothyroid.

So naturally your knowledge about yourself, your affairs, events and the processes in the body of a child are so limited. We are very ignorant parents. Oh! we know how to give them birth, but we do not even know how the child has to be conceived, how their genes or DNA are to be influenced when they are in the womb.

You have the story of the three wives. You have the story of Dhruva. There are many stories. They are mythological stories no doubt, but they shed a light on the possibility of influencing the genetic structure of the child, the DNA structure, the molecular structure of the child – but how many parents can do it?

What we want is just one thing; our children must remain religious. All parents want it. They should speak the truth. They should never tell lies. They should not insult their parents. They should always obey their parents. They should talk sweetly. I mean these are the only things we call positive! They are not positive. I would say they are exaggerated moral fantasies.

Children must make mistakes, I am of this view. They must tell lies. They must make mischief. It is the age when the mind has to grow, when the brain has to grow. Without

conflict the brain cannot grow. Therefore, you have found in your society that children who are very good are also very dull. Children who are mischievous are very fast because the growth of a child is related to the growth of the brain, the grey matter, which will grow only when there are conflicts.

So these are some of the things that you must keep in mind about yoga. Do not force yoga on your children. When they grow up and become eighteen, nineteen and twenty you can tell them, because then they can understand and appreciate the physiological, biological, therapeutic, spiritual and moral values. They can understand at that time, but at the age of eight, if you tell them, 'You must practise yoga and become a good boy', he does not understand.

What is goodness after all? Goodness is a concept which has to come after intellectual growth, and unless you have intellectual growth – what is goodness? Goodness is a relative term. What is goodness in one age does not remain goodness at other times. Many things in our social and religious concepts are relative to time, social, economic and political conditions. That is how the whole community has to be guided and disciplined. The code of discipline, therefore, in the form of religion, morality, ethics has to change from time to time. It cannot remain the same. Those people who expect, what you call a static order, those who believe in a static order will stagnate. The economy and intellectual growth will stagnate and therefore keep your children free and let them only learn through imbibing.

Please suggest a good diet for increasing appetite, weight and height for a fourteen-year-old boy whose present weight is 34 kg and height is only 1.5 metres.

Khichari twice a week and fasting once a week. If you are having late dinner, then only have vegetarian diet; roti and subji, not even dal. Some people eat at about nine or ten o'clock and if they can manage with milk, that is fine. Once a week or so you can have nice food like paratha, puri, pulao, sambar, dosa, aloo or whatever it is.

The items of food should not be monotonous, the same everyday roti, dal, roti, dal, roti, dal; rather one day sambar, one day rasam, one day khichari and some day pulao. Hunger has much to do with liver conditions. When the liver becomes sluggish then naturally appetite decreases. Rasam is the best of all appetizers. Not only an appetizer, if you are having flu or malaria, just have a glass of Mysore rasam and sleep at night. In the morning, the fever is gone.



19

Satsang

*16 June 1987, addressing a group of yoga aspirants
of a Teachers Training Course*

Would you kindly explain the reason why and how yoga nidra is so effective therapeutically?

When you practise yoga nidra, you touch certain centres of the body and these centres are connected with higher centres in the brain. When you concentrate on one part or the other of the body, immediately messages or impulses are communicated to the remote centres in the brain, which is one of the reasons why yoga nidra is a very effective practice.

Why is it that yoga nidra always starts from the right side and pranayama always starts from the left side?

The left side represents the mental faculty, ida, and the right represents pingala, the prana. Therefore, when we are practising yoga nidra, pingala, that is vitality, prana, emotion, passion and heat in the body must be subsided first and that is represented by the right side. When you are practising pranayama, it is important that the mind is brought under proper control and that is why pranayama starts from the left side.

Can it happen that someone goes into deep trance during yoga nidra and does not wake up at the end? If so, how to wake them up?

When you practise yoga nidra you do go into a trance sometimes, but there is an automatic revival of consciousness. You

do not have to be woken up; you will get up on your own. As long as you have karma, you won't remain in a trance because people are not that fortunate to remain in trance. Maya and karma will bring them back again.

Does spicy and non-vegetarian food affect yogic life? Please suggest the normal balanced yogic diet.

Point one: Only when you are practising higher yoga and when you are practising pranayama particularly *mouna*, silence, and fasting from time to time, does a non-vegetarian diet produce adverse effects. When you are practising yoga in order to keep fit or live the normal life of the householder, a non-vegetarian diet does not interfere with the yogic process.

Point two: When you start practising yoga properly, systematically, after some time you develop within yourself a sort of instinct, or I would say intuition, which will guide you about everything else. You should remember one important thing that each and every person has an efficient guide within. That is called the atma and this atma keeps guiding you about everything from time to time. We are totally ignorant of this presence within ourselves of that higher faculty, because we have become so blunt, so extroverted.

That guide present within yourself, that guru, speaks and instructs you in the language of silence. He does not speak in English, Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali, Tamil or Spanish. His is called the language of silence, and if you are able to tune yourself to that guru, you will not only be able to get guidance regarding vegetarian or non-vegetarian diet, but in many other matters as well.

In the tantric tradition, a non-vegetarian diet is considered a part of the ritual. The tantric tradition is the most ancient tradition of mankind, not only in India, but also in Europe during its early civilization, in South America, North America and many other places in the world. I have gone to all these places. I have seen their open air museums and other ancient places. The tantric tradition was very strong. It was intended to develop the psychic and spiritual

potential of beings and to awaken the kundalini shakti which is dormant in mooladhara chakra. In those rituals you have meat as an ingredient. All these traditions were intended for householders, therefore to the question on how the non-vegetarian diet affects the yogic process, it depends on the kind of attainment you want to have. Of course, by every standard, a vegetarian diet is the better diet for good health, for future generations and humanity.

Please suggest some asanas which could be done regularly to keep oneself fit physically, mentally and spiritually.

Well, for aged people it is the pawanmuktasana series. For young people, it is surya namaskara. Surya namaskara and pawanmuktasanas are the best, as both have a very rich combination.

Why does the ashram have meals at such early hours? 10 am and 5 pm.

That is the ancient system. To take your meals at 10 o'clock, and your dinner before sunset at 5 o'clock, is a good practice, as after sunset the digestive functions will become very slow and ultimately they become dormant. In digestive functions you have digestive gastric juices, enzymes, hormones and insulin. They do not work in the night because the digestive functions of human beings are related to the day and the sun. There are two types of animals, some are nocturnal ones, like owls, but the functions of human beings work and become alive in the daytime. That is why dinner, the heavy meal, should be had before sunset.

In the morning, it is very important to have a full meal at 10 o'clock, otherwise you will have gastric problems. We get gastric problems when our stomach is empty for a long time, especially with people who are suffering from hyperacidity. Nowadays, many people suffer from hyperacidity due to air, food and water pollution.

Breakfast should be very light. Many times when the breakfast is good we eat a lot. We should eat only minimum

for breakfast, because in the morning when you get up, at 5 or 6 o'clock, your digestive functions are not working, even your brain is not working. All the mechanisms in the brain are not able to coordinate and therefore in the morning we should not eat much. Previously, when I used to drive, I would get up and first thing in the morning I would say, "Take bath, have tea, exercise and only then drive the car." When we do not follow these rules and drive the car first, somewhere we miss coordination and there is an accident. Accidents take place when there is a lack of coordination between various computer circuits in the brain. So, this coordination is a very important factor and in order to have this coordination between body and mind, and between the digestive functions and the body, it is important to eat something so that your system is compelled to start working.

There are various types of secretions in the body which get mixed with the food that passes through the alimentary canal, the stomach and duodenum, and the small and big intestine. It is similar to a factory where you have various chemicals getting mixed at different stages and if one of those chemicals is absent, there will be a defective process. That is one reason why the body has become very defective because we eat late. Sometimes when you are travelling, or have some marriage function or some guest is visiting, I can accept it, but as a rule one should eat before sunset.

When your stomach is empty, you should meditate. You can meditate for one hour, two hours or three hours, you can pray, you can sing for one or two hours, but with a loaded stomach, if you pray or meditate, I do not know if God will listen or not. That is another matter, but certainly your food will get decomposed because in deep meditation the inner body temperature comes down. The normal temperature of the body which is necessary for gastric and digestive functions is not present at that time. Therefore, it is always said to practise yoga on an empty stomach.

20

Satsang

*17 June 1987, addressing a group of yoga aspirants
in a Teacher Training Course*



What does it mean when your breathing stops all of a sudden during pranayama?

There are three types of kumbhaka. *Kumbhaka* means when the breath stops. *Antaranga kumbhaka* is when you stop the breath within the lungs; *bahiranga kumbhaka* is when you empty the lungs. These are the two kumbhakas that are well known to most people and they practise it. But there is a third sort of kumbhak called kevala kumbhaka.

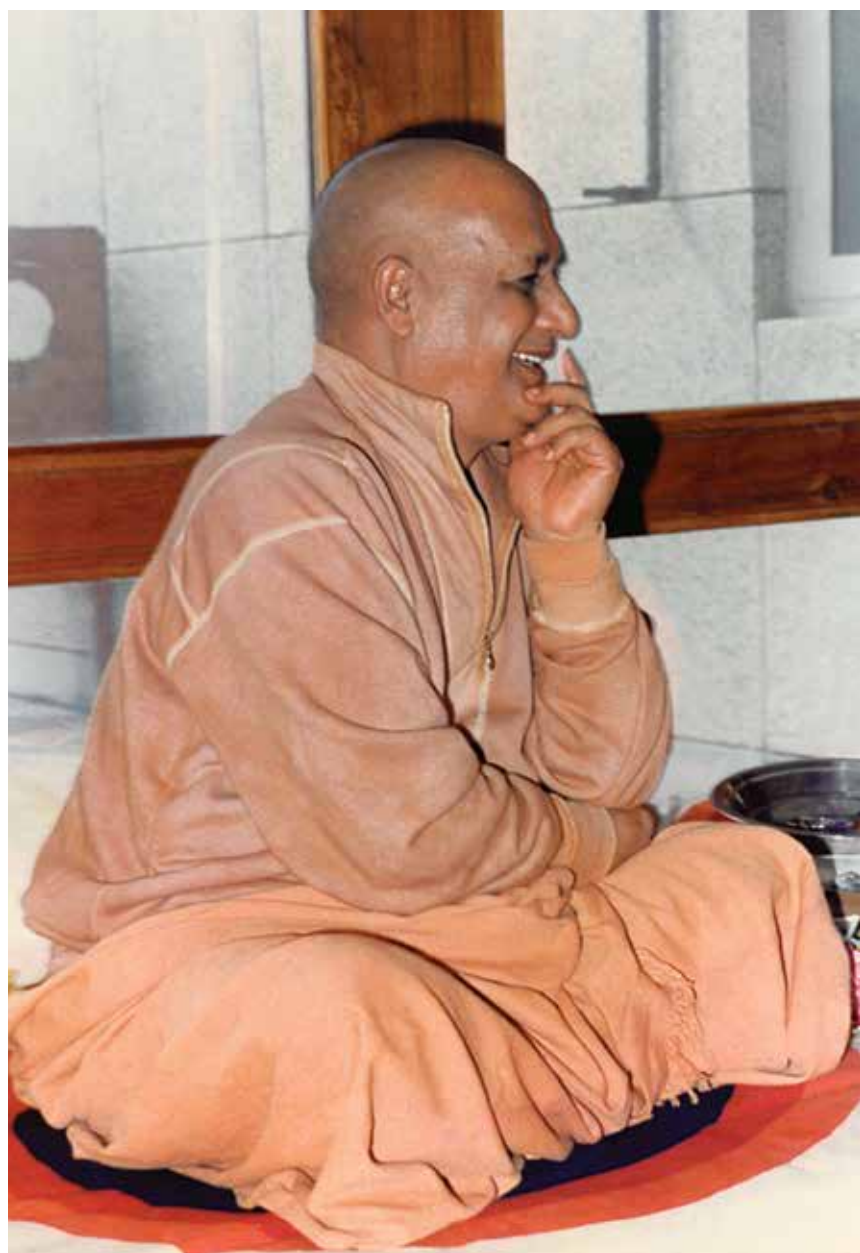




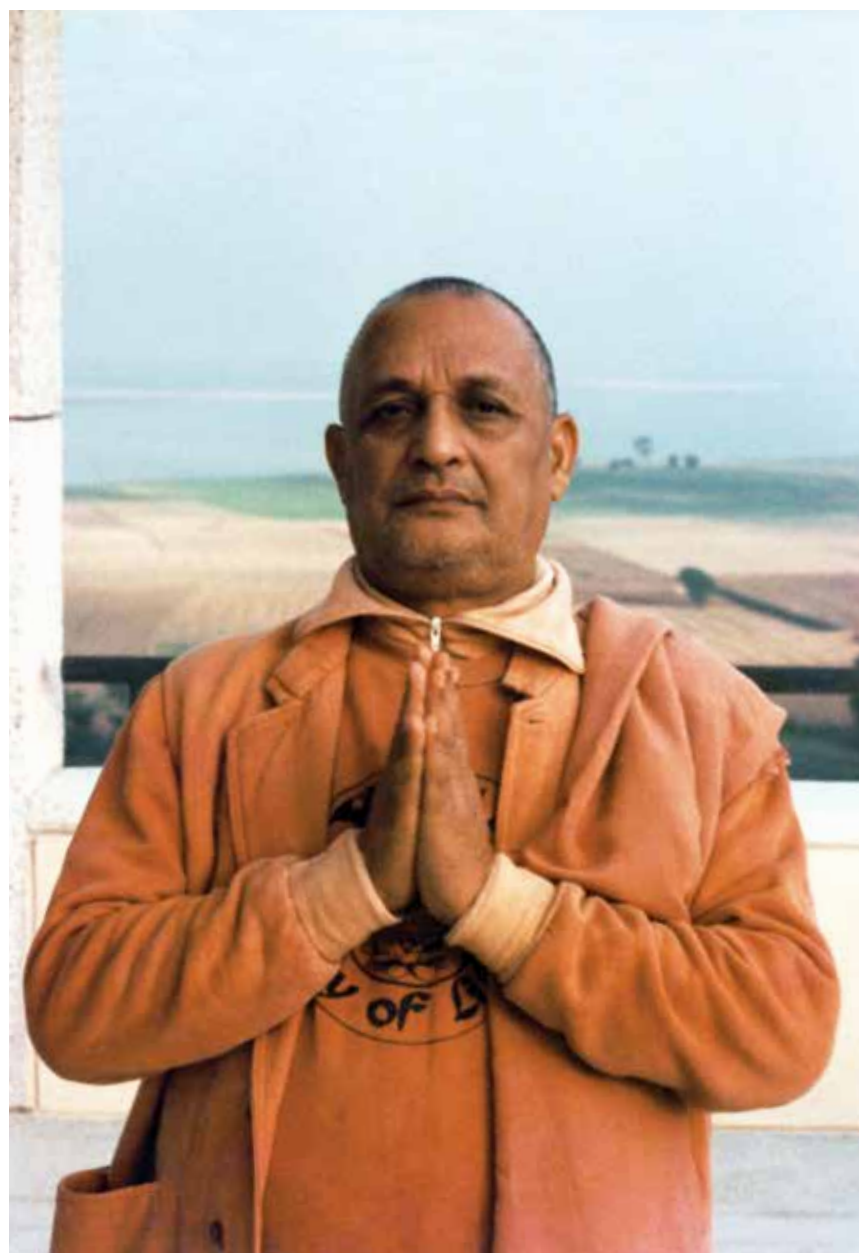












When you are doing meditation or practising pranayama and suddenly the mind becomes tranquil, attains equipoise and stops oscillating, at that time the breath stops for a moment. It neither goes in nor does it come out. That is called *kevala kumbhaka*, but it is only for a short time.

The poets in India, Kabir, Nanak, Surdas have written poems on these phenomena. The consciousness hangs in between, neither in the body nor beyond; in between the body and the higher self there is a suspension of the self and it is a very difficult matter for all of us to understand. If you read and try to understand the songs by Mirabai, Kabir and many others that are sung every day, this state of *kevala kumbhaka* is considered to be very important.

Kevala kumbhaka

The sadhu, the yogi, who takes underground samadhi, *bhu samadhi*, has the same system. When you concentrate in *bhrumadhy*, between the two eyebrows, *prakash*, the light, becomes visible. When the light becomes visible the breath stops. You may not be able to do it for more than a second or two or three, but by gradual practice the concentration on the light in *bhrumadhy* can be done for two, three, four, five days or for ten days.

During the period of Maharanja Ranjit Singh of Punjab, one yogi practised it for forty days. Of course, earlier people used to consider them bogus, but now there is science. The yogis who take underground samadhi are tested by remote control systems, their radial pulses, cardiac behaviour, metabolic systems, skin resistances, blood flow – everything is monitored. It is completely real. It is not bogus. There are many yogis who have failed and have died. This is also true.

As long as there is light at *bhrumadhy* and you can clearly see it as you can see the sun, the moon, a lamp or any other object, constant and continuous, it is called *akhanda*. Like the unbroken flow of oil that is how the consciousness has to be. The mind should not break. If I see the light, then it goes, again it comes, again it goes, when the mind dissipates, when

the mind breaks, an idea comes and goes and comes and goes, it is called *vikshepa*. *Vikshepa* is not *ekagrata*. *Ek* means one, *agra* means in front, when one object shines in front of you that is called *ekagrata*. When this *ekagrata* is achieved then the next stage, *nirodha*, is also achieved. *Nirodha* means stopping, blocking. The breath is blocked for one day, two, three, four, five or six days. In fact, the total metabolism stops; the total bodily processes stop.

Of course I am not asking you to do that. It is just a reply to your question. So, do not worry when the breath stops for a short period during pranayama.

By which action and thinking should a person improve the quality of his life?

In order to improve the quality of your life, you have to amend the entire constitution of your life. The whole book has to be changed. Matters like education, parenthood, relationships must change and your attitude. How you apply your religion in your life should also change.

You should not make a mockery of your religion because every religion whether it is Hinduism, Sikhism, Christianity or Islam is the product of a perfected brain. No ordinary man has created it; they were very great men. But people have made a mockery of our religions. Religion should not be handled by political people; religion should only be handled by sadhus and saints. Religion should only be preached by sadhus and saints. A politician should not even talk about religion, because what does he know about religion? Religion has to do with man's inner evolution. What can a minister talk about religion? He talks only from the books.

Sadhus and saints who have denied themselves of the essential pleasure of life; sadhus and saints who have dedicated themselves for higher spiritual achievement should be the sole preachers of religion or *dharma*. That is where the whole mistake has taken place.

The great saints now in this world are not recognized. Sadhus, saints, tapasvis and tyagis of today have no place

in our society. Because if we speak, it would put an end to many things. We do not accept them. We live with you. We can make a compromise, but we do not accept many of the things. The systems of marriage, education, family links and relationships, the matter of behaviour between husband and wife, parents and children, your attitude to your children and many other things, we do not accept. Then there are many things in society which are dangerous – alcoholic drinks, nicotine substances, narcotics and many other things. I do not have to count them. Maybe, you know much more than I do.

Sadhus and saints would plan the society because they have far-reaching knowledge and they know. So if the quality of life is to be improved, then we have to not only amend the constitution, I would even say we have to change the constitution completely.



21

Am I Evolved?

*22 June, 1987, addressing a group of yoga aspirants
of a Teachers Training Course*

If a person has an evolved mind without doing any formal training, is it necessary for him to train himself physically also or can he continue concentration without bothering about the body?

Who is going to confirm that you are an evolved person? It is very difficult for a person to realize himself. Therefore, it is safe to consider yourself as a very ordinary person. No saint, prophet, avatar or guru has ever bragged about himself. The greater you are, the humbler you become. That is the secret.

When you talk about an 'evolved man', I do not think that anyone for that matter should give up the regular systematic practices of hatha yoga, asana, pranayama or raja yoga, because once you have assumed this physical body of five tattwas you are a material being. As such you are subject to the law that controls matter. There are distinct laws which control matter, the psyche and spirit. You are matter; you are an object because you are composed of these five elements. Therefore, the practices of hatha yoga, raja yoga, bhakti yoga and karma yoga, which are considered as instruments of self-evolution should be practised.

The great saints from any religion, community or denomination, even after having attained the highest pinnacle of spiritual life, used to pray every day. They would fast,

observe mouna and observe the laws of piety and purity. They did not say, 'I am a prophet'. They did not say, 'I am a saint'.

A prophet, a mahatma, a rishi or an avatar is considered to be beyond the three gunas, to be *trigunatita*. An *avatar*, a divinity incarnate, a divine person or a *mahatma* like Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Christ, Nanak, Mahavir, Gautama Buddha, Ramakrishna did not belong to matter. They were above matter. Certainly they had a physical body, but that physical body was not controlled by those laws which control the three gunas, sattwa, rajas and tamas.

That is the reason why when Mirabai went into higher ecstasies, she just became light. When Kabir died, his body became a matter of controversy between Hindus and Muslims. Muslims wanted to dispose his body in their own way and Hindus wanted to do it their way. When they opened the coffin, the body was not there. In the same way, we hear about Christ's ascension to heaven and about Rama and Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. You know all the stories. Sometimes it seems like gossip, but it is not true. The body as matter can be converted into light. That is a scientific principle. It is not a mythological story.

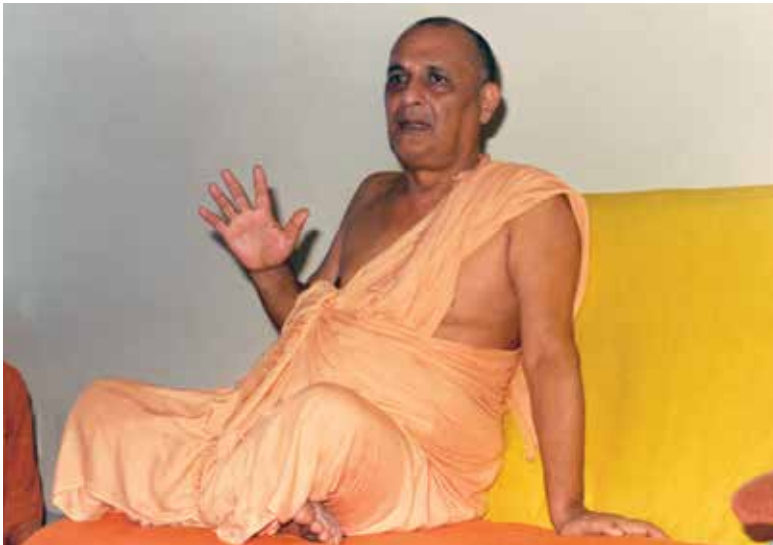
Of course, you may not be able to convert your matter into light because it is crude matter. It is tamasic matter; it is not sattwic. You may even be a sattwic man, a very good person. You may be speaking the truth and following ahimsa and celibacy that is sattwic. But I am talking beyond sattwa, *trigunatita* – one who has transcended the laws that control the processes of the three gunas.

