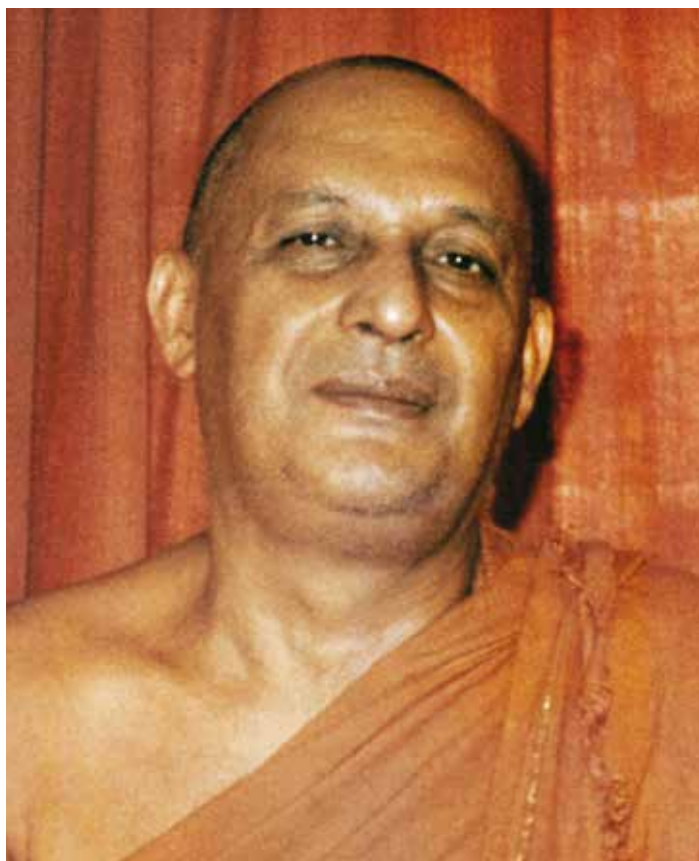


Volume IX

Teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

Teachings of
Swami Satyananda
Saraswati
Volume IX



SWAMI SATYANANDA SARASWATI
1923~2023
CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

Teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Volume IX

*A compilation of talks and satsangs
given by Swami Satyananda Saraswati
at Ganga Darshan Vishwa Yogapeeth in 1981.*



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

Teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati, Volume IX

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

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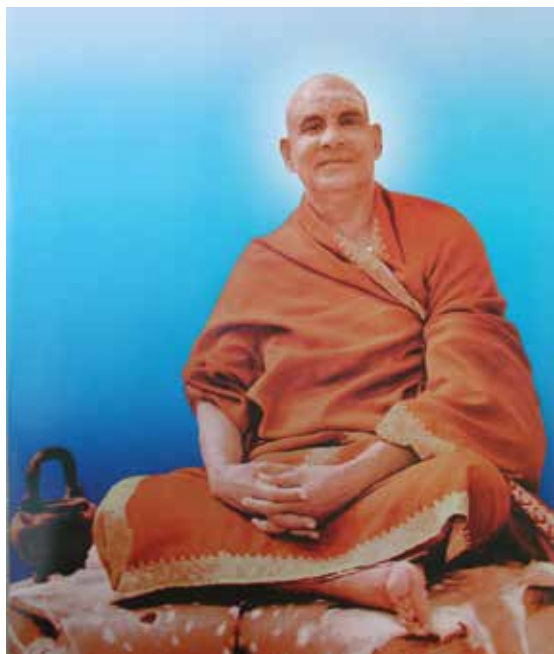
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Dedication

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



Dedication

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

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1

Satsang

January 1981

Could you please talk about how to develop willpower?

I used to spend a lot of money when I was in school. My father did not know how to check it, but he was a very shrewd man. He seemed to have learnt a particular trick somewhere. He asked me to enter all my expenditure in a diary for five years. After about five or six years one day he told me, "Bring the diary with the list of your expenditure," He gave me a red pen and said, "Please go through it and question whether each expenditure was really necessary." I remember very clearly that out of those hundreds of entries only twenty survived. The expenditure that seems necessary today is found unnecessary after a few years.

The same is true about thinking. What happens in the process of thinking? Wastage of energy. Energy is spent because every thought is a product of pranic energy. If there is no pranic energy there cannot be any thought. I am talking to you using energy. They are running the tape recorder, utilizing energy. You are feeling, hearing, smelling, moving, talking and understanding using pranic energy. In the process of thinking one uses a lot of pranic energy. If one could conserve that energy, one's willpower would be fantastic.

If you realize that you do too many unnecessary things, you should try to remember your mantra all the time. This is called mantra repetition. Repeat your mantra whenever you

are free. You do not have to use your mala. Just concentrate on your natural breath and become aware of your mantra. You can do it any time. This is the surest and easiest way for the development of willpower.

When the disciple dies, does the master take charge of the disciple and help him after death?

It depends on the spiritual capacity of the guru and the depth and intimacy of the relationship between guru and disciple. Many times the guru and disciple have a very intimate relationship. It is not physical intimacy. It is not an emotional relationship. It is not the love and affection in the relationship. It is not even the relationship of total emotional integration. It is a tantric relationship between guru and disciple.

A tantric relationship is an occult relationship. Many times mothers and their children have this relationship. Husbands and their wives have this relationship quite often. It is an internal link between people. While being physically separate they are attached through a psychic relationship. If this occult relationship exists between a guru and disciple, the guru can take care of the disciple in any form and in any condition.

It is very important for the disciple to forge this link, because gurus who are evolved are completely without care. They live in a transcendental state of consciousness and are totally careless about what happens to the body and mind. Therefore, it is the duty of the disciple to forge this link, and prepare themselves properly for it. A guru can look after the welfare of a disciple in this life here, and in the life hereafter, but if the disciple is not able to forge this link, even an evolved guru cannot look after his or her spiritual welfare here or in the hereafter.

Is there a difference between spirit and soul? And why are they sometimes written Spirit and Soul?

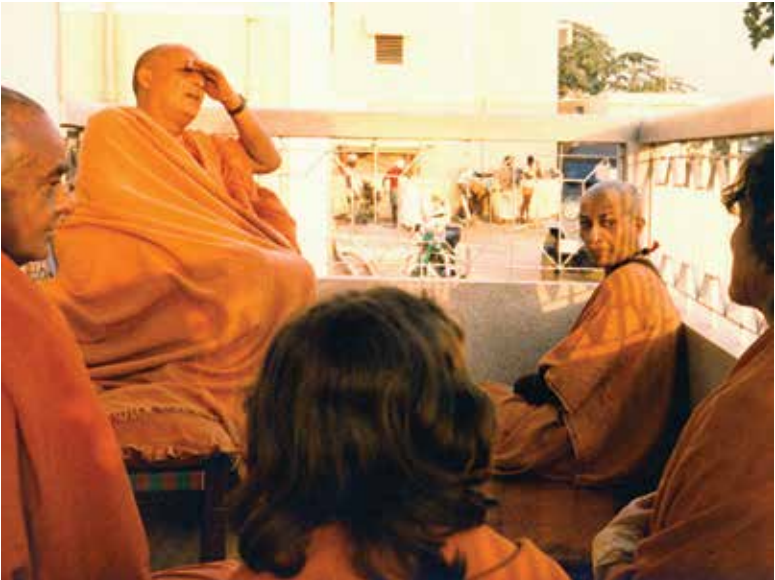
This question is not very difficult if understood properly. In Vedanta philosophy, there are very clear indications. The physical body is called the gross body, mind is the subtle body

and the totality of one's karma is the causal body. These are three bodies which we inherit.

When the gross body dies, the causal body, also known as the astral body, leaves the gross body. This causal, astral body which is the sum of one's experiences in this life due to this gross body, emigrates from it. This is also called the spirit. Some people even call it a ghost or apparition, but it is known as the spirit. Sometimes people also call it the soul. Spirit and soul in this body are the same, written with a small 's'.

Besides these three bodies there is Consciousness in us. It is not the mind, it is not the body, and it is not the karma. It is the pure *atman*, pure Consciousness. In philosophy that is known as Spirit or Soul. In this context, the Spirit and Soul are written with capital 'S'. Therefore, the terms spirit and soul and Spirit and Soul denote completely different things.

In vedantic philosophy Spirit and Soul refer to *atma*, the permanent basis of life: the individual soul *jivatma*, and the universal Soul, *Paramatma*. *Jivatma* is the emigrant, not *Paramatma*.



2

The Role of Guru

1 January 1981

A guru lies within all of us. That guru is known as the inner guru, or *sat-guru*. Ultimately, there is no guru other than the one who lives within each and every one of us. This is the truth of the matter, but unfortunately there is always a gap between truth and reality. Unfortunately, it is not enough to believe that the guru is always within us. This belief is nothing more than an intellectual concept – it is a concept which exists simply as a pattern of the mind.

The situation we are dealing with is a very difficult one. Even though our minds can accept and believe that the guru is within us, this does not give us the guidance that we need, because we are not yet capable of tapping that inner guru. There is energy present within all matter, but in its natural state you cannot harvest it and use it. First you have to submit this matter to a scientific process which will release the energy. Then it can be harnessed and used.

So how can we unlock, how can we give expression to our inner guru? It is a question about guru that will always concern us. It is to this end that we practise sadhana and kriya yoga. With these practices we are trying to create a situation in which the inner guru can emerge. The guru we can see and understand, and whose language is within our intellectual grasp, is only our first guru. His role is to show us the way to our own sat-guru.

Part of this involves helping us select the right yoga practices. Usually we need this guidance because we are confused. We know a lot about different practices, and sometimes we know so much that we do not know how to put it all together in our spiritual life.

What is the story of the *Mahabharata*?

There was a king whose name was Santanu and he had a queen who gave birth to a son named Devabrat. Later the king fell in love with a fisherwoman, but her father would not allow her to marry the king unless he promised that her children would succeed to the throne of India. The king could not make this decision because she was not his wife.

His son, Devabrat came to know about it. So he went to the girl's father and said, "You give your daughter in marriage to my father. And I will assure you that her children will succeed to India's throne." The father said, "What is the guarantee of this?" Devabrat said, "I will never marry." He promised that he would remain a life long brahmachari or celibate. So, his son and heir having made this promise, the king was able to marry that fisherman's daughter.

Devabrat was known as Bhishma Vitama. *Vitama* means grandsire, *Bhishma* means 'who makes a mighty deed'. From this fisher-girl were born two sons. One of them died on the battlefield and the other survived and had two sons. One was born blind and the other was born full of jaundice, and because he could not impregnate his wife a special process was followed that was very current in India, called extramarital relationship under certain conditions.

Rishi Vedavyasa was asked for that extramarital relationship. Now the process of this extramarital relationship is that the man who comes for this relationship should have certain things applied to his body so that he does not look beautiful. He came with all kinds of ointments rubbed on his body and he did not look very nice. When the girl saw him in the light, she closed her eyes. So, she conceived a blind son. Next time, when this extramarital relationship was again allowed, the

rishi came with a different application and she was suddenly filled with fear and her blood went cold. Another son was born and he was yellow. They were the two brothers. Known as Dritarashtra, the eldest, and the other was Pandu. *Pandu* means jaundice.

Dhritarashtra, the eldest brother, succeeded to the throne. Although he was blind, still he ruled the country, because Pandu did not live for a long time. According to Hindu customs, one who becomes king should have no disease, he should not be deaf, dumb or blind, or have any other disability, but Bhishma Vitama had made the promise to the fisherwoman and refused to succeed to the throne. Dhritarashtra married a woman from Pandha and her name was Ghandari. From her one hundred princes were born.

The other brother, Pandu, was incapable of conceiving but he had two wives, who had six children: four from the eldest one and two from the younger one. Out of the four, the eldest one was Karna. Karna was born to Kunti, the wife of Pandu, before she was married. Due to social shame, or whatever you might call it, she did not declare the child and left it where a fisherman's family brought up the child. He was not brought up by the royal family because he was left by Kunti. After Kunti was married, she gave birth to three children. The eldest was Yudhishtira, the second Bheema and the third Arjuna. The next queen conceived two children, called Nakula and Sahadeva. All five were recognized as legal children of Pandu and called the Pandavas, but the eldest one was not legally declared.

There were a lot of difficulties between these two families. The eldest son of the blind king succeeded the throne and became a rascal, given to bad habits and he was very cruel. His name was Duryodhana. He never allowed his cousins to have any say in state affairs and the family dissipated ultimately leading to a consuming war of India – the Mahabharata. Both the armies fought for eighteen days.

On the fifteenth day of the war, when the two commanding chiefs of the blind king's army were killed, Karna took

command. At that time he learnt that he was the son of Kunti, and was poised to fight with his own brothers, but he had to go through with it. On the sixteenth day, his chariot gave way. According to the rules, when a warrior is not in the mood to fight, or is not poised to fight, he cannot be attacked. But Krishna told Arjuna it was the right time, and so Karna was killed though he had no weapon in his hands.

Karna was a very mighty warrior and he was a yogi, a tantric. He used to worship Chandi, his ishta devi. Every night he used to go and perform tantric rituals and the site of Ganga Darshan is supposed to be the place of his parents – Karna Chaura. It is supposed to be the site of the ancient palace. Karna ruled the area of the Bhagalpur, Munger and the other side of the Ganges called Angadesh.

The mythological stories about Karna say that when he was born, his chest was steel, his arms were steel. They were as strong as steel, and arrows or bullets could not penetrate. So were his ears. He also had special knowledge of fighting. When he became the commander-in-chief, the other party, the Pandavas, was very much afraid of him. They knew he was a mighty warrior. It was then they disclosed to him his real identity and said, “You are the son of Kunti, and now you are fighting with your own brothers.” He said to Kunti, “Well, I do not know of this. Anyway, it does not matter, I will not kill all five brothers, I will kill only one. So in any case you will still have five sons.”

Karna was a yogi, a tantric who had special siddhis and in Hindu history he is known as a man with great charity. Nobody who asked him for anything ever left disappointed. This was his greatest weakness. He had a special weapon called Shakti which was very powerful. To get this weapon from him, Lord Krishna went to him in the disguise of a Brahmin and asked for his weapon – shakti.

3

Satsang

4 January 1981

Addressing a group of yoga aspirants from Colombia

What is the difference between yoga and tantra?

There is no difference between tantra and yoga. Yoga is an offshoot of tantra. Tantra is the most ancient science dealing with the discovery of hidden energy in man. *Tantra* means expansion of mind and liberation of shakti. In order to expand the mind and liberate Shakti, there are many ways of tantra, and yoga is one of the earliest. Tantra is not a particular practice. Tantra is a philosophy.

The philosophy of tantra is that man is not just matter and the present state of man's evolution is not final. The present state of man's mind, body, intellect and emotions is not final. We can expand our mind, emotions and intellect. The most modern philosophy of tantra is that in man's physical body resides a power and this shakti is known as kundalini. It is also known as the Divine Mother, Durga, Kali and the World Mother. It has many names, but tantra calls it kundalini. This shakti can be awakened by certain practices. Yoga is the practical side and tantra is the theoretical side. Therefore, tantra and yoga are the same, just like theory and practice.

How should we accept our nature in spiritual life?

Everybody has his own nature. Some are very dynamic by temperament, very ambitious, passionate and aggressive. Some are very passive, dull and pessimistic; others are

balanced. People do not belong to one category of nature. We are a combination of the three gunas.

The three gunas are known as sattwa, rajas and tamas. Not only human beings but everything in nature is a combination of the three gunas. In the scope of evolution one guna or nature is predominant, and the others are subservient. You cannot be only rajasic. You may be predominantly rajasic but you have the other two gunas as well. Therefore, in spiritual life when we have a particular nature we have some difficulty.

Those who are aggressive, dynamic, passionate and ambitious have difficulty in practising yoga. They have difficulties in practising meditation. They should understand that they must practise karma yoga, hatha yoga, bhakti yoga and raja yoga in combination. Those who are pessimistic, lazy and indolent in nature should practise more of karma yoga and hatha yoga and less or not at all of raja yoga. Those who are balanced and harmonious by nature, and nothing disturbs their mind, should not practise karma yoga, bhakti yoga, hatha yoga or raja yoga, they just have to practise samadhi yoga. A man has in him dynamism, emotion, a psychic personality and rationality. Therefore, he should practise a combination of karma yoga, for his dynamism, bhakti for his emotions, raja yoga for channelling his psyche, and jnana yoga for directing his intellect.

In the process of spiritual unfoldment, you must make use of your guna and accordingly you will have to select a form of yoga. One need not practise yoga in an orthodox manner. The moment we become orthodox in yoga, yoga becomes a religion. If I am good it is because I am good, and not because I wanted to be good. Therefore, you should first of all analyze your own nature and then start the practice of yoga suitable to your evolution.

What advice can you give us to live a full life?

In order to live a fuller life, you will have to break the barriers of your mind and emotions. Man is a captive of his own faith. He is captive of social circumstances. How can he live a fuller

life? You do not have an independent mind; you do not have an original mind. You have an indoctrinated mind. You have been brainwashed by the circumstances in which you have been living. Wherever you live, in India or South America, you cannot say you have an original mind.

Many times our mind is thinking automatically. There are many concepts which are so automatic to us. The language we know is so automatic to us, we do not have to learn it. From this you understand how much we are brainwashed and automatic, and how much our brain or personality is conditioned. As long as we are conditioned we cannot live a fuller life. We have our concept of freedom, knowledge, health, prosperity and happiness, but that is what we have been taught.

First of all, to lead a fuller life, you will have to break the mind. You will have to completely clean it up. You will have to channel your own faith. It is such a difficult thing, but once you channel your own faith, you do not know what you are going to live up to. Most people are very weak. They can not live without a faith, without concepts and boundaries. They must have boundaries.

In order to live a fuller life, the boundaries will have to be shattered. How to break the boundaries? You have to practise yoga first and gradually come to the deeper realms of the mind. When you go into the deeper realms of the mind, you understand the reality of the universe and you know what is truth and what is not. Then you lead a fuller life.

What is death?