These three gunas, according to Samkhya philosophy, relate to matter. They do not relate to spirit but to the mind. They are related to the body; they are not related to atma. Atma is beyond the three gunas. You cannot say that God is subject to the three gunas. No, only matter is subject to the three gunas – the whole universe: the sun and moon, the stars, planets, black holes and supernovas are all subject to the three gunas, sattwa, rajas and tamas.

We say sattvic referring to a moral quality, but I am not talking of the moral concept of the gunas. In Samkhya philosophy, these three gunas relate to the quality of matter in action, proportion and manifestation. Uranium is the yellow cake that is called dormant in the tamasic state. When it is agitated by exciting the core or purified, it is in the rajasic state. Every matter has that.

The physical body of an avatar is still a physical body, and it is born from its mother like you and me, but it is pure to the extent that nature does not have any control over it. It can be converted into light. *Mirabai jyoti me sammaje dego* – Mirabai became light and became one with the light.

I believe that nobody should feel that he is evolved, no, it is a big mistake; and one who says that he is a great man is certainly not one. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has said that there are four fundamental qualities of a great man: smaller than the blade of grass, more tolerant than a giant tree, respectful to those who insult him and singing the name of God all the time. These are the four fundamental qualities of a person who is evolved. But then you are not, and certainly nor am I.



22

Negative Indoctrination

25 June 1987

Expose yourself to every situation in life and be sure you do not indoctrinate your children negatively. Do not create fear and phobias in them. Risk should be the pleasure and essence of life. Everybody must take a risk: risk of death, risk of starvation and risk of life. Without risk, I do not think you can earn real wealth or even money. Those people who are millionaires and multi-millionaires are risk people.

Risk has to be taken whether it is a good thing or a bad thing. If you tell your children right from the beginning, 'He is a bad boy, do not go with him, or do not go there'; and if after twelve years of age the girls are not allowed to peep through the balcony or talk to the young boys, then I cannot justify it.

You may say it is necessary for a pure society. What pure society are you talking about? Calcutta has many prostitutes; a small place like Munger has registered prostitutes. Your social structure is wrong. You are not thinking correctly. If your social structure had been better, your children would have been strong. When they grow up, they would not have phobias. There are many people who have phobias because of their early social upbringing which was based on so many rumours, so many false ideas: 'Do not go out – nowadays they kidnap children', one rumour, 'Don't let your son out after six o'clock', second rumour.

I believe that everybody has great magical power within – everyone, anyone. Nobody is stupid, nobody is a dunce. I am talking especially to the young people. Risk is the secret of life. It is the basis of adventure and the key to victory in life whether it is money, power, position, scholasticism or anything. Fear is the greatest enemy. I remember one sloka from King Bhatrihari:

Bhoga roga bhayam kule kshuti bhayam, vitle nrupalat bhayam.

Fear is grabbing at you everywhere.

*Sarvam vastu bhayanitam bhayanitam bhuvoivirinam
vairagyam eva abhayat.*

One has to be fearless through the practice of vairagya.

Vairagya means to destroy neurosis. We are all neurotics. Parents are neurotics and they give birth to neurotic children and when they grow up they become psychotic. That is why your society is paralyzed. Your society is economically paralyzed. Intellectually you are paralyzed and physically you are paralyzed. What strength have you got as a nation? Am I wrong? Then why do you not have a free society?

This indoctrination, this programming is a very repelling procedure. I have myself undergone it and I do not like it. I never liked it. Once years ago, my guru said to me, ‘Swami Satyananda do you practise asanas or something?’ I do not know why, but I said, ‘You have told me to do it once, do not ask me anymore. If I do it, I will do it by myself and if I do not, that’s it. I do not need to be reminded.’

You see this is how children think and they must be free to tell their parents. Only then will they have a developed personality, free from fear. That should be the attitude of everyone. It does not matter if society is destroyed. Society is changing. Society is not our security. Society is a bundle of selfish people looking to their own interest; and therefore, a change in the structure and in the dominating aspects of the society of every country has to take place.

23

Spiritual Awakening

*25 June 1987, addressing a group of yoga aspirants
of a Teachers Training Course*

What is spiritual awakening? What is kundalini awakening? What are spiritual experiences? What is self-realization or God-realization? What exactly do these things mean?

Something like what is the meaning of soap, Savlon, Lux, or Rexona? It is all the same, whether you call it awakening, God-realization, union with God, *samadhi*, *moksha*, *nirvana* or *shoonya* and there are many other names.

They are our expressions. From time to time, the human being has tried to explain the higher experience in his own terminology. In India, *darshan*, *samadhi*, *moksha*, *nirvana*, *kaivalya* are the terminologies, and they indicate only one thing in man's life.

When you are born from your mother, that is your physical birth. When you become ten or twelve, there is a mental awakening. When you become eighteen, nineteen, twenty, there is an emotional awakening. When you are thirty-five, forty, fifty, there is an intellectual awakening. Then you become fifty, sixty and with your little problems in the family, there is an inner awakening. I am trying to explain what awakening means. Awakening relates to the evolution of a particular faculty in man.

Atma

You know the body and mind and you can also understand what emotion and intellect is, but there is something else

which our rishis and munis have been talking about – spirit, atma. *Atma* means the Self, my Self. Here, my Self, does not mean this body, not even the mind. Of course, I identify myself with my name, caste, creed, religion, sect, community or nation. That is called identification, *abhyasa*; if I live with you for a few years, then I identify myself with your family.

Vedantic philosophy, which is the culminating point of the Vedas, has come to the conclusion that you are not this body, nor the mind, emotion or feeling. You are not even this *prana*, life, you are none of the things which you are experiencing.

Deep down in yourself there is a universal awareness, just as there is a tiny little nucleus at the base of matter. Within the core and around that nucleus, revolve molecules, atoms and electrons. Exactly in the same way, at the centre of this periphery, this body, is one small point. Tantras call it *bindu* or *parabindu*. Nada yogis call it *nada*. The bhaktas call it God, Bhagavan, Ishwara. Yogis call it samadhi, the self, atma, and in English it is called spirit. Spirit should not be taken as spiritualism. Here it means the pure self, *atma*. This atma is not a limited entity. One plus one is equal to one, not two. One represents infinity and infinity plus infinity cannot be two infinities. Infinity plus infinity is infinity, and infinity minus infinity is infinity. Therefore, in the Vedas and Upanishads there is a mantra *poornamadah, poornamidam, poornat poornamudachyate*. *Poornamadah*, that is infinite; *poornamidam*, this is infinite. That transcendental bit is infinite which you are not able to see, the atma. This perceptible universe which you see is also infinite. From infinity, infinity has been created.

From infinity, finiteness cannot be created: from *poornam*, *apoornam* cannot be created. Just as when you light one candle from the main one, and then a second, third and fourth, all the candles are exactly the same, the light is the same. Similarly, you must understand that this self, or this atma, is a matter of very deep experience.

When the sun has set and so has the moon, the stars are not twinkling and there is no light; it is at this time that

the experience of the self takes place. This means when you have been able to dissolve your mind and are able to eliminate your body consciousness, the name, forms and duality – ‘me’, ‘he’, ‘they’ – the idea of multiplicity and diversity are completely removed from the mind. When you are neither awake, sleeping nor dreaming, you can have a little experience of That.

It is not a waking or dream state, nor sleep because in sleep you know nothing, in dream you have half experiences, and in the waking state you have experiences which come to termination and which are not complete and full. A Muslim saint once said, “There is no waking state.”

Buddha called it nirvana. In the same way, many great prophets named it differently. They call it ‘grace’. Grace is an experience, not a blessing. Grace means the vision of that supreme self, and this is known as *anugraha*. It is *anugraha*; not blessing or benediction. It is not the benediction of a swami, priest, pandit or any great man. Grace is the flow of light which comes out from within. Jains call it *kaivalya*.

The very important Hindu expression for that is, *Bhagavan ka darshan* – God’s vision. What is darshan? *Darshan* means ‘to see’. When you are able to see something without eyes, hear without ears, think without mind and speak without tongue, that is called darshan.

Darshan

That is the stage when you can have the vision of your ishta devata in the depths of your consciousness, when ‘you’ are no more. When this little consciousness limited by senses, body and mind is present, you cannot experience it. You have to die, but not the physical death. In his letters to the Corinthians, Paul the Apostle wrote (15:31): “For I swear, I die every day.”

It is not just the greatest, but the only purpose of human life. One may accept it or not, be able to put it into practice or not, that is another matter. Our social construction or social system has become materialistic. The rulers do not under-

stand what they have to do because for rulers the purpose of life is power and money. If they realized that the purpose of every human being is to evolve from the lower grade to the higher and finally realize his core existence, his own *atman*, they would form a different society. In India for thousands of years, the rulers established that structure of society where people could lead a spiritual life without any difficulty.

What is the level of a disciple who can have communion with the guru? How can we assess the progress in our sadhana?

If you sow a seed in a flower pot or anywhere, after three days you cannot see whether it has grown or not. If you keep checking every third or fourth day whether it is growing, it will never grow. In the same way, those who are too anxious about spiritual evolution and try to map or guide it are not going to get anything, because the first condition in sadhana is to do your sadhana and leave the rest. Your duty is to practise sadhana and not think about the result or outcome. This is true not only in sadhana, but even in your life.

What is the central teaching of the *Bhagavad Gita*? Sri Krishna says (2:47):

*Karmanyevaadhikaraste maa phaleshu kadaachana;
Maa karmaphalahetur bhoor maa te sango'stwakarmani.*

Thy right is to work only, but never with its fruits;
let not the fruits of actions be thy motive, nor let thy
attachment be to inaction.

If that is so for worldly activities, why not for spiritual ones and everything else? A sadhaka should not try to find out about himself, his own spiritual progress. If he does, he will either become arrogant or feel inferior. He may begin to feel he has become a prophet, a great yogi or jnani; or he will think he has not achieved anything.

As far as spiritual evolution goes, it is a matter of not just one lifetime. How many years does it take to become a doctor,

accountant, auditor or engineer? About sixteen or eighteen? If you take eighteen years to become an auditor, doctor or an engineer, then even one lifetime should not be considered too long to acquire the highest blessings of human life. Therefore, continue your sadhana and forget the rest.



24

Satsang

21 July 1987

I am having a little trouble understanding enlightenment. The way I understand it, your road to enlightenment was a long hard road. Now we hear that enlightenment is like a snap of the finger; it is inside us all. There are no years of sacrifice. All we have to do is practise love and understanding that everything on earth, every animal, every person, every inanimate object, are all God's creations. Is there something that I am missing? Is there a contradiction?

There is no contradiction. Enlightenment is the ultimate destiny of everyone, but everyone will not get it at the same time and everybody does not get it in full, as well. Enlightenment comes in stages. According to Hindu, Jewish and other saintly classifications, there are seven stages of enlightenment. That is to say, there are seven curtains as they call it. One by one the seven curtains are removed. When the final enlightenment comes, then you merge with the light. That is the general theory in Hinduism and also for Christians, Muslims and Jews; all saints say the same thing.

Everybody will not be able to get it at the same time by any shortcut. At least, I am not aware of it. I know that there is also a science called hypnosis, and that externally it is very much like spiritual upliftment. One feels very high, great or tranquil, but on the path of hypnosis the consciousness becomes limited and it contracts; it does not expand.

During every period of history, there have been many people, tribes and races who tried shortcuts to enlightenment; so far none has succeeded, none. The statement of all great saints and sages, avatars or prophets is that enlightenment comes rarely and by the grace of God. It is the destiny of everyone, but they are not qualified because with the onset of enlightenment the consciousness becomes greater, wider and it can cover a very big area. It can include many persons.

A person with a low or tamasic mentality, a demonical or worldly mentality, will not be able to do full and right justice to people who are within the framework, within the compass of his consciousness. That has happened many times with a lot of groups in history.

You remember the group some years ago in Guyana, where one thousand people committed suicide? Such things have happened many times. Now because of fast communication media we know about it, but it has always been happening. What disaster took place in Oregon State where Rajneesh used to stay? It is a disaster because many faiths have been shattered. Many lives, many people have been destabilized. Many people who had come to a conclusion about spiritual life have now begun doubting or re-questioning it. In the same way, many times in history, it happened that people of different mentalities, raw mentalities have created a lot of problems.

It is very important to know that the real path of enlightenment, the straight path of enlightenment should only be given by the guru to those people who are very compassionate or merciful to all mankind, to all life. Even if they do not want it, it will be revealed to them. Otherwise sometimes, this science of enlightenment can also cause great problems for humanity.

Only a man who is a good man should be enlightened. A madman should not get enlightenment. My God, it would be chaos! A tamasic man, a *rakshasa*, a demon, no, he should not have enlightenment because he will bring human evolution to a halt. The man who is even in the first

stage of enlightenment has tremendous capacities. I mean, what to say of a man who is in the fifth or sixth stage of enlightenment!

Christ could have saved himself. Many others could have saved themselves, but they did not do it because their enlightenment, their high spiritual level of consciousness, had nothing to do with their personal tragedies and difficulties. They came only for others with compassion and love. You understand? Not for themselves. Christ did bring many dead people to life; he healed many people, so did Anandamayi Ma and many saints. Krishna did not. Buddha and Mahavir did, but not for their own selves. Shankaracharya suffered a lot of physical ailments. Vivekananda had physical ailments. He did not do anything about it. He helped others.

For the person who is enlightened, the first philosophy is that this body is mortal. Whether it comes or goes, whether it is born or dead, matters little because the soul in the body is immortal – it does not die. So what if my body dies? It is no loss. For people who are ignorant, the loss of the body is a great loss, so they use all their enlightenment for rejuvenation of the body and desires. So it is a very complicated topic.

In my opinion, from time to time, people who are not of a sattvic frame of mind do also have access to enlightenment many times, but somewhere there is a fuse which blows out.

There was a Mr Moon in the United States. I heard he was behind bars. For taxes? Somewhere he got caught. When these people get enlightenment, they become very egotistic. They become too puffed up. They feel too great about themselves. They do not give respect; they act as they please and speak as they like. It happens to many people.

Maybe that is not true enlightenment?

Enlightenment begins in stages. At that time there are limitations, incompleteness. Only in the final enlightenment, when the self is dissolved, when 'I' am no more comes in, vedantic parlance, *videhamukti*, like Ramana Maharshi's *videhamukti*. *Jivanmukti* comes before; it would be the

sixth stage. These seven stages of enlightenment are also accompanied by incompleteness or relativity, but in the final one there is no relativity of time and space. So, I do not think there is a shortcut.

When you said that a sign of enlightenment is the fact that people are no longer conscious of their body, it reminds me of Swami Sivananda.

Swami Sivananda was about sixty and in very bad health. He had an enlarged heart, diabetes and all kinds of things. At a certain point, some of his disciples took him to doctors and the doctors said, 'You have to slow down.' They would see him singing kirtan, dancing and keeping a killing schedule at every place he would go. Nobody could understand how he could do this. I guess they can handle it. So, in order to understand Shakespeare, you have to become a Shakespeare rather than discuss Shakespeare.

How does kundalini awakening relate to enlightenment?

The awakening of kundalini is the way towards enlightenment. When you practise karma yoga, bhakti yoga or any form of yoga, you may do your worship, you may fast, observe mouna, practise some disciplines or abstentions or you may practise tantra or yoga, the first thing that happens is your kundalini awakens. Awakening is the first stage of enlightenment. There also you have seven stages or chakras: mooladhara, swadhisthana, manipura, anahata, vishuddhi, ajna and bindu.

How can sannyasa and the attitude of an artist who is looking for expression be combined?

You can do any spiritual practice and go through yoga practices into another level of consciousness, another realm of mind. When you go there you can hear sounds and become a musician. Or you can see forms and colours and become an artist. Whichever path of sadhana you follow, it will first lead you within – within the subtle body.

The entire area of awareness is divided into mainly three: external, intermediate and internal. These are the three. You may safely say the external mind comes into play during various practices of meditation in different stages.

In the Bible, Koran, Vedas, Upanishads or the *Bhagavad Gita*, one thing has been said: what you seek inside temples, good houses and angels is everywhere. Hindus and the Bible say the same thing. The Bible talks about the seven houses and seven temples and white light. You find the same in the book of the Jews, the Torah, in the Koran and the books of Parsees, Zend Avesta. When consciousness leaves this objective area, the land of objects, perception, cognition, smelling, touching, thinking and remembering, it enters into another intermediate area. It is a vast area. There it can have the awareness of that form for a very short time also, and many times we have it in meditation.

Sometimes it can persist for days together. You do not even like to come out. You just sit inside the room and you are seeing the television inside. Morning, day, noon, afternoon, night, morning and the parents say, 'What is happening to this chap?' In India, we do not do that. We try to find out what it is all about. Has he gone insane or does he have some psychological problems? In the West, they would send him to the mental hospital. That is why they have not made any gurus so far, because gurus have to go through these abnormal stages, as I would call them. Sometimes parents just are panic-stricken. For two or three days the son or daughter does not eat, they have lustrous eyes and they see things.

Is that day-dreaming?

In the West they call it day-dreaming, we call it higher experience; that is the difference. That is why many times people ask me why India alone can produce gurus. I say, 'Because we make them.' The raw material is there in the West; there is equal potential. Western people are very devoted and sincere people. There are no two opinions about it. Maybe sometimes more than Indians. But in your society,

in your religion it would not be allowed. Ramana Maharshi, for example, sat down in a shop for two hours, nodding the head. The shopkeeper did not think he was crazy. He gave him two rupees and said, 'Where do you want to go?' He said, 'Vishakhapatnam, Arunachalam.' He took the train and went to Arunachalam where he wanted to go. In the West they would have put him in police custody.

So this intermediate stage sometimes can continue for a long time and it can also be very difficult. Christ had to face Satan. Buddha had to face Mara. Paramhansa Muktananda of Siddha Peeth, and like him many others, had a lot of difficulties for days together; many passions the whole night. You think of all dirty things, bad smells, bodies being cremated; you can see the direst shape of women and odd things come. You have to face that.

Christ faced it. It is not written about it much in the book, but it is written. Buddha also faced it on the night of Buddha Poornima, the night of the enlightenment of Buddha. Then Buddha practised for many days. He went to different places, sat down and maintained that attitude one night, two nights, three nights. He changed the place and then again he saw his previous lives and saw the different lokas, the different extra-terrestrial spaces. He knew when he was in animal bodies; he knew when he was in human bodies – Bodhisattva.

So these things happen to a person. Then he becomes a writer, he may become a poet. He can become a painter or he can take an ordinary piece of rock, use a chisel and hammer and give it a beautiful shape. All these great artists have given expression to the realities of life through poetry, music, literature, symbolism and through the Puranas; they are all symbolic. Painting, wood carving, stone carving or dancing are expressions of inner stages; they are expressions of life. They are expressions of lower life and higher life, of total life, but it is only possible if you are able to attune yourself with that level of consciousness because there are different levels of consciousness. There are levels of consciousness where these things do not happen; where

there is no vibration, no idea comes, no form. That is much higher of course.

As an artist, if you are looking for new forms, how to combine that with the attitude of a sannyasin or renunciation?

No, sannyasa is not renunciation. Renunciation is a very incomplete word. What is renunciation? What have I renounced? Renunciation really means leaving, throwing away or rejecting the objects to which you are related in life: like wife or husband and children, money, family, society, home, bank and car. I have everything, maybe, one or two less. So renunciation is not that.

Sannyasa does not mean renunciation. I give you an example of what sannyasa means. Let us say, you have 100,000 dollars in your bank. That is your money, your personal money. You can spend it as you like according to your whims and fancies. Now suddenly it comes to your mind that this money should be made into a trust, an endowment for blind people, orphans, starving people, whoever – people in distress. So you start an institution, a trust and put all the money there, 100,000 dollars. There is a body of directors and according to the constitution, the aims and objectives, they spend that money and whatever money comes, they put into that trust.

Now that money is not yours. That money has been endowed, dedicated, offered. *Sannyasa* means offering one's personal life. I have no personal property. I should not have any personal property. If I faced the problem I would tackle it, but I would not tackle my personal problems because I have no money. I have given everything. My personal qualifications, my body, my mind, all that is now dedicated to one purpose – yoga! That is the concept, ideal and philosophy of sannyasa; it is not renunciation.

We do live a very simple life in order to avoid complications. If I have to live luxuriously then I have to have money. If I have to have money, then how can I get the money? It is so difficult. Sannyasins live a simple life, not because through simple life they become sannyasins. No, anybody can lead a

simple life; it is not the essential qualification of a sannyasin. It is the way of a sannyasin because there he finds very little complication.

If I go out of this ashram, I do not think I am going to take more than a small bag. I do not have to tell the sannyasins, because the typewriter does not belong to them, the almirah does not belong to them, the books do not belong to them, this transistor does not belong to them. Nothing belongs to them. The only thing that perhaps belongs to them are two dhotis and shirts. Add a little bit for foreigners from abroad, passports and maybe some money. This is the concept of simplicity as an aid to spiritual life, but that cannot be considered to be the main qualification of a sannyasin.

The main qualification of a sannyasin is that he is dedicating all his energies for the fulfilment of one purpose, whether it is God-realization, self-realization or nirvana – whatever it is. A sannyasin may work for yoga, vedantic philosophy or even to propagate the Bible, Koran or Puranas, but that is all secondary. We take sannyasa for just one purpose. The ultimate purpose of a sannyasin is to realize the highest form of consciousness. That is the purpose for which we leave our parents.

We have tried different ways. Quite a few have succeeded, but the percentage is not that great. Many people have regressed, gone back, remained static or forgotten the aim of life. Their ordinary karma, samskaras and mentality comes up again. That is sannyasa.

The concept of sannyasa in Christianity comes from the Greek background. Monk comes from the word 'mono'. Mono means 'single'. Of course, we also say a sannyasin has to live a single life. In any case all alone – niranjana in Sanskrit. *Niranjan* means mono, alone, that is the concept. In Christianity monks also ultimately dedicate themselves to the service of humanity because that is God's wish. God's work is the service you render to God because you are rendering service to His people. You understand? The concepts are the same.