Whatever I reply will only be a theory to you. In practice man can never understand and face death. The only thing that man does not want and the only thing that is inevitable is 'death'.

There is nobody today who is living constantly or is immortal. Death is an inevitable consequence of the quality of matter. The body is matter. It has a period to survive, and after that it must die. The spirit wants to live in the body, but death has to take place.

According to yoga, death is a state of body. The spirit does not die, the soul does not die, only the physical body dies. Therefore, when you ask, "What is death?" I will say, "It is the end of your body. It has nothing to do with your spirit." There is a famous song in India which is known by most people which says, "That which is born must die. That which dies must be born again." This is the inevitable process in the realm of nature.

What importance has the concept of reincarnation in yoga?

The fundamental philosophy of yoga is the philosophy of consciousness and the concept of energy. Just as in religion there is a non-dual concept, yoga has a dualistic philosophy. There is the concept in yoga of two eternal energies, two eternal beings, known as *purusha* and *prakriti*, consciousness and energy. In tantra, they are known as Shiva and Shakti. These two things are external. Your body dies and my body dies, but the spirit continues. That is the fundamental philosophy of reincarnation.

Yoga believes that there is evolution. Evolution in the realm of matter, the mind, every realm. In yoga, it is not possible to believe, 'I am just born with this totality of mass'. It is very illogical to believe that the thing has just come without following the process of evolution. My mind, my body and everything else have been developing in the last sixty years. The present state of man's life is forming a link in a long chain. Therefore, reincarnation in yoga is not viewed as a religious belief. It is a logical outcome of ratiocination.

Where is the spirit born from?

The spirit enters the body at the end of the fourth month of pregnancy. This spirit is the transmigrated stuff from the previous life. If a man dies today, he will be reborn after a few years and the spirit will enter on the fourth month in the womb of a mother. During that interim period, it will be in a dormant potential state, just as a seed of a plant remains in a dormant potential state.

Up to sixteen weeks the foetus is only a lump, a tumour. It lives on the oxygen and blood supply provided by its mother. It lives on the heart beat and every physical process of the mother. The foetus lives like a tumor lives on the supply of the human body. At the end of the fourth month, the spirit enters the body and it becomes an individual. It has then an independent physical, mental and spiritual system. It has its own heart and nervous system.

When does the spirit come back to pay for past faults?

In religion, people believe that the spirit comes back to suffer and to pay. In yoga the soul does not come to pay, the soul does not come to suffer, the soul does not come to enjoy; the soul comes to evolve. It is about evolution of matter, evolution of mind, evolution of everything.

If man comes to pay, would he be a programmed being?

Man is a link in a long chain. Matter is in a state of constant evolution, in every speck of creation. This evolution is leading him from gross to subtle. In the course of millions of years, what has happened to the matter in the earth and what has happened to the matter on other planets? The earth may be a few million years old. The cosmos is infinite and eternal. You cannot fix a definite date for the beginning of the cosmos. You cannot even fix a date for the earth because the earth did not come on a certain day. It was a gradual process in the realm of nature which took millions of years on this little planet. In the same way, the different animals, mammals, reptiles and birds came to evolve in the course of many thousands of years as a result of natural evolution.

We should not impose our personal feelings and personal experiences on the process of this reincarnation. I have my personal unhappiness, but I cannot say that I am paying for the past. I may have a diseased body but I cannot say that I am paying for the past. This is the way to relax yourself. If I have certain problems in my life I say, 'Well, I have done something in my previous life and I am paying for it now.'

Then I am quiet. Everybody tries to impose his personal philosophy on a God philosophy. The human body is a perfection in the realm of nature after millions and millions of years of nature's hard work.

In the course of history, we have lived in different political and social circumstances. When we were living completely independent lives, we had very few emotional problems. When we organized a society, a family and relationships, we started having a lot of emotional problems. When we did not have a religion, we did not have any problems. When we started having religion, we started having problems: wars, shootings, killings and executions. When people suffer they begin to think, 'Oh, my Lord. Because I have done something bad in my previous life, I am suffering now.'

Nature is an artist; nature is a sculptor. It is trying to form a perfected pattern of life. During the process of creation of this pattern, it is chiselling out the unnecessary parts from that crude stone. Take for example a piece of timber. What does the carpenter do with it? He cuts, he drives nails in, and he chisels. If only the timber could think, it would think in terms of suffering and pain. As long as you have knowledge of suffering you always misunderstand the purpose of nature. If you understand the purpose of nature, you understand the purpose of pain. Suffering is a very relative term. What is suffering in South America may be happiness in India.

In India when a girl is married, she leaves her home, she cries. When a dead body is taken to the burial ground, people are singing. Can you understand that in South America? Do you cry when you are married? Do you sing and jump when somebody dies at home? That is the concept of man's suffering. That is the concept of man. That is the concept of man desiring suffering and happiness.

How do you classify your disciples?

I have never tried to classify my disciples. I have never thought about it until you put this question to me. I know only one thing, that you love me and I love you. There are

many people who live with me and many who do not. For me that makes no difference, because I believe that everything is happening within myself and within the heart of the disciple. It is true that some disciples live the life of a sannyasin and others the life of a householder. This is not my classification; it is their classification.

For me, both of them are trying to work out the problem of spiritual evolution. As long as they are trying to work it out, there is no difference in their being my disciples, as sannyasins or householders.

In the Catholic religion, marriage is an unbreakable sacrament. What is marriage in the Hindu religion?

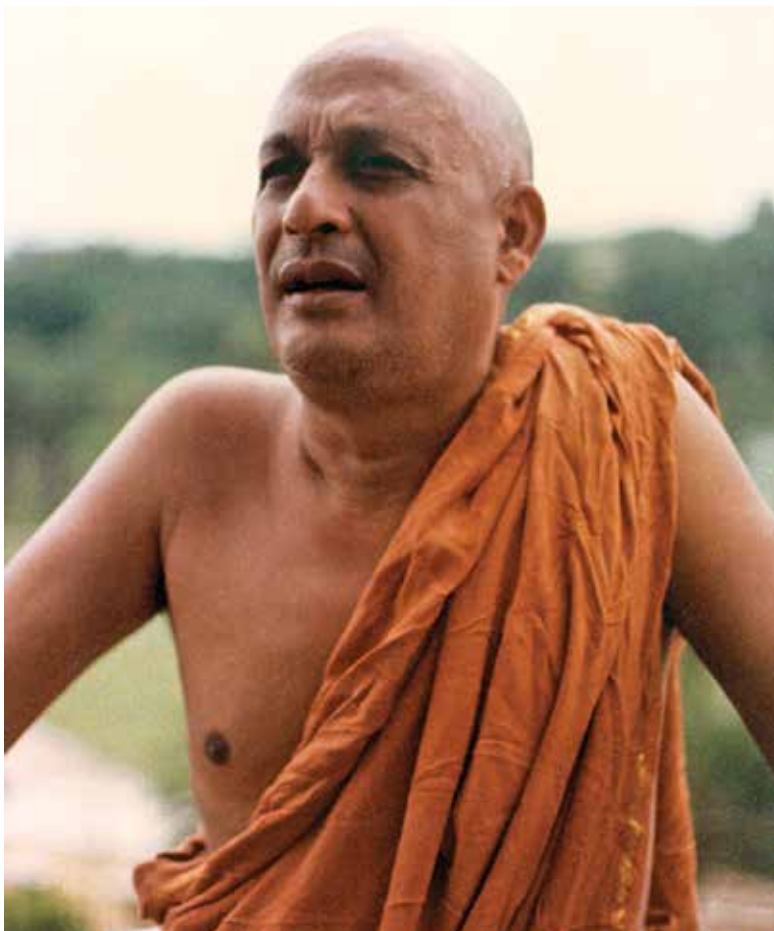
The Catholic religion came about nineteen hundred years ago. The Hindu religion is much older than that. The Catholic religion has received inspiration from the Hindu religion. Older than the Catholic religion is the Jewish religion. Whether you agree or not, the Jewish religion is the father religion of Christianity. Well, many people do not like me to tell this, but it is a fact. How can we disown the father? I am not a Hebrew, but the Hebrew religion is very old. It may even be as old as 5,000 years, but older than the Hebrew religion is Zoroastrianism, and older than Zoroastrianism is Hinduism.

In the Hindu religion there is one marriage and it cannot be broken. The orthodox Hindu religion does not even accept divorce. When the Hindu girl goes to her husband's family, it is said, 'Only your dead body will come out of that house.' But, there is one difference. Hindus have made it very practical. It is not enough to say marital bonds are unbreakable. You have to foster a society for that purpose. In the West it has not happened. You have fostered a society where marriage is unchallenged. You have fostered an economic system where marital status is challenged. You have fostered a philosophy where the sanctity of marriage is challenged.

Since the West is living in an atmosphere of contradiction, the faith of Catholics cannot be practised and is not being

practised there. Hindus believe in one marriage, lifelong partnership, equal rights, distribution of duties, but at the same time, we have tried hard to foster the society where this will survive. We have created the literature which would help in fostering this society.

When the Hindus were at the peak of prosperity and now when we are not rich but poor, still we are working hard to foster that society where marriage becomes what we call a lifelong sanctity.



4

Gayatri and Mantra

5 January 1981

Addressing a group of kriya yoga aspirants from Italy

In the science of mantra, there is one thing called daily practice. The mantra which is given to you by your guru should be practised as much as you can, but when you want to awaken the potential of the mantra, when you want the mantra to become full of life, when you want to bring the shakti of the mantra alive, then you have to practise the mantra for a certain number of times.

For instance, the mantra *Om Namah Shivaya* has five syllables. If one practises it 500,000 times in fifteen days, it is called one *anushthana* or one round of mantra. The Gayatri mantra has twenty-four syllables. This means this mantra should be practised 2.4 million times to complete a cycle. If one completes this cycle, one attains one *siddhi* or perfection. The mantra becomes awake and alive. It is very difficult and may take half a life to complete, so there are other provisions. One can practise it one hundred and twenty-five thousand times or in even smaller cycles. These cycles are necessary in order to explode the power of the mantra.

We practise mantra japa for five or ten minutes, and that offers us relaxation. It intensifies the alpha waves in our mind, but intensification of alpha does not lead to the discovery of spiritual potential. We have to go beyond it where there are no waves. The normal waves are alpha beta, gamma, delta and theta. The mind, however, has to go beyond these waves.

It has to go even beyond the waveless void. The mind has to become zero, it has to stop for a moment. The electrodes or EEG and other instruments must record zero impulse in the mind.

Twice a year there are periods which are conducive to mantra anushthana – nine days in March–April, and nine days in September–October. They are known as Navaratri. In Christianity, there was the practice of Novena, which is lost. Now there is only a ritual of Novena worship that is all, not a sadhana. The nine nights of Navaratri are followed by the tenth day, considered the day of victory, accomplishment, the conquest of light over darkness.

During these days, householders retire from their activities of life. One member of the family practises the mantra. The husband may practise mantra from morning to evening with a few breaks here and there. He does not consume any cereals or meat, having only fruits, milk and a little boiled vegetable, nothing raw. Some eat only once, others twice. They sleep on the floor for nine days, not on the mattress but on the grass mat. The men do not sleep with their women. They do not shave and after nine days, on the tenth day, they just come out from this sadhana.

These practices are repeated every year, not by the same member, but by different members because not everybody can practise at the same time, otherwise what would happen to the household? In this way, once a year, one retires into seclusion, practises one's mantra from dawn to dusk or even till late at night, with little breaks for food. One completely withdraws oneself. This is called anushthana or the cycle of the Gayatri mantra.

The third practice for which the Gayatri mantra is used is for nadi shodhana pranayama. In the beginning, one has to use the small form of Gayatri, and eventually the big form. The ratio for the pranayama is 1:2:2:1. Inhalation for one repetition, retention for two repetitions, exhalation for two repetitions and external retention one repetition of the Gayatri mantra.

In India Hindus initiate their children at the age of eight to ten. At that time, they are taught only three things: salutations to the sun, *surya namaskara*, the Gayatri mantra (the first type) and pranayama. These three things are taught to them in the ceremony which takes place at the age of ten.

The Gayatri mantra offers them the wisdom of the most ancient Veda known as *Rig Veda*. It is said by teachers that the basic mantra is *Om*. *Om* is a bija mantra. It is also the universal mantra, not a general mantra. This mantra is very powerful. Sometimes the aspirant is not qualified or prepared for its effects. He practises the mantra *Om* and suddenly comes face to face with certain difficult experiences, because the effect of *Om* is very rapid. It should not be practised, especially at the age when the aspirant is not yet qualified or prepared.

The *rishis*, the wise men, offered another mantra in the place of *Om*. This mantra was revealed to them so that the ordinary people who are not prepared could practise the mantra without any drastic or rapid results. Some believe that this mantra is addressed to the sun, but ultimately it has been found that this mantra is directed towards inner brilliance, the inner sun. The inner brilliance must shine and one's consciousness must be enlightened.

There is a beautiful and long poem written by Sri Aurobindo. The name of that work is *Savitri*. Savitri and Gayatri are synonymous. There is absolute darkness in the early morning, with only the stars shining. After some time, one feels light shooting forth through the horizon. That is the indication of the advent of light. The same happens in the inner horizon exactly as it happens in the external horizon.

Internally also there is absolute darkness. One can see visions, from time to time. They are like the stars in the darkness of early morning. When the internal sun is about to rise, one experiences traces of light within the horizons of one's mind. That upspring of light is called Savitri, just before the sun comes out which is then called Gayatri. It

represents the external self which illuminates the whole world and simultaneously represents the inner self which illumines all the planes of one's existence or consciousness.

The external sun only illuminates the external gross world, but when jnana rises, when wisdom dawns and when inner enlightenment takes place, not only the physical body, the mind or astral body, but all planes of existence become perceptible and one can experience them.

The seven syllables are known in Gayatri as the seven *lokas* or planes of existence: bhu, bhuvaha, suvaha, mahah, janaha, tapaha, and satyam. *Satyam* means absolute, which represents sahasrara chakra. Tapaha represents ajna chakra. These seven planes represent the seven realms or dimensions of consciousness of which you become aware when the sun rises in the inner mind.

In the Hindu religion, there are only three things that matter. One is the *Bhagavad Gita*, second is the Ganga and the third is Gayatri. Take these away and this culture would not exist. The *Gita* as you know is the philosophy of Hindu religion. The Ganga is external as well as internal. External Ganga is Ganga Darshan and the inner Ganga is the sushumna which runs between the earth and heaven. I have given you the introduction of Gayatri.

Whatever you are, live life in the way you can as a saint, debauchee, criminal, scavenger, butcher or a prostitute. It does not matter who you are, but remember that the totality of life is self-realization and strive for it all the time.

Please, could you talk on destiny and free will?

In Samkhya, yoga and other philosophies, there is a lot of discussion about destiny and free will. In yogic terminology there are two terms. One is *prarabdha* or destiny. Destiny is a part of the plan. It is the outcome of the constant accumulation of karma. If you see a fruit or a flower in a basket, you must presuppose that there is a tree or a plant somewhere. The fruit is only a destiny of a tree and the flower is the destiny of a plant.

The other term is *purushartha*, which means free will and human attainment. These two schemes or universal laws should be understood properly. The fructification of the total karma or acquisition of life is known as destiny. Birth is an outcome and a destiny. Likewise, death is an outcome and a destiny. It is part of the whole plan which is called destiny.

What is *purushartha* and free will? *Purusha* means 'spirit' or 'higher consciousness'. When one has lost the identification with one's body and senses and has begun to experience higher consciousness, one has experienced *purusha*, the higher consciousness. When this higher consciousness is achieved, it is not conditioned by time and space and it is not limited by destiny. It is beyond destiny and it can become a creator. This does not happen to everyone. Only one in a million seekers may become like this.



5

Satsang

6 January 1981

Addressing a group of kriya yoga aspirants from Italy and Colombia

Swamiji, why is the lingam the symbol of mooladhara?

First of all, you must understand exactly what the word lingam means. According to vedic philosophy, the word 'lingam' means 'astral awareness.' Lingam has another meaning, that is, the male sexual organ. 'Shiva' is the name of a level of consciousness. Shiva means the highest consciousness of a yogi. *Shiva lingam* means the astral symbol of Shiva.

There are twelve important centres all over India, which have shrines dedicated to Shiva. In every shrine they have a form known as 'Jyoti lingam.' *Jyoti* means bright light, effulgence, brilliance. *Jyoti lingam* means effulgent lingam of the light within you. These twelve Jyoti lingams are displayed in the shrines of India and they symbolize the twelve important centres within us. Out of these twelve, three Jyoti lingams are considered very important.

This physical body which you have is a miniature replica of the macrocosm, the external world. The external world which you see around you is an expression of yourself. You should not doubt this theory. All the oceans, planets, rivers, mountains and the different continents exist in this physical body. This is not mythology, nor a belief. It is an absolute scientific fact.

Just as you can find the whole cosmos represented in an atom with even the space within the atom mathematically

proportionate to the external physical space, in the same way, you can locate the entire universe, not just one solar system, but all the galaxies in this physical body. They are within you and if you study them, you will understand what I have said. This is the first thing you have to understand.

We make a philosophical error in thinking that this body is simply bone, marrow, fat and blood flowing through the vessels. We think that there is a low voltage energy flowing through the nervous system. And that by cutting the veins and destroying the brain cells it will destroy this computer like body machine. This is not true. This body is the microcosm and the totality of the universe exists in the microcosm. Whatever exists in the microcosm, exists in the macrocosm, and whatever exists in the macrocosm, is present in the microcosm.

In this way, the three Shivalingams that are enshrined in mooladhara, ajna and sahasrara, simultaneously represent the three Shivalingams next to your brain. The word lingam means astral body, not the physical. You have ideas within you; you have emotions and energy in you. Can you see them? No, you experience them, you can feel them. You know fear even though you cannot see it because fear has affected you. Similarly, you know passion and so on because the memory and knowledge of inner perceptions is not lost. They are astral faculties. I must say this word in order to make you understand. Love is an idea, but you do not know it and you can never see it because it is an astral substance.

In this physical body exist astral substances. These astral substances are both dark and effulgent forces. The dark astral forces exist below mooladhara. The effulgent astral substances exist above mooladhara. These astral substances are denoted by the word Shivalingam or Jyotirlingam.

The first astral substance exists in mooladhara, which is the highest chakra of the lower world, and which is the lowest chakra of the intermediary world. In mooladhara chakra, one becomes aware of one's external life which means one has become aware of one's astral substances. These astral substances in mooladhara are denoted by the Shivalingam.

I am giving you the reference of a beautiful book written by Swami Sivananda on this subject called *Lord Shiva and his Worship*. There are other books also written by many brilliant and outstanding authors. There is a very extensive and thick book devoted to this subject called the *Shiva Purana*. It is mythological in approach. There are eighteen such books in the vedic tradition, out of which the *Shiva Purana* is very important to study this subject.

According to the vedic tradition, Mount Kailash represents sahasrara chakra. At the bottom of Mount Kailash is a beautiful lake called Manasarovar and the mountain resembles the external Shivalingam.

Could you speak on vegetarianism?

Apart from the scientific view point of health, there is another important point to be considered. Animals protect the ecology and the atmosphere. If you have studied this subject, you will agree with me. One animal kills another animal and maintains the balance. If you kill all snakes, those animals which the snakes used to eat will multiply. Nature tries to maintain the balance of animal numbers and creates what we call the ecology of the environment.

Apart from this, every animal carries a particular disease. These diseases are peculiar to every animal. When man eats the meat of animals which carry the diseases natural to their incarnation, these diseases get transferred to man. A lot of research has been done on this subject. Therefore, as man began to think, he started to understand that he should take more grain, vegetable, fruit and less meat.

In fact, there was a time when man had almost stopped eating meat, but when there are wars the meat industry becomes important. Even after the wars finish that industry continues. I have done statistical studies on it. Before the First World War very little meat was consumed by people. By the end of the war, the consumption of meat had increased 750 times. That amount further multiplied 1,000 times after the Second World War. It was during wars that the meat industry

started, but after the wars ended, it was not shut down. What happens to the meat? People have to eat it. In order to encourage people to eat, they say it is good for health. However, in the last twenty to twenty-five years, many people are turning to a vegetarian diet.

I would like to know what I can do to be less sensitive.

I think it is good to be sensitive. It is good to be sensitive, but you must make the right choices and selections. There are moments when one has to transcend the sensitivity, and even the hypersensitivity which one develops through yoga. People who are sensitive make very good yogis. Do not try to suppress that. Do not have any negative opinion about your sensitive nature. Just practise yoga and you will find that your inherent quality of sensitivity will give you rich experiences.

When sensitive people practise yoga, they take very little time to experience the results. Those who are blockheads take a long time in yoga. It is better to be sensitive and sharp than to be insensitive and blunt, because the outcome of yoga is more important.

How were you initiated into the practice of yoga?

Frankly speaking, nobody initiated me into yoga. I knew yoga the moment I became aware. Whenever I read books on yoga, I knew that I knew what they were saying. Whenever I read books on religion or kundalini yoga I knew that I knew the knowledge in them. I have read practically all the books on kundalini yoga, yoga, Upanishads, Vedas, Bible, Koran, but the only thing I have understood was that there was nothing new in them. Whatever was there, I already knew.

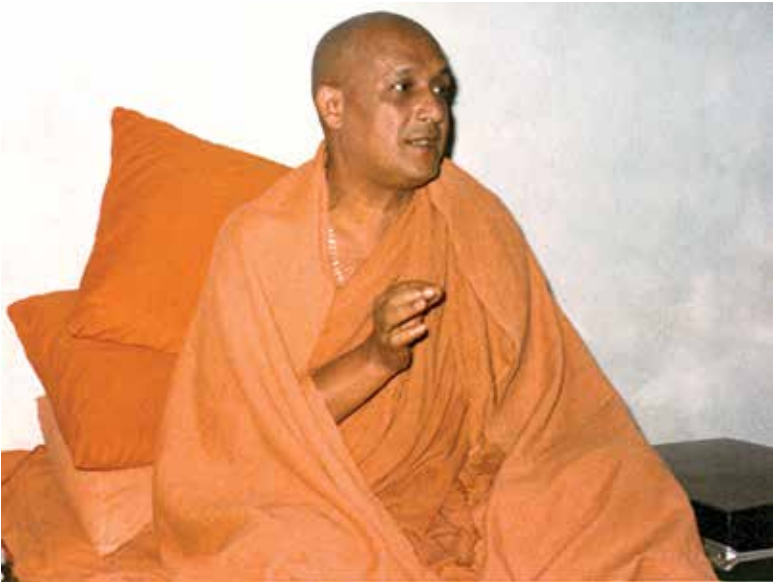
Therefore, the question of my initiation into yoga does not arise. Perhaps it was because my family had practised it for generations. My father, my grandfather as well as my great grandfather, belonged to spiritual traditions, and they had their gurus. Naturally, being their product, I already had in me what they had learnt and experienced.

Does yoga have a good practice for insomnia?

There are many yogic practices which are beneficial for insomnia. I can give you the names of three practices – trataka, nada yoga and yoga nidra. With these three practices you can get a better and proper quality of sleep.

Instead of increasing the perception of more subtle things it is lost and does not come back for many years. Why is there a loss of this state?

When perceptions depend on the mind, they cannot remain permanent. The mind is constantly progressing and regressing. The mind is never constant and therefore the experiences we have through the behaviour of the mind are of the nature of the mind. When the experience is a spiritual experience, it becomes constant and consistent. This is the reason why many people have certain perceptions for a while, but in the course of time, they are eroded on account of the nature of the mind. In order to avoid this, one should try to transcend the perceptions of the mind.



6

Satsang

7 January 1981

What is the point of creation and what is the role of man in the process?

I do not know what is the point of creation. Philosophy has been talking about it for so many thousands of years. In eastern and western philosophy, this problem remains unsolved. Many philosophers are beginning to wonder if there is creation at all. Whether it is not a greater, a supreme or cosmic will. Therefore, in philosophy, this question remains unresolved, but religion has a simple answer. They say God created it.

This is not a very logical answer. This only suits very innocent people. They just believe that God created it, but the shrewd intellectual will ask, "Then who created God?" You will have to give some kind of answer, either 'Somebody created God,' or 'Somebody did not create God.' If you say that someone created God, you will have to say who. If you say no one, created God, he's eternal, you will have to explain eternity.

Timelessness is a very difficult concept for us to understand because our mind is finite. Since our mind is finite, it is used to understand the beginning and the end. If I tell you that there is something without a beginning, you may accept it, but you will not understand it. Therefore, in India, philosophers like Shankaracharya or upanishadic philosophers, and in the West, philosophers like Hume or

Descartes, have all come to a point that the creation which you experience is not a reality. It is either mental projection or a sort of experience which you are undergoing, or if at all it is real, it is like a speck.

From the point of view of the scientist, there is also not a definite answer. Religions believe God created it, philosophers have not resolved the problem, and scientists are talking about time, space and object – which are myths. Time, space and object do not really exist. Since Einstein's discovery of relativity, we have come to have two things called relative and absolute. What is relative is a concept and what is absolute is reality. Absolute must be constant, should not be dependent, and should be homogeneous. Relative is always changing, fluctuating and inconsistent.

I do not think that anybody ever knew the answer or that anyone will ever know it. In the *Rig Veda*, there is a poem: 'Whether there is existence or not, God knows it.' If you are undergoing a dream and you are dreaming that you are dreaming, who is going to decide whether you are dreaming and that the dreamer is not a dreamer? Such questions were put to Lord Buddha and he said, "Don't ask these questions please because they are transcendental questions; they are useless questions. There is pain in the world and there is a way to relieve pain. You should only try to discover the way to get rid of the pain."

Are we denying the guru given to us by birth, for example Christ, when we surrender to a new external guru from a different country and tradition?

If a person is sufficiently evolved, he does not need a guru at all. If a person is not evolved, he needs a guru. He needs a guru in his own reflection, in his own image. If a teacher of higher mathematics goes to a primary school, and begins to teach higher mathematics to a primary class student, the child will not understand anything, because the child is only learning addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. You have to teach him what he can understand.

It is true that Buddha and Christ were not gurus. They were incarnations; they were divine beings. They came to the world, not to teach, but to save humanity. They are known as saviours. Whenever the virtues decline, and whenever viciousness rises and when the higher values of life are challenged, when the petty values of life are acceptable, at that time, in order to save the good people and eliminate the criminals, God incarnates from time to time. He is endowed with special powers because he is powerful.

Such people are like Christ and Buddha. In their own lifetimes, they must have lived as gurus to many people, but their role was much greater than that of a guru. As such, every aspirant must have a guru whom he can understand and whose language he can follow. This is the basic and fundamental mistake that many people make; they keep for themselves an ideal which is difficult to follow.

All these great men like Christ and Buddha came with a special mission and a greater awareness. They were not human beings; they were divinity. Even the physical body they had was not a gross body. Their body was a divine body. Their body was not composed of the five elements of nature, the *pancha tattwa*. Our bodies are composed of the five elements of nature and it will die. The body of these divine beings does not die. It automatically turns into light. Their death is just magic, a show. We think that they die, but really they do not. They are immortal. Therefore, let us not bring down Christ and Buddha to this guruship. It is belittling them.

But Christ died on the cross?

In a film you see a person crying, but it is just an act. For the ordinary ignorant people Christ died, but for the wise people he did not. His physical body was created of divine potentials.

As it happened to Christ, a similar thing happened to Chaitanya and Mirabai, and many more people we can account in history. In my opinion they were not human beings and to consider them as guru is just belittling them. We are simple people; we can be gurus because we are finite.

We can understand your problems and you can understand our language. You can understand the path we are talking about. Therefore, there should not be much of a gap between the wisdom of a guru and the understanding of a disciple. This is very important.

It should be remembered, that when you are realized and when you are evolved, you do not need any guru. You are your own guru. What does this mean? It means, when you begin to hear the inner voice, and when this inner voice becomes infallible, the guru for you is out of question. Who needs a guru? He who cannot listen to the inner voice. Who needs a guru? He who is confused. Why should we need a guru at all when there is God? Because the distance is very great. I do not understand the divine voice. God is talking to me and guiding me all the time. He is in me, but I do not understand it. I do not feel him because I am finite, because I am ignorant, because I am unevolved. My mind is not pure; there is turbulence in my mind. My whole soul is disturbed. I cannot hear him, so I need someone to tell me where to go.

I will give you a very gross example. Once I met a lady at Delhi railway station. I was young at that time and that particular day, I was agitated. She asked me from which platform the train to Ambala left. I said, "You read, it is written there." She told me she could not read. I just kept quiet. Although everything was written there, she could not read. Although there was an information centre there, they did not care for that lady. When she saw a swami, who was not in tiptop dress, just a simple man, she thought, I would attend to her. She felt there was less difference between herself and myself. I went to the information centre, got the information and gave it to her. This is the philosophy of the necessity of guru.

If you are spiritually brilliant, you do not need a timetable, but when you are not spiritually brilliant, then definitely you need someone to tell you. Therefore, guru is sometimes necessary and sometimes not. Sometimes scriptures are necessary and sometimes not. Sometimes satsangs like

this are necessary and sometimes they are not. Sometimes reflecting on the self is necessary and sometimes it is not. The whole thing depends on the stature of the disciple. One has to find out where one really stands.

When does a person receive his spiritual name?

Everybody can receive a spiritual name whenever they become aware that they are different than the body. The physical body has a name to identify it. That denotes your tribe, religion, country. But what about the inner self? That is different from the body. The car and the driver cannot have the same name. My car is 'Ambassador', but my name is not Ambassador. My name is Swami Satyananda. In the same way, this body is the car. What is the name of the driver? What is the name of the owner? What is the name of the spirit? What is its qualification? Is it a mechanic, a driver or a passenger?

Sometimes I am a passenger. Sometimes I am a driver, sometimes I am a mechanic, but I am definitely not the car. Therefore, I must have a name other than the name of the car. When you become aware of this fact, you must have a spiritual name.

What is the meaning of consciousness?

Consciousness has different meanings. Usually when we use the word consciousness we mean the mental state. In philosophy, Consciousness with a capital C means the individual self. The same word is to be used for the mental state as also for the spiritual stuff in man. In yoga, for mental consciousness we use the word *chitta*, and for higher consciousness, for higher states, we use the word *atma*.

Which is the best way to develop willpower?

The best way to develop willpower is to practise mantra. It is also the easiest way. There are better ways, but they are very difficult. Everybody cannot do it. There are forms of tantric and raja yoga sadhanas which are instrumental in the development of willpower, but mantra yoga is the easiest

way for the development of a strong will. In addition to the mantra there is another way. That is called trataka. Through this practice very strong willpower can be developed.

Every night make mantra japa your last item and let mantra japa be the first action after you leave your bed. When you leave your bed in the morning, just sit down quietly, repeat your mantra mentally, no mala is necessary and then make a resolve – I shall face the whole day with greater patience. At night, when you have finished your daily chores, you sit on your bed, close your eyes and practise your mantra with or without mala. No particular number necessary, one, two or ten malas, depending on the stimulated or peaceful condition of your mind that day.

After the practice of mantra, you must resolve in your mind, “When I sleep in the night, and when my mind is withdrawn and subconscious, let it rest with the atman, so that when I wake up in the morning I will wake up with greater energy and vast strength.”

One more thing. Stop useless thinking. Most people think all the time and they think useless things. You have seen a monkey in the zoo, he never sits quietly. He keeps moving all the time. The mind is also behaving in the same way. If you can conserve the wastage of mental energy, your willpower will become greater. I know thinking is necessary, without that you cannot go to the market, shop, home or kitchen. Sometimes in this process of necessary thinking, you also think unnecessarily – I do not mean that – I mean total unnecessary, useless and fruitless thinking.

Why can't we know who we were in other lives?

It is good that you do not know who you were in previous lives. It is also better if you do not know what you will be in other lives. These forty or fifty years that you know is enough. They have been so heavy on our mind and emotions. The tragedy and comedy of forty, fifty or sixty years has been enough for us. I want to forget it because it is no use to me. It is painful, or illusionary.

I was a multimillionaire in the last birth, but I am not today. That man hated me, he murdered my son, he stole my property. He or she betrayed me. You know, all these things are disturbing our soul. All these things are creating jerks in our personality from time to time. If you forget what happened just before you came to the ashram, you would have less problems in spiritual life, and less problems living your family life as well.

Nations fight with each other on the basis of the enmity that took place two thousand years ago. Tribes and tribes are completely massacred – that is why nature has been very benevolent upon us and we do not remember what we were in our previous lives. A simple example: If many of you knew what your relationship was with me in the previous life, you would come with a revolver to kill me. So nature has dropped a curtain between this life and the previous life. We do not know what we were in our previous lives because we are influenced by ignorance, by the lower part of our personality, and because we are too weak. The moment you overcome these weaknesses, all lives will become clear to you.

There have been many saints in history to whom their lives in the past and their lives to come became very clear. How funny it is to know what I was in my previous life! It is useless. The past is always dead, let us bury it. Man has to live in the present, that is the best. What happened in the past should not interfere with our present happiness. If you can completely separate the past from the present, the present will be glorious and golden.

What is karma?

Every experience in life, which a man registers in his brain and mind, is karma. *Karma* means action, but action does not only mean the physical action. Mental fantasy, passion and ambition are also known as karma. Physical action and mental action are both known as karma. Whenever there is a movement in the body or in the mental plane, that should be understood as karma.

According to evolution, karma undergoes three different stages. First of all, the impressions and experiences of life are accumulated in the mind. The accumulation first takes place in the subconscious mind. Then, in the course of time, this accumulation is transferred to the unconscious. As long as these experiences are in the subconscious mind, they can project themselves in the form of dream or daily actions. When these experiences and impressions are transferred to the unconscious, they can express themselves either in deep meditation or later in life, even in another life. The impressions which are stored in the unconscious mind are known as destiny or fate. These karmas which become destiny greatly affect life.

Karma is action and action is a product of the body and mind. Just as a tree produces seed, in the same way, man is producing seeds during every moment of his life. Just as the camera constantly photographs the movement of the body, in the same way, the inner mind is photographing everything that is taking place in our life.

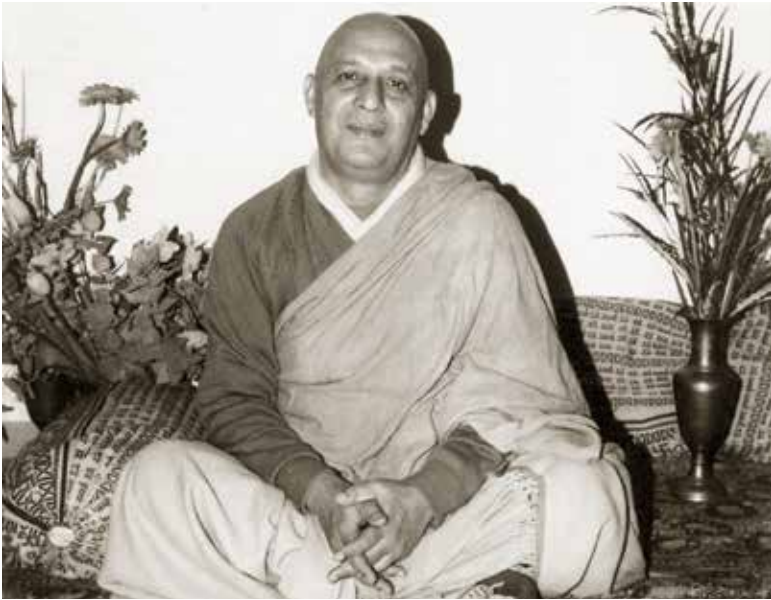
These karmas are also known as samskaras. An action becomes an impression. If I hate you, I create a karma. If I love you, I create a karma. If I have attachment for you, I create a karma which creates an impression known as a samskara. This karma is responsible for our future incarnation. We are a product of karma, of our parent's karma and the social karma. We are composite beings.