Another point comes to mind that there are two aspects to life: hypnotizing and dehypnotizing yourself. When you live amidst pleasures, luxuries and prosperity, you are under hypnosis. When you lead a simple life of austerity, self-imposed poverty, using the biblical language, there are many things inside that come out because that is deprogramming or dehypnotizing yourself. You are deprogramming yourself, and then a lot of inner struggles, inner conflicts, ideas, emotional outbursts, passions come out. Your mind is not busy with luxuries or the senses; it is just free. Life appears naked before it. That is how the sannyasin can get in touch with the tools of expression. People who have given great art, poetry or great things to mankind were those people who were having great conflicts, turmoil and struggles in their mind. All great poets, authors or writers were not people who were under the process of hypnosis.

In order to be creative, you have to adopt a totally different way of life. You have to get in touch with your inner self. In order to get in touch with your self, you have to drag the inner consciousness out. In order to drag the inner consciousness outside, you have to allow your mind to feel, face and experience the naked reality, in steps. Face the basement of your mind in you, and the cruelties and hideous forms of men and society. Then you can make beautiful pictures of angels or Satan, write poems or sing songs. Creativity is an outcome of man's penance.

Swami Sivananda manifested his realization in service to fellow man. You read about some highly enlightened individuals who are up in the Himalayas in a cave by themselves. To isolate oneself is the opposite of Swami Sivananda's idea. What benefit do they give to mankind?

Swami Sivananda has made it very clear. He has explained it in his earlier writings. Somebody has to produce, manufacture and create cosmic energy, the high tension, the great power. Then that power has to be received by somebody, to step down the high power, to convert it or transform it into

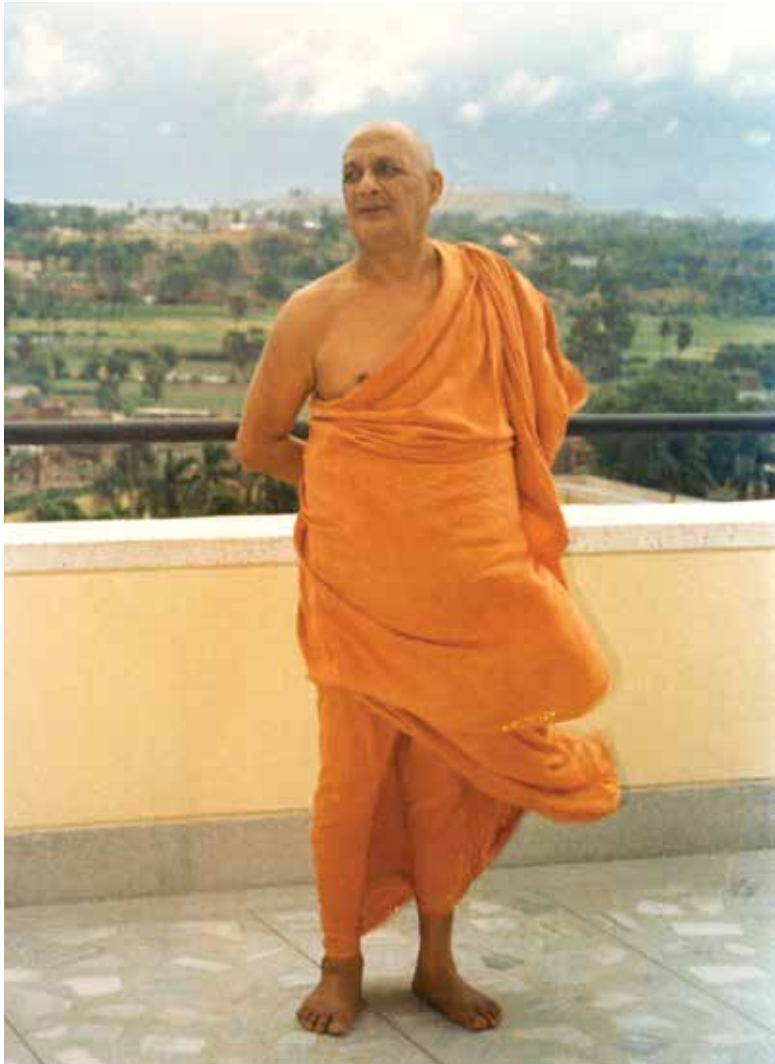
a lower power. So, these people in the Himalayas stay there. They have nothing to do with compassion, mercy or this or that. They are always in touch with the cosmic energy, light, the cosmic consciousness, and they become the storehouse; they become the powerhouse. Somebody has to carry that energy from the powerhouse to the substation and from the substation to the house meter and from your house meter to your room. Such people are doing it. Swami Sivananda has explained the role of those saints who are in touch or in communication, and who are one with the absolute. They are the storehouse – the powerhouse of cosmic energy. Then part of that cosmic energy is to be brought down to the level of ordinary human beings.

They reach disciples; they reach their substations through vibrations or in some other way? Do they reach out to people?

No, they are not particularly reaching out to anyone. Of course the vibrations will be there but not particularly for you, me or him. It depends on who can attune to the vibrations and convert that 11,000 KV into a lower voltage, high tension to low tension. It depends on that. Even if an ordinary person goes there, he may not be able to experience those vibrations; they are of a very fine quality. It is only a very spiritually sensitive person who can feel those vibrations. For example, I am here and radio waves are here, but I do not feel it, but when I put a transistor I experience it. Do you feel radio waves or electromagnetic waves here? No, because we are so gross. I am not getting those vibrations, but the moment I turn on the transistor I get the sound or whatever it is.

In the same way, even if an ordinary man approaches Babaji or anyone else, a naked fakir, he won't be able to feel the vibrations. He may have faith for a sannyyasin, a great man, a saint, a man who is practising austerity. He may have faith. You may have faith, you may prostrate and you may feel he is a great man, but to get in tune with the vibration is only possible for that person who has that subtle mind. These

saints, great sadhus and sannyasins, as Swami Sivananda said, are able to feel those vibrations and they become the channel of that higher energy. They can transform the higher energy into what we call low energy or the energy which people can handle.



25

Inner Awareness of the Guru

27 July 1987

The book *Taming the Kundalini* talks about worshipping at the altar of the light of the inner self, and about maintaining constant awareness of the self in meditation and constant awareness of ishta so that this awareness starts pervading the whole being. So, this awareness comes out; it becomes visible. Through this awareness, it manifests as the person who guides you. Could you talk about that and how it relates to living away from your guru?

Individual awareness is formless. Whether it is my awareness or your awareness or anyone's awareness – it is formless. It is there. You can feel it. I can feel that awareness: I am. But I cannot see it, and therefore it is very difficult to retain that awareness mentally for a period of time and concentrate on that. It is a very abstract awareness – I am. So that awareness has to be given some form. It has to be given some form for the time being. For that purpose, you should give the form which you can retain in your mind, the form of your guru or the form of anyone so you are always thinking about him or her all the time.

Maybe you think about him because you love him or maybe you think about him because you hate him or because you do not want to think about him. There are so many factors of thinking, awareness. Love alone is not the only form of awareness. Hatred is also a very strong form

of awareness and concentration. When you hate or dislike someone, you do not want to remember that fellow; the awareness becomes more intense. The intensity of awareness has to be created no matter how. It is not important how you create that awareness but it has to be very intense. It has to just move your body and mind. Then your awareness and the person within you are the same – not two. In other words, your awareness, which was abstract and formless when you only said, ‘I am’, ‘I am aware of myself,’ assumes a form.

It is a supposed form like in algebra: suppose x is equal to five or x is not equal to five. It can be anything but there has to be some hypothesis. There has to be some postulate in order to get a final answer. So, supposing my awareness is Swami Satyananda. That is how you postulate and that is how the hypothesis begins. Now you are actually aware of yourself. You are aware of yourself but the form is mine. It is yourself but the form is mine because you love me, or because you hate me, or because you do not want to think about me or because you think I am God.

That is called intense awareness and such a person is called your ishta devata. *Ishta* means anything that is according to your desires. You desire it. You want it. You like it and therefore it is ishta. If you do not like it, it is not ishta. Devata does not mean god. It is usually translated as the word god, but in Sanskrit *devata* means illumination. Anything that is illumined, anything that is enlightened, light, torchlight. It illuminates the almirah, the door. It illumines every part. So that is devata. *Ishta devata* means anything of your choice. This is the basic thing. Even if you do not know theoretically what I have been telling you for the last ten minutes it does not matter. When the mind merges with anything, sacred or otherwise, and becomes one with anything awful or beautiful, merges with anything divine or otherwise, your ishta devata is there.

The external factor of the form means something, but it is immaterial. Your awareness is your awareness, abstract, formless, nameless, beyond time and space. You could only

make it a subject of your awareness. I do not, but it has become more concrete in the form of a Shivalingam or in the form of this, that or in my form. That form is immaterial, yet it has a place in the mind, without that the cognition and perception, or the awareness of your awareness cannot take place. That is the religious aspect which Hindus have been fighting about for the last so many thousand years, the most intellectual ones – for this form.

In India you see so many forms. You do not find many forms in Christianity or Islam. Here they have stuck to forms, not because they know that God has a form, but the mind needs it. God does not have a form, but it is not enough to say, 'God has no form'. It is not enough to say, 'My soul has no form, my soul is formless'. It is formless, it is nameless, but there is no use saying that. If I want to realize it, I will have to decrease and minimize the distance between myself and my awareness. There is a great distance between my mind and my awareness, so much distance my mind cannot conceive of it. I might read about it in books about consciousness, awareness, *atma*, spirit, the self. That is intellectual; it is not awareness or experience. There is a big gap, and that gap has to be minimalized; the distance has to decrease.

In order to decrease the distance, you bring in a form. When you bring in the form, the mind becomes subtle, and the self is apprehended in the form of a Shivalingam or anything else. When the mind is able to apprehend the Shivalingam in the deeper form, its grossness is still reduced until it becomes the shining one. Then a time comes when that medium is completely removed and you say, 'I am neither guru nor disciple, not God nor Brahman nor Vishnu, no time and no space: I am what I am.' That is the final stage. It need not be learnt from a guru. That has to be your experience. Nobody has to teach you what to experience. No book is necessary. You just give your mind somewhere totally, completely, a place where you will not be able to take it out.

Just like a passionate man, a greedy man, a frightened man gives his total mind. Do not worry about the consequences.

Just think of it as an adventure. In this adventure you may be lost forever. Who knows? Many people were lost when they went to Mount Everest, North Pole, South Pole, the seas, the oceans, but ultimately they conquered.

The same is true in this case; it is an adventure. You have to do it. Of course, you do not have to become crazy in the sense that you are a misfit in society. There is a time up to which you have to remain fit in society and there comes a moment when you do not care for society and then you become a misfit, but by that time, even if you are a misfit, society fits itself into you.

Unless you are able to give your mind and awareness totally, this path is just like any ordinary religion; morning you get up, you do some asana and pranayama. You do meditation. It is like a religion. Those who are keen on it have to make a sacrifice of their own self. As you sacrifice an animal, you sacrifice yourself. It is not that easy.



26

Karma Sannyasa

28 July 1987

What is the purpose of karma sannyasa?

A karma sannyasin can express himself more fully than a man who is involved in very insignificant matters. There are many matters in life which can be ignored. If you ignore them it does not matter, but people cannot ignore them. If you quarrel with your sister, brother, wife or if you have a love affair with someone, it is the funny little insignificant things that disturb the mind. If the mind can be made free from these insignificant preoccupations, then the mind can grow into ideas and transform itself into some sort of creative art. Painting or making a nice big garden and many more creative activities you can do much more successfully if you can render your mind free from these insignificant preoccupations.

The purpose of karma sannyasa is to make you more capable to function in a better way in life. Every now and then you get emotional shocks and injuries or you are emotionally hypnotized, so then the act of creativity suffers. The mind has very limited energy. There are people who are unlimited but most people have very limited energies, and you cannot give your mind to so many things which you think are necessary but which are not.

When you take karma sannyasa, it is a philosophical approach. You are not controlling the mind. You are trying to understand the importance, function and capability of

the mind. If you do not have a capable mind, you cannot imagine properly, and if you can imagine, you imagine the wrong way. After all fantasy, imagination and emotions spring from the mind. There is a base from where everything springs. If you have to express yourself, for that particular act of expression either your mind has to be capable or there has to be intuitive guidance. From within you, flashes come through. Many people have ideas and the expression becomes more spontaneous and more real if you take karma sannyasa.

Karma means the relationship with this world, with the mind. Your relationship with your mother, father, brother, sister, friend can become a karmic relationship where you are bound. These are the good and bad tragedies and comedies, whatever happens becomes your comedy and tragedy. It depends how much you are linked with the people through karma. If there is no karmic link, only a social link for your mental or emotional involvement, then whatever happens you know, you are not affected by it. There is no inter-relationship. There is no karmic link, only a social link. The social link can continue, but it is the karmic relationship by which my problems become your problems, my happiness becomes your happiness, my tragedies become your tragedies that makes you suffer a lot.

I give you a very simple example of a very well-known person, Karl Marx, the visionary of the communist philosophy. His concept, realization or understanding of the communist socialist philosophy was influenced by his karmic links. He was very much affected by poverty, by the sickness of his sisters. He could see everything only from that particular angle. As Karl Marx witnessed his personal life so did Gandhi. Gandhi also had the experience of poverty, illiteracy, exploitation, social injustice, inequality. Gandhi saw the same things and he analyzed, wrote and spoke about it. Marx and Gandhi saw the same thing but took two completely different turns. Gandhi evolved one expression of philosophy and Marx another expression.

The effect of these two philosophies cannot be assessed now because it is only about fifty years. After one hundred or five hundred years, what will be the change? What will be the situation in our government? What will be the form of social crimes in Russia if this hard, thick, strict and strong whip is withdrawn? What will be the state of crimes, criminals and corruption? The people are not thinking; the government is thinking, but it is the common man who has to think that he has to change. That it is the influence of Gandhian philosophy – the individual process of reformation. Reform begins with the individual, no matter how much time it takes. Even if a fraction of the community begins to reform spontaneously, without talking about law enforcement, the police or military, a new philosophy will be born. There will be greater pressure on the society by these positive thinking people and accordingly the social laws will be amended. The traditions will be amended. A good man will be respected. A corrupt man will not be respected.

When you are karmically linked with life, your expression cannot be very aesthetic and refined, but when you have broken your karmic links with everything, even with your professions in the realm of philosophy and mind, then you live with detachment. Detachment does not mean that you throw things away. No, that is not detachment; it is renunciation or rejection. Detachment and attachment are products of the karmic link.

Imagine a servant of thirty years' employment who looks after the accounts and lands, the telephone or children, he drives the car, but this is not a karmic link. When this man gets a letter from his family who lives far away that his wife is sick, he is disturbed. That is a karmic link. You can be very sorry without being affected. You can be happy without being affected. You fulfil all your duties, yet there is something in you which should remain uninvolved. Then expressions are revealed to you spontaneously. There comes an inspiration like build a bridge or go on an expedition, discover new lands, islands and countries. Those inspirations come from inside.

What is the concept of karma yoga?

The concept of karma yoga is very simple. When you work for someone, you should work in the same spirit as when you are working for yourself. That is one of the most important qualities of a karma yogi. Once you leave, you just leave everything behind. This ashram is not built by me but by the swamis. They work hard in body and soul and when they go with a bag I do not think they remember this place at all. The spirit of karma yoga is very simple. You are in it and you are not in it. You do karma but nothing belongs to you so you do not make a samskara. The mind is purified. Selfless service without any personal motivation creates mental peace.

Swamiji what do you mean by awakening the inner power or shakti in the form of guru?

The higher or great power is formless. It is an all-pervading essence. Ordinary mortal eyes and mortal beings cannot comprehend that higher power. There are many things, like bacteria, which you cannot see without proper instruments. In the same way, the transcendental forms or aspects of reality are formless and therefore the mortal mind cannot comprehend them. However, there is a way to realize it. You have to create an image, an idol or a form which can be anything, a flower, a symbol, your guru. There is not just one form in which you can formulate that abstract reality. When I say that you can realize that higher power in the form of your guru, it only means that I am talking about the realization of *savikalpa samadhi*.

In raja yoga it has been explained that the highest stages of cognition, the highest states of realization are twofold. One is called *savikalpa samadhi* and the highest is called *nirvikalpa samadhi* where there is no archetype, no form, no name and no limiting dimensions. You become total and you do not remain an individual. You cannot be demarcated by the notions of personal ego, *ahamkara*. You are lost as far as individuality and *ahamkara*, the limiting adjunct is concerned. As far as the infinite 'you' is concerned, it is total.

In nirvikalpa samadhi, there is no means of experiencing or realizing it because the very process of realization postulates duality. When there is non-dual existence, who is going to perceive whom? Who is going to see whom? How can one know the knower?

That is what is written in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*. How can you know the knower by which you know everything? That is the state of nirvikalpa samadhi which has been a matter of great adventure and research for many yogis who have tried to get into that mode of experience and at the same time maintain this lower consciousness of duality where they could say what it was.

In this savikalpa samadhi, there is total realization of what you call *atman* or *paramatma*, the highest being or supreme essence as western philosophers would say. There is realization, but at the same time, from some corner of the existence, there is slight awareness of the existence of what it is. It is with this partial knowledge or partial cognition that the great men, saints and yogis of the past have been able to talk about God or consciousness.

When you look at a flower with your eyes open, it is sensorial experience, the rose or the lotus. When you close your eyes and try to formulate the lotus or rose within in the form of a vision, a little experience; what is it? Is it that rose which you saw outside on the plant? No. The inner rose, the experience of the rose, which you have is made up of mental stuff, that which you are imagining, cognizing or experiencing within you is constituted of mind and psyche. It is mental stuff; therefore, we say that the experience of a flower, symbol, guru, Krishna or Christ is made up of your own consciousness and is totally subjective. You are realizing yourself in the form of Krishna, Rama, Christ or guru. The experiences which you have within you during deeper stages of meditation are manifestations of yourself. It is not a manifestation of anybody or anything from outside.

Realization is an expression of yourself. God's *darshan* or divine vision is a manifestation of yourself. Passion, anger,

greed, desires or anxiety; all these mental patterns which you experience in your day-to-day life are manifestations of your lower self. Compassion, mercy, love, sacrifice, dedication or selflessness are manifestations of your human self. Inner vision, the experience of stars, moon, mountains, divine beings, angels, devis, devatas or sounds of all kinds are manifestations of your evolving, higher, growing and progressing self. As you go deeper and deeper, you become aware of the finest form of yourself.

According to modern science, matter can be split, stage by stage, step by step, grade by grade so that ultimately it becomes nuclear energy. Sound is a manifestation of matter. Matter has many finer and finest forms and, in the same way, consciousness has the finest and the grossest forms. Senses, sensorial cognitions are the grossest form. Mind is also a gross form but not the grossest.

Atman means self, the higher power, the higher self, which can be realized up to savikalpa samadhi in any form you like, also in the form of your guru if there is no conflict between yourself and your guru. If you have any conflict between yourself and your guru, then there is going to be trouble in that area of consciousness. Therefore, in the Upanishads and other books, it has been clearly stated that there should be no conflict between guru and disciple under any circumstances because ultimately it is going to destroy your own patterns. You are going to be the loser – not your guru. The relationship between you and your guru has to be established in such a way that the image within yourself does not fluctuate, extinguish, die, break, become disturbed, and does not cause any spiritual problems. This applies to guru, Krishna, Rama or any other symbol.

27

Samskaras and Vasanas

*13 August 1987, addressing a group of yoga aspirants
of a Teachers Training Course*

Please explain what it means to exhaust karmas, samskaras and vasanas?

The mind registers every objective experience and every subjective thought, feeling and emotion that arises in the mind of an individual. Sometimes these emotions and thought currents are conscious, but mostly they are unconscious. We do not even know they exist. These registered impulses and impressions, in the depth of the mind, become the *samskaras*, the dormant potential of man's existence. Some of them can be experienced in this life and they influence our thoughts, actions, philosophy and reactions. Success and failure, your accomplishments and expressions in life are all controlled by these samskaras, the seeds of life.

Japa – exhausting samskaras

There is a method by which these samskaras can be exhausted. If these samskaras are not exhausted, they become the *karma*, the life-force and later they become what we call our personality, the symbol of our incarnation.

When you sit down for *japa* or when you meditate, many thoughts come to the mind. You are practising your mantra, *Om Namah Shivaya*, but at the same time thoughts and reflections of the past, anticipations of the future and worries about the present keep on hovering in your mind. What do

you do then? Most of you withdraw your mind from those thoughts and bring it back to the point of concentration. That is a mistake. A person, who has not been able to identify himself with the sattwic state of mind and transcended the rajasic plane of mind, should never try to control the mind.

Chitta vritti nirodhaha, controlling the vrittis, modifications and expressions of total consciousness, is the ultimate definition. Most of us do not belong to a sattwic state; either we are tamasic or rajasic. If you take it that you are rajasic, then during japa when thoughts come to your mind, when passions assail you, you should not control them. You should observe them. You must try to witness the thoughts, experiences, passions, emotions and memories while you are continuing your own japa, maybe *Om Namah Shivaya*, or anything else.

This is one way to exhaust the karma. You exhaust the samskaras not karma. You are exhausting the samskaras. When you are able to exhaust the samskaras, they will not fructify; they will not be born; they will not be transformed in the form of karma.

Ashram – exhausting karmas

Besides this there is another way of exhausting the karma – choose a difficult way of life. Do not aspire for a luxurious or comfortable life. In the ancient times, householders used to go to ashrams for a period of fifteen days to six months. They lived there like recluses. That was their training. They slept on the floor on a carpet, shaved like sannyasins and ate food once a day. They did not read newspapers, hear transistors or meet their own kith and kin, but spent their time in what we call austere situations. The word used for this is *tapasya*. Every householder and sannyasin can do *tapasya*. As it is the cleanser of karma; it changes the entire personality.

Rama went to gurukul. Rama was the son of an emperor. He lived for twelve years in his guru's ashram, living a simple life, sleeping on the floor or going out to collect things for the ashram. Then when he went out of Ayodhya on the

insistence of Kaikeyi, he lived in the jungle, in the forest, for fourteen years. He did not suffer because he had been given that initial training. Although he was the son of an emperor, he lived like a sadhu, a tapasvi. He lived like a mahatma for twelve years and it was that initial training that gave so much strength to Rama to face the rigours of his exiled life.

Initiation

The third method is initiation, *diksha*. Everybody who is keen to unburden the karma should get initiated into spiritual life. I am not talking about religion, I am talking about spiritual life. Initiation into spiritual life means that you have to be initiated into a mantra and a method, *prakriya*. You practise the mantra and the prakriya every day – that is called *sadhana*. Like this, there are many ways by which you can get rid of karma.