7

Religion, Yoga and Love

9 January 1981

Addressing a group of yoga aspirants from Colombia



In the Catholic religion, it is said that the enemies of man are the world, the demon and the flesh. What do you think of these beliefs?

It is not only said in the Catholic religion, but also in yoga. In yoga we do not use the word enemy. We say that there are three obstacles on the path of the divine. Maya is one

obstacle, mind is another obstacle and the physical, material need is the third obstacle. When you sit for meditation, the mind creates all kinds of games. You have to fight with it all the time. For years and years, you keep wrestling with the mind in all sorts of ways.

Then again you are in the body. The problem of sleep, hunger and exhaustion or fatigue is there. Then there are physical urges. Food is one urge, sleep another, fear is the third and the sexual urge is the fourth. So whatever is said in Catholicism is true and is also said in yoga. It is a matter of common sense. Those, who have been practising bhakti and trying to come closer to their own selves or to God, have to face these three forms of sickness, in spite of all sincerity, honesty and truthfulness. The world, the devil and the flesh are in my words – maya, the mind and physical awareness.

What is divine love?

Love is twofold. One is to love the mundane, and the other is to love the transcendental. Transcendental love is known as divine love and bhakti. *Bhakti* is translated as devotion, but it is love. When you love the higher being, and your mind is completely saturated in him, it is known as divine love.

When the mind and emotions are directed towards the mundane objects of the world, when the emotions run after transient things and the mind after the trifling matters of life, then that is known as mundane love. It is worldly attachment. Worldly love pacifies the body and disturbs the mind. Worldly love breaks the heart.

On the other hand, divine love fulfils inner happiness. It gives peace to the heart, brings concentration to the mind and ultimately purifies the whole body. When your mind is directed to God, guru, the creation of God, the disciples of your guru and the suffering people, then it is the enactment of divine love. When you love and enjoy yourself, your wife, children and your own things, when the purpose of love is self-enjoyment, that is called worldly love. In yoga, bhakti is the higher love.

8

Satsang

15 January 1981

Addressing a group of kriya yoga aspirants from Greece

Could you please speak to us on the origins of yoga and tell us how it has spread throughout the world?

There cannot be a chronological history of yoga. From the beginning of creation, man has observed the events of life. From time to time people with super minds were born, which would set the common man thinking as to what made this happen. Imagine, the impact of someone with a special mind, like a telepath, thousands of years ago in the community. People took notice of it and tried to find different methods for the awakening of man.

Man has always been aware of the possibility of a super-mental state and has been trying to discover ways and means to develop that mental state in himself. This was a very important matter for the people, especially in India. The most ancient books of India are known as Vedas. *Veda* means knowledge; Vedas do not mean holy books. The Vedas are a collection of various hymns revealed to various people.

When the aspirant entered into a higher state of mind, he had a certain cosmic awareness or flash. He wrote it down in the form of hymns. The Vedas are considered very old books. A conservative estimate made by western scholars dates them 45,000 years back. In these vedic texts there are very clear references to meditation, higher awareness, supermind, and more. People were trying to discover

methods to attain that state, not only in India, but also in other parts of the world. The manifestations which take place in the supermental state were variously interpreted. Some interpreted that phenomena as a spirit coming from outside and inhabiting the body, others as a black spirit or a boon of God. Yoga did not believe in any of these. It said that these manifestations of mind do not happen through an external agency. When the mind evolves, one comes to a point where these manifestations take place spontaneously.

Yogic awareness developed in different parts of the world from time to time. Religious books like the Bible, Koran, Zend Avesta were written only a few thousand years ago at the earliest. There were oral and written traditions much before these books were finally written down. However, events causing political turmoil destroyed them. In other countries the tradition was completely lost.

In India there was a particular sect of people which was responsible for protecting this science. The people of this tradition lived a very spiritual life. Hence, political turmoil in India could not touch these people. These are known as sects of swamis. They are unconcerned with political change in this country and they do not prefer or follow any particular political order. As swamis, they do not depend much on society. Swamis spend their lives in devotion, studies and contemplation. Therefore, the history of the Indian tradition is the history of yoga.

There is a region in the brain which regulates body temperature. How can we locate it and influence our body temperature?

It is not possible for the common man to locate this centre in the brain, but this centre can be activated through the practices of pranayama. Many experiments and scientific studies carried out in different parts of the world have shown that pranayama is the best way for control of body temperature. Pranayamas are not breathing exercises.

Prana means energy. It is not breath; it is not air. What you breathe in and out is the breath and air, not prana. Prana is the essential energy inherent in every cell of the body. Different names are given to it like bioenergy, vitality, but they do not convey everything. There are two nadis in the body, ida and pingala. These two flows are very important. One is the pranic flow. It originates in mooladhara chakra and flows within the framework of the spinal cord. This prana is influenced by the practice of pranayama.

If pranayama is correctly practised, it not only controls body temperature, it can control thought waves as well. There are many things which have to be controlled before spiritual experience. First of all, the mind needs to be controlled. Thought waves are a manifestation of the mind, and pranayama is the most important instrument for its control. Mudras and bandhas should also be practised along with pranayama.

Moola bandha is a contraction of the perineum. Uddiyana bandha is a contraction of the abdomen. Jalandhara bandha is a contraction of the thorax. These three bandhas are important for the proper practice of pranayama. The first effect of the practice of pranayama is on the lungs, then on the heart, then on the nervous system, and finally on the brain.

Scientists are working nowadays on the phenomenon of stopping the heart. It is based on the yogic postulate that one can stop the heart and restart it. This has been publicly demonstrated many times with medical scientists observing it. The heart can also be stopped by controlling the prana in which prana is converted into the experience of light, and this experience of light continues to be the nucleus of life.

During the period when the heart has stopped completely, there is no activity in the body. Body processes like the growth of beard stop. There is no heat in the body but the practitioner has awareness. He is not unconscious, and his awareness functions symbolically within a locality. There is a small spot of light between the two eyebrows and he is aware of that light alone. He is not aware of himself; he is

not aware of time and space. He is not aware of anything else happening. He is just aware that there is a light.

As long as there is light, there is life. Therefore, prana controls the life principle and this life principle is defined in yoga in a different way. When one practises pranayama, one is controlling the different influxes of prana in the body. According to the books of yoga, there are five divisions and five subdivisions of prana. Through the practice of pranayama these different divisions of prana can be energized in their own locality. But it should be remembered that the ultimate form of prana is light.

During the period of samadhi, the aspirant withdraws his prana throughout the body and converts it into an experience of light between the two eyebrows. Later when the light disperses, the pranas spread throughout the body. The different organs of the body begin to function. Many scientific studies have been done on this.

There are a few important places considered to be the original home of yogis in the Himalayas. Even now people go and live there. It is very cold. I once lived there for nine months. I was very young, twenty-one years old. I could never get out of my cottage. The snow was many meters deep. There was no heater, no sweater. Everything was frozen and I had to live in the room for nine months. I could not even see the sun. There are many places like that situated in the Himalayas, and most swamis spend a few years or months there at some point in their life.

I went to the place which is the origin of Ganga, called Gangotri. There is a small temple for Ganga at the place where the Ganga is emanating. There are a few cottages on both sides of the river. Many people go there on pilgrimage up to the months of September or October. After that the roads are completely closed due to snow. Only about five to ten swamis stay there till the end of March. The pilgrimage season restarts after March. I went there in order to practise pranayama, because pranayama was my important topic. I have never believed that pranayama is breathing exercise.

I am definite that prana opens the secret doors of mind and experience. I also know that pranayama explodes the hidden phases of energy in the mind and body, but it has to be practised properly.

Prana is a wild elephant. If you have not tamed it, it can be disastrous. Therefore, before the practice of pranayama, hatha yoga must be practised. Hatha yoga comprises the six processes of purification. Before you take to pranayama, asanas should also be perfected. Before you take to the higher practices of pranayama, the diet has to be reduced to a minimum. An aspirant of pranayama does not live to eat, but he eats to live. During those nine months that I practised pranayama, I had various experiences. I had two explosive experiences and I could not get out of them. I could not deny them either.

In the first experience, I saw saffron-coloured sages with flowing beards walking on the snow-capped mountain. I thought it was a hallucination and tried to get out of it. I gave myself a few slaps and even twisted my ears, but the experience remained. A few days later, I had a second experience on the same mountain. I saw saris put there to dry. When I saw those saris, I thought they were the saris of the goddesses Durga, Parvati and Kali. This was a living experience. I am sure they were not there and I also know I was not mentally unbalanced. It was not a hallucination, because I knew I was normal, doing all my jobs very well. At the same time, I saw them. That is called a living experience.

Every experience is inherent in man's brain and mind. I will go even further. All experiences which you have in your day-to-day life are experiences you have within yourself. You do not see me here; you see me within yourself. Every experience is subjective. Although the object is there, the perception takes place within you. Cognition takes place within you, because when you reduce every matter to atoms, it does not exist anymore.

When matter is reduced to atoms, matter does not exist. Every cognition has its base in matter. When matter is atom-

ized, there is no matter left. This can be done by reducing the frequencies of the mind. Therefore, pranayama does not merely regulate the body temperature, it also regulates the experiences, expressions and manifestations of the mind. If you proceed gradually to practise pranayama, perceptions change.

I am a householder and I feel I have completed my duties. Still I am not able to make myself free. Is there any chance for me to be a swami?

Whether you fulfilled your social obligations or not, you can always become a swami. What are obligations? They are the enactments of life. You have created them. You have committed them. Now, there is a self-considered emotion that you have to fulfil them. A man defecated on his bed sheet. When he went to clean it he lamented, “Well, I have to clean it now.” Why did I dirty it? This is our concept and idea of duty and responsibility. During moments of ignorance, we cannot think well.

I can assure you that a man can live a complete life without involving his real person. To be able to do that it is necessary that he understands what he is doing. When we play a role in a drama, do we involve our real personality? When we play a drama, do the events in the drama affect our real life situation? The drama does not affect you as a person, because you know it is a drama. At every point of enactment, you fulfil the role in the best possible way as an actor. If you have to weep you weep, if you have to laugh you laugh, if you have to love you love, if you have to lament over the death of your mother, you do that as well. You have to fulfil the role that you are given, but when you come out of the studio you are a different person. It was not a dream. It was a part of an enactment. Similarly, a householder should always remember that he is playing a part in a drama, and he needs to play it well. He should not be a bad actor and give up in the middle of the drama, saying “This is only a drama’.

At the same time, through all this, there is an inner recess in our personality. There is an area which is calm, quiet and silent. It is an area which is full and vibrating with experience. Just go there. This is the spirit of sannyasa, when you realize that you can play both roles at the same time. You can look after your husband, wife and children. You can go to the office, market and factory, and at the same time be in touch with your inner self. From today you can say, 'I am a swami'. Lest you forget it, you have been given one dhoti and one mala. Make it a point to wear it in the morning when you are meditating. It is not necessary to go to your office with a dhoti and put everybody to embarrassment. However, it will remind you every morning at the time of your spiritual practice, 'I am a swami. I am a swami. I am a swami'.

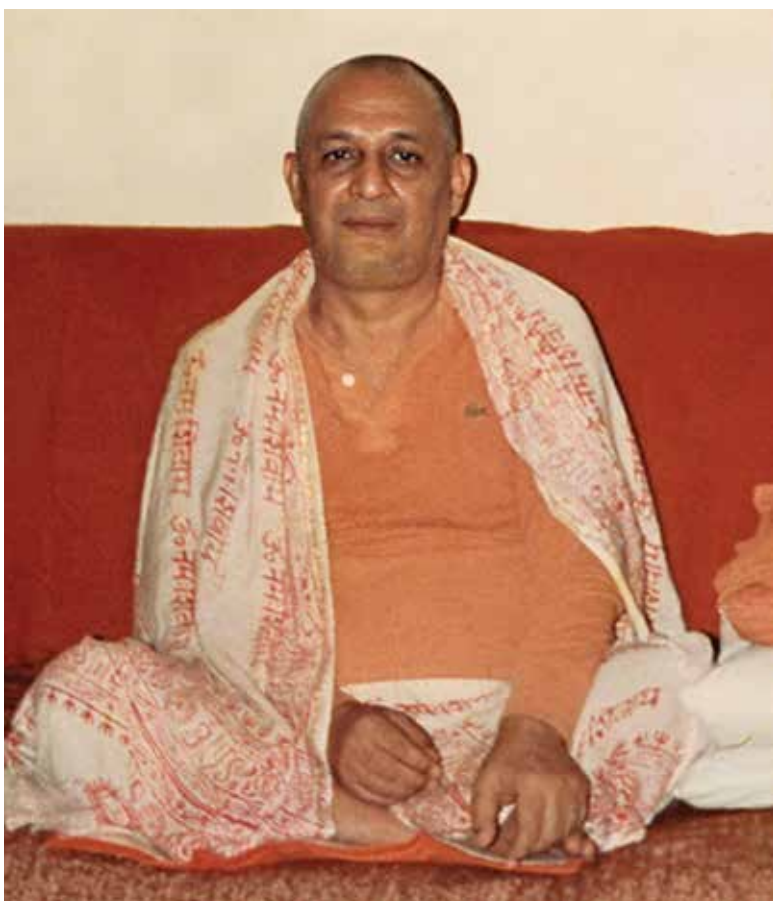
The logic behind it is very simple. One can even go into the military with this dress, take a machine gun and fight in the battle field. One does not have to put on badges and stars to fight. What matters is the system one follows. In the military, the moment one puts on the uniform, the badges, stars and the big cap, this mere pretence brings courage. Fear dies, one forgets wife and children; one does not worry about machine guns or bullets anymore and death loses its meaning. This is the importance of a uniform. If the military uniform can have such a tremendous effect on the fundamental functions of the human mind, why not the dress of a swami?

From time to time, householders who have developed a spirit of sannyasa must live, work, strive, discuss, talk and reflect together. During that period, they should simplify their needs to the bare minimum, live a very simple life so that their minds are not dependent on external materials. That is why ashram life has been designed the way it is.

When you live in an ashram you should look like a swami. When you go back from the ashram you should look like a gentleman, with a nice dress, cosmetics, and all which is beautiful and attractive, all which is maya. Here all those beautiful dresses should be put into the suitcase because

nobody will admire your beautiful clothes. Here we see the beauty inside. In the ashram, an ugly person can be beautiful, and a beautiful person can be ugly. Even a person with a clean dress can be dirty and a person with a dirty dress can be most clean. That is how I have visualized the life of every householder.

I tell everybody, “Go to the ashram. Live there for some time and participate in everything. Get rid of the patterns of life that are in the mind. Work in the kitchen, in the garden, anywhere you like. Nothing to do, nothing to undo.”



9

Satsang

17 January 1981

Addressing a group of yoga aspirants from Greece

What is the significance of karma yoga?

When you do an action with certain motives, it is called karma, but when you do some actions without any motive or personal interest, then that becomes karma yoga. When you do an action with motive, you are always aiming at the consequences and results. It affects your mind. You are never sure as to what you are going to get and what you are going to lose. If you have a business or a shop, you have an interest in it, and whatever happens in the shop or business affects your mind. Therefore, it changes the structure of the mind. When you practise karma yoga, the mind remains untainted, particularly when you are suffering from nervous depressions or nervous breakdown.

Nervous depressions and nervous breakdowns are the consequences of man's relationships with the results of karma. Some people have a strong mind and they get out of a crisis, but many people are very weak and they get into it. If something goes wrong in life, depression follows. It may not follow directly – first comes disappointment, some sort of melancholy follows, then fear complexes, suicidal tendency, nervous depression, nervous breakdown, and then heart attack or finality. The whole process has followed as the consequences of man's involvement with the results of karma. If such people come to yoga for help, they should be involved in karma yoga and instant relief will begin.

On the path of spiritual development, karma yoga is the basic yoga. There are three major hurdles in spiritual experiences. The first hurdle is the impurity of the mind, the second is distractions of the mind, and the third hurdle is hallucinations of the mind. The hallucinations and distractions of the mind can be handled through bhakti yoga and the impurities of the mind through karma yoga.

What can be done in the way of prayer or meditation if someone does commit suicide?

Life after death has always been a mystery for man; he has never seen it, but he has heard a lot about it. In early life one does not think too much, but when he arrives at the later stage of life, he begins to think for he knows that he has to go too. If you tell a person that on the 12th of the month he will be finished, he does not want to believe it. Nobody wants to feel that he will be finished and that it is the end of life.

Therefore, many religions in history have given a thought to it. Out of all these religions, perhaps Hinduism is the only religion which has gone through this topic very carefully. Hindus have not decided this point on a religious basis or on the basis of personal faith and belief. They have given various explanations and definitions. First of all, they had to decide whether there is anything that survives. Unless you solve this problem, what is the use of thinking of something more? Whether a man who has committed suicide becomes a ghost or not, has to be decided later. First we have to decide whether we will survive or not. If we are to survive, who will survive? Will the body survive? To believe that the body will survive is very illogical. Will the mind survive? If it does, what is it? So, who is the migrant? Who is the traveller? That has to be decided first.

After we have logically, and by other means proved or decided the migrant, then only we can go further. Of course, all religions have accepted in some form or the other this continuity of consciousness. Christianity and Islam have also accepted the possibility of survival of consciousness. They do

not talk about migration or that the soul migrates from one body to another body, but they definitely mention about the soul after death and a judgment that will be given.

From this we understand that religions like Christianity and Islam have also postulated the possibility of the survival of the soul beyond the body. The current philosophies are Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Islam and Christianity. These five are very ancient. Most people in the world follow one of these five. Of course Buddhism is there, but its philosophy is not distinct from Hinduism; therefore, Buddhism must be accepted philosophically and technically as part of Hinduism.

These different religions are unanimous on one point, the survival of soul after death. So far as the migration and judgement is concerned they are not unanimous. So, depending on this one point we accept that the man does not die with death.

Will you allow me to disagree with the point of view that the practical and illiterate person is more advanced and even preferable from the educated and trained person?