The same thing was said by a great sannyasin, Nagarjuna, a Buddhist monk, who went to Greece to preach. There he met the King Menander of Greece. The king asked him the same question of how to exhaust karma. Nagarjuna said, ‘Take a handful of wheat seeds and put them in the soil. They will grow after a week and they will produce more wheat. You collect those seeds, sow them again; they will produce more wheat. So from one handful of wheat seeds you get a quintal, many quintals of wheat in the course of time. If you do not want that, then you should fry the seeds first before sowing them.’ The handful will become nil. They will not grow. That is how you have to burn the karma. A person who has burned his karma can operate in this world as a professor, businessman, an industrialist, politician, a police officer, school teacher, a husband, a father, a swami or a labourer.

One point to keep in mind is that you should not live or act by the force of karma. You must act by the force of spirit. Why are you working? Why are you living? This is the dictate of my spirit not the dictate of my karma. My karmas have not made me a swami; my spirit has made me a swami. My karmas have not made me a husband or wife. My spirit

has made me. I should be what my spirit wants. If my atma and my God wants me to be a swami, I should not be an industrialist. It is the command of that higher force that a man must listen to.



28

Satsang

14 October 1987

Addressing a group of kriya yoga aspirants

With all other practices of yoga, I find my normally busy mind slows down and becomes peaceful. With kriya yoga my mind becomes explosive, irritable, anxious, violent and unstable during the practices. What is the meaning of this? Am I not ready to practise kriya yoga?

There are two forms of yoga practices. One form of yoga practice relaxes the mind and subdues the senses, makes you quiet, I would say dull. During that period the alpha waves in the brain are intensive, the hypertension and the blood pressure comes down. These are the normal yoga practices like mantra, ajapa japa, yoga nidra or simple types of meditation or mantra meditation. Kriya yoga is a part of tantric practice.

The mind, the consciousness expands and then a certain amount of energy is released, even as a scientist first of all splits the matter and releases certain energy. You know about nuclear science and other sciences. The matter is split into elements, otherwise matter is a congregation or consolidation of elements. These elements are separated. When these elements are separated then a certain energy is released. We call it energy, nuclear energy or any other form of energy. In the same way, in tantra the practices first of all expand the mind, rather than contract or withdraw the mind.

Now, some yoga practices help you to withdraw the mind; the tantric practices make you expand the mind. While the

withdrawal of the mind is taking place, your sense awareness, your awareness of the outer things becomes dim. You know less about the sounds. You are withdrawn into yourself and there is a quietness for some time. That is called withdrawal of the senses, *pratyahara*. That is the fifth stage of raja yoga, sense withdrawal.

In tantric practices the withdrawal does not take place; the dullness of mind also does not take place. As a result, the mind becomes irritated. When you come out of your practices you feel so much energy that you do not know what to do with it! So what do you do? You get angry, irritable and excited. That is why the tantric practices should be done with proper understanding. Fear will not achieve anything because these are the compulsory and inevitable symptoms.

Those of you who have read books on kriya and kundalini yoga, awakening of kundalini, awakening of the primal power or evolutionary energy in man would have noticed that every aspirant, after awakening, undergoes various critical situations emotionally as well as physically. With the awakening sometimes you do not feel hungry; you have difficulty sleeping, you do not get sleep, a sort of temporary insomnia takes place. In many cases, or I would say even in most cases, the sexual passions rise abnormally high. So these symptoms are bound to come. If you are patient, if you have no fear and if you understand that this is going to happen, then you can bear this situation with calmness of mind.

In the Buddhist tradition, there are many stories of the moments when Buddha attained enlightenment. At the time of enlightenment or just before enlightenment, he too had so many temptations. I mean, you are talking about instability and irritability, but what are they? They are part of temptations; they are forms of temptations. Buddha had those temptations. Those of you who are well acquainted with the biblical tradition know that Christ was also tempted.

These temptations which come to spiritual aspirants at a lower stage are different; and those which come to a higher, great personality like Buddha or Christ are different.

There used to be one Swami Muktananda in India who is no more. Paramahansa Muktananda was a great aspirant, great yogi, great sadhaka. His guru was a kundalini yogi, Swami Nityananda. Swami Muktananda himself has written in his life history that what kind of nightmares he had. He writes, 'While I am practising, I am practising for eternal peace, enlightenment, union with the cosmic soul, but what is happening to me is completely different.'

If you can understand what I have said you can go ahead with your kriya yoga practices, but if you think you cannot handle them any more, then do not do them.

Please explain what karma sannyasa means?

Karma sannyasa means renouncing the doership of the action of the karma. This is the literal meaning. We operate in our life with motives, with expectations and a desire. A thought is a motivated force. That goes well with most people because there is a period in life when one has to have motivations and desires so that one can function well. When you want to realize your inner self, then there are obstacles which have to be removed. These obstacles are presented by your day-to-day life due to your interactions with people, with karma and with obligations.

A karma sannyasin operates as a normal human being, but within his own self he keeps himself totally unaffected by the effects or results of karma, and thereby he maintains peace and stability of mind. During meditation the karmas, the *samskaras*, the seed of the karmas, do not come up and disturb him.

How do you define the difference between detachment and not caring? At what point can you tell when you have reached the uncaring stage?

For most people it is difficult to live and work without any attachment. Just imagine that you work in a bank as a manager, a cashier or an accountant, and one fine morning you come to know that the bank has been looted. What will

happen to you personally? How will you be affected? Will this news damage your mind? Certainly not! Here your relationship is just a simple karma. There is no attachment although you are a cashier, an accountant or a manager. But if you lost \$100 or \$200 or about \$1000 what would happen?

Attachment

Where the self, where the ego is related to an action, to an event, attachment automatically comes up. Attachment is created. When your ego is not related to the action, to the event, to the person, then it does not matter much. Therefore, in order to perfect detachment, you will have to revise your relationship with people, events and objects.

This is a very important subject discussed in the *Bhagavad Gita*. The central theme of the *Gita* is exactly the same. Arjuna, the disciple, is asking Krishna. 'You are committing me to duties. You are committing me to action. Don't you know that action brings about reaction? A karma produces another karma and that creates other karma, so the chain of action and reaction is formed and grows. Why do you involve me in this? Why don't you allow me to renounce the action, the karma, itself?' Krishna said, 'No, by renouncing karma, by renouncing duties or by renouncing your obligations you make no spiritual progress as long as the attachment is within you. Renunciation of action, renunciation of life in general could be just an act of escape, escapism.'

Therefore, Krishna says in the *Gita* that it is foolish and ignorant to think that by renouncing an action or by doing away with duties, you can attain higher states of mind or spiritual salvation. On the other hand, he says it is possible that you as a householder, an army commander or a farmer can awaken your spiritual self. You can have the vision of the eternal being. You can have the experience of *samadhi* or the great tranquillity.

Arjuna said, 'How is it possible? The whole day I have to work for my children, for my wife, for myself, for my family and then I have my passions and I have my emotional

obligations. So many obligations a human being has! Not only social or economic, he has his personal and emotional obligations. Do you mean to say that with all this I can make spiritual progress? How is it possible? Do you mean with all this I can attain the supreme state of life?’ Krishna point blank replied, ‘Yes.’

Spiritual growth

The external life, the general life in our society changes from time to time. Today we are in the twentieth century. Then there will be the twenty-first, twenty-third. Maybe five hundred years ago the situations were different; five thousand years ago the situations were different. Social conditions, cultural conditions, economic conditions, the demands on human beings were different. But whatever they are, they do not pose any sort of problem in one’s spiritual growth.

Neither does one’s education, profession or marriage. Even if one has to go through various experiences in life in order to fulfil one’s psychological, physical and emotional demands, one can go ahead with that. In the long run everything or every stage of life is part of the great evolution. A baby cannot walk but a child can. A boy can run. These are stages. So we falter in the beginning. We make mistakes. We cannot think properly. We get angry. We have a lot of worries and anxiety. We have got all kinds of passions, jealousies, hatreds; they are in perfect harmony with the scheme of evolution.

It is true that you should not stop there. First point: jealousy, anger, hatred, greed, passion and so on are perfectly in order and you have to go through these experiences, like you become a child, then a boy, then a young man. Everything evolves. The point is, a spiritual aspirant does not stick there, does not stay there.

If you have hatred, have an experience and get out of it. If you have jealousy, well have it. Why do you subdue it? Why do you suppress it? Have it but then leave it behind as the traveller leaves behind the milestone so also every aspirant

has to leave behind these milestones of life – the mental tendencies, positive and negative both. The problem with us is we get stuck to one thing and we do not know how to get out of it, whether they are emotional desires, emotional demands or your psychological obligations, necessities and desires. You keep on moving around them for twenty, thirty and forty years until the day you are departing for the grave you are there; you do not leave them behind.

A spiritual aspirant must undergo every experience in life whether it is positive or negative, whether it is divine, animal or human, whether it is higher or lower. There is no difficulty with it but he should leave it as a traveller leaves milestones behind him, that is the central theory of detachment. Do not stick to anything, just leave everything behind. Today you have quarrelled with me, okay, perfectly all right but do not have it tomorrow. Today we are quarrelling for some reason, we have issues; we have points; we fight but not tomorrow; because tomorrow and today is twenty-four hours apart. In twenty-four hours, we can move further and we can move further to a point where the problem or the fight which we had yesterday is an event of the past.

It is the same about every single rhythm with prosperity, with power, with affluence or with a young body. We are young and then we become old. So we are travelling. Detachment is perfected. It can be done if you keep on flowing with the rhythm of life and do not stick to something indefinitely.

The one aspect of yoga I have most difficulty accepting is that of devotion to or worship of the guru. It seems to me to retard personal growth. What is your view on this?

There are people of this view. It is very difficult because I have also undergone some similar experiences. There are people who can go to a temple or a church and they pray; I do not understand. Why do they do it? I do not understand the meaning. I never understood it. If I have to pray, I can pray just here. I can pray in my bedroom. Why should I particularly go to that temple, before a statue, photograph or

in a graveyard? Oh no – I do not understand it and perhaps your question is my question.

I think such a man is not mentally evolved. He says retarded; I would say no, he is a mentally unevolved person. I have thought more about it. A human being has necessities which are very important. What are they? They are emotional needs.

Now the question is, why should one have a child? There are people who want to have babies. They want to have them, but what for? I do not understand it. It is their emotional need.

Emotions have forms, let us say parental or fraternal. These emotions need to be fulfilled because they are the basic forms of human personality. Parents love their children so much. You see Irish people carry babies all the time and love it; my parents must have done the same. If these people do not have babies, they feel a sort of void in life.

I do not know if you have felt it or not. I have not felt it but I think it is there; I see it in people. They feel a void. If the mother is dead, the child feels a void. If the mother is alive and the father is dead, the child feels a void. Maybe both parents have gone and the child is left alone, he feels a void and you can see that in his personality. It is not imagination. It is not our imagination. You can see that in his personality, that void has affected his personality, whether fatherless, motherless or parentless. Also in childless couples, you can see the void in their personality. Their behaviour is affected because that particular emotional need was not fulfilled. A child needs parents. Parents need children. If these two needs are not fulfilled, it affects the mind and personality. Why is another question.

In the same way, man and woman, husband and wife, lover and beloved, boyfriend and girlfriend have certain relationships. There is the relationship that is mental, emotional and physical. Supposing we were deprived of this relationship but we wanted it, most people would go crazy. There would be as many mental hospitals in our country as there are houses today. Every home would become a mental

hospital if a man cannot go with his woman, and a girl cannot go with her man, if they cannot love each other.

That is an emotional need. These are the necessities, the primary needs, the basic needs of life. When one grows, one has another need – to have a friend in a guru. Then guru is not merely a divine being, but guru is one to whom he can give the best of his emotions, not the ordinary emotions. There are refined forms of emotions. There are average forms of emotions. There are also lower forms of emotions. I am not talking about lower and average forms of emotion because when you need them, you have them. When you have a refined form of emotion, then definitely you need a guru; and when you do not have these refined forms of emotions, then certainly you do not need a guru.

Therefore, the devotion to guru or love affair with guru, which is a much better expression with guru, with your finer emotions, with your sublimated nature, is not an indication of a retarded personality. On the other hand, it is the indication of a growing and progressing personality.

How is it possible to keep a sense of direction with your spiritual growth when you are not close to a spiritual teacher?

It is good to be with your spiritual teacher for some time but it is not possible to be with him all the time. It is his image, his awareness and his spiritual presence which you can always carry with you.

There used to be one poet in the middle ages in Persia, Omar Khayyam. He has written beautiful couplets on this point. He says, 'I love you, I love you, and I love that jar which contains wine.' You understand? He calls the body a jar which contains wine. The jar is there but it is not important because you are in me. Which is more important, you by my side or you in me? That is called spiritual presence. The spiritual presence of any divine being, the spiritual presence of guru is much more powerful than actual physical presence.

I have been teaching yoga for more than a year now and recently lost my sense of confidence in this role. Can you make any suggestions?

I do not have any suggestions but I can tell you one thing, I used to teach yoga from 1956 to 1965. Sometimes I was the only person there. Nobody came in the morning. If ten people came, the next day they would become eight and four and five; I had to lose confidence. Likewise, there can be many reasons for the loss of confidence. I thought, 'Why is this happening? I am teaching yoga very satisfactorily and I know all the asanas and pranayamas, but still they do not come?'

I did lose confidence, not in myself, but in the profession of teaching yoga. I thought that this was not going to work. This happened up to 1964, eight years. When I was in Rishikesh with Swami Sivananda in the ashram for twelve years, I was also given the duty of teaching, but for twelve years nobody came to my class. All the visitors used to sit in satsang and do kirtan, but nobody came to my class in the early morning. That was enough to destroy my confidence, but it did not destroy my confidence. I said, 'No, perhaps there is something that I am missing.'

In 1964, the first thing that I did is I stopped moving. I stayed a few years not going out from the ashram in Munger. From 19 January 1964, almost continuously, I had streams of yoga teaching; it never stopped. The reason was that I became steady; before I was all the time trying to find out where was the problem.

In the same way, when you say that you are losing confidence in something, you have to find out why. Investigate. If you properly investigate, you will certainly discover the problem. I can assure you of one thing, a person losing confidence in teaching yoga in Australia is surprising. Because in Australia, wherever you sit down and start yoga, you will definitely get half a dozen people.

In a country like Australia where people are yoga-minded, where people at least take yoga kindly, your loss of

confidence must be properly investigated. According to that investigation, you should continue because that is a great service to people. It is also a great service to yourself, because when you teach yoga you become more and more aware, and more and more conscious.

What is fear and why do we have it?

Basically it is the effect or the result of hormonal imbalance. Fear can be injected; the glands are there. There are other forms of passions. Fears are there, passions are there, anxieties, worries, depressions, all these are caused by the factors that control the body. Basically it is that.

It is aided by the upbringing, the whole way we are brought up, and the kind of religious ideas we were given because most people in this world have fear, fear for God. Everybody is God-fearing; most people are God-fearing. Do people really fear God? Does it really help to develop a healthy society? Has it done so? No.

This fear was instilled in us. This is the basic fear. Man is taught to fear something that is not known to him, fear someone whom he has never seen, a ghost. We hear stories that in England there is a castle or an old house in France, and a ghost is living there and making all ting-ting-ting in the night or some funny sounds. These are fears of something which you have never seen, which is unknown.

The human being has inherited this fear from his ancestors. In the beginning, the human being lived entirely different situations. The whole day and night the man had to be amongst fear. A monkey baby, a calf or any animal has the capacity to climb a tree, run very fast or swim. Human beings up to one year cannot even hop, run or climb a tree. They need to have some practice.

So this is the poor situation of this intelligent human being. He had to survive many million years ago when there were many big animals to devour him. He had to survive and he was under constant fear. When he was under constant fear, the glands that are related to the secretions that produced

fear were developed in him. Adrenal glands, thyroid glands, all other glands have respective actions in the body, and these glands develop on account of the practice. So man practised fear all the time, as a result of that these glands or this mechanism in his body developed. That is the cause of fear.

If you want to overcome that fear, it is not easy. Even if you have nothing, no problem, nobody to kill you, nobody to rob you, nobody to criticize you, nobody to harm you or nobody to destroy you, even if there is no such problem, still you will have fear.

The brain, the nervous system and the glands interact with each other under certain conditions. In the daytime, a child can just walk through the garden or the bushes but in the night it cannot. The brain, the nervous system and the chemical or hormonal secretions relating to fear can be managed through a proper yoga system, and at the same time, clear the cobwebs in your religious personality.

What role does the morality and personality of the spiritual teacher play in the path and progress of the student?

It is a question of acceptance. If you are allergic to my personality and to my morality, then certainly you are not going to be influenced by me. You are not going to be benefited by me and I cannot penetrate in you, and there can be no link between yourself and myself. I am talking the inner link. If my personality is in complete agreement with you, then naturally you will be drawn to me and there is going to be a link between you and me. That link between you and me makes you my disciple and makes me your teacher.

It is not important what personality a teacher should have. We cannot specify what morality he should practise because in every society the moral standards of personality are different. Not only from country to country but also from time to time. Sometimes the disciple is very orthodox. Hindus are so orthodox. If they know that I drink wine and scotch . . . ah, they cannot accept it. There will be a

de-linking, you understand? There will be a de-linking. If they know that I smuggle gold, there would be a de-linking. But if they know that my needs are few and that I have been living a life of this kind and that kind, then there is a linking.

In my opinion, a disciple must choose the guru in his own image. It is according to your image that you have a guru. He may not be according to my image. I may not accept him because my standards are different and your standards are different.

There appears to be an ever increasing number of spiritually-minded people in Australia and it has been said that a new age of awareness is coming. How do you see this developing?

These people are everywhere. I have been to the Soviet Union and East European countries and they do a lot in Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and Poland. They are called the socialist block countries. I am not talking about Germany, England or France. People are passing through a period of an experience of anti-climax. When you follow a materialistic path, you are climbing, prosperity, affluence or material growth. There comes a point where your mind cannot accept anymore. Then there is an anti-climax. At this peak, everybody is thinking about what is the ultimate form of this universe. Who runs this majestic, fantastic show? Is he a man like me or is he a force? If he is a force, what is it like? Where is it? Is it there or is it here? If it is here, where is it?

Modern science has definitely played a great role in it, particularly physics because they have exploded matter. They have discovered energy and now they are going beyond energy. In Samkhya philosophy matter is called *prakriti* and energy is called *shakti*. Now they are going beyond. What is that beyond? They have not realized it yet; consciousness, *atma*, the self, yet they are talking about it. Many scientists have written beautiful books. Itzhak Bentov, a very great scientist, has written books about kundalini; he talks about

incarnation and the descent of divine energy on this plane in human beings. He says, 'How do you understand it scientifically?' We say avatar. When the divine being assumes a human form, he becomes the replica of that force. How is it possible? Is it scientifically tenable? He said yes.

Like that there are many spiritual questions and spiritual topics which scientists have been discussing in the last twenty to thirty years. Up to 1927 it was different. From Aristotle to Newton, they all believed that the universe was built with matter. Matter was the building block of the whole universe, right from the time of Aristotle or maybe even earlier up to Newton. With the advent of scientists like Max Plank, Einstein and many others, they came to understand that the inner matter, or the total matter, or the ultimate matter or the ultimate contents of matter were not matter. These objects are not matter. Atoms are bouncing all the time. It is not matter but it looks like matter. So therefore matter is not the building block of the universe but matter itself is what you call the condensation, solidification or concentration of the forces of energy.

Due to science, religious bigotry has also failed. I go to Catholic countries like Colombia and Spain where there are many big cardinals and I have no problem. They have their own religion. They have their own books. They have their own traditions, but at the same time when I talk about something other than what they talk about, they are prepared to listen. There may be a few fanatics. There may be a few orthodox thinkers. You have them in every country, but now humanity as a whole is trying to understand whether it is possible for us to be totally spiritual even though we may live in this world as ordinary human beings.

We are so unhappy, discontented and at the fag-end of life that everybody feels that he has lost this opportunity and he has missed this train. Everybody feels it and you will also feel it if you are not careful enough. As such, man has to find the solution for peace and enlightenment without feeling, 'How can I realize the higher being? I have to become a swami for

that. I have to renounce. I have to give up meat or drink or my affairs.'

Sri Aurobindo speaks about something very astounding which you have to understand. He talks about supermind as a descending force, not as an ascending force but as a descending force. Even as the sun rises in the morning and a part of the earth is illumined, the supramental force is descending and it is affecting the human minds, human consciousness and human behaviour as a whole.

Scientists are helping in the growth of this philosophy and yogis have been thinking about it. Aldous Huxley has spoken about it. Annie Bessant, the theosophical crusader, Madame Blavatsky, the Russian lady, and Colonel Olcott are very important historical names in theosophical traditions and they speak about the same thing – the descent of a supermental ray. Whether it is a physical force or whether it is a spiritual force or whether it is something like a cosmic ray or a beam coming from extra-terrestrial places, it is something which we keep on discussing for decades and centuries.

There is definitely a great change taking place and what a great change has taken place in the last sixty years that I remember! People are asking more and more about the substance of matter, the essence of matter, the origin of matter and the actual personality of matter.

Who am I? Swami Satyananda? No, it is the name my priest, my guru, my teacher or my parents have given me. A sannyasin? No. My guru has made me a sannyasin. So the name, the sect, the religion, the language is superimposed on me. I am not that. Then who am I? Am I this physical body? Or am I this mind? How do you define yourself? These are the questions that keep coming to every intelligent being today.

What part does the outer personality play in the realization of the inner nature?

As far as I understand and as far as I have gone through stories and examples, inner life is unaffected by outer life. Socially it may be. If I am a dacoit, a burglar, a criminal, a

murderer or a debauchee, it may affect my social life. It may affect my social interactions, social circle, but certainly it does not affect my spiritual being, if I am trying to tread that path. The *Bhagavad Gita* has said no matter in which family you are born, no matter in which country you are born, no matter which religion you pursue and which moral path you pursue, if you are treading the spiritual path your external life means nothing. You are going to experience that spiritual self.

There are stories about dacoits, murderers, debauchees, prostitutes, about all kinds of people in every clime and country where those hopeless people have realized the highest being. So the inner personality is unaffected by the external personality.

In order to live in a society, to create, patronize or help a good social system towards peace, harmony, accord or non-disturbance, it is always good that the spiritual personality and the external personality have some sort of parallel. They must have some sort of balance. Otherwise your external personality will create a very bad society. There will be no harmony. There will be no peace. There will be discord, tension, fight, murder, rape all the time going on. What can you do? It is better to have a balance between the external and internal personality although it is not at all compulsory.



29

Satsang

19 October 1987

Addressing a group of kriya yoga aspirants

What is the connection between yoga and astrology?

Astrology talks about science or some such things which are both microcosmic and macrocosmic. In macrocosms you have planets, stars, their movements, orbits and their frequent interactions with each other. You say the planet is in the fifth or seventh house. In astrology we say the moon is in the fifth house, whereas the house of the moon is in the second and has gone to the ninth. That is what we talk about, the interrelationships which we call macrocosms, the bigger, extended universe. But the universe is not only macrocosmic, it is also microcosmic. Within an atom, even in the minutest atom, molecules and space are exactly and accurately proportionate to the macrocosmic space. If there is a sun outside, there is a sun in an atom. If there are planets revolving around the external sun, there are electrons revolving around the internal one. The behaviour, process and everything else is the same in both. You can safely say there is a universe outside and another inside and both are duplicates of each other. Not at all different. Not even by the smallest fraction. This body is a microcosmic universe.

This is the view of scientists and has been the view of the vedic seers of the Upanishads and Vedanta. Vedantic philosophy says that the replica of the absolute and eternal, the replica of everything, what you call God, Allah, Brahman

or Soul, is here and is in everything. That central figure, the substratum is present in each and every speck of this creation. There is no field, place or thought, nothing in this universe as far as it can extend, no place where that substance, the central *tattva* or element is not present.

This is something which you cannot understand by logic, but only by deeper experiences. Modern, materialistic science is now coming very close to this. However, vedantic philosophy has been talking about this time and again.

In the past, many attempts were made by various religious thinkers to contradict this idea, that the ultimate soul and the substratum were transcendental and not immanent. In philosophy, you talk about two systems, the immanent and the transcendental. The transcendental principle surpasses all the categories of mind and every category of senses and every form of logic. We cannot understand it or reach it. It is beyond everything. The other principle is called immanent. Immanent means present in everything, everywhere, every time and all the time. It is here now, it was here yesterday and will be here tomorrow. There is no place where the substratum is not. That is called the principle of immanence.

According to these two principles, the philosophers developed two systematic philosophies called pantheistic and panentheistic. These two words are very important in understanding the relationship between yoga and astrology. Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Zoroastrianism are pantheistic. Vedic religion is panentheistic. It says that the reality is not only transcendent, but also immanent. In order to understand the reality which is beyond all categories of mind, body and senses, you have to look into the immanence. What we realize in *samadhi* and *nirvana* is transcendental reality through the realization of immanence.

If that be the case, then the practitioner of yoga, that is yourself, has all the planets revolving in you. At the time of your birth when you were produced by your mother and your head came out, the first breath entered into your nose and your mother's system of feeding was blocked, that is the

instant which is considered to be the planetary position of your life. The first breath goes into the nose. Because up to the time of birth, the mother feeds the child directly and its lungs do not function. The moment he inhales the first breath, his mother's system is disconnected and his own is connected. That is considered to be the time, *muhurta*, or the moment, of his birth and according to that the astrological chart is cast.

Therefore, the diseases, sicknesses, mental and emotional conditions, destiny, success, failure, profession, business and education, including your love or marital affairs are all dependent upon the movement of the macrocosmic universe in you. By the practices of yoga, we can influence the effects of the planetary movements. First of all, we can do this through mantras.

The power of mantra is very great. The mantra is a simple word and you need not say that it is the name of God or something. *Mantra* may be the name of God, but it is a sound force, the shakti of nada. This sound, when repeated many hundred, thousand times with concentration of mind, starts from the same point where you were born twenty, thirty or forty years ago. The entire relationship between the planetary positions in your life has a different ratio and different relationship, and accordingly the destiny, *prarabdha*, and the things to come are amended. In certain cases, they are also changed.

In yoga, when we give mantra we always look to the zodiac sign which is called the astrological sign or *rashi* in Hindu astrology. On the basis of that astrological sign, the mantra is to be discovered because these mantras belong to frequencies related to the particular astrological or heavenly position within the body, whether it is *Aim*, *Kleem*, *Kreem* or *Om*. They are sound principles and this sound is subject to frequencies and velocity. The simple rule is: higher the velocity, lesser the frequency and lesser the velocity, higher the frequency.

In the practice of mantra, the aim is to increase the frequency of sound and decrease the velocity. In order

to minimize or decrease the velocity we take recourse to concentration, one-pointedness of mind. When your mind becomes one-pointed, the mental patterns lose their velocity. It is quite understandable, intelligible. When the mind becomes quiet, the jumping becomes slow, the velocity is reduced. When the velocity of the mind is reduced, naturally the velocity of sound is also reduced because sound and mind are functioning in total interaction with each other. When you say *Kleem*, you grasp it through your mind and when the mind's velocity is decreased, the velocity of the sound is also decreased. When the velocity of mind and sound are both decreased, the frequency increases.

When the frequency of the sound increases, it becomes a force, a *shakti*, and this particular force is responsible for what we call spiritual experiences. These spiritual experiences are not at all hallucinations. They may not have meaning at that time, but they are not hallucinations or dreams. They are not even nightmares. While practising mantra, you are in total interaction and relationship with the external universe. You know that you are in a room, in siddhasana or padmasana and practising mantra. You are aware of time and space and your environment. It is at this time that the frequency can be intensified and an experience can be gained.

Moses saw the bush burning but it did not become ash. He was not sleeping, unconscious or dreaming. He was aware of his environment and time and space. Similarly, another example would be of Blaise Pascal, a great scientist and mathematician of France. His mathematical equations are quoted very frequently in modern-day mathematics. He was a simple mathematician playing with figures, numbers and equations. One evening, when it was dark, he suddenly found a big fire burning in his room. Can you imagine? He was not sleeping. He was aware it was about eight, nine or ten o'clock in the night. That fire burnt in his room for two hours. He was looking at it for two hours before it disappeared.

Similar experiences cannot be termed madness. They cannot be called hallucinations. They are experiences

which come from the inner depth. Therefore, the mantra and its relationship with the mind and your birth sign is so important.

We are told we should put others' needs before our own; we should serve others, but just how far do we go with this when there are some people who would take advantage of our kindness and demand more than we can give them?

This has been my problem too. I have never been able to understand it. I have lived with a man who was my guru. I should not just use the word man. He was my guru. He was the type of man you have described and by that he gained; he did not lose anything. Materially, he gained. His name and fame spread and he became a great personality, the guru of thousands and millions, whether Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Roman Catholics, Protestants, all kinds of people. People used to come to him and he always put others' needs before his own.

I would cook food for him, say a South Indian dish. Before eating, he would keep some chapattis and dal separately in another plate and would tell me, 'Give it to that swami'. First, that was the order, 'Give this to that swami', and only then would he eat. He had a very simple process; before eating, when the food came to him, he took a little rice, never roti, dal and sabjee, a little morsel, and put it on the ground, on the earth.

Most Hindus do it; they say this is an offering to the gods, divine beings. Some people, even before eating, take a chapatti to the cowshed and give it to the cow. They do this because, according to the Hindu religion, feeding the cow is the highest dharma, the greatest religion and the greatest spirituality. They do it every morning and also at mealtimes.

That was a simple example. People gave so much to Swamiji. He would get blankets, clothes, sweets, fruits, biscuits and money every day! He just kept on giving, from human beings to monkeys. In those days, there were a lot of monkeys in Rishikesh. These monkeys were rowdies, not gentlemen,

and very shrewd. There was a kitchen, a very big hall, close to where we used to eat. The moment we opened the door, monkeys, who were gathered in a corner, would go into the kitchen and pick up twenty rotis with great speed. 'Click!' just like that. They were so troublesome. At that time the kitchen was on the Ganges bank. We used to carry tiffins from the Ganges back to the kitchen for some sick people. On the way, the monkeys would attack and take away the chapattis and rotis. Swami Sivananda fed them every Friday morning. It was the duty of the swamis on Thursday to soak horse grains in water. On Friday morning, on the same terrace, some swami used to say 'O! O!' calling the monkeys to eat the grain. This was done because he said monkeys represent the great Hanuman, the monkey god. He thought like that. It is not possible for me to think the same way, maybe it is difficult for you too.

You see those people are born with that dharma. They come with that nature because doing good to others can also be an egoistic action. You are propelled by your own ego and in order to feed that ego you do good to others because that gives you satisfaction. But there are people in this world who always consider that it is their duty to do good to others and they are born only with that purpose. There have been many stories in the East and West where people born with that nature consider others' needs superior to their own.

Now comes the point of exploitation, misuse of that attitude by others, which I think is not true. The person has this attitude as a part of his personality and he is not acting out of his ego in order to satisfy himself or impress others, and is not just being charitable, altruistic or humanistic. No, it is his dharma and nature. In such a case, a change takes place in the personality of the other party to whom the help is being extended and that person is transformed. Likewise, saints and sages, sadhus, mahatmas and divine messengers have transformed the lives of many people.

It is not easy for everyone to practise this, but I think we also do it. Most of us do it in a very limited sense. We keep

the needs of our children ahead of our needs, and if we love somebody, our child, lover, beloved, friend, husband or parents, we always place their needs ahead of ours. Am I wrong? We have been practising it, but the point here is we are practising it because we consider that person as ours. My daughter, my son or my darling, that mine-ness has to go away. That's difficult.

When there is someone who is not yours in any way, a stranger, a monkey, an animal or anybody, and you are able to extend that part of your spirituality to him, it means you have become selfless. That is called selfless service, selfless action. It is not a bad action when you are looking after your child or you keep the need of your nearest and dearest one ahead of yours. It is all right; there is nothing wrong with it. It is not unethical or immoral. It is necessary, but it is an outcome of your selfishness because your self is involved in it. Now this involvement of your self makes you sacrifice, become kind and keep his needs ahead of yours.

If this selfishness can be removed and is not a part of your personality, whatever you do will be done without thinking about what you are going to get out of it or what you are going to lose. When Swami Sivananda did many funny things I could not relate with him. It was so difficult for me to understand what he was doing, as I am so practical and pragmatic! But I always knew he never thought about what he was going to gain thereby. The only thing that was in his mind, in my opinion, was that God is in every form. That was his view. The monkey is God and these boys, these ladies, who are here, these ashram residents, they are God. The guest who has come is God. Therefore, if anybody is sick, unwell, unhealthy or in trouble, I am not helping him for my gain or for his gain, but I am worshipping God. That is the attitude of saintly people and everybody has a different attitude. Saintly people have the attitude of divinity and the people who are charitable, humanistic and philanthropists have the attitude of doing good to others. They are working for other people.

There used to be many people suffering from leprosy in Rishikesh. They used to beg on the road. Swami Sivananda brought them together in a colony. Many times the local leader or politician used to come and praise him, saying he was doing great social service. Swami Sivananda used to say only one thing; 'If you serve others selflessly, some of your bad karmas are written off.' Because karma encounters karma; karma contradicts karma. That is how the nullification of karma takes place. In my opinion, you have to think about this carefully. Don't just do it emotionally. After all, if you can reach that height, and many great people have reached that height, it is worth doing it.

Is there such a thing as destiny? Are there plans laid out for each incarnation?

I do not think that there should be any other opinion on it. It is very scientific. You reap the harvest. You have a handful of seeds. You sow them again. If you sow wheat, you do not get paddy. If you sow paddy, you do not get barley. If you sow barley, you do not get mangoes. There is always a process of action and reaction. In scientific language they are called equal and opposite. They are always present. The whole universe, not only human beings, vegetables, minerals, chemicals or waves which you cannot see. Whatever waves there are, they are products of certain events. An event took place and a reaction began. A sound was born and reaction began. A tree was born and the seeds were thrown out.

One lifetime is not enough. You may not believe it. That is another matter. It is illogical to feel, think or believe that there is only one life for man, animal or object. It is not true. Metamorphosis, transmigration is endless. The seed will be transmigrating from the tree and another tree shall be born. Then it will produce seeds. It will migrate and another tree and more trees will be born. That is how mangoes, paddy, and wheat have survived along with avocado, the Australian fruit. They have survived for thousands and thousands of years, and this is the transmigration of the species.

There is transmigration of individuality, called karma. A karma is not destroyed. Experience cannot be destroyed. Every event is an experience. Every moment is an event and every moment, every cognition and perception is registered in the deeper mind. We call it the causal body, the subtle body. The physical body is called the gross body. The mind and the subconscious mind are known as the subtle bodies. What projects in dream and the thinking mind is called the subtle body, and then there is the causal body. These three bodies comprise the personality of an object and after death, migration takes place and the karmas bear fruit at the right time.

According to the doctrine of karma, there are three forms of karma. One is known as the accumulated karma; what you have done in the past. It is accumulated like fixed deposits. The second karma which you are generating at the moment now is the current one; it is the current account in the bank. And the third karma is destiny. When the fixed deposit is maturing and paying you the interest of 10 percent or 12 percent, it is destiny. It is not the principle. The principle shall always remain, but you will only reap destiny. That principle will go further and create another destiny. Like a fixed deposit, you will get 10,000 at the end of the two years, and you take it, put it in your pocket and reinvest it. So these are the three forms of karma, the accumulated, the current and the destiny.

Destiny is what you have to enjoy. Current is something which you have to do on account of your desires and passions, and so on and so forth. Accumulated actions are those you are carrying with you, and every month, day, and minute, the maturity is taking place and you are reaping the interest of it – unhappiness, happiness, death, birth, love, hatred and so on. It is important to know whether you can negate these karmas or not. Is it possible to escape them? Is there a way?

Some people say, yes, there is. There are methods by which the karmas can be erased, scraped, improved and adjusted. If you have a revolver in your wallet to shoot

someone, there is enough time for you to decide not to. If you have a revolver in your hand and a finger on the trigger, you can still hold yourself, but if you have pressed the trigger and the bullet is off, there is no question of holding it back.

Destiny is something like the third example. Destiny has to be faced by everyone, even a prophet, messenger or incarnation, a great saint or sage, whether it is Ramakrishna, Moses, Christ, Swami Sivananda or anyone, including you and me. That is the law of nature and there cannot be anything beyond that. There is no exception to the laws of nature because it is stern. It is fixed. These laws of nature control human beings, vegetables, minerals, animals, chemicals, gases, waves and many other finer things in the universe. It is not only you and me.



30

Sadhana Under Guru

14 November 1987

Could you tell about your own sadhana when you started under your guru?

I really did not practise or learn any sadhana from my guru. I have been searching for the cause of an experience which I had when I was only six years old. That experience which came to me, a very average child at the age of six, set my mind into motion and it brought me to maturity in thinking. I wanted to know whether it was a sickness, an evil spirit or a divine spirit possessing me. 'What is it?' At the age of six, I had an experience where I could see my body as it is – hands, feet and everything, but I could not feel it. It was very frightening, it was not a soft, smooth experience. Every time it came to me, I did not know what was going to happen and fear crept into my mind.

That was the reason why I went for many sadhanas. I did japa, I prayed, I chanted *Hanuman Chalisa* and many other things. I read the Bible and went to church. Then I practised asanas, pranayama and hatha yoga – neti, dhauti, basti. At the age of twelve, I practised khechari by cutting the tongue and all kinds of things. I do not know whether anything did produce any result because I was too small to make a judgement.

At the age of eighteen I met a lady of thirty-five. She was a tantric, illiterate lady from Nepal and she taught me tantra,

practically all the forms of tantra that there are. That did produce results and hallucinations. It did transport me to a different realm of experience during the practice and also after the practice. Sometimes I could go a bit within myself. Sometimes I could go very far within myself. Sometimes I used to go within myself and be frightened and come out. Maybe what was happening to me was due to the sadhana that I had practised earlier and which might have purified my body. I learnt from her for about six months. That gave me very good results and I was very happy with it. After she left I still did have experiences but eventually they ceased to come, and she had told me that this would happen because these experiences belong to the lower divine planes. She said that one day these experiences would cease and I would go into samadhi.

It happened. I used to sit in the asana and then get lost. I did not know where I was. I lost total connection with time, space and myself too. It was much deeper than sleep, deeper than anything. It was something like death. I died and then I came back. By that time, I had lots of books and was studying Sanskrit. I can speak Sanskrit even better than English and Hindi. I love Sanskrit. It is perhaps the only language I love. So I used to read those books, the yoga, Samkhya and Nyaya texts. The various philosophies like Buddhist and Jain texts and the texts related to the philosophies of India and Greece, and the Epicureans and Hedonists. I came to know that what I was attaining was *jada samadhi*, where the consciousness is suspended. It is suspended animation and therefore the karmas are not roasted; the karmas are not extinguished.

Karma is the seed of existence: you are born again and again; you are unhappy; you get this incarnation and you feel this 'I'ness. It is the cause, the seed, the sperm of duality. Karma is in a suspended animation stage; and therefore, once you come out of *jada samadhi* you are the same – same soul, same rogue, and there is practically no change in you.

Then I read Swami Vivekananda. I have very great respect for him as a swami, but as far as academic things are

concerned or yoga I did not read his books because he is talking about something beyond what I need. I don't need inspiration. His book on the *Yoga Sutras* is very concise, and a book which can give you some experience. He said without *guru kripa*, without guru's grace, you cannot cross the barrier.

Until that time, I did not like the idea of guru and serving someone; it was not possible for me. When I was born, the first thing that my parents placed in my hand was a gun. That was my tradition. My ancestors fought on the battlefield and that was the traditional training for we are fighters and warriors. We do not care for death. Death is just a passing show. It is nothing important; you do not have to worry or cry about it. So then I read about many gurus, like Ramakrishna Paramhansa, then I met Anandmayi Ma at that time. Finally, I left my place in search of a guru, not to learn sadhana from him but to get his grace – a free donation!

I went to Rajasthan and I lived with a tantric yogi for about nine months. He was a master in tantra but not in practice. He did not know as much as that lady knew but he was a scholar. He told me all the different systems of tantra, the Kashmir system, South Indian system and others, but I was in search of a guru who could just bring me out of that jada samadhi. I left the yogi and I do not remember the intermediate journey. I have a good memory, but I do not know what happened. Until a point near Saharanpur in UP. There was a sadhu with matted locks and he was smoking a cigarette. I had not smoked for many months and I asked him to give me a cigarette. He got angry with me. He said, "You want a cigarette? You are a young boy." Finally, he asked me where I was going. I said that I was in search of my guru. He sent me to Rishikesh where I met Swami Sivananda within three days. Swami Sivananda told me only one thing, "Stay here. Work hard. That's all." I stayed.

I did not do sadhana as a matter of fact. From time to time I used to meditate or sit on the Ganges bank, that kind of thing. The sadhana which I did in Rishikesh was hard work, physical work as a kitchen servant, as a bullock cart

driver. I used to cut grass for the bullocks in the ashram. I used to clean the cows and milk the cows, cook food for them, bring vegetables or take the post from Sivananda Ashram to Rishikesh two miles on my head and post it there and come back – no cycle. I used to go to deposit the money in the bank. From Rishikesh ashram to Dehradun is twenty-six miles, the nearest bank was twenty-six miles away. The nearest ration shop was six miles up. I had diseases like hepatitis, typhoid, paratyphoid, dysentery and ulcers in the mouth, vitamin A deficiency. Tuberculosis also I had. That was my sadhana.

Sadhanas like kriya yoga, kundalini yoga, swara yoga, prana vidya, ajapa japa or hatha yoga are intended for different categories of aspirants and really you do not know which will suit you and which you will be able to do regularly with great success. Those who are practising different sadhanas can do so but ultimately they will have to assess as to which is the particular sadhana to which the mind gets stuck, or which appeals to your mind, and as a result of that gives some kind of regularity and inner equanimity, and an inner experience is born.

You do not have to say which sadhana is greater. To some it is ajapa japa, to some kriya yoga and for others it can be any other sadhana. The central theme of every sadhana is life itself. If you practise sadhana in 'isolation' by extracting it from the flow of life, I do not think that you can get anything. A candle is burning and the windows are open, when a gale comes, the candle is extinguished. Whatever tranquillity, one-pointedness or equanimity you attain through the practice of raja yoga, bhakti yoga, jnana yoga or any yoga sadhana is immediately destroyed by the terrific currents of life, the day-to-day life. Therefore, it is more important to adjust your life current and the work you do in life, the karma and acts you do. They are really intended to purify yourself. That is the greatest sadhana.

You have children, parents, a wife, friends, property, money, passions, ambitions, desires and hatred. That is the

totality of life. It is like a garden where you do not have only mango trees but also oranges. Different forms of experiences in your life become important and you will have to decide how to face them and fix them up. If you think that you are going to renounce and abandon them, perhaps you are going to have to come back again, as I did once. When you leave your karma, it is necessary to come back again. Life has to be understood whatever you do. Anger, passions, ambitions, worries, hatred, anxieties, ill health, good health, good friends, bad friends, disappointments, frustrations – it is a big list. That's life! How are you going to understand it? Swami Sivananda said, "Work hard and everything will be all right."

People consider life in two compartments. Marketing, banking, driving, cooking, counting money, writing letters, talking to your wife and children, having good food are worldly things. Sitting for meditation and doing pranayama, reading the *Gita* and Bible are spiritual things. You have divided life into two compartments. Now break those compartments for they are just one and the same if you are a sadhaka. If you are a traveller on the spiritual path life is just one. If you are not a traveller on the path, then your worldly life is worldly life and spiritual life is spiritual life because you are not aware.

For people who have been searching for a way there is no one way, there are no two ways. There are only ways. Everything, the entire existence, manifestation, reaction, life as a whole is an experience within yourself. Your interaction with your family is taking place within yourself. Your interactions with worldly things are taking place within yourself. If you see some dirty, obnoxious stuff outside and visualize it, it is yourself. You are experiencing that dirty stuff within yourself in the form of your mind. You are experiencing yourself. Pain, pleasure, disappointments, the dull life and hatred, which you experience in your day-to-day life is an experience of yourself.

If it can be realized by you that every work which you do will be a part of the inner experience, then it can help

you. This did happen to me in Rishikesh. Swami Sivananda has clearly written that my capacity to run the ashram was so fantastic, I am talking 25, 26, 27 years ago, so fantastic that the whole Divine Life Society is not Swami Sivananda's dream – it is my dream. I dreamt it. I saw the houses, the quarters, the ladders, the staircases, the temple, the building, the colour, the painting, the woodwork, everything else, the mail, the money and the kitchen, everything. It used to go into my mind during the night all the time, for hours and hours together and for nothing. The day I left I just left it. It is not in my mind. I am not sorry that I am not there; I am happy that I am here. This is how you have to arrange yourself.

Practise any sadhana you like. Practise swara yoga and after a few years or a few months you can give it up and practise kriya yoga; then you can give up kriya yoga and you can do some other yoga. That is not important. You need just two things in life in order to make a breakthrough. One is the tantric way of practising which is something very powerful. It can explode the mind. Every householder can do tantric practice.