It is not necessary for a sannyasin to be a scholar or an educated person because spiritual experience can come to anyone. This does not mean that educated persons cannot have spiritual experiences. Educated people can also have spiritual experiences, but the educated people will have to work a little more.

I will give you a very simple example. When I initiate uneducated people into mantra, I give them a sound and tell them to concentrate on the sound. When I initiate an educated person into mantra, I give him a sound and tell him to concentrate on the sound, but this educated man has difficulties because he has no concept of sound. If I tell him to concentrate on the sound of *Om*, he knows O and M, if he knows English. He has to transcend that step first. The uneducated person can directly go to the sound waves because his mind is not conditioned like ours. A particular

sound has been taught to us in symbols. The sound 'ah' has a symbol.

The concentration on sound has to be symbol-less. When you are concentrating on a mantra through a symbol, you are not concentrating directly. Therefore, a person whose mind has not been structured by certain symbols finds it easier to conceive the subtle waves, but it should not mean that only illiterate people can have experience. Anybody who practises sincerely has access to spiritual experience.

Can you tell us how an industrial, capitalist and materialistic country like America has developed so much in yoga?

Wherever there is wealth there is tension; wherever people are living the fast life, there are more tensions. The same is true with America. It is an affluent nation and therefore they have more mental problems. They have tried many methods to get rid of these problems and finally they have come to yoga and are finding fantastic results with yoga.

In India, life is different. When you live in the villages, life is calm and quiet. There may be dust, but there is no pollution. There is a lot of fresh air and fresh water. They get up at four o'clock in the morning and they go to bed at eight o'clock in the evening, and are outside throughout the day from morning to evening. Only at night they stay in their houses and most parts of the year they do not even sleep in their houses at night. For nine months from February to October, they sleep outside. So naturally, they have no such problems as Americans have. Americans have a lot of problems like pollution and emotional problems and tensions. Whether they are in houses, offices, cars or trains, they have to be in completely soundproof compartments. They do not have a community. They do not have a family. The man in this flat does not know who is staying in the next flat.

Two Indians from Jamalpur living on the same floor of a building for seven years never knew each other. One day, when I went to Jamalpur to inaugurate a function, I met both

of them. I asked them, 'Where do you stay in America?' One named a particular city and the other said, 'I stay in the same city.' I knew the city a little so I asked, 'On which side do you stay?' They named the street and the building and finally they realized they were staying with only a wall in between them. In America there is neither emotional integration nor informal friendliness.

Once in Barcelona, we were having kirtan in the flat of my host. All the next door neighbours said, 'What are you doing?' It cannot happen here. If you are singing in India and I object, I will be considered a crazy man. People will say, 'He is singing, why are you worried?'

In the absence of emotional integration and because of other factors as well, the young people chose a different life altogether. In the beginning they were following the path of the hippie cult, but they did not find peace. Then some of them followed the Hare Krishna cult where they found a very well-integrated community. Now they are finding that yoga is the best way.



10

The Mantra Om

20 January 1981

Addressing a group of kriya yoga aspirants from Greece

The *Mandukya Upanishad* explains the meaning and philosophy of *Om*. *Om* is the ultimate cosmic sound. Let us not consider it as a holy word. Let us also not confuse *Om* with religious divinities. When I talk about *Om*, I am talking about the sound principle; sound at various levels or vibrations. It is a combination of three sounds: A-U-M. These three sounds represent the three states of an individual. The individual consciousness undergoes changes during a lifetime. The three states are known as waking, dream and sleep.

Waking, dream and sleep are the three phases of experience of an individual. In these three different phases of experience, the individual is passing through different phases of incarnation. Therefore, the sound 'A' represents waking, 'U' represents dream, and 'M' represents sleep consciousness.

According to our understanding, *Om* seems to be a combination of three sounds, but the *Upanishad* goes on to tell us that these three sounds are not transcendental sounds, they are empirical sounds which are subject to sensorial and mental experiences. After the three sounds of A-U-M, there is the fourth sound which is unheard, transcendental and non-empirical. Therefore, it has four *matras* or sounds. 'A' is one *matra*, 'U' is the second, 'M' is the third, and the fourth one is transcendental.

While the three matras represent waking, dream and sleep, the fourth represents samadhi or moksha. In the same way as an individual experience is divided into three, time is also divided into three. There are two categories of time: relative and absolute time. What is relative time? Past: that is gone; present: that is; future: that will be. That is called relative time. What is absolute time? Absolute time is known as timelessness. Time is a category of the mind; time is an experience of the mind. As long as you are aware of time, you have a mind, or as long as you have a mind, you have knowledge of time. If you transcend the mind, then naturally you transcend time.

What is that experience when you have transcended the reality of time? What is that experience when you have transcended the experience of mind? The Upanishads say, 'Timelessness.' It says, 'You are there for all the time you are there.' The whole time is understood or experienced in an atomic space. It is a very important topic, and it will become a little bit technical if I talk to you in the language of the Upanishads and physics.

The philosophy of the Upanishads with regard to *Om* and the theory of modern physics move parallel to each other. *Om* therefore is not a holy word, it is what we call the equation of total time and timelessness. If you have studied science, you will understand what I mean by equation. These great things that are very deep have to be reduced to some sort of equation. Just as E represents energy and O represents oxygen, there are thousands of equation signs.

'A' represents the waking consciousness, when the body, mind and senses are functioning, depending on the objective experience. 'U' represents dream consciousness, when there is no object, no functioning in the senses, when the mind is completely isolated, bereft of the sensual contacts. However, when there is no experience or no experiencer and homogeneity pervades human consciousness, at the same time, the seed of incarnation is there, the seed of karma is there and karma is not obliterated, that is represented by 'M'.

But when these three are brought together, and the sound is produced as *Om*, that represents the unity of different phases of time or timelessness.

The word *Om* was first found in the *Rig Veda*, and it is said in the Vedas that *Om* is the symbol of the cosmos. The whole cosmos is time, space and matter. Time, space and matter is universe, and time plus space plus universe is equal to *Om*. So, *Om* should be considered as the symbol of total creativity. However, it is also said that *Om* is the creator. It is a very peculiar concept.

When time and space come close to each other and they meet with each other in the nucleus, the object explodes. This object explodes into millions and millions of fragments. These fragments are what we call the different planets. We call them nebula. Time and space respectively represent the two forms of energy called plus and minus. Time represents plus and space represents minus. Object is the nucleus which is completely hidden and unmanifest.

During a certain moment in creation, time and space come close to each other. There is an automatic attraction between time and space. It is only during the period of total destruction of matter that time and space fly apart. During the process of creation, there is a natural coming together of these two forces. The funny thing is that when time and space interact with each other, they always interact in the nucleus. That is the philosophy of nuclear fission; that is the secret of the atom bomb and the secret of the whole of creation. Millions and millions of different planets are nothing but fragments of the object which is the nucleus. Therefore, in this particular context, we can also consider *Om* not only as creation, but also as the Creator.

There is a difference between philosophy and religion here. In every religion there is a god as Creator and there is creation. God is the Creator and creation is different from him. In philosophy, the Creator and creation are the same. Just as there is a pot maker who makes pots by putting a little mud on the wheel and creating the little earthen pots. The

pot here has two causes, one is called the instrumental cause and the other is known as the efficient cause. If there was only a pot maker, the pot would not be there, and if there was only earth, even then the pot would not be there. The pot came into existence because of two causes – the pot maker and the earth.

So here an object has two causes – instrumental and efficient. Is this the situation of creation? Is there a God somewhere who takes a little flesh from here and a little bone from there, and a little blood from here and a little mud from there? Religions say, ‘Yes, God took something from here and something from there and made man, animal, horses, donkeys, pigs and rats’. Philosophy says, ‘No. This is the reply of a person who is very innocent, who does not want to think too much. He says, ‘God created and the problem is finished.’ The intelligent man says, ‘No, it is not possible. What should be the relationship between the creation and the Creator? Are they different or are they the same?’

In essence, Hindu philosophy believes that the Creator and the creation are inseparable. Of course, not the Hindu religion. The Hindu religion is as innocent as Christianity or Islam. “Who created this? Is he alive? Or did he transform himself in creation? Why? Does the creation exist at all? Well, why am I thinking?” All these funny questions have been raised in the Upanishads and they came to a scientific equation called *Om*, which represents the lower and higher stages of existence. This *Om* was emphasized and transformed into waves of sounds. That is known as Gayatri.

In the Vedas, the first equation of the cosmos is *Om* and the second explanation of the cosmos is Gayatri. Therefore, Gayatri is as important as the mantra *Om*. It is a mantra of 24 syllables which represent the same as *Om* or *Aum*.

11

Introduction to Tantra

24 January 1981

Addressing a group of yoga aspirants from Greece

I will give you a short introduction to tantra. In the last few years, scientists and thinkers have been talking a lot about tantra. Some time ago, yoga and tantra were considered different from each other, but lately, with current research and scholars studying both sciences, they have come to the conclusion that yoga is an offshoot of tantra.

Tantra is a very ancient science which was known to humanity thousands of years ago. There have been many civilizations in different parts of the world which had access to this science at different times in history. Tantra is neither occultism nor mysticism, and it is most certainly not a religion. Nevertheless, many religions have been inspired by the tantric way of thinking. In various religions there are systems, practices and rituals which have been derived from tantra. Whether one accepts it or not, tantra can be considered the mother of all religions.

The word tantra is a Sanskrit word. It is a combination of two ideas and it has two roots from which the word has been derived. One root is called *tan* which means expansion, the other is the root *tra* which means liberation. So, etymologically, *tantra* means expansion and liberation. Expansion and liberation are the two ideas that are apprehended in tantra: expansion of mind and liberation of energy. Just as in nuclear physics, you split matter and

liberate energy, in spiritual sciences, you expand the mind and liberate energy.

Scientists have visualized two realms of nature and two realms of energy, *shakti*. The two realms of nature are the empirical nature and the transcendental nature. They have visualized two forms of energy as well. One form of energy is known as the creative energy and the other is known as the creator. Now, scientists are trying to liberate energy on the material plane from the nucleus of matter. Even as all matter has a nucleus, the mind also has a nucleus. Mind is not thought, emotion or memory. Mind is a part of the universal mind, what we know as the total mind. Therefore, this mind, your mind, my mind or anybody's mind, being a part of the universal mind, has a nucleus. Everything in this world has a nucleus. Matter has a nucleus and when it explodes you get nuclear energy. Similarly, mind has a nucleus and when it explodes you get enlightenment.

In tantra, the nucleus of matter is known as *moola prakriti*. *Moola* means basic, *prakriti* means the creative energy. The nucleus of mind is known as *Hiranyagarbha*, the golden womb. From time immemorial, philosophers, yogis and scientists have been trying to explore ways to explode this nucleus. This is the universal mind, also a part of *prakriti*, which has two poles at opposite ends.

The universal mind is composed of a type of protomatter, and its two poles are known as time and space. Time and space are considered as the categories of the mind, but speaking in an orthodox way, time and space are different from the universal mind. On the plane of the universal mind, time represents the positive pole and space represents the negative pole of energy. As long as time and space do not come together, there cannot be any output of the universal mind. When time and space come close to each other, only then does the universal mind become the creative force. As long as time and space are separated the universal mind is not a creative factor.

Therefore, in tantra, the first important thing is expansion of mind. Again here, it should be remembered that the

mind in tantra is completely different from the mind that we understand in our day-to-day life. Normally by mind we mean a thinking and a feeling instrument. My mind is happy and my mind is unhappy, this is how we understand the mind, but in tantra, yoga and in philosophy, mind is completely different to what we think.

Even in modern psychology, there has been a lot of talk about the mind. I have made a thorough study of modern psychology, and I think it has not arrived at the right definition of the mind. The mind in yoga, in Samkhya and in tantra is known as *chitta*. *Chitta* literally means awareness. Awareness at different levels is chitta. Objective awareness is one of the manifestations of chitta. Subjective awareness is another manifestation of chitta. Absence of awareness is also a manifestation of chitta. According to yoga and Samkhya, chitta has five realms of manifestation.

I do not want to go into details about these fivefold patterns of chitta. The *Raja Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali say a lot about it. In order to understand tantra it is very important to understand chitta, because most people have never understood chitta at all. What we know as chitta is not chitta, but its current manifestation. If there is a fragrance of flowers in this room, you know only the fragrance and not the flower. The various experiences which we have in our daily life are not chitta. The sensory experiences, the subjective experiences, the happy or unhappy experiences are not chitta; they are not the mind.

In Samkhya, it is very clearly written that chitta exists in various levels of manifestation. At a certain level of creation, the chitta is completely inactive, hibernating and inert. When chitta is completely inactive, it is in the form of moola prakriti. That is the unmanifested state of chitta. Therefore, mind can be in manifest and in unmanifest state.

When we are agitated or the mind is wavering, the chitta is at a different level. Therefore, during the practices of expansion of chitta, tantra is attempting to expand it to different levels of awareness. There is a lot to be said about

the relationship between matter and the mind. Matter at one level is nothing but the manifestation of chitta. It is difficult for many people to understand, but scientists have definitely arrived at this conclusion.

We know very well that matter and energy are inter-convertible. At one level of creation and at one level of manifestation it is known as shakti and at another level of manifestation it is known as matter. Just as matter can be completely disintegrated, similarly, the mind can also be completely disintegrated.

There is another important thing that all of you must note. Neither matter nor mind is homogeneous. Matter is a composition of many elements. In the same way, mind is also not a homogeneous unit. It is also a composition of many elements. Just as a house is not homogeneous, but is a composition of brick, mortar and steel, etc., creation is also not homogeneous. Creation is a composition of various elements like ether, air, fire, water and earth.

If they are not homogeneous and are compositions of various elements, what are those elements? As far as we know, matter is a composition of more than 96 elements. In the same way, chitta is a composition of 24 or more elements. This is very important. First of all, you must analyze the mind; you must explain it. We are practising yoga, meditation and are trying to conquer the mind, but if we do not know the anatomy of the mind, I do not know if we will be able to conquer the mind.

It is said that every experience we have in our daily life is one of the complements of the mind. If these experiences are barred the mind loses one of the complements. The objects that come to our vision every day also form the complements of the mind, the chitta.

In order to disintegrate the mind, just as you disintegrate the matter, you will have to block the processes of the components. Can we block the process of experience? That is most difficult. In order to block the process of experience, we have to practise yoga and meditation, but chitta is not

merely an abstract substance. It has the sensorial channels for experience.

Therefore, in tantra, the word expansion is very important. Every element that composes chitta, that is the complement of chitta, has to be separated. That happens during deep meditation. The various experiences that we have are the expansions of consciousness, expansions of chitta. When the chitta is expanded a fine type of energy is liberated. This energy is in the form of enlightenment. This energy is sometimes in the form of information or mental power. Energy has no particular category. It can be used in manifold ways.

Shiva and Shakti

Shiva and Shakti are introduced in tantra. If you do not understand Shiva and Shakti, you do not understand tantra. Symbols are after all symbols and equations are after all equations. Sometimes it is very difficult to point at the truth without the help of symbols and equations, but if those symbols are taken as they are, then there come the difficulties.

Those of you who are aware of Shiva can definitely analyze the symbol. Shiva is conceived of in two forms. One is the human form, as a yogi, and another is in the form of the linga, the *Shivalinga*, the oval-shaped stone. This Shivalinga is also considered to be in twelve different forms. They are known as the twelve *jyotirlinga*, lingas with illumination. *Linga* means a symbol and *jyoti* means light.

Shakti is also symbolized in a different way. You may have known, heard and seen that there are three main forms of Shakti. These three forms of Shakti represent creation, maintenance and metamorphosis, respectively. One of them is known as Lakshmi, another is Saraswati and the third is known as Kali or Durga. Out of these three Kali or Durga is considered to be the explosive energy representing the awakening of kundalini. Sometimes people from the Occident do not understand these symbols, but the thinkers and the deep-minded philosophers have tried to go deep into these symbolical expressions.

There is one symbol which I would like to explain. That is the ferocious Kali, a black coloured woman with extreme ferocity, stepping on Shiva who is lying on the ground. She rests one of her feet on his chest, and her blood stained tongue is hanging out. She is holding many things in her different hands. This figure is a symbol of awakening of energy out of the body of matter.

It is a scientific process. If there is an explosion of matter, there is an explosion of energy. If there is explosion of mind, there is explosion of another form of energy. The energy which explodes from chitta, from the deeper layers of the mind and consciousness, is known as kundalini in tantra. This is the concept of Shiva and Shakti in tantra.

Hindus believe that husband and wife together, complete the circuit in their daily life. It is not merely the coming together of a man and a woman as a human being, though man definitely does represent one pool of energy and a woman represents a different pool of energy. Therefore, on the ordinary level of existence, the man and woman represent Shiva and Shakti in miniature. The man and woman are made of the same stuff. He is made up of blood, flesh and marrow, and so is she. She has the same number of senses as he has, but we are not talking of the body. When we talk about man and woman we are talking about the poles of energy.

For the time being, we will have to transcend the idea of the physical body and energy. In the 13th chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita* it is said, 'Prakriti and Purusha (that is Shakti and Shiva) are both eternal'. On the philosophical level, purusha or Shiva is the inactive reality. It is not responsible for anything. It does nothing. Shakti is responsible for everything that is taking place in all of creation.

Unless there is a union between Shiva and Shakti in any realm of spiritual sadhana, unless Shiva and Shakti come to the point of union, no experience and no event can take place. As long as they stay separate, nothing happens. Shiva and Shakti should not be merely limited to the concept of

man and woman. The concept of Shiva and Shakti is not merely the religious concept of Shiva and Parvati.

In your body, you have the two nadis called ida and pingala. Both these nadis emanate from mooladhara chakra in the perineum. Ida and pingala cross each other at four centres before they come to the point of union. Crossing takes place at swadhisthana chakra, manipura chakra, anahata chakra and vishuddhi chakra. The union takes place in ajna chakra behind the mid-eyebrow centre. Normally this union never takes place. The union is not only of the two nadis, but there is union of the two nadis with a third force. The third force is known as sushumna. Sushumna is important in tantra.