For example, marriage is not necessary for progeny, though once upon a time it was necessary. Enjoyment can also not be the purpose of marriage. The purpose of marriage is to establish a relationship between the two poles of reality which in the universe are known as time and space.

There are two forms of energy called time and space, what you call positive and negative, two forms of energy interlinked with man's consciousness. They are the two aspects of consciousness which always remain separate, apart from each other, diametrically opposite. There is a time when they travel in the opposite direction, towards each other. There is a point where they meet and where the experience begins.

Man and woman represent time and space. I am not talking of a social science or biology. I am talking spirituality. They are different and they have to be different. Positive

and negative poles of energy are different from each other; therefore they create an effect. This is the opportunity for everyone to make a breakthrough through tantra which is the easiest path: the body merges with the senses. The senses merge with the mind. Mind merges with buddhi. Buddhi merges with ahamkara. Ahamkara merges with *mahatattwa*, the great principle. Then, the second thing, you have to find a guru who should create a final breakthrough.



31

Tantra

23 November 1987

Addressing a group of kriya yoga aspirants

What is tantra and how are tantric practices different from yoga?

It is very important that you examine tantra critically. It is no use telling you the differences between yoga and tantra because ultimately the object of tantra and yoga is the same. Both talk about emancipation, *moksha*, but of course, classically and historically there are differences. Tantric traditions are much older. I think they are the oldest, much older than scriptures like the Vedas, Bible, Koran or Zend Avesta or even Lao Tzu. Tantric traditions were unwritten, oral traditions.

If you follow the history of man, with reason and logic, you must accept that man was fortunate enough to discover that he had a mind maybe many thousands of years ago after he began to walk on this planet. This is how evolution began. That was man's greatest discovery, that he had a mind and could relate himself to time, space and object at the same time.

This relationship, between mind and the triple realities of nature, was the foundation of the great breakthrough. That is where man broke away from his other relatives, the animals. We are related to them; there is no doubt about it. They called it *chitta*, awareness. In English you call it mind and various philosophies have given it various names. That

awareness in man, which made him aware of himself, is the ego principle, *ahamkara*, *chitta*, *manas*, the mind, and *buddhi*, intelligence.

Ancient teachings

It must have happened many hundreds of thousands of years ago. Do not talk about five thousand years. I mean it is absurd, illogical. Those of you who have had some access to the vedic literature, of which the oldest is the *Rig Veda*, and have read the renderings of Max Mueller, Wilson and many other western scholars in Germany, England and other countries, will agree with me. If you study the literature, the composition, the metres, its poetry and many other aspects, you will agree that a primitive man, a man just trying to evolve, could not create that literature. A primitive man could not just get up and start writing like Shakespeare and Milton. It must have taken many thousands of years before he was capable of writing like these thinkers. So vedic literature was an outcome of the maturity of man's mental processes, called knowledge, *jnana*. The word knowledge in Sanskrit is known as *veda*. Veda does not mean holy scripture or religious book; it means knowledge.

Tantric traditions are much older than this, they are called *agamas* and the Vedas are called *nigamas*. These agamas are oral as well as written traditions. They are oral traditions handed down from guru to disciple, from mothers to daughters and in some places they are handed down through art, painting, music, magical rites, rituals and sculptures.

Today music has become a means of recreation and relaxation. Art has become a pastime for a capitalist society, but art has greater meaning as in the temples of Puri, Khajuraho, and many other places in India. If you go to the southern parts of Colombia, in the district of Neiva, Tolima and San Agustin, you can see stone carvings scattered over hundreds of kilometres. Ignorant Colombians say it is the creation of hunters, for they have lost their tradition. Similarly, in some places in France, Russia and Scandinavia

you can find such things, and this is how the traditions were handed down.

Expansion and liberation

This tantric tradition was oral and it came to man voluntarily. Let us examine what the word tantra means. It can mean many things. In a particular context, in its historical and classical sense, *tantra* means expansion and liberation. Expansion, just as you stretch a rubber band and expand it or you expand a balloon by blowing into it. Expansion means stretching something of a particular size and making it bigger. Here liberation is not used in the religious sense as many Christian and religious books say. In this context, liberation is used exactly as it would be in physics – the release of energy, energy becoming free, liberated. These are the two ideas which form the word tantra.

It may have happened that in a particular village, a man was maybe singing, sitting, thinking or dreaming when he saw a vision of a great, disastrous flood coming. He woke up and told his tribe that he had some sort of vision in which he saw the coming of a big flood and persuaded them to move away. So they moved out of that locality, and after a month or so the flood did come.

There may have been many similar instances which happen even today. That is why you begin to wonder, 'Why is it happening, who does it, how did it happen, is it the conscious mind, or the subconscious mind? Maybe it is a vision from God, or the awakening of kundalini, or just a hallucination, or it could be a paranormal or abnormal functioning of the brain?' You have not got an answer for it. Some may say God has given this man the vision and he has saved us; he becomes your saviour. Others say, no, his kundalini is awakened, allowing him to foresee it. Nowadays, you may have some sort of answer, but imagine one million years ago when man has just made the breakthrough. He was just organizing himself, learning to learn, think and adjust his memory, intelligence and his logic, and suddenly he began to have some sort of

visions, either during his waking or dream states or during his tribal dances. People will certainly ask, what is it? How did he do it? This is just one simple example. There are many others.

Maybe a man in a village has healing power. He touches you and the sickness goes away. So they explained it in their own way. Today, we explain it in our way, through Kirlian photography, animal magnetism, prana vidya and others. When Christ did many things in Israel, the Jews called him a magician. That was all they could understand. In India, when Buddha helped many people out of their problems in life, they said, 'He is an enlightened one.' You see how the explanations differ. They do not say he is a magician, but an enlightened man who has pure buddhi, is sattwic and has a pure consciousness, so he is able to help others. If the same things happen in Africa, the man is said to have control over some spirits through which he helps others. These enquiries in the beginning of man's history ultimately formed the basic ground for tantra.

In the early period of tantra the traditions were very confusing. Even today, it is a confusing tradition. There has also been a lot of misinterpretation and exploitation. Some people have been helped, while a lot of harm was done to others. Many people were worshipped as gods, divine beings. But these things came to those people naturally, not by their personal effort. There are people who are perfect by birth, who we call *siddhas*. Then people began to say if this is not bogus but true, and if this can happen in one case or in many others, can we also acquire it? That is when they began to search for a way which came to be called the tantric paths. You may call them the spiritual, magical, ritualistic paths, or the kundalini way, the left-hand way.

Yogic disciplines

The vedic traditions evolved later. When man became a writer, poet, composer, he began to sing the hymns of the Vedas. Later, they came to the point where they said, 'If you want to awaken your consciousness, awareness, and mind; and if you

want to become extraordinary, we will show you the way.' 'What is the way?' The answer is, 'It is yoga.' Now the same tantric events which had been explained in the name of spiritualism, devis and devatas, the animal, gods and others were all forgotten in yoga. In yoga, they say it is your own dissipated mind becoming weak. When it is concentrated it becomes powerful. Try to process this mind just as a scientist processes matter. The scientist splits matter into various elements: molecules, atoms, electrons until finally, when everything is stripped off, he comes to a very fine substance called energy. In the same way, the mind is split by going into yourself and gradually drawing the essence of the mind. This is the path of yoga.

Yogic philosophy says, 'Subdue the mind, withdraw the mind. When it goes out off the point, bring it back again, discipline it, control it, put it on the right track with yama and niyama and more.' But tantra says, 'Don't worry, expand the mind, let it think. Do not try to control the mind, just continue with your practices. If it is pranayama, mantra or magical rites, whatever your practice is, just go on with it and do not worry about the mind.' In this way the flow, the expression of the mind, or I should say, the changes taking place in the mental frame should not be suppressed or subdued. This is the basic difference, there is no other difference.

We live in a society which cannot exist without some form of discipline. If tantra says, 'It doesn't matter, don't talk about discipline, let your mind run wild, you can think anything,' I don't think any sane society will accept it. They will say, 'No! It is important to have a better quality of society. People must keep their mind, buddhi, attitudes and philosophy well-disciplined.' In this respect, yoga has the advantage and that is why it has a greater following in society. Yoga directly helps in proper organization and systematization of society.

Beyond the senses and mind

The words expansion and liberation in tantra have definite meanings. When you sit down and visions float in your mind, what is happening to you is called expansion. When the mind

moves beyond the given categories, it is expansion. The mind is based and dependant on the sensorial perception; the senses bring information to the mind. When I see a flower and recognize it as one, it is called cognition. If there is no flower, there is no flower-cognition. When someone sings, I can hear the music because of the relationship between the ears and the music. If the music is not there, there cannot be the cognition of sound.

When the mind can function, cognize and experience sound, form, smell, touch, taste and knowledge without an intermediary basis, that is called expansion of mind. It can only take place if you have an expanded mind. If not, then your knowledge will have to depend upon the objects being perceived by the senses and transmitted to the mind by the normal, regular mind. The regular mind functions within given parameters or boundaries, but an expanded mind functions beyond the limitations of the senses, beyond time.

The expansion of mind takes place through various methods. There have been times in history when people have tried to expand the mind through a biochemical process. Parsees and Hindus used to drink soma. Soma is a creeper; I do not know if you can still get it today. The Brazilians say there are soma creepers in Brazil. The Vedas contain a lot of references to this soma creeper. There are soma sacrifices called *soma yajnas*, conducted by Brahmins, the priests, intellectuals and yogis. The soma creepers are collected in an earthen pot on a full moon night and buried underground. It is left to brew and ferment. When the proper time comes, it is taken out and drunk, making them feel very high. The mind begins to expand and they begin to see divinities, colours, sounds and have altered states of consciousness. Later it was banned in India because it became dangerous for people who were not prepared.

Everybody is not qualified for everything. People began to think, 'If Brahmins can drink soma, why shouldn't I? It is my basic, fundamental right.' People talk about these fundamental rights today. There are many stories about this in the Vedas. Once the *kshatriyas*, the fighting class, asked

the same question. The priest replied that it would split their heads if they were to drink it. Disregarding the priest's warning, they drank it and split their heads. They would drink the soma and fall down drunk in the streets. That is because they cannot control it. In America, there are boys who jump out of windows when they take LSD, thinking the window is a mall or a highway. The same thing can happen with many other products which influence your biochemical structure. In tantra and yoga they are called *aushadi* or *vanaspati*, which means an extract from a herb or from nature.

Besides this, there are many other methods to give the process of expanding the mind a boost – what you may call a booster. One of them is going to the burial ground where dead bodies are disposed of, where they are booked for heaven. I have done it. And yes, it does work at least for a few days, but please do not do it. I could not do more because, after all, I had a family. If people want to go there, they won't be allowed as there are traditions to be followed. They may go mad or may not be able to handle the effect of the mysterious, frightening atmosphere of the burial ground.

There I was sitting in the burial ground and all the time there was fear creeping into my whole body; my heart was palpitating at a very high rate and every now and then I was expecting something. It was all in my subconscious, but it was so frightening. I tried my level best, but each time I felt that I was going to lose my mind. The same thing can happen to many people. They go to the burial ground to face the environment but they also have to face their own mind. The mind is under tension, the pressure of fear and certain occult impressions. If you are weak, you are done for. You will have to be transferred to a mental hospital if you are not already dead from a heart attack. If you are strong, you will survive with a few startling experiences. I saw a light there, but the bright light was not outside, it was in my mind. You are trying to create an effect on the gross matter of the body.

You should remember one point which I have forgotten to mention. In tantra, this physical body is not a product of

sin. Tantra does not believe in sin, even sex is not a sin; it is a sadhana. I don't have to go into the details. This body is not a product of sin and they view the body exactly as the scientists who say that this body is a combination of atoms and molecules, compressed together in a particular proportion. This body is not just flesh or bone; it is not marrow, ligaments and muscles. If you go deeper into it, you will find that this body is composed of the most microscopic elements of nature. In exactly the same way, maybe even more, tantra says that this body is *chinmaya* which means nothing but dynamic consciousness. *Chit* means higher, or cosmic consciousness. *Maya* means full of, just as milk is full of sugar. In the same way, this body is chinmaya, every part of this body is permeated by the invisible presence of consciousness, *atma* or *chit*. That is the primary hypothesis of tantrics. If that be so, then what you are trying to do in the burial ground or by drinking soma is trying to influence the microscopic material of this body.

Molecular changes are taking place in the body. Changes are taking place in the atomic structure of the body. You cannot say that atoms are only in uranium, plutonium or helium. Atoms are everywhere. The flower is a composition of atoms. Every animate and inanimate matter is a composition or an expression of the atom. Tantrics have used all their methods with this in mind.

We know that this material body is not just full of consciousness, it is consciousness manifesting in different degrees. Consciousness in the form of mind, matter, bone, marrow, flesh, blood and so forth. These are the gross manifestations of that consciousness. It is the same when you are trying to extract energy from matter anywhere. Hydroelectric energy, thermal, nuclear, or whatever forms of energy that you try to extract from matter are manifested in different degrees.

The grossest manifestation of energy is matter; its most subtle form is the Self, *atma*. Energy lies in between these two. Therefore, we have the trinity: the Self, energy and

matter. What you call in Christianity as the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. We have always believed in the same things: Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara. We too have that trinity, but with a different name. However, I am not talking about these religious trinities. I do not understand religion; it is too much for me. Either I am far below it or too high, but I understand what I say – matter at the lowest level, energy at the intermediate and consciousness at the highest level. Therefore, in tantra, you have to keep in mind that you are dealing with matter, energy and spirit, all at the same time. You should not consider them as three; they are the manifestation of one solid reality. That solid reality is called *advaita* which means not two, non-dualistic.

Survival of knowledge

From this tantric system came later written traditions following the vedic tradition. These were written about hundreds of thousands of years ago, the *Rig Veda*, *Yajur Veda*, *Sama Veda*. Particularly the *Rig Veda* was written at a time when the topography of this Earth was different. The Indian and Pacific oceans, and the North and South Poles were not the way they are today. They were written at a period when the North Pole had a thriving civilization. You can read this in the Puranas or books written by authentic authors such as Max Mueller and others.

I also know that in the vedic texts, particularly the *Rig Veda*, there are references to astronomical situations – the position of stars, their movements and eclipses – which did not take place just five thousand years ago. It is said, even by western scholars, that some of the eclipses referred to in the *Rig Veda* happened forty-five thousand years ago. It was only after vedic literature was rendered into writing that the tantric traditions were written down. They became the great books of that tradition in which various systems were laid down.

India was then flooded with these tantric traditions. I am talking about India because tantra has survived in India.

It has survived here and it shall survive even if society, the government or the establishment become materialistic through and through. There are people, like us, who will live to manage and maintain it.

Various thinkers capitalized on this tradition. I used the word ‘capitalized’. These thinkers were at different times known by various names: The *Shaivas*, worshippers of Shiva, the *Vaishnavas* of Vishnu, *Shaktas* of Shakti, *Sauryas* of Surya, and *Ganapatiyas* of Ganesha. These were the existing cults. Today, the last two are non-existent. There are one or two here and there or maybe they have gone to Japan because Japan is the solar cult. The three surviving cults are still powerful.

The Shaiva tradition became very powerful in Kashmir and Southern India, particularly Tamil Nadu. The seat of Southern Shaivism was Chidambaram which has a Nataraja Temple. These people began to codify and study the traditions in a philosophical perspective, because in India no tradition, not even yoga, can survive, if it has no philosophy. Philosophy means the relationship of a particular ritual in the cosmic context. Why are you practising tantra for clairvoyance, telepathy, psycho-telekinesis or for taking gold or money from somebody’s pocket? There has to be a philosophy. This philosophy when codified by the Shaivas became known as *Shaiva agamas*.

There are ten different schools of Shaivism known by various names such as Shaiva, Virshaiva, Kashmir Shaiva and others. Mighty teachers have been born in these traditions. In France, there is a book called *Pratyabhijna Darshan*. It has been translated into many western languages. Many other great books were written by the acharyas, like the *Vigyanbhairava Tantra*, *Pratyabhijna Hridayam* and *Rudriyamala Tantra*. They are wonderful texts but the basis of all these books, the entire philosophy is one – *advaita*, monotheistic non-dualism.

Though I am talking about *trika*, the system of trinity in relation to tantra, about the atma, shakti and *padartha*, matter, please remember that I am talking about one thing,

one supreme essence, manifesting itself on many levels in the form of nature, *prakriti*. This prakriti is the same as matter in tantra. In English it is called Nature with a capital N. The entire universe, the forces, gases, minerals, vegetables and many other forms of life is called matter. This matter is a form of reality or a manifestation of reality. Do not say He is different from This. There is no He. There is no creator. Creator, creation and creativity are inherent in each other. Scientific minds will understand this, but religious minds can never understand how something can exist without a creator.

When I was in the fifth class of a convent school, one of my teachers, a priest, told us that if there is a house, there should be a builder for that is aetiology. I accepted it because I was very young then. Later, when I began to study tantra, and even now, I have come to the conclusion, and I hope that all of you will, that creation is a continuous process. It is an ongoing, eternal, non-stop process taking place within creation itself and not out of it.

Therefore, although we talk about the three different manifestations, such as the Self or the cosmic being, energy and matter, we are really talking about only one thing, the non-dual cosmic force. It has no name, place or shape; it has nothing. We know nothing about it; nobody knows anything about it and nobody shall know anything about it. It is unknowable.

If you are trying to know it, forget it. Do not waste your time; you will never know it. However, you can raise yourself above matter, up to the level of energy which the tantrics call kundalini. Kundalini is the basic substratum of the entire tantric philosophy. They say that the creative force or power, the kundalini energy, which is also known as the Devi or divinity, the mother resides in mooladhara and it has to be awakened and raised.

How does it rise? There is no difference here between yoga and tantra, here yoga and tantra mingle like Ganga and Yamuna in Prayag. They say that kundalini can be raised through pranayama, concentration on bhrumadhya, doing

moola bandha, uddiyana bandha; or by taking a chillum and Bam Bam Mahadev, the Kundalini will rise. Or sit in padmasana and do dhyana on Gauri, or Parvati, or guru and it will rise. As far as the techniques are concerned, there is practically no difference.

The one big difference is that in tantra there are certain practices that are accepted such as sex, as an accessory to sadhana. This is not accepted in yoga. Yoga says, 'No, you have to be a celibate, not because it is necessary, but in order to survive in this ignorant, confusing and confounding society.' There are so many religions which do not consider sex as an act in itself. They think that it is a sin; it is bad and sometimes the lower elements take advantage of this. Stick to satya, ahimsa, brahmacharya, asteya, aparigraha, these are the disciplines of a yogi. *Satya* means truth. *Ahimsa* is a very famous word, it is an international word. Some call it *shanti*, love, non-violence or détente. It is known by different names. *Ahimsa* is a word which was popularized two thousand five hundred years ago. The word appears in the Vedas. The Jain prophet Mahavir first pronounced it, *Ahimsa Paramo Dharmaha*, *ahimsa* is the supreme religion. Buddha called it *karuna*, compassion. Christ called it love.



32

Satsang

24 November 1987

Addressing a group of kriya yoga aspirants

How does the process of releasing samskaras take place? In yoga nidra for example what exactly is this process? In yoga are we aiming at getting rid of all samskaras or only the ones which create disturbance and problems in our lives? Do we destroy the samskaras in their seed form or just destroy their influence on our lives and is it possible to release samskaras in dreams? Does a small child release samskaras from past lives by listening to kirtan? Is it possible or desirable to release all samskaras and how does that affect our experience?

The question is very difficult. We are talking about karma and samskaras as if we are talking about eggplants and potatoes. When I go to ultra-modern cities, like Bombay and Delhi in India or those in the West they talk about karma as if they were eggplant and potatoes. What is samskara?

The doctrine of karma is a very complicated doctrine and one has to understand everything about karma. Action is not karma. The movement of body or mind, the action through the body and mind in any form is not karma. Let us take the example of a plant. How does it produce flowers and seeds? How do these seeds migrate? How does the rebirth of the seeds take place and what happens in between?

We sow wheat in the month of December, then it grows. In the month of May or April we harvest it. Some of it we eat and a part of it we store for transmigration, for rebirth, for perpetuating the progeny of wheat. We do not sow it immediately; we wait for December. So in between what happens to the seed? Does it die? Can it die or does it grow?

If you try to understand various examples of vegetable life, like trees and their fruits, you will come to understand that karma is a process of transmigration. If you do not believe in or understand transmigration, rebirth or *punarjanma*, it is futile to talk about karma.

Karma and transmigration are interconnected, inter-related, inseparable processes of creation. There is no existence of karma without rebirth and no rebirth can take place without karma. Therefore, in Indian philosophy, particularly the vedic philosophy, we talk about karma as the potential seed of creativity. We shall refer to the Jain, Buddhist and Hindu philosophies when we talk about karma and transmigration, because these three philosophies talk about a logical process, a process which is not beyond reasoning.

A philosophy which is derived from the source of the Vedas is called vedic philosophy. In India, non-vedic philosophies are those which are not drawn from the vedic source but from independent investigation through a process of introspection, argument and discussion. The Jain and Buddhist philosophies are non-vedic, independent philosophies. These philosophies talk about karma.

A thought which you generate in your mind is a potential movement. It is something within the cosmology of your being. A thought which is being produced within you has a reality within your being. It is a reality, of course, an abstract reality. Although, it is an abstract reality, it is a force. A force which cannot be destroyed. A thought is created when it is produced by you on conscious, subconscious or unconscious planes. These thoughts are like patterns within your being, like waves of light, electromagnetic or radio waves. A thought

is a force in the form of a wave and this wave is always circular in pattern, and therefore it is called a *vrutti*, which means anything which is circular in motion. This pattern which is created can be seen. A thought can be registered. It has got a particular motion. This thought which is created within the cosmology of an individual is a powerful tool through which a man acts. It is not possible to destroy a thought. You think that you are destroying it, but it is not true.

Someone dies in my family and I am affected by it. It has caused a stir, a movement, a mobility. It has created a thought, motion, force. Now it cannot be destroyed. It will continue to influence various areas of my existence, negatively as well as positively. The negative aspect is that it will cause psychosomatic diseases, produce cancer or cause high blood pressure. It can make you want to commit suicide. It can compel you to plan to murder somebody or many other things; it can even compel you to take sannyasa, shave your head. The unseen, the invisible effect of a thought is mysterious.

Those of us who do not know how to investigate, do not understand the source of karma. We ask ourselves, why did I become a sannyasin, marry, try to commit suicide, become a criminal or renounce? No, you definitely cannot tell the reason. What you say is not logical or scientific. For example, because of vairagya I renounced, or because of frustration I wanted to commit suicide or because of my violent nature or misunderstanding I did this or that.