When the energy of ida and pingala unites with each other in sushumna or near sushumna, only then does the experience of explosion take place. Therefore, in tantra, the awakening of kundalini is the last and highest subject matter. From time to time, different explanations have been given, but finally it was said – ‘Awaken the kundalini.’ It is definite that when chitta undergoes the process of fission, awakening takes place.

Mantra, yantra and mandala

Tantra is definitely a practical science. This topic pertains to its philosophy. There are three things in tantra, known as yantra, mantra and mandala. Through the medium of yantra, mantra and mandala, the hidden energy of man can be awakened. Of course, we should employ all the three in our sadhana. This science was already known to humanity at different periods of history.

Mantra should not be considered merely as the names of gods and goddesses. Mantra is a syllable and by the practice of this syllable, one can tackle the source of energy. The science of tantra works on the archetypes of the human brain. The human brain contains millions, billions and trillions of archetypes. It is necessary to get these out. In order to free oneself of these, the science of yantra and mandala

is employed. We have to understand what archetypes are. We say that archetypes are samskaras. When you have an experience, it does not die. It is converted into a seed. Every experience which we have had is registered in our brain in a very subtle form. Within a minute one can remember many things. They are in such a subtle form that millions and millions of experiences can perhaps come together in very little time.

These experiences are known as samskaras, which are responsible for karma; responsible for reincarnation and responsible for man's happiness and misery. They are also the limited regions of man's knowledge. Every man is bound by his own karma and even though he wants to get out of it, he cannot. Then it becomes important to blow the whole mind. The whole chitta has to undergo a process of metamorphosis. In India, for many thousands of years, tantra has been regarded as one of the most powerful methods to transcend the barriers of life.

The last thing I want to say, before I conclude, is that tantra is often misrepresented in both the Orient and the Occident. The thinkers of this subject will have to think properly about it, because we are living in an era where the concept of energy has become gross. We can no longer think that a human being is just the body, and it is also not correct that the human being is only as much as can be seen by the eyes.

There are bodies beyond bodies; there are bodies behind bodies. There is not only one body, but many invisible bodies. These invisible bodies are the areas of luminosity and they should be separated and split. When you split them from each other, you have different experiences. Just as you have different experiences in a dream to those you have in the waking state, or during schizophrenic fits.

We have different bodies which are disorganized. Even these invisible bodies are disorganized. They are affected by our karma; they are affected by our religion, and they are also affected by the various solitary events of time. There is

only one body which remains unaffected; all other bodies are affected in some way or another by the things that happen. Therefore, through the practice of yoga, the process of purification has to take place in the different realms of man's existence and awareness.



12

Satsang

13 October 1981

What is the future of India?

For many, many centuries all systems, whether political or religious, have been allowed to flourish in India. You can have your own religion and political system, and I can have mine. On account of this, there is so much diversity in thought, action and political behaviour. We have not been able to create a feeling of unity or oneness in the way that the Middle and Far Eastern Muslim have, because our population consists of Muslims, Christians, Hindus, the Hindu sub-sects, Parsis, Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs, and everybody follows their own way. Now all these religions were allowed to grow side by side so that there would be complete freedom in spiritual choice.

Later, when political consciousness developed in this country, the different religious and spiritual groups were utilized as political congregations and unions. With the advent of the modern technological civilizations, the most ambitious and brilliant people of India left this country. They joined the modern cultures abroad and there was material, scientific and technological advancement. As such those countries developed societies which were rich in economics and literature and more advanced in politics, education and in every other field of creativity. In India, we have continued to fight with each other and we have been caught up in political quarrels, so we have been unable to progress much.

Now, in times to come, it will be necessary for all Indians to protect themselves, their political philosophy and their economic programs, by maintaining a strong spiritual background. If we are able to do this, we will be able to give better guidance to the rest of humanity. All over the world, people have reached the crossroads and they are facing great crises in economics and morality. Not only is there widespread moral degeneration in the Middle and Far East, it is in the European and American countries and everywhere else. All over the world, you can find the black market, corruption, political espionage, betrayal of the national interests and acceptance of political failure. There is so much corruption going on in western countries that the total mind of the community is changing greatly. The Middle East is becoming very arrogant, and although you might not feel it here, you certainly would if you were in the west. If you string together all the recent happenings, it will be evident that the Middle Eastern countries just don't care.

India has a very important role to play in accelerating the rate of spiritual evolution throughout the world. At the same time, we have to make political and economic progress in order to make our country more stable. All the religious groups will have to come to a point of common union; there must be some sort of fusion. In spite of their so-called differences, the Shaivas, Vaishnavas and Shaktas feel that they are one. In the same way, there will have to be unity between the different religions, although of course they will have to maintain their singular identities at the same time.

We do not want the Parsis to become Hindus or the Hindus to become Parsis, and we do not expect Muslims to become Parsis, Hindus or Christians. You must remain you and I must remain I, because if I destroy your identity, then the aspects of your culture which are beautiful and worthy of cherishing will be lost completely. We do not want to lose the living columns of culture which every religion represents, but at the same time, religions will have to meet on some points and surrender their identities to a certain degree.

They should surrender their social-political identity but not their philosophical, religious and spiritual identities, these have to be maintained at all cost. If we were all to surrender our social-political identities perhaps we would become the strongest people.

Why do you teach the same basic techniques of yoga to all, even though every individual is unique and has his own path to the goal of truth?

Each of us is born with a different temperament so we must find our own path of yoga. In the same way, we all have to find a religion for ourselves. We cannot claim that because this is written in the Vedas, this is what we must all do. Likewise, what is written in the Koran or the Bible cannot be for every individual. No, you have to have your own Bible, Koran or *Gita*. We must find our own religion as religion cannot be one. There should be as many religions as there are people, because religion is a path. It is not an institution, organization or a sect of popes, mahatmas, mahants and executives. Religion is a path and each path is different. The goal may be one, but definitely the paths vary and no two people can traverse the same path.

However, we have to make a start somewhere and because we face almost the same circumstances and tragedies in life, we can start at the same point. Our goal may be the discovery of truth, but right now we are faced with the difficulties of life. What are those difficulties? The physical ailments, the turbulence of the mind, indolence of spirit, lethargy and the uprising of passions. Therefore, even though everybody is different and unique in his own way, because we are facing identical problems in life, the primary and elementary paths have to be the same for most people. Later, when you have overcome the problems of your body, mind, nature, temperament, family, etc., then you should think about discovering the truth.

I know the discovery of truth begins at any point. Even today we are trying to discover the truth along with millions

of other people and creatures. Every species in the animal, mineral and vegetable kingdom is following the path of truth, discovering it, but they do not know it. When you become aware that you are a pilgrim on the path of truth, then you have to discover the way for yourself. All that the mahatmas and saints can do is lift you out of the quagmire of *avidya*, deep ignorance. They are only raising you from that.

Although we are walking in the direction of truth, the process of perfection or the great pilgrimage on the path of truth, cannot begin when we are still in the clutches of ignorance. At that time, we are so involved in our own personal affairs that if we made a diary of our thoughts we would find that 99.5% of our problems are with our own selves. We are all narcissists.

When we cannot look beyond ourselves or beyond our own problems, pains and pleasures, how can we claim that we are searching for the truth? If a baby is crying on your lap and somebody is singing or playing music in the same room, what will you be listening to? The crying baby of course. This is what is happening to all of us. The message of the discovery of truth is with us all the time, we know it and we read about it in the *Gita* and different books, but we are so much entangled with the sensible things or the senseless things of life that we cannot heed it.

Everybody has worries and everybody has to face life in its true form, we cannot expect everything to happen just as we want. Things will always eventuate as they are schemed, and therefore it would be much better if we could accept this. When we are caught up in the expectations and disappointments of life, every time we take a mala or practise meditation, we just think about ourselves. Not for a moment are we able to get out of our own limitations.

However, when we are aware that we have to walk on the path of truth and realize our own selves, and when we have overcome our limitations and personal neuroses, then we have to find an individual path for ourselves. Asanas will no longer do, and pranayama and meditation will not help.

There are no teachings that will take you to the goal. All the yoga, all the religions, spirituality and philosophies that are being taught are just to take you out of the dark abyss of life. Once you step out of that, you have to find your own way, nobody can show you that. If anybody tells you he can, he is misleading you. All the mahatmas, saints, yogis and munis who have come as saviours and redeemers have just come in order to lift you from the dark abyss of life, from avidya or maya.

I have not been teaching you any unique path, I am only teaching you a very common series of practices which are essential for everybody because we are all suffering from the same thing. If everybody who came to me had influenza, I would basically teach them the same thing. Therefore, when people ask me why I teach the same techniques to different people I say, 'Because you are suffering from the same sickness.' When most people are suffering from maya, *avidya*, ignorance, or *moha*, infatuation, how can we give them different pills? Therefore, everybody begins with pawanmuktasana.

Does mantra initiation accelerate an aspirant's spiritual progress?

There are and have been many people doing sadhana without having a guru, and still they evolve, but there have also been many people who have insisted on having a guru. Let me present Kabir as an example. As you know, he was not a superstitious man. He was very rationalistic, analytical and thorough in his approach. He had an adamant desire to be initiated, but because the circumstances surrounding his birth were not clear and his real parents were not known, he was denied that privilege.

So, one morning, he went to the ghat where Swami Ramananda, a great guru of that time, took his early morning bath. He lay down on the steps leading to the ghat, and as Swami Ramananda was descending the steps, he put his foot on the body of Kabir. When he realized he had stepped

on a man, the swami cried, '*Ram, Ram*', as we usually say. Kabir jumped up ecstatically and said, 'I got the mantra. This is what I wanted to hear from you. *Ram, Ram*, that is my mantra.'

So, from that day onward, Kabir continued to repeat the mantra and increase his love for Rama. When people asked him, 'What do you mean by Rama, Rama who was a man, the son of a king?' he said, 'No, I am talking of every Rama: a Rama who was the son of Dasharatha; a Rama who is omnipresent in all hearts and all beings; a Rama who has been playing this entire drama, who has been responsible for the whole creation; and a Rama who has transcended the mind, body and speech.' This is how he had been working on the mantra which he obtained by cheating his guru.

If that is the case, why should we have doubts about it anymore? It may be possible for us to realize the highest without receiving a mantra from a guru, but we are not sure about it. Therefore, it is safer that we take a mantra from a guru even if it is not necessary.

When you accept a guru, you start to work on the plane of ego. If you do not want to have a guru, you are fighting on the plane of ego, and ego is the greatest barrier between you and your inner spirit. When you accept a guru, you are surrendering your ego, and unless you surrender your ego, you can be sure you are not going to have a guru.

What is the relationship therefore, between ego and spiritual progress? Spiritual progress is essentially linked with the disintegration of ego. Here I can quote many examples, but I will give an example of my own. I had been aware of the higher state of consciousness by the grace of nature, even from the age of six. When I was ten, I started practising something because someone had told me that the awareness I had was natural and that I must start to develop it. However, I found that when I used to lift my consciousness, I always reached a particular point of *shoonya*, void, which I could never go beyond. My mind became void. I had no self-awareness, no awareness of time, space and matter, just

shoonya, no experience. It was like the hibernation of the entire process of consciousness.

I asked many people for guidance. I was living in Almora then and lots of sadhus and mahatmas used to pass through Almora on the way to Mount Kailash. Some of them advised me, but I did not understand what they said. However, one very nice swami said, 'Look here, I cannot tackle your spiritual problem, and nobody else can, because you need a guru.' I asked him why I needed a guru and he replied, 'The curtain that hangs before you can only be removed by substituting a guru in its place.' This was so difficult for me to understand. Anyway, circumstances changed and I left my home and went in search of a guru. I went to Rajasthan and stayed with an old swami who was a very good tantric yogi. He liked me very much, and from him I learned all about tantra. However, when I asked him how I could remove the barrier that blocked my path to higher consciousness, he said, 'This I cannot say.' So I left.

When I came to Swami Sivananda, I asked him only one thing. I said, 'When I meditate something is wrong, I do not know where I am. What should I do?' All he replied was, 'Do guru seva.' So I tried it and it worked. Therefore, in my personal opinion, there is no harm in taking a mantra from a guru, in following the type of sadhana he gives you, and in offering your inner devotion to him. That will only help your psychological or psycho-emotional condition.

It is true that many people are afraid of being exploited by the guru, but for that a disciple is more responsible than a guru. Your relationship with your guru is purely private and confidential. A guru is not a social event and a disciple is not a propagandist, a preacher or a public relations officer for his guru. A disciple is a guru's personal investment, and therefore the mantra is confidential. The relationship between the two is also an absolutely private affair.

Many years ago, I met a brahmachari in Munger when I was staying in Ananda Bhawan. We knew each other very well, and once by mistake, I happened to ask him the name

of his guru? He said, 'How can I tell the name of my guru? It is so sacred. It is personal and intimate.' So, when even the guru's name is so sacred, the mantra that is given by him, the sadhana which he teaches you and the relationship which you endear are all very private matters. If this intimacy is respected, the guru can never exploit the disciple. Disciples are exploited when they are over-ambitious. They keep stressing 'My guru is great' and they keep belting it out like a drummer beating on his drum. Then they exploit the guru and in turn the guru exploits them. This is a mutual affair.

What does it matter to you if your guru's name is written all over the walls in neon lights? Guru's name should be written on the walls of your heart and you know it. How much you love him and what type of sacrifice or offering you make to him only concerns you and him. Why should a third man come into the picture? Why should it be broadcast to the public? What has society got to do with your relationship with your guru? The relationship you have with your guru is purely spiritual and should be regarded as sacred.

Just as you treasure a valuable diamond and conceal it from the public, you should do the same with your relationship with guru. Do you show your diamond or nugget of gold to everybody you pass in the street? Do you brag about its monetary value? No, you keep it in a safe place and out of sight. Then why should your relationship with guru become so public, cheap and ordinary that you go around telling everybody about the miracles your guru performs, the greatness of his being, the eminence which he enjoys and the love and power and faith that he has? No, your guru should be your beloved. That is what Guru Nanak said, "My guru is my beloved, you have nothing to do with it."

In this scheme of spiritual evolution, guru's presence in your life is essential. If that is the case, then this is what you should do. If you have already received a mantra intuitively, or from your father, mother, grandfather, or any other family member, or if it is connected with the worship of any *kuldevata*, family deity, you go to a guru and ask him to

chant that mantra in your ear. Listen carefully to the way he chants the mantra and the sound he is producing and try to reproduce that mantra in the same way. That becomes your sadhana.



13

Satsang

*14 October 1981, addressing a group of yoga aspirants of a
Yoga Teachers Training Course*

What is the mind and what is beyond it?

In Samkhya, Nyaya, Vedanta, Buddhist and Jain philosophies, one finds an analysis of the mind. What is the mind? Is it an expression of the neuronal responses of the brain, or is it consciousness? Indian philosophers have discussed this subject for thousands of years. They say that mind is a composition of twenty-four elements, comprising the five *karmendriyas*, which are organs of action, the five *jnanendriyas*, which are sensory organs, *manas*, *buddhi*, *chitta*, *ahankar*, the four-fold awareness, the *panch tattwas*, which are the five elements, and the *panch tanmatras* which are the essence of elements. When all these come together, they form what we call the mind.

The mind is born of prakriti. It is said very aptly that the name of the mother is prakriti and the name of the son is mind. In Samkhya philosophy, *prakriti* is universal energy. It is not nature, as you read in the books. It is not the nature described by poets. In Samkhya philosophy, purusha and prakriti are dual, eternal principles. *Purusha* represents absolute consciousness and *prakriti* represents total matter. When purusha and prakriti come together, creation takes place and when they separate, there is dissolution.

Further, according to Samkhya and the *Bhagavad Gita*, there are two levels of prakriti. One is called *para prakriti*, the transcendental prakriti, and the other is called *apara prakriti*,

the mundane prakriti. The mind is born of apara prakriti. Those who have read the *Bhagavad Gita* will remember that it speaks of two levels of prakriti, para and apara.

Being born of prakriti, the mind is subject to the three gunas. *Tamas* is that state of matter in its rudimentary or static form where there is no evolution. It is the first state of matter. When there is movement within matter, that state is called *rajas*. The mind is subject to three stages of evolution, starting with *tamas*, transcending through *rajas* and terminating in *sattwa*. Therefore, it is not possible to control the mind, because it is either tamasic, rajasic or sattwic.

The only way forward is to sublimate the mind, which is possible for most people, or to transcend the mind, which is possible for only a few. One can transcend the mind through certain kriyas. For example, if one takes a drug, like hashish, the whole world is transformed and one is able to transcend one's mental awareness. In the same way, there are many kriyas, particularly pranayama, through which one can get completely elevated, and exist without any confrontation with the mind and its vagaries.

Why fight with your mind? Why confront your guilt? You can never win because the mind which you are fighting and the mind who is fighting back is the same mind. The fight is not between two persons or two minds. The fight takes place within one's mind and so the mind splits. This split is between ego and superego. This is the exact cause of all mental problems which religious people are suffering from all over the world.

The mind has tremendous energy. If you pull it, it pulls you. There is a constant tussle between the two equal forces, the *shuddha vritti* and the *ashuddha vritti*, the pure and impure forces. In the course of this tussle we become schizophrenic. When one fights one's mind with great strength, while having a very strong mind, and when *shuddha vritti* and *ashuddha vritti* are equally strong, it leads to disaster. If one's *shuddha vritti* is very strong and one's *ashuddha vritti* is very weak, one is safe. One becomes a good person. If one's *ashuddha*

vritti is very strong and the shuddha vritti is very weak, one becomes a bad man.

However, if the shuddha vritti is strong and the ashuddha vritti is also strong, this tug of war goes on constantly, and that becomes the cause of many mental problems. Religion is responsible for creating this inner conflict. It would be much better for us if we did not become religious, if we could remain simple, innocent people. Therefore, do not fight your own mind. Do not become your own enemy, simply because you have committed certain mistakes. They are all social mistakes, but you think that they are spiritual mistakes.