A karma is like a seed. It hibernates within the being and remains within your being for many years. It remains there just as a seed is stored and at the proper time it starts affecting your life. Therefore, the yoga nidra or music or any form of yoga which you do is not enough to exhaust the karma or samskaras. It would be an exaggeration for me to say, 'Yes, through yoga nidra you can exhaust your karmas, become karma-less and free from karma'. Very few people in the history of mankind have remained free from karma.

These people who remained free from karma, who became free from karma are called *jivanmuktas*. The liberated

people who have freed themselves from karma are not too many. I can count them on my fingers. Out of millions and trillions of people who are born, only a few attain this highest state of freedom from karma where there are no samskaras, there is no seed, force or motivation and there is no compulsion to do a karma.

When you practise yoga nidra, the violent influence and effect of karma is pacified for the time being. Just as you give an injection to a mental patient and he becomes calm and quiet, you can live with him in the family; or you give him an electric shock which makes him amenable. These kriyas like yoga nidra or music bring about passivity in the structure of your karma for some time so that you may improve the quality of your philosophy.

Vedic philosophy has said that every life, not only human, is a product of karma and the karma is the nature of nature. This is the quality of nature; it is the law of nature. Nature means *prakriti*; nature is *prakriti*. It is a cosmic principle. I am not talking about God. It is a cosmic principle which is inherent in each and every object and every object which you see is controlled by a definite law of nature. These laws of nature are known as the properties of the particular object.

As such, when we talk about the exhaustion of karma or samskara we should be very careful that we do not misunderstand the philosophy of karma. Even if you do not work for any reason and you keep on sitting the whole day, still you are creating karma. Without moving your body, without involving your senses, a karma can be created within the realm of your psyche, within the deeper dimensions of your mind. These deeper dimensions of mind are so mysterious that we do not understand them.

For us, life is only this much; we are only what we appear to be. If you are fortunate, sometimes you can go deep within yourself, transcending the awareness of this physical body. You will find that you are much more than this physical body. There is a greater, wider and much bigger form of your existence. You are existing even without a body. The ego, the

individual principle of *jivatma bhava* as it is called can exist without this physical body. The individual has the karma and therefore it inherits this physical body, operates through it, creates a desire, wish or passion, fulfils it, enjoys that wish and desire and also suffers that experience through this physical body. If you have the ability, you can exist even without this body.

The body is perishable; it has a limit. Everybody dies, including a human, animal, vegetable and mineral body. What is in you, the individuality, the individual called *jivatma* does not die. The death of the ego principle can take place only when you have achieved enlightenment. When one achieves enlightenment, *jnana* or knowledge of oneself, *atma anubhava* or the unity of totality and diversity of the ego principle or the individual principle dies, it merges just like a river merges with the ocean. After that there is no individual existence. Then 'I' does not exist. I would say, 'I' does not exist because this ego, the 'I', has merged into the totality and at that point of merger, safely you can say, I have finished with all my karmas.

Yoga nidra and singing music are all higher forms of self-forgetfulness. I am not criticizing these practices because I teach them. But the philosophy of karma has made this very clear. Karma has been one of the points of discussion throughout the ages in India. Every thinker spoke about it. The philosophers of yoga, Buddhism, Jainism, and those of Samkhya, Mimamsa, Vedanta also started talking about it.

This ego is called *jiva*. Jiva is the individual principle and that is called a seed. That is the seed which is produced. Later, it migrates, creates a body for itself, lives in that body, works out a few karmas and accumulates much more than it has worked out. You are working out your karmas now, but you are accumulating more than you are working out. Therefore, the store of karma is in the mind and this is a very great obstacle on the path of enlightenment. At least I do not find a way.

Many people say, 'For six months, I was having good meditation and now suddenly everything is topsy-turvy. What

can I do?’ The hurricane has come; the storm has come. It has disturbed your mental establishment. Now the rehabilitation program should begin once more. You rehabilitate yourself, and start settling your mind, philosophy and everything else, and start your yoga, meditation, religion or whatever you like. After five, six, seven or ten years suddenly another hurricane comes. Either the husband divorces the wife, or wife the husband or the son dies, many things happen in life which are unfortunate, which form a path for our desire, personality, and foolishness too.

I do not know why we cry, feel sorry and are affected. Some of the saints have really laughed at our foolishness. You met me in a hotel in the night or somewhere in a club and we spoke to each other. Then I began to think you are mine and I am yours, and we established a relationship. After some time, something happens and I am sorry. Well, we were co-travellers who happened to meet each other by chance or maybe by cosmic will and again we separated, either by chance, or by cosmic will. We begin to feel so much that many people become mental patients; they go to mental hospitals. I do not have to tell you what exactly happens when such tragedies take place in life.

Therefore, the philosophical attitude to adopt is to think that the individual ego is migrating from one body to another and from that body to the next one. That process has to be stopped. Why should this idiot travel now? What is the purpose?

In the *Shvetashvatara Upanishad*, a beautiful Upanishad, there is an example of a tree. There are two birds – one on the lower and another on the upper branch. The bird on the lower branch eats one fruit of the tree, finds it bitter and spits it out. Then it tries another, spits it out. It is the same when you have an experience. Then the bird leaves the tree and goes to another tree in search of a tasty fruit. It tastes a fruit, finds it very bitter and spits it out. In the meantime, it looks up at the bird and says, ‘Why don’t you take it?’ The bird on the upper branch says, ‘You continue; I think I am learning

from your experience. You go on trying but so far you have only been spitting.'

Finally, one day, the bird from the lower branch says, 'I'm tired of eating and spitting, but I see you don't eat and yet you are so full of glory, happiness and contentment.' The bird from the upper branch says 'Look here, the best thing is to keep on hopping from one tree to another and not expect anything better than what you have experienced.'

Now this exemplifies the *jivatma*, the individual self and the spiritual self. The bird on the upper branch is the spiritual self, the illuminated state of mind. The spiritual self is always aware that whichever way you may turn in this life you will always find incompleteness, imperfections. You will not find homogeneity, totality, contentment and completeness in this life.

Only those who have introspected can understand this. But those who have not will find it very difficult, because many people are frustrated but don't know they are. Many are living a life of discontentment but they do not understand it. You may be discontented; you may be having frustrations after frustrations, disappointment after disappointment, but you are not aware of it because you do not have keenness of mind. When the mind goes after sensual pleasure or gross objects, it remains blunt; it is no more keen or sensitive, and therefore, it cannot comprehend the mental states. What is happening to my mind? What am I feeling and experiencing? You will find at this time that every action which you do, everything you accomplish in life, every plan you make, has an effect behind it and that effect is your experience in life. A frustrated man, a disappointed man or a maniac creates an effect in life and particularly in human society. Human society in particular is an effect of the whole of that process.

How do we come out of this cycle of karma: birth, death and rebirth. The sages and saints call it by two names – mortality and immortality. These words have been used frequently in biblical scriptures – ambrosia, nectar, *amrit*,

mortality, immortality. You hear this every day. There is a prayer, *Asato ma sat gamaya, mrityurma amritam gamaya*, Lead me from mortality to immortality.

Now here mortality and immortality should not be confused with dying physically. The words mortality and immortality have no reference to the body. When you say mortality it means the cycle of birth and death. Therefore, when you are born, you are coming into existence again within the limited area of life; when the cycle of birth and death stops, then the individual self, the *atma*, the *jiva* becomes free from the fetters and remains the same all the time without any change or fluctuation, without having to go through this body or that body. Therefore, when we are talking about karma and when we talk about the samskaras, we should be very careful.

There are four different philosophies in Buddhism. In short, they are known as: 1. Madhyamika philosophy, 2. Yogachara philosophy, 3. Sautantrika, and 4. Vaibhasika. These are the four types of philosophies they talk about. Out of which particularly the madhyamika school and philosophy talks about it.

Once the philosopher Nagarjuna went to Greece and he met the king there. They had a discussion on the theory and the philosophy of karma. Nagarjuna explains, “A seed will germinate if it is alive, if it has the potential it will germinate. You cannot stop it. If you want the seed not to germinate, then you will have to roast it. If you take a few grains and you sow it, after a few days, they will sprout; they will germinate. If you roast those grain seeds and then you sow them, they will not germinate.”

How to roast the seeds? They talk about the word *vairagya*, dispassion, *anasakti*, detachment; therefore, in addition to the practice of yoga nidra, in addition to the practices of music or anything like that, we should try to develop a philosophy called *anasakti*, dispassion, detachment, and through this act of detachment, it will be possible for us to become free from karma.

Can I combine sannyasa, my livelihood and artistic work?

Sannyasa is not a life which you cannot accept or which you can experience only by becoming a monk. No. I must tell you first what the philosophy of sannyasa is. Sannyasa does not mean renunciation. No, it is not even becoming a monk. It is derived from the basic expression called *nyasa*. *Nyasa* means trust, like a charitable trust, educational trust or social trust.

Sannyasa means a trust. You have been using your mind, your body, your emotion, your intelligence, your intellect, your resources, everything you have for yourself. The day you stop doing it, using your body for yourself, using your mind and emotion and everything for yourself, you are a sannyasin. That is the meaning of a sannyasin. A sannyasin must use his own resources for himself minimum. After all, for me to survive or for you to survive you need something.

That minimum requirement for survival is all right but using every individual capacity, individual potential, individual virtue, individual power, individual resource only for yourself, your wife, your children or your enjoyment, well, that is not sannyasa. If you have a lot of money, you can spend it for yourself, have a building, have this or that. But if you create a trust of that money, and then resolve that this money will be used for an orphanage, medical care or for education, then you can use that money only for that purpose.

The purpose of sannyasa

A sannyasin makes a resolve. A person makes a resolve that he is going to utilize his life only for the purpose of enlightenment. A sannyasin has no other purpose in life – whether it is Swami Vivekananda or Buddha – a sannyasin's first resolve is to realize the higher consciousness, to realize his infiniteness. The purpose of taking sannyasa should be to realize through experience one's own infiniteness and to throw away the idea, the experience, the notion of one's limitations. All one's resources, mental powers, emotional capacities will have to be harnessed towards the fulfilment of this goal.

Once you have achieved this particular object, as Buddha and many others did, there is a realization of what I should do. I should do what is good to humanity; I should help people. No, that cannot be the first idea of a sannyasin. Sannyasins should not lose track of this particular idea. Once you have had some sort of enlightenment, your mind, yourself, everything that you are becomes different. In this enlightened state of your existence, revelations come, inspirations and a clean-cut path. First, you become a sannyasin and after becoming a sannyasin you realize what is to be done. If nature has chosen you to become a Christ, to lead thousands of people, to heal hundreds, you will do it. Therefore, you become a tool, a medium, an instrument of the cosmic process. As many saints have said, 'I am an instrument in the hands of God'.

As long as a sannyasin has the ego that, 'I am the doer', 'I am doing', or 'I must do', he is functioning on the plane of duality. He is functioning on the plane of ego, *ahamkara*. He is functioning with a limited philosophy and concepts. Many sannyasins fail in life because their primary education in sannyasa is incomplete, whether it is in Christianity or in any other religion. A sannyasin is one who has dedicated, surrendered and given up everything that he has; he is not going to use anything for his own self.

If he is a strong man, let him go to Gangotri and practise penance. It is a strong man who can bear heat and cold and the rigours of life; let him utilize his strength in practising *tapasya*, austerity. Let him go to Gangotri and eat once a day – two chapattis with water from the Ganga.

Swami Sivananda lived like this. Swami Sivananda, my guru, lived in Rishikesh. He used to go to kshetra, a public charity. He used to collect rotis, every day five rotis, and he used to save one or two. In one week he used to save, say about fourteen, twenty or thirty rotis. He used to keep them and remain in his kutir for one month without coming out and every day he used to eat a little roti just to survive.

1988

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Satsang

7 June 1988

Should asana practice always start with shavasana?

You can start your asanas either with shavasana or with kaya sthairyam. Kaya sthairyam means sitting in siddhasana with chin mudra or, if in padmasana, then in yoni mudra. Do not move the body for three minutes. Just keep your mind in the passage between the navel and the throat and follow the breath up and down for forty-five rounds. Then you can start your asanas, whichever ones you like.



Under what conditions should one not practise yoga?

When you are suffering from an acute illness like acute typhoid. In chronic and constitutional illnesses, you can practise, but in acute illnesses you should not practise. The book *Asana Pranayama Mudra Bandha* tells you everything about it and also the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, which is a very ancient book written by a great yogi, Swatmarama.

How does yoga affect the young and old?

To the young it gives the energy to become more active and lead a fruitful life. To the old people it can give peace, one-pointedness and freedom from the reflections of the past and anticipations of the future.

Which asana can help the mind and which are suitable for peace?

According to the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* and other yogic texts, and the *Yoga Darshan* of Patanjali, the primary purpose of asana is to still the mind. Indians, in olden days, did not practise yoga for high blood pressure because they did not have it. They lived in a pure atmosphere, ate simple food, did a lot of exercise and work the whole day. They used to expose themselves to every rigorous situation of life and practise austerity, *tapasya*. They did not practise yoga for diabetes or cardiovascular problems. Then why did they practise asana?

The definition of asana is *sthairyam sukham asanam* – hold yourself in a steady and pleasant posture and sit quietly. Therefore, the purpose of all asanas, not only of padmasana or siddhasana, was to still the mind, to make the mind peaceful so that you could engage yourself in spiritual contemplation and philosophical thinking. It is very difficult to say which asana can confer peace and stillness of mind – every asana! The main purpose of asana is that, and if you want to study more you will have to study the concepts of Patanjali in the *Yoga Sutra*, because he says that when you practise asana it balances the influence of the opposite forces in the body (2:48):

Tato dvandvanabhighatah.

Thereby the pairs of opposites cease to have any impact.

What is the difference between yoga and physical exercise?

Yoga is a system in which there is minimum stress on muscles; exercise is a system where there is insistence on muscular exercise. In all exercises, whether they are aerobic or any other form, you burn the muscles; you exercise them, but in yoga you use muscles the least. Yoga practices or asana work on the nerves, endocrines and the pranic forces inside the body.

What does it indicate if someone sleeps deeply in yoga nidra?

It means you are full of tensions; your nerves are tired and because of yoga nidra they have gone into a deep state of depression due to the intensity of delta waves in the brain.

Is any type of exercise advisable after meals, like yogic or abdominal breathing?

After lunch and dinner when your stomach is full or half full, you must practise vajrasana and sometimes, if necessary for those who are suffering from backache, they can practise makrasana but no other asana.

What is the difference between the effects of asana and pranayama?

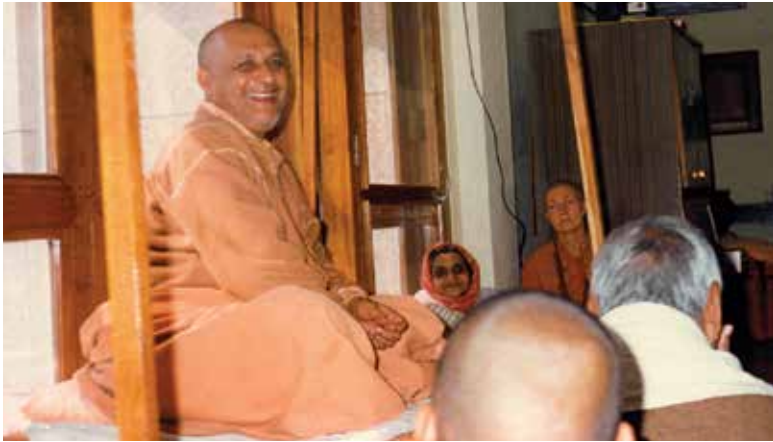
Asanas prepare the body and when the body is prepared, the pranas can penetrate every nerve and every pore of the body. The body becomes efficient in order to assimilate the pranic forces within.

Which are the best asanas for concentration?

It has been proved that the best asana for concentration is siddhasana for male members and siddha yoni asana for females. One of the most eminent doctors of the world,

Christian Barnard, the first doctor of South Africa who did heart transplants, open heart surgery, has written about siddhasana. He says that through siddhasana a man can control the wild behaviour of testosterone. Testosterone is a particular hormone in a man's body which is secreted by the testicles, and if you can control the wild behaviour of testosterone, it will not assimilate and build up in the circulatory system. As a result, you can avoid heart attacks, because when testosterone becomes mingled up with the blood vessels in the blood stream, the blood goes to the heart and creates an extra pressure on the heart.

In meditation we need that pressure. If you can practise, siddhasana you can have control over a particular nadi which is directly connected to the heart. In siddhasana you are pressing *shukra nadi* which is the nadi of the perineum or coccyx. This shukra nadi is responsible for ejaculation when it is stimulated. If you can control this particular stimulation you can have fine control over the brain, because shukra nadi, the perineum, is the seat of mooladhara chakra. Mooladhara chakra is the seat of kundalini and kundalini is directly connected with sahasrara chakra. There is a 'Hot Line' between sahasrara and mooladhara. Therefore, I consider siddhasana to be the best.



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Satsang

13 June 1988

Can yoga therapy help correct vision, in particular, far-sightedness? If so, how effective is it?

There are certain conditions which perhaps yoga cannot help, but if the organs are functioning, certainly yoga can improve them. If the problem is organic, it will be much better if proper treatment is administered. Certainly through yoga, through trataka, or eye exercises, or through the practices of neti kriya, or sometimes even by quiet meditation, as many times as possible, you can improve the eyesight.

A few weeks or months after completing a teachers training course our intention and commitment diminish. Our practice and proficiency in yoga decreases rapidly. Could you please suggest specific steps to keep our interest active and alive?

In western countries, there are thousands of yoga teachers who have been teaching yoga for over two, three or even four decades. Yoga has become their philosophy, their life, their behaviour and their livelihood. There are many thousands of yoga teachers in European countries whose main subsistence is yoga; they do not do anything else. A compulsion has to be created in one's life so that one will not be able to do away with yoga. It is so easy to learn yoga from the Bihar School of Yoga but in two or three months it will be forgotten. Teachers

have to create a situation where yoga is a 'must'. Yoga has to become a 'must'. Without it one must feel unable to survive either physically or economically.

If in this ashram it was decided not to teach yoga, the ashram would be closed in a few months' time. It could not survive. We have to teach yoga in order to survive. It has to be an economic as well as a philosophic compulsion. Yoga is a good, honest profession and one which has much to do with our 'national indebtedness'. When I started the Bihar School of Yoga many years ago, fifteen-days expenditure was twenty-one rupees. Now it is about four hundred rupees.

All over India, there was criticism for I was the first yoga teacher to charge. I decided that I had to do it. All my gurus (brothers), sannyasins and yoga teachers, said, "Swami Satyananda sells yoga!" Today there is hardly any yoga institution which does not charge. If you want something to become stable, you have to dig it deep so that it does not move or flow away. You have to create a base for yoga in your society. If you are a lawyer, a teacher or a doctor, practise your profession by all means, but why not teach yoga? There are people in India who are hairdressers and they teach yoga in the morning. They charge for it, but of course they are capable yoga teachers. A yoga teacher should know about the laws of the mind and human emotions. He should be able to deal properly with his pupils.



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Satsang

14 June 1988

As a student how can I use yoga nidra for study?

A lot of experiments have been done on yoga nidra. One can learn a new language completely in about fifteen days. In fact, it is being done. In many western countries, when the boys and girls from, let us say, France want to go to Spain, live there and work at the same time as clerks, stenographers or receptionists, they have to learn Spanish. How do they do it? There are lessons, proper scientific lessons recorded on tape, which you can get from shops. You can put these in the tape recorder at night, plug in the earphones and sleep. The tape recording plays all the lessons, rewinds, plays again, rewinds again, plays again. Then you get up in the morning, have your bath and listen to the lessons once. Do this for fifteen or twenty days, maximum one month. You will be able to speak the language of a receptionist, tourist guide or conductor of the public lorry service. You have the language to manage your job.

I have also done this experiment many times. Now, I do not have much time, but when I had the time I did. First, I tried these lessons on a dog. Unfortunately, he died, because I did not know how to look after an Alsatian. I used to play a certain tape in my room when he was in my room. The whole night the tape used to play and the dog did exactly what was played on the tape.

Later, I repeated this experiment on Swami Niranjana with the *Bhagavad Gita*, Upanishads and many other things, including yoga. He was a very naughty boy when he was in the ashram; the young boys were considered as 'bad boys' in the ashram because they would not study at all. The moment I used to go into my room they used to make fun, Swami Niranjana, Swami Gorakhnath and many others. There was a bunch of these 'bad boys' in the ashram. I knew about them and I thought, there is no use admonishing them every now and then for this does not really work. Fear does not work, nor does threatening or admonishing. Nothing works in a man; he throws everything out! So I tried this method of yoga nidra. Swami Niranjana used to live with me. That did work. He has not been to any school, but he can definitely write better Hindi than any graduate or even literary person – English, Spanish, or any other languages as well.

Yoga nidra can help you in your studies, but how to do it is the point, because you cannot prepare tapes. I know that it can be done. Perhaps the boys in the college would prefer to invest more money in pants, shirt, coat and shoes rather than in a good sophisticated piece of tape recorder. If you can sacrifice your whims about your fashion and other things and if you can get a good set of tape recorders, you can record your lessons. Read the lessons in the evening by yourself or ask somebody to do it. While you are sleeping, to the right or to the left, whichever it is, put the earphones on. In the morning the chemistry lesson is ready. Just read it once again. It has gone into your subconscious mind.

The intellect belongs to the conscious mind. The subconscious mind is that area where an impression or an idea becomes a secret and is embedded, just as you sow a seed. The seed is embedded; you cannot see it. Now the whole process is taking place inside, an unseen process. Just take a fenugreek seed, or wheat or any seed. When you put it inside the earth what is happening? Something is happening, but you cannot see it. Gradually any impression, any idea, any samskara or any seed, which is planted in the depths of the

subconscious mind, is sure to come out – that is the natural law. Good samskaras come out and bad samskaras come out a little quicker. If it is a bad seed, it will come out very fast; if it is a good samskara, it takes time; weed does not take time, but if you want to grow lady's finger or spinach, it takes time.

When you listen to the instructions of the tape recorder a sound is going into your subconscious mind, because when you are sleeping at night, the brainwaves are silent. First there are beta, then theta, alpha and delta waves. During deep sleep the brain waves are minimum; that means the brain is now resting. There is no disturbance as such so any samskara impression or idea that is sent into the brain through the ears is bound to be registered there. Within your brain, in the subconscious mind, there is a recording and registering system like that of a computer, maybe more sophisticated than a computer. There is nothing which is not registered there.