There can be no spiritual mistakes. All the mistakes we make are either social or legal, but religions have told us they are spiritual. That leads to guilt in our minds and we are afraid. We think, 'I have done a bad thing. I should not have done it.' It would be better to say, 'Well, I have done it, that's all.' It is definitely not recorded in God's account book, I am sure, because God has more important things to do than writing down what bad things you or I have done.

These are the funny concepts about God and truth which people are taught in order to control society. Therefore, we develop guilt and suffer. 'I have made a mistake. I have made a mistake. I have made a mistake.' We repeat it like japa all the time. 'I have done wrong. I am a sinner. I should not have done it.' This is how we hypnotize ourselves. We have to free ourselves from this type of thinking; we have to transcend it, because nobody is born perfect. Everybody has made what we call mistakes. What is a mistake in the twentieth century could be a virtue in the twenty-first century.

This is how one has to purify and transcend the mind. When thoughts come into your mind during meditation, let them come, do not stop them. When you are practising mantra and thoughts keep coming into your mind, let them come. Try to discover a powerful sadhana for yourself like pranayama, mudra, kriya yoga, and simply transcend the mind. Let the mind keep on thinking and you get out of there. Take off as if on an aeroplane and go higher.

You must try to find a sadhana for yourself and that sadhana should be based on bhakti yoga, raja yoga and hatha yoga. In bhakti yoga you should surrender, in raja yoga you should understand the mind, in kundalini yoga you should awaken the kundalini and transcend the mind. Unless one awakens one's kundalini, transcending the mind is a very dangerous idea, because one lives and exists through the mind. Before one transcends the mind one must develop a higher power in oneself. That is called kundalini Shakti. When the awakening of kundalini takes place, one's life is controlled by that higher power and then one can transcend the mind. One can shut down the small generator after one acquires a big generator. But if one shuts down the small generator before acquiring the big generator, what will happen?

What is the mystery behind creation?

Creation is an endless process. One cannot put a date to the beginning and the end of it. Creation is a consequence of the changes taking place in the realm of *prakriti* or nature. There are three aspects of creation: time, space and matter. Time and space are two opposite poles of energy. Time represents the positive energy and space represents the negative energy. When they come together, which is to say, when they do not move in the opposite direction, but towards each other, there is a meeting point of time and space. When time and space meet, an explosion takes place.

This explosion is responsible for the creation of millions and billions of nebulae, and it is constantly happening in every sphere. It is happening in the heavens and also in the womb of mothers when conception takes place. When the two opposite poles unite there is an explosion in the nucleus of matter and that explosion continues. This is how the different heavenly bodies, constellations and stars are created.

However, is that creation or is it a dream? That is the first thing we have to find out. Does creation really take place? This matter has been discussed in Vedanta, in the *Yoga Vasishtha*, the Upanishads, the *Ramayana* and the scriptures.

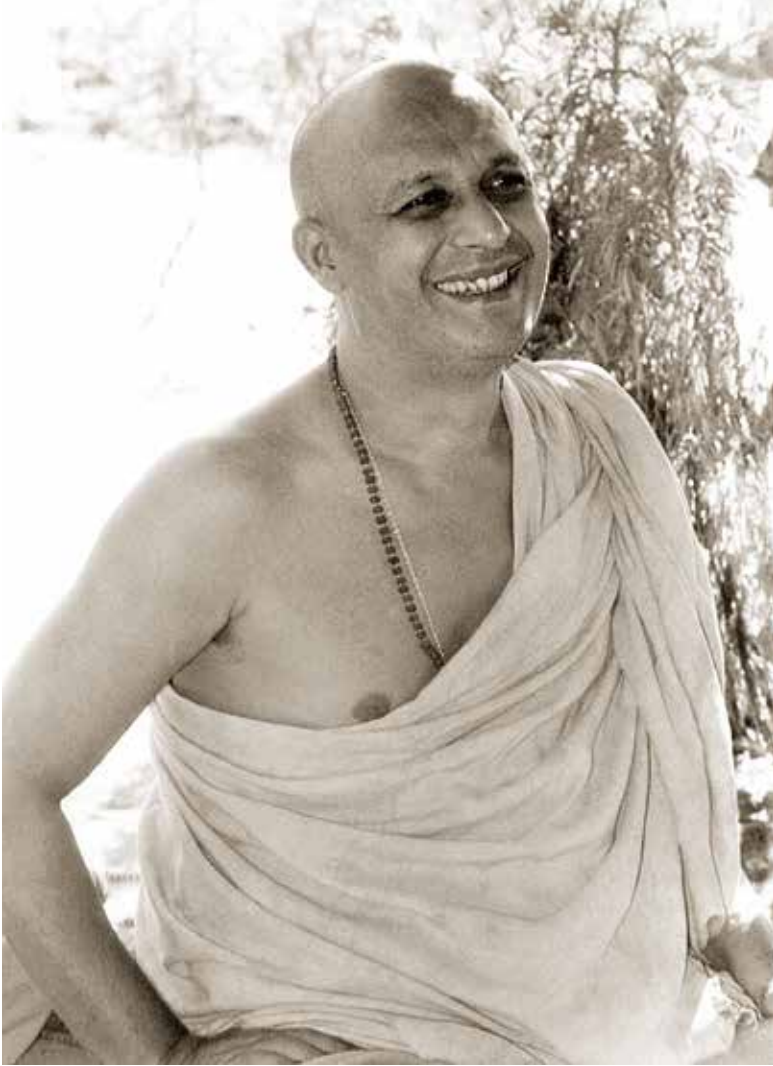
Is what you see only an experience or is it a reality? Vedanta says there is no creation, we merely undergo the experience. We come to a similar conclusion in the study of advanced physics, that time, space and matter are a myth. The universe and creation does not exist as far as advanced science is concerned today. A scientist looks at this issue differently.

Therefore, you will have to study different systems and come to a conclusion for yourself. This is one of the main subjects of Indian philosophy. Is there creation or not? If there is no creation, then what is all this? If there is creation, why is it so? What happens to this reality when we go to sleep, when we dream? Is this universe an experience or is it a fact? There is a difference between experience and fact. According to Buddhist philosophy, perception, experience, knowledge, everything is purely a subjective affair and nothing is objective.

The Upanishads say there is no creation, therefore, there is no destruction. There is a beautiful book called *Yoga Vasishtha* in which you can find the narration of Lilawati. Lilawati was a queen. She was sitting by her husband and happened to sleep for a short period in which she had a dream. In the dream she died and was reborn, married and had children, seven times. She experienced seven births in two minutes. When she woke up, she told her husband, 'I have experienced seven lives of birth, marriage, children, enjoyment, suffering and death.' Is this life the basis of that, or is that life the basis of this?

You have to decide which is the basic experience upon which other experiences are taking place. Whether the waking condition is the basic experience, or the dream condition is the basic experience or the condition of sleep is the basic experience. Indian philosophers say that none of these three are basic. The basic experience is samadhi and in samadhi there is nothing. So, it is a very difficult question which could take months, years and perhaps a whole lifetime to discuss. However, you are not going to arrive at any conclusion, because the question is a transcendental one.

In the *Yoga Vasishtha*, which is a discussion between Rama and his guru Vasishtha, Rama has these very doubts and Vasishtha tries to dispel them. He tells Rama that every experience seems to be real when you are involved in it, and when you are out of it, it is finished and not real any more.



14

Yantra and Mantra in Tantra

15 October 1981

Addressing a group of yoga aspirants of a Kriya Yoga Course

What is tantra? Why do many people have the misconception that it involves magic and spirits? What is the relation of yantra and mantra in tantra? Can mantra be practised without yantra?

The science of tantra is the oldest science known to mankind. Tantra was prevalent even in primitive society. It is true that magic and spirits have found their way into tantra, but there is nothing wrong with it. It depends on the way one understands it. When the practitioner of tantra reforms his personality and his consciousness changes, certain symptoms manifest in him which may be interpreted differently by different people at different times.

If one practises tantra and begins to speak spontaneously, it is interpreted as the person being possessed by a spirit and the spirit speaking through him or her. Even now, many traditions and religions in the world misinterpret yogic phenomenon along these lines in such incorrect ways. Clairvoyance, telepathy, clairaudience, psycho-telekinesis and many other extrasensory perceptions are interpreted as manifestations of spirits because this is how some people understand it.

It is only in jnana yoga, Vedanta and Samkhya that one is told that these manifestations are one's own expressions in an altered state of consciousness. When one's consciousness

gets altered, one becomes a different person. Many times after doing certain practices, one feels like a different person. One is used to feeling a particular way about oneself, for years and years together, say thirty, forty years but suddenly through certain practices a change takes place in the realm of one's consciousness. If the practice one is doing is a very strong practice like pranayama, then one begins to feel quite suddenly that one is a different person, and one feels that there is another person within oneself. Samkhya philosophy, Vedanta and yoga philosophy interpret this experience as an evolved or altered state of one's consciousness. Those who do not understand this, interpret this phenomenon as a spirit having taken one over. Magic and spirits are interpretations by only those people who cannot understand that consciousness can be altered and one can be a completely different person by certain practices.

Tantra is a Sanskrit word, a composition of two *dhatu*, two roots: *tan* or *tanoti*, which means stretching, and *tra* or *trayati* which means releasing, liberating, making free. *Tantra* means expansion and liberation. Expansion of mind and liberation of energy is the meaning of tantra according to its etymology.

In nuclear physics, matter is first disintegrated. Matter is a composition of ninety-six or more elements. Matter is not homogenous, and in the same manner, mind is also not homogeneous. Mind is a composition of twenty-four to twenty-six elements just like matter is composed of ninety-six or more elements. If these ninety-six or more elements of matter are disintegrated, the inherent energy is released because the ultimate nature of matter is energy. There is no difference between matter and energy except in the state of manifestation, just as there is no difference between milk and curd. When milk changes its shape and form, it is known as curd. Similarly, when matter undergoes a change it becomes energy. Energy reconverted is matter. Matter disintegrated is energy. Energy is the manifestation of matter. Similarly, the mind being a composition of *padarthas*, elements, and

tattwas, when disintegrated, releases an amount of energy, *shakti*.

Mind in its ultimate analysis is atman. *Atman* is the word used in the Upanishads, the Vedas, in Vedanta philosophy and in Hindu tradition for something which is permanent behind the impermanent affairs of life. Atman is the Self, self with capital 'S'. This atman is the nucleus of one's existence. The mind is the gross incarnation of the atman. When this mind is transformed it shines as atman.

Shankaracharya said, *Jivo brahma eva na aparaha* – the individual self is the cosmic self and not different. The individual self, the atman, is not different from the cosmic self, the *paramatman*. Just as matter is equal to energy, energy is equal to matter. The famous equation of $E=MC^2$ can be applied as Atman=Mind transformed. Transformation of mind begins with its expansion. Mind has its limitations; it cannot operate or act independently. It needs its secretaries, the five *karmendriyas* and the five *jnanendriyas*, the ten senses of action and knowledge. The mind functions in the present moment with the help of the ten senses. The mind can perceive only what the eyes are capable of perceiving and nothing beyond. The mind recognizes only what the ears can hear and nothing more. This means the mind functions within a range of limitations. The mind cannot see those things which are invisible to the eyes. For that purpose, the area of operation of the mind has to be expanded. Can your ears hear the subtle sounds? No, they cannot. Can you smell even those aromas which are subtle in nature? No, because the senses have their limitations; and they can operate only up to a certain extent. The mind derives jnana, knowledge, only according to the capability of the senses.

The mind cannot cognize what senses cannot perceive. In tantra the first principle is that either one improves the quality of one's indriyas, the senses, or completely rejects them. Either one tries to improve the quality of one's eyes, ears, and so on, or reject them if one is not able to do so. Then one will have to operate without the intervention,

cooperation or coordination of the senses. The question is whether the mind can recognize without the indriyas – can you hear without the aid of the ears and see without the aid of the eyes? Usually one cannot but if one improves the capability of the mind, the mind has a sixth sense. The mind can also be the sixth sense in which the qualities of all the senses are inherent. Sri Krishna says in the *Bhagavad Gita* (15:7):

*Mamaivaamsho jeevaloke jeevabhootah sanaatanah;
Manah shashthaaneendriyaani prakritisthaani karshati.*

An eternal portion of myself having become a living soul in the world of life,
draws to (itself) the (five) senses with the mind for the sixth, abiding in nature.

Mind is the sixth sense in which all the qualities of the five senses are inherent. It means the mind can see, the mind can hear, the mind can smell, the mind can feel and the mind can touch. These capacities are inherent in the structure of the mind. So why can one not improve and manifest it? This process is called the expansion of mind.

Sometimes one hears certain noises within, even though there is no external sound. What is this experience? How did it happen? That particular experience which manifests in one without the involvement of an indriya is a consequence of the expansion of mind. There are certain sadhanas for expansion of mind. When individual consciousness is completely withdrawn, energy begins to flow.

Individual awareness is the awareness through which one understands the world. It is the awareness which is responsible for experiences in *jagriti*, the waking state. This is individual consciousness. When one enters into meditation one withdraws individual consciousness. If one is able to withdraw the total consciousness completely through an effective sadhana, the ego is completely reduced, removed and eradicated. The awareness of 'I' is totally lost.

Three levels of energy

It is at this time that one begins to develop the shakti in oneself. Energy is a word that has been used but not understood. Shakti operates on different levels, on the material, mental and spiritual levels. Scientists have been working on Shakti at the material level for a very long time and have been able to understand that particular aspect of matter. They have exploited it and are using it, working wonders with that energy. That is called material energy, or *bhautik shakti*.

Then there is mental energy. This mental energy becomes available to one in the form of *prajna*, intuition. The *Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali has named it *ritambhara prajna* (1:48):

Ritambhara tatra prajna.

There (at the borderline of nirvichara samadhi) the super consciousness becomes full with cosmic experience.

Prajna is generally translated as intuition, but it is more than that. When knowledge is not based on evidence, it is called *prajna*. Our knowledge about an object is always based on evidence. There is evidence: one is the sense, another is the object itself. There is an object and you see it and therefore it is. But if there is no object and you do not see it, and yet you feel it, that phenomenon is called *prajna*.

Sometimes there are no clouds in the sky, everything is clear, yet one feels it is going to rain. There is no evidence, nevertheless one feels it. That is called *prajna*, when the information, the knowledge is obtained without any evidence of the object or the senses. This *prajna* can also be false. Therefore, they say *ritambhara prajna*, not merely *prajna* but *ritambhara prajna*. There are two facts in the Vedas, one is *satyam*, and the other is *ritam*. This universe and this creation is controlled by the two processes as it says in the *Rig Veda* (10:190.1):

*Ritam cha satyam cha abhdhaatapso dhyajayate
Tato ratrayajayate tatah samudra arnavah.*

Truth (of thought) and truthfulness (of speech) were born of arduous penance, thence was night generated, thence also the watery ocean.

Satyam means a definite law and *ritam* means the spirit of the law. I am using the word law because I do not know what else to use. *Satyam* is the law. If one pours hot water on the body one is going to be burnt – that is the law. If one keeps a piece of ice for a length of time on the palm, the palm is going to get frozen – that is the law. It is the property, the quality called *satyam*. What is truth is the law. *Ritam* is the substance and the substratum is *ritambhara prajna*.

Ritambhara prajna means that particular quality of intuition which is permeated with basic fact. This is the mental energy through which one has extrasensory perceptions, premonitory dreams, the ability to read the thoughts of other people, the ability to transmit thoughts, waves and magnetism to others. One can also transport one's personality, which is called *kayapravesh*. Shankaracharya transferred himself into the body of King Amarooka. During the period he was touring the whole of India, Shankaracharya came to the north of Bihar near Saharsa. There was a great pandit, Mandana Mishra, who was a master of the *karmakanda* branch of Vedanta, the ritualistic branch. Shankaracharya was on the mission of debating and arguing with people about the truth of their statements. He went to Buddhist monasteries, defeated them through his knowledge and converted them to right thinking. Then he came to Mandana Mishra, and there was a *shastrartha*, between them, an interpretation of the scriptures.

Shankaracharya represented Vedanta, the monistic philosophy, and Mandana Mishra represented the ritualistic philosophy of the Vedas. Bharati, the wife of Mandana Mishra was the umpire, the judge in the *shastrartha*. After a few days, Mandana Mishra's mala began to fade away which indicated that he was losing his point. He finally accepted defeat and wanted to become the disciple of Adiguru Shankaracharya.

At that point, Bharati entered the shastrartha and said, “Look here, you have only conquered one half of him. I am the other half. Please get ready for shastrartha with me.” She sat down, for the next round of interpretation of the shastras. There came a point when Shankaracharya could not proceed further with the process because Bharati began to ask questions on the *kamashastra*, the shastras on carnal love. If Shankaracharya had replied to her, he would not have been accepted as a Brahmachari, hence disqualified and if he did not reply, he would have lost the shastrartha. He asked for some time and went in search of someone who had died recently so that he could enter that body, undergo the experiences described in the kamashastra and come back to face this wise lady. He did that in the body of King Amarooka.

Shankaracharya transported his personality into King Amarooka’s body who had just died, due to which the dead body came back to life. While Shankaracharya lived in the king’s body, he had instructed his disciples to guard his body in a cave. Shankaracharya continued to rule Amarooka’s kingdom but the people saw a great difference in the nature of their king. Since the soul of a great saint had entered the king’s body, his behaviour was entirely different now. The people consulted the wise men and wanted to know the reason for this wonderful and peculiar behaviour of King Amarooka.

The wise men concluded that the soul of a great rishi or mahatma must have entered his body. They ordered the soldiers to hunt for a preserved dead body. The soldiers, eventually reached the cave where the disciples of Shankaracharya were preserving and protecting his body. When the disciples realized why the soldiers were hunting for Shankaracharya’s body, they called him back into his body. As soon as Shankaracharya transported himself back into his original body, King Amarooka’s body dropped dead. Shankaracharya went back to Bharati, held the discussion with his new found knowledge over topics from the kamashastra and defeated her in the debate. This is the shakti or energy that represents mental shakti.