The mind is all-pervading. You may be looking at me, but the mind is looking at everyone. The subconscious mind is all-pervading. If you know Sanskrit and have read the *Yajur Veda* there is a *sukta*, a hymn: *Sahasra sirsha purushaha*, consciousness has one thousand heads, one thousand eyes, *sahasrapad*, one thousand feet, *sabhu nimvi shvato vritva athya thishtad dashan qulam*, your consciousness, your mind, your chetana which is operating even when you are sleeping is not only looking in front, it is looking all around. It has one thousand eyes; one thousand means numerous. In Sanskrit when it says *sahasrar* or one thousand, it means numerous, *anekane*.

The subconscious mind is operating when you are meditating, one-pointed, sleeping or in yoga nidra. When the external, the conscious, the gross, the objective mind is withdrawn, the subjective mind becomes operative. As long as the objective mind is operating, the subjective mind does not work, because the law in science is: The higher the velocity the lesser the frequency. The objective or *sthula* mind represents velocity, speed; the subjective mind represents

frequency. The subconscious mind is controlled by certain frequencies and these frequencies are very high. With Very High Frequency (VHF) and Ultra High Frequency (UHF), velocity is reduced to a minimum. That is a law of science: when the velocity of mind is very high, the velocity of the subconscious mind is very low and therefore, in order to make your inner mind, the subconscious mind, more powerful, productive and responsive you will have to withdraw the outer mind.

This external mind depends on the five senses; if you are blind, you cannot see; if you are deaf, you cannot hear. This brain, this external, gross, conscious mind is totally dependent upon the object and the sensorial channels. Without the object I cannot experience. If you have no eyes you cannot see a flower; if you are deaf you cannot listen to me, but the subconscious mind can listen even if you are deaf. A deaf man can listen, a blind man can see. Surdas wrote, *ja ki kripa pangu giri lange ne andhi ko sab kuch darsha aye* – The blind can see and the lame can jump mountains by His grace. In the *Ramayana* it is written:

Binu pad chalai sunai binu kanakar binu karam karai bidhi nana.

Anan rahitsakal ras bhogi

Binu bani bakata bad jogi.

Brahma walks without legs, hears without ears, works and performs different acts without hands, tastes everything without a mouth and is capable of speaking without speech.

This subconscious mind is called *sukshma sharir* in Vedanta. What you call the subconscious mind, in modern psychology, in Vedanta, Samkhya and many other Hindu philosophies is known as *sukshma sharir*, the subtle body.

In answer to this question, I must tell you to sacrifice something from your personal life and try to experiment on this. Get one good tape recorder and forty, fifty, sixty, seventy tapes. Then ask your teacher, professor or anybody to

explain the chemistry, maths or geography lesson, whatever it is, and at night, turn it on. I assure you that you will have first-class sleep and first-class studies. You will be able to use the time; you are not even wasting the night. Your sleep has also become productive – that is the lesson of yoga!

What is natural or normal breathing? During yogic breathing both lungs are completely filled with air, what about normal breathing?

Natural breathing is effortless breathing, when you are only watching the breath. When you breathe in you make an effort; when you breathe out you make an effort, that is called pranayama but when you do not practise pranayama, when you do not make an effort, that is called ‘effortless breathing’, *sahaj pranayama*. In the night you are certainly breathing. Are you sure that you are breathing? Yes. That is called normal breathing or natural breathing or *sahaj* breathing. The point is you are only breathing and not watching it. If you want to see this natural breathing, ask one of the members of your family to sleep at night and you sit down and note. You won’t find that they breathe in the same monotonous way throughout the night. No, they will change their breathing pattern after every ten or fifteen minutes. Sometimes it is faster and sometimes the breathing stops for a split second, two, three, four, five, and when it stops your sleep is broken.

Usually one of the reasons you get up in the night is because the breath automatically stops for a period. This behaviour is controlled by the autonomic nervous system in the brain. This is what we try for in *ajapa japa*; this is what we try for in *antar mouna*. Lord Buddha used to teach *vipassana* which is the same thing. Mahavir, the Jain saint, used to teach *preksha dhyana* and in the Upanishads they used to teach *ajapa japa*.

The *jiva*, individual soul, is repeating *So Ham, So Ham, So Ham*, all the time; you are practising the *So Ham* mantra day and night and the total number in twenty-four hours is twenty-one thousand six hundred. Fifteen breaths per minute

is natural. It is here that the saints have said: *che sau*. Swami Goraknath has said, *aisa jap japo mana layi, So Ham, So Ham surat gayi*. *Surata* means 'awareness', *api ap* means 'ajapa jap'. *Banka nali main uge sur*, *banka* means 'lotus', *kamal* and *nali* means 'stem', lotus stem, and *sur* means 'sun'. It means that at a particular moment the whole spine becomes like a tube light, like a florescent lamp. The whole body produces a melodious tone. That happens after practising it for twenty-one thousand six hundred times.

The yogi tries to produce this because it is said in the hatha yoga shastras that the breaths are limited and fixed. You will take just so many breaths in a lifetime. So these breaths are fixed – fifteen per minute, twenty-one thousand six hundred in one day, in ten days, two more zeros, one hundred days, one more zero, one thousand days, one more zero, one hundred years, so many zeros.

If you want to change the ratio of the time span then bring the breathing process down from fifteen to fourteen to thirteen to twelve to eleven, you can definitely bring it down to ten rounds per minute. At first, you have to make an effort, later, it will become natural. Everybody breathes fifteen rounds per minute, naturally, but by yogic concentration, yogic practices, you can bring it down to ten per minute. Most people can bring it down to twelve or eleven. When you bring the rate of respiration to ten per minute then the brilliance in the brain increases.



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Satsang

24 June 1988

During some of the practices we are asked to observe ourselves. Is there any difference between the observer and the observed? Are they not the same?

Ultimately the observer and object of observation are the same, but that is ultimately. During sadhana there is this duality between the seer, *drashta*, and the seen, *drishya*. The mind assumes certain vrittis. When you are observing yourself, you are creating a pattern in the complex of your mind. The mind is building or reforming itself into a particular vritti. It is all right but you should also remember that the mind is divided into five vrittis: *pramana* or direct knowledge, *viparyaya* or wrong knowledge, *vikalpa* or fancy, *nidra* or sleep, and *smriti* or memory. These are the five vrittis according to the classic yoga: right cognition, wrong cognition, absence of cognition, past cognition and mistaken cognition.

This particular vritti which you are talking about is called the dhyana vritti. In order to overcome and conquer these five vrittis, you have to create a new vritti. The *Yoga Sutras* mention various ways. One is described in (1:35):

Vishayavati pravrittihi utpanna mansaha sthiti nibandhani.

Or else the mind can be made steady by bringing it into activity of sense experience.

That vritti can be anything. You can concentrate on a great saint; you can meditate on light or you can meditate on the forms and patterns of your mind; it can be passion, anger, desire, fear, it can be anything. What do you do?

In tantra, you go to the burial ground. What happens? You observe fear. Fear is a vritti. When your mind has got fear it is one *vishayawati pravritti*; passion and anxiety are also *vishayawati pravritti*. Therefore, in tantra, in order to control the mind the *vishayawati pravritti*, the activity of sense experience, has to be controlled and thereby the mind is brought under control; but that is not the only way.

Lord Buddha, Mahavir and many other great mahatmas taught other ways. Kabir Das and the Upanishads said just concentrate on your breath, then on your mantra, then on the spinal passage, then on the lotuses, the chakras, then on the nadis, then on sahasrara. These are the grades and steps.

To observe yourself during ajapa japa, during vipassana meditation or preksha meditation, is a general practice but it is much more than that. It consists of self-observation: you observe your fingers, the position of your arms, the position of your body, if your eyes are moving, if you are concentrating or not concentrating, if you are thinking or not thinking, if you are facing to the north or to the south, if you are on a cot or on a chowkie, if you have worn a dhoti or trousers, if you have worn a shirt, so many things you have to observe. You observe the palpitation of your heart, then you observe the silent vibration of your body.

As you go deeper and deeper, you find that your body is not still; you feel it is still, but it is not. The physical body vibrates at a terrible rate and you cannot see it; you cannot feel it. It is only by keen, constant and deep awareness that you can feel your body vibrating. You do not know that your eyes move. It is only during medical examination that REM's are noticed. It is only during deep meditation in samadhi avastha, savikalpa, that the eyes have no REM's, rapid-eye-movements, but if you look on the machine the REM's are seen. These eye movements control the movement of the mind.

The mind is not just psychological; mind is physiological as well, *mastishk*, brain. Mind and emotions are not just psychological. Emotions are as real, true, tangible as a chemical reaction producing smoke or gas. A thought is produced by chemical reaction. In our physical body there are chemical and pranic reactions. We have two energies in our bodies, mind and prana. These two great forces depend on the chemicals of the brain. It is true everywhere. You cannot just generate electricity. There are chemical reactions, chemical associations. The energy has to pass through certain chemical structures or formations and that is how energy, electricity is produced.

A thought is a very complex thing. A thought is produced not by mind alone but by mind plus prana plus the chemical reactions in your body. Therefore, in order to observe yourself, you have to remember one thing very clearly: you are trying to have control over each and every function of the body. Lord Buddha used to instruct his disciples, “Bhiku, when your hand is half up you should know it; when you have raised your arms completely, you must know it; when you are scratching your nose, you should know it; when you have scratched the third time, ‘yes I have scratched the third time, fourth time, fifth time’.” The more you become aware of yourself the deeper you are going into your mind, your consciousness, thereby, controlling each and every emotion and chemical reaction.

What is mental conflict and how does it cause mental disorder?

When two opposite forces are against each other that is called conflict. The usual philosophical expression for conflict is *dwandwa*. Heat and cold are two conflicting forces in nature; pain and pleasure are two opposite forces; birth and death are also opposite forces; respect and insult are also opposite forces; friendship and enmity are two opposite forces. That is the eternal *dwandwa* in life. In the *Bhagavad Gita* it is said that in order to be a normal human being, to have a normal

human mind, you must be free from dwandwa. *Dwandwatitaha* is one who has transcended the dwandwa (12:19):

*Tulyanindaastutirmaunee santushto yena kenachit:
Aniketah sthiramahir bhaktimaan me priyo narah.*

He to whom censure and praise are equal, who is silent, content with anything, homeless, of a steady mind, and full of devotion – that man is dear to Me.

It is also said in the *Bhagavad Gita* (4:22):

*Yadricchaalaabhasantushto dwandwaateeto vimatsarah;
Samah siddhaavasiddhau cha kritwaapi na nibadhyate.*

Content with what comes to him without effort, free from the pairs of opposites and envy, even-minded in success and failure, though acting, he is not bound.

Conflict is a psychological process in the human mind and it is caused by many factors in life, not merely personal factors but social, cultural, political or philosophical. Every idea that you understand causes an impression and finally causes a conflict. That is why some of the religions like Islam do not want any other idea. It is good, in a way, because it does not allow another thought to come into your mind and then cause a disaster or a conflict. A Hindu mind is full of conflict because it believes, ‘this idea is also good’, ‘that idea is also good’ and all the conflicting and contradictory ideas are in Hindu minds.

The Christian mind is also full of conflict. A Christian believes in chastity. The Bible believes in chastity, in purity but in their schools they are taught the philosophy and psychology of Freud. The religious mind believes in chastity and purity and that this is the way for salvation, *mukti*. What does Freud say? Just the opposite. He says that if you want to be happy, chastity is no solution; chastity is an unhealthy proposition. That is what he has taught. Therefore, the Christian has a conflict in his mind of two ideas: one idea is

the racial, basic, ancient idea, which he has inherited from his ancestors, his religion, cult, background; the other is the intellectual, social idea of which he may or may not be convinced, but he likes it. There is a tug of war. The conflict is within the subconscious mind, in *chitta*, in the field of samskara, in the field of faith, not in the field of buddhi. That is precisely the reason why in western countries most people become abnormal because at one time they develop guilt.

Modern science does not believe in God or in the theory of evolution. The natural theory of evolution of Darwin and other biologists say something else. They do not say that the earth was created in six days and that on Sunday God took rest. They do not believe it, but in the Bible they have read it in the Book of Genesis. In schools, colleges and the university, it is just the opposite. Now what would be their state of mind because they have two opposite pieces of knowledge, two opposite faiths and beliefs. They are sure of neither. They do not know if the earth was created in five and a half days or six days or whether it is a slow evolution as Darwin has been saying. They are sure of neither. There is conflict when there is no knowledge and no faith. You should have *atal shraddha*, unflinching faith.

These conflicts about dharma, about *maryada*, correct and appropriate in any situation, where to draw the line, virtue, vice, duty, relationships are so complicated that an ordinary man cannot decide for himself. These conflicts sometimes become wide; the distance grows so much that the conflict does not at all relate to the two ideas. They become entirely, absolutely and totally different. That becomes schizophrenic. Schizophrenia is mad.

This dwandwa in the mind, *antar dwandwa*, can only be obliterated either by *shraddha* or *jnana*; not by book knowledge, *shastra jnana*, alone but by *atma jnana*. Conflict cannot be obliterated by psychoanalysis. With due respect to modern psychology, I say this. Doctors are also giving pills because they cannot help. They have to work out the problems by biochemical methods.

In the life of Sri Rama in the *Ramayana* by Valmiki or the *Ramacharitamanas* by Tulsidas, you find so much conflict in the mind of Bharat, Kaikeyi, Kaushalya, Dasharatha, in everyone's mind. There is only one person who is free from conflict, who is decisive, and that is Rama. He has decided that *dharma* is above *bhavana*, duty is above emotion; personal relationships to the side for my duty is this much and nothing else. No argument, no justification, no convenient logic. This is what I have to do. A man who has decided what he has to do without the least doubt about it is a jnani.

In the whole *Ramayana* you can find two persons who are so sure, confident and free from conflicts: Ravana and Rama. Ravana also has no conflicts in his mind. Perhaps in the last days when his powerful son Meghanad was killed there was a moment when he lost control of himself for a short period, but otherwise the conflict about his attitude for Sita, he did not at all repent. Therefore, Valmiki says in his *Ramayana* (Lanka Kand):

Rama Ravana

Rama Ravana yudhyiorwa

The struggle, the conflict between the two great universal forces cannot be compared by anyone else; the battle between Rama and Ravana was incomparable and if it could be compared it could only be compared between Rama and Ravana, that's all. It is also said in the *Mahabharata*:

Dharma se tattva nihitam gohayam.

The essence of dharma is very mysterious.

Everything ultimately boils down to the mind. In our family, professional and daily personal life, we have conflicts. Some have become aware of them and others have not. In order to have a healthy frame of mind, it is necessary for everyone to dissolve conflict.

You see more psychological problems in the western world. What is the reason for this frustration?

It is not frustration; it is disillusionment. When you reach the mountain top, there is a process of coming down, anti-climax. Western society has worked very hard for material prosperity, industrial growth, scientific and technical perfection and a perfect social revolution. Western society which followed the path of the Christian faith revolted against that very faith. They were not satisfied by the philosophy, the theology and the systems which created pronouncements of religion about the universe, the soul, karma, virtue, the relationship between man and God. They were not at all satisfied and the material philosophers along with the scientists gave a new philosophy altogether for their society. They became very rich and prosperous with all the conveniences, employment, travel, research and sensual opportunities, *bhoga*.

When you are stuffed with everything, you ask yourself – what is next? Before you wanted a car, now you have a car; before you wanted a home, now you have a home; before you wanted employment, now you have employment, before you wanted to talk to your brother five thousand miles away, now you can do it. Desire is an outcome of scarcity. Desires do beget desires. *Trishna*, craving, begets *trishna*, but only up to a certain extent. There is a process. Cravings do beget cravings; desires do beget desires, but after some time desires create *vairagya*, *virakta*, dispassion. It does not happen in the beginning; perhaps not for a very long time in a social process or even in the life of an individual, but it does happen.

When you, I or anyone at the age of twenty-one had desires, we fulfilled them. Another desire came, desire begot desire but after fifty there is a change. There is some sort of *virakta*, some sort of dispassion that comes in the mind of each and every one. As it happens with an individual, it also happens in the social progression. A society progresses through intensity of desire, craving, passion and intensity of aggrandisement and it goes on and on. Then the social progression changes and it has changed in the West.

It is not frustration. When a man is trying hard for pleasant things, what is he wanting? What is he aiming at? He is aiming at *paramsukha*, total happiness; he does not want happiness to come to an end. *Param* means ‘total’, but he finds that this *sukha*, happiness, did not give him *paramananda* total bliss. Therefore, he changes his experiment. When your wife, children, money or the opportunities do not give you *paramananda* will you still continue to milk them? No, you will search for another path. So the people who went to India, China and Japan, to the various parts of the world, brought back with them the message of spirituality, *adhyatmikta*.

Someone wrote a book *Hindu Deva Sabha*, the Hindu pantheon. It is a very beautiful book. Similarly, many adequate and inadequate books were written. The message of Ramakrishna and of Vedanta was spread by Swami Vivekananda; the message of karma yoga was spread by Swami Sivananda; the message of kriya yoga was spread by Paramahansa Yogananda. Then the message of Vedanta was also spread by Swami Ramatirtha, to mention just a few luminaries. Today in western countries, particularly in America and Europe, you will find all the *sampradayas*, sects of India, particularly Hindu *sampradayas* of the vedic dharma. The pantheon of vedic dharma is represented in every country by one person or the other. You will find Neem Karoli Baba and Baba Ramdas disciples everywhere. When you want to attain paramananda and you are not able to attain it, you change the order.

The Christian religion is a very sober religion. It has many great saints of spiritual perfection. Those saints were exploited by political authorities for their political ends, whether it was Saint Francis or St Xavier, St Teresa or St John of the Cross. The Christian church does not believe in *poonarjanma*, reincarnation; it is dogma. The Church decided in Constantinople (Istanbul as you call it) to declare transmigration a dogma. There was a big convention, but you cannot decide transcendental matters by a board of directors, by ballot and voting. If all of us decide that Rama

was not God, it is foolishness. They decided that the theory of transmigration should be declared a dogma and therefore the Church does not talk about it, but everyone in western countries does.

Christianity has properly moulded the mind of a common westerner and on that moulded personality yoga has done a wonderful job. Yoga has succeeded in Christian nations and among the Jewish particularly because their religion has a good effect on their personality – the inner life. All the expressions are there. When we say ‘inner life’ they understand – *adhyatmik*; when we say ‘inner voice’, they understand what we mean by it. If we say ‘the voice of silence’, they understand exactly what we mean because it is there; they use these words: voice of silence, inner voice, paradise, nectar or ambrosia. They even understand chakras. Therefore, we should never say that western people are frustrated. They are disillusioned.

What about the hippies?

There is nothing wrong with the hippie movement. I don’t think so. The hippies were the heretics of America. If a cult has to change, a society, religion change, if the whole social process has to undergo a total metamorphosis, something like this has to happen, somebody has to revolt. If you go to dinner with a black tie, and I say, ‘I can go just like this with dhoti’; if you say, ‘I take champagne and scotch’, and I say, ‘I take ganja’; if you say, ‘I can go and dance with this girl in the nightclub,’ and I say, ‘I can practise tantra with her’ – then that is the revolutionary tone.

The hippies changed the elegance, the so-called ‘show’, the smart dress, smart behaviour, smart way of talking, everything calculated, everything trimmed, whether it is ‘good morning’ or ‘hello’ or ‘thank you’; everything is trimmed and taut, taught in schools and colleges. The hippies say, sit down anywhere, do anything, dress any way you like. Why play only one particular instrument; you can play the guitar and the sitar.

The hippie culture is a transitional culture. When revolutions break out in a society, if it is a political society, what will happen? What happened in Russia? Nihilists, Bolsheviki, Communists. That is an intermediate transitional society and politics. Russia and China have undergone an intermediate transitional political situation which will not continue for a long time, because communism and socialism are not man's nature. Man is a capitalist by nature.

In every religious society, there is always a transitional point happening and that happened with the hippies. I do not think that it is wrong. I do not even think that there are any more hippies in the USA. That was a period and it is gone. Now there are no hippies but swamis, disciples of Maharshi Mahesh Yogi, Rajneesh, Ramakrishna and Vivekananda's order, disciples of Swami Sivanandaji and of Sant Kripal Singh and the Bhakti Vedanta movement. There are so many disciples and they are doing a good job.

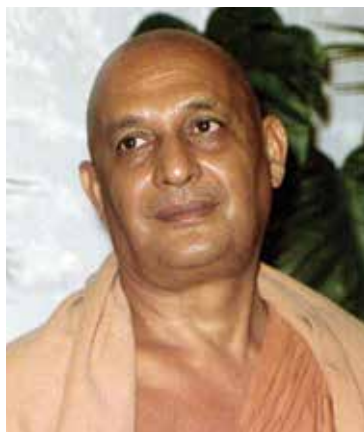
Quite a few of them are my gurubhais. Swami Satchidanandaji is my gurubhai. He is a Tamilian from Lanka. Now he is an American citizen and *dadaji*, grandpa, of American boys. People love him. There is another yogiraj, Amrit Desai. There is yogi Swami Rama, who has an ashram which is just like a university, the Himalayan Institute, with faculties of yoga. There are many Americans and quite a few Indians. All of them are well-educated people. They talk about yoga, meditation, the Vedas, Vedanta, Samkhya, Nyaya and the ashram is spread over five hundred acres. Can you start an ashram in India on five hundred acres? I do not suppose the Indian government will allow you. It will happen in India too because India is undergoing the same phase as America has undergone with the hippie movement, but with a difference of coat, pant and tie. It is also having a hippie movement, a transitional movement, and most of you have had a glimpse of the hippie life, maybe in your personal life too.

What about the drug addiction in the western countries?

The alcohol industry in western countries is like any big industry, not a small one. The alcohol industrialists are multi-millionaires, billionaires. People may believe in drug addiction, but I know the truth because I am a travelling man. There is a big economic deal behind it when they talk about drugs. What drugs? Do you think that champagne is less harmful than ganja? Do you think that these modern medicines, steroids and antibiotics are less harmful than many other things? Why don't you compare it? I don't mind that you consume it. I don't take it; I don't preach it, but since you mentioned drug addictions, there is no drug addiction anywhere. All young children in western countries go through a period of experience. During that period of their innocence, seventeen to eighteen years of age, they experience quite a lot of things but they do not continue it; they become serious.



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 the satsangs of *Teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati, Volume XII*, Swami Satyananda answered sadhaks' questions at Ganga Darshan Vishwa Yogapeeth in 1986, 1987 and 1988. Whether it is to clarify the differences between traditions, customs or superstitions, Swami Satyananda explains complex vedic or Samkhyan philosophies with parables and personal experiences, rendering them easily digestible in our modern time.



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