Then there is spiritual shakti, *atmashakti*, *adhyatmik shakti*. The tantric processes are a completely different science from any other religion. All religions want you to be a man of a particular quality and only then do they accept you. If you are a Hindu you should be a certain way, if you are a Christian, Muslim, Jew or Buddhist, you must have a certain specific behaviour. Tantra does not lay down any such views. Its main hypothesis is whoever you are and wherever you are, you can start going further without affecting the mode of your life.

This does not mean that tantra is asking one to live a low quality of life. What it says is that even if one belongs to a low quality of life, it does not matter. One can start regenerating the higher consciousness in oneself from that particular point itself. In contrast, if you go to practise other spiritual sciences, the guru or the teacher will ask you not to drink or eat meat. Tantra makes no such demands.

Generally, one starts with following religion, not practice. When one starts one's upward ascension with religion, the first things one faces are the psychological problems of personality. I do not mean the religion with which one is affiliated. I am talking about the religion one practises. A sudden change is not good, for it is a reaction to the whole affair that one has been facing in life. Many people become vegetarian overnight. Many people give up drinking because they think it is a very important spiritual or ascetical attainment. If you analyze it psychologically, and scientifically, it is a very unscientific process. As far as spiritual progress is concerned, the spirit evolves gradually. One does not have to become focused on one's infirmities and faults. One has to start with the practices first. Therefore, tantra is unique in this aspect.

In one of the mantras of tantra shastra it is said, "One shall ascend by that by which one falls." It means, that which is considered to be a point of downfall in religious parlance, is considered to be a springboard for higher evolution in tantra.

Mantra

Tantra has designed mantra, yantra and mandala. These are the three important practices that are the practical side of tantra. Raja yoga is ashtanga yoga with the eight limbs: yama and niyama, asana and pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana and samadhi. Tantra is the three-limbed yoga with mantra, yantra and mandala.

Mantra can be practised with or without yantra. Mantra can be practised with or without observing certain restrictions. Mantra can be practised by anybody of any caste or any religion. Mantras are important for the process of purification of mind, *chittashuddhi*. If one is able to alter one's state of consciousness without chittashuddhi, one is not going to have very good experiences. That is why before altering one's consciousness one must purify the chitta. Purification does not mean the religious type of purification. That is puritanism. Everyone's mind is filled with complexes, excessive information, samskaras, habits, conditionings and archetypes. Hence, we get horrible dreams. In the same way, if one alters one's consciousness with drugs, pranayama, mantra or anything else, one is going to see horrible visions.

In Munger, I had a very good disciple. When doing sadhana, twenty-five years ago, she began to feel that someone was present behind her and she was frightened. She came out of her room. I was not in the ashram. She phoned me about this. I said to her "This is very good. This is what you have been doing sadhana for, for the manifestation of your inner spirit, and now it is free and it is coming out." She said she was frightened and could not face it. I said, "Okay then stop the whole sadhana. You have not been able to purify your consciousness and therefore you are having so many experiences which are very unpleasant."

The literal meaning of mantra is *mananaat traayate iti mantraha* – By which the mind becomes free of its habits is called mantra. Mantra helps one get rid of certain internal habits. There are also tantric mantras which are very powerful, and not given to people. They are mantras for

establishing certain tasks and you do not have to know them. A few mantras are for our spiritual evolution.

Yantra

Yantras are designed to directly influence the deeper aspects of the mind. One does not have to go through the entire process. Yantra is like a drug, given directly to the mind, bypassing certain stages to influence the deeper realms of the mind. That is how yantras are used. A lot of work has been done on yantras.

A yantra is a thought, a yantra is a word, a yantra is a sound in its true state. A thought has a form. A sound has a pattern and a form. Every idea has a form. Anger has a form, love and hatred have forms. What is that form? A mantra has a form. *Om, Om Namah Shivaya, Sri Ram, Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya* have forms known as devata. Devata does not mean God. That is a very imperfect and false translation. The words devata and devi are derived from the main Sanskrit root *dyut*, which means enlightening. When there is an enlightenment within you, that knowledge is called devata. When you can see something in your mind without your eyes, without preconceived knowledge, that particular illumined knowledge is known as devata.

Every sound and every object has a real form. It is not the enlightened form but the gross form which can be seen through the gross mind and the gross senses. Your eyes and your mind are adjusted to see only the gross form. The real form is known as devata, the form which is a consequence of enlightenment.

Every mantra has a devata. Yantra or the geometrical diagrams like Sri Yantra are basic forms of things. The Sri Yantra is the expression of the whole of creation, *srishti*. The Sri Yantra, it is not merely an assembly of triangles and circles, it is not merely a replica, it is the real form of the whole universe and creation. The different psychic content in the human mind relates itself to one of these geometric formations. It is a very difficult idea for us to understand.

I have a disciple in Geneva, Switzerland, who is a school teacher for primary school children. He is a brilliant man, but he is also a bit cracked. He is very well known and people respect him very much. He has proposed a method of learning by teaching through yantras. He has been working on yantras not along spiritual but academic lines. His first proposition is that the mind should be influenced by inserting a yantra in it. When one concentrates on the yantra, one is only inserting it in the mind. First the mind has to be influenced by inserting a yantra. When the yantra influences the mind, it explodes certain archetypes which can help the child have a greater, deeper and more powerful assimilation of what has been taught. This means that the knowledge the teacher has been imparting to the pupil can be effectively grasped by the child, if he does it through the deeper part of his mind. His class room is filled with diagrams of yantras. He has a collection of more than 20,000 yantras, including the Jewish yantra of Kabala. He has yantras from the Egyptians and other tribes also.

The intellectual religions are not at all effective in influencing the psychic content of the mind. Sometimes we see people become mentally unbalanced, then a yantra is inserted in their mind through an amulet or armlet. The insertion of the yantra into his psychic mind is not necessary through the eyes or ears. The senses need not come into the picture. If I draw a particular yantra, put it in an amulet and give it to you, you may not know what exactly the amulet is. Your mind does not know, your eyes do not know, but there is someone in you who knows what there is and what it is. This is called the psychic body, the *vijnanamaya kosha*.

The spirit in you which has one thousand heads, the spirit with one thousand eyes, the spirit which has one thousand feet – this is the mantra of the *Yajur Veda*. It is the *Purusha Sukta*, the hymn to the cosmic purusha. That psychic man in you, that psychic body in you, need not see the yantra with his eyes, and need not understand the yantra with his mind, because you exist independent of all these. The psychic

man is independent of the senses, independent of the body, independent of the mind. He can function without these. That psychic content, that psychic personality, can know what the amulet or *taaviza* contains and is affected by it.

This school teacher in Switzerland has been working with yantra. I have met him recently and he told me that to teach a child something, one can either influence the intellect, *buddhi*, or emotion, *bhavana*, or psyche. If one wants to impress the psyche, one does not have to sing a song or give religious teachings. One can impress the psyche by yantras.

In the tantric system yantras are very peculiar. There are many thousands of yantras designed in the tantric scriptures. A collection of these yantras was recently published in many countries by a very important Indian scholar, Ajit Mukherjee. The first book that was published is called *Tantric Art*, the second book is *Tantric Asanas* and the third book is *Tantric Techniques*. Ajit Mukherjee lives in London and was once the director of the National Museum in Delhi, Government of India. After retirement he lives in London with his mother and children. He is quite old, but comes to my seminars and we exchange views. He has been consulting me from time to time for his books.

The philosophy goes like this: This first thing is the seed, *bija*. The seed splits into two, and these two parts are known as purusha and prakriti, Shiva and Shakti, matter and energy. In the dormant potential state, in the unmanifest state, in nirguna state it was just a seed. Before the period of manifestation there was a split into two and one part of the seed is called Shiva while the other is known as Shakti. There is a constant, unbroken interaction that goes on between the two in every sphere of creation, in the mineral kingdom, vegetable kingdom, animal kingdom, human kingdom, mental kingdom, spiritual kingdom, there are so many things visible and invisible. Interaction takes place in all these between the two poles of energy. Modern science has to accept this theory. The interaction between the two split parts of the *bija* called purusha and prakriti, matter and

energy, is responsible for the creation and expansion of name and forms.

How does one control it? One can be the controller of the bindu, one can be the controller of the bija. How? One can visualize the bindu in the mooladhara chakra, in akasha, in *shoonya* or void. One can visualize it within the mind or without the mind, it does not matter. When one is able to visualize the bindu at any point in one's body or outside the body, then after sometime the bindu undergoes the process of what can be called a split. Duality begins to appear in one's mind. Or one creates duality between the seer and the seen.

You have been listening to me for the last one hour but you were never aware that you are the seer and I am the seen. You were not conscious of it but now you will become conscious of it. There is always a duality in this process. When one concentrates or becomes aware of the bindu, the bija, at a particular moment there is an absolute split, total break. Then one becomes aware of being the seer and also becomes aware of the seen. While visualizing the bindu, in a moment something happens and one slips out of the normal range of consciousness. One gets out of this body, out of this frame, out of the usual conditionings of the mind, thoughts, emotions and decisions. At that time the mind becomes very efficient. There are many people who are very efficient in their fields, whether it be mathematics, arts, science, culture, discovery, research, music, painting or even crime. They are an absolute genius.

About fourteen years ago there was an event which took me by surprise. I knew that a man was attempting to steal something from the ashram. I appointed one swami to be alert at all times to prevent it. In the evening around six, we were conducting aparokshanubhuti class in the sadhana hall. All the swamis were there except him. I had said to him, 'Look here, when all swamis are in the class, you must see to it that nothing untoward happens in the ashram.' The swami was totally prepared, but when the man scaled the walls and entered the ashram, the swami was asleep. The man opened

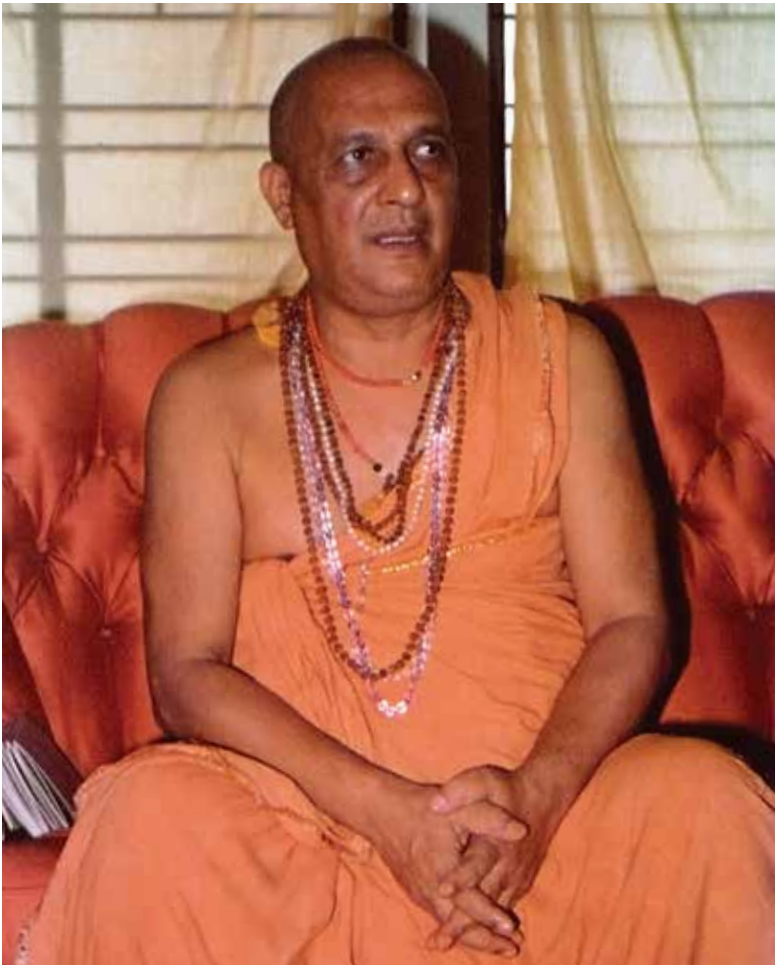
the nut and bolt, removed the motor and pump and made off with it. When I saw what had happened, I said, 'This is the shakti criminals have. Sometimes, they can impose yoga nidra on people.'

The same thing happened to me once near the rooms called ajna and bindu, two grass huts with thatched roof. I used to stay there. There was nothing much in the ashram to take. But after all a thief is a thief, it is in his nature to steal something. One night at one thirty a thief climbed the guava tree. I was looking at him but I could not speak, I was dumbfounded. I could not do anything; and I was simply looking at him, shining his torchlight in the guava tree. I knew that something strange was happening to me because I was not able to utter a word. Then I suddenly remembered that before they start on such encounters thieves go to the mandir and do a particular pooja. I told myself this thief has done something of that kind. Suddenly I regained my speech after two or three minutes and I said, 'Who is there?' and he ran away. For a few minutes his willpower was very strong. These people also have a very efficient mind.

This efficiency of mind, this clear insight into the mind, object, discovery, the day-to-day life, including running of family, shop, factory and industry, one's personal affairs with people can be guided better with a higher quality of mind than with the normal quality of mind. The mind which we have today is only one generation higher than animal consciousness. We want a different generation, a much more improved generation of mind so that we can function without the senses, so that the mind can function with its inherent knowledge that it has within it. This atma is *sarvajna*, all-knowing, you do not have to derive knowledge from outside, because the storehouse of knowledge is within you. You are *sarvajna*.

You need not try to deal with this problem from a personal point of view. When you are ready to improve the quality of your mind, tantra tells you how to do it, step by step. First mantra will purify the mind, then you will have to work with

yantra and finally you come to mandala. Mandala is what you see visually as the devis and devatas of Hindu dharma. Devi Durga, Murti, Shaligram, Shivalinga, Hanuman and you paint the tree with a symbolic colour and you place a stone. All these things are the mandalas. These mandalas are intended to create a deeper impression into that particular area of the mind which you cannot handle through the intellect.



15

Tantric and Hatha Yoga Asanas

16 October 1981

Addressing a group of yoga aspirants of a Kriya Yoga Course

Hatha Yoga as a subject is an offshoot of tantra. Therefore, asanas are a part of tantra. Tantra has always been all-embracing, very broadminded, and catholic in its views. People practising tantra were criticized by those who were influenced by the idealistic approach of religion. All religions talk about certain aspects of purity in mind, body and spirit which are presented as very high ideals. So much so that even the strong and sincere people could not fulfil it. This is how hypocrisy came into every religion. If all religious people were to look into their life honestly and sincerely, they would have to accept that they are hypocrites.

Origin of hatha yoga

The very definition of hypocrisy is *Manosi anya, vachosi anya, karmani anya* – something in the mind, something else in speech, something else in action. This is hypocrisy. What then is honesty? Being consistent in one's principles, in one's thought, speech and action. It is very difficult sometimes because the expectations are so high that one fails to fulfil them. When one fails to fulfil them, one adopts an appearance to show others while living a different life for oneself. That is called hypocrisy.

Tantra did not accept hypocrisy. However, the religious people looked down on tantrics, so the tantrics extracted

the practical aspects of tantra from the philosophy. One of the most practical and benevolent aspects of tantra is hatha yoga which teaches practices for the union of ida and pingala in ajna chakra. The set of 84 asanas are in fact 8.4 million asanas. This is why the scriptures describe 84 lakhs of yonis, which are 84 lakhs of incarnations, each one representing one posture. Each posture is a milestone in the evolution of consciousness from the amoeba to today's human. Out of these 84 lakhs of asanas, 84 asanas are described in the tantric texts and are also mentioned in the *Kama Sutra*. It is said by Rishi Vatsyayana in the *Kama Sutras* that these asanas must be learnt from an experienced teacher.

These 84 yoga postures like *matsyasana*, fish pose, *ushtrasana*, camel pose, *sarpasana*, serpent pose, *shalabhasana*, locust pose, *ardha* and *poorna matsyendrasana*, the half and full twist of Matsyendranath, represent the broad milestones in the process of evolution of the *jiva*, the individual soul, from the amoeba to the highest human soul:

One of the greatest gurus or exponents of hatha yoga besides Lord Shiva is Matsyendranath who lost himself in his siddhis. Matsyendranath is at the origin of the *Nath Sampradaya*, the Nath sect, which is very famous in India. *Navnath* means there are nine naths, Matsyendranath, Gorakhnath, Charpathnath, Gahininath and others. The yogis of the navnath sampradaya are also known as kanphata yogis. They make a hole in the earlobe and put a kundal, a ring in it. Most of them live in Nepal, but you also find them in India. There used to be nath yogis living even in Munger.

Matsyendranath is considered to be the founder of the nath sampradaya. He was a great siddha but he got trapped in the net of desire to perform his siddhis. His disciple was Guru Gorakhnath who was a very spiritual person. He used to remain in nirvikalpa samadhi all the time and did not meddle with the mundane things of life. Although he knew that his guru was in the grip of temptations of his yoga siddhis, he had absolute reverence and perfect *shraddha*, faith, for him.

Matsyendranath was enchanted by the beautiful Queen of Assam and he wanted to be with her. She had many powers. Assam in those days was a queendom, not kingdom. Women ruled Assam and conducted the administration. Matsyendranath was completely hypnotized by the enchanting beauty of the queen.

When Gorakhnath came to know about this he was in the Himalayas. He travelled all the way to Assam to break the shackles of maya, and rejuvenate the knowledge of his guru, bringing him back to his senses. Gorakhnath was a dynamic exponent of complete yoga, not merely of asana and pranayama.

He talks about surati, nirati, asana, pranayama, vipareeta karani, etc. The book written by Gorakhnath on hatha yoga is known as *Goraksh Samhita*. It is a perfect text book on hatha yoga besides *Gherand Samhita* and *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*. These three are the standard texts on hatha yoga. Gorakhnath started the movement of teaching hatha yoga to laymen. His disciples, the navnathas, later initiated people into shatkriya, shatkarma, hatha yoga, asana, pranayama, vajroli, sahajoli and ajapa japa.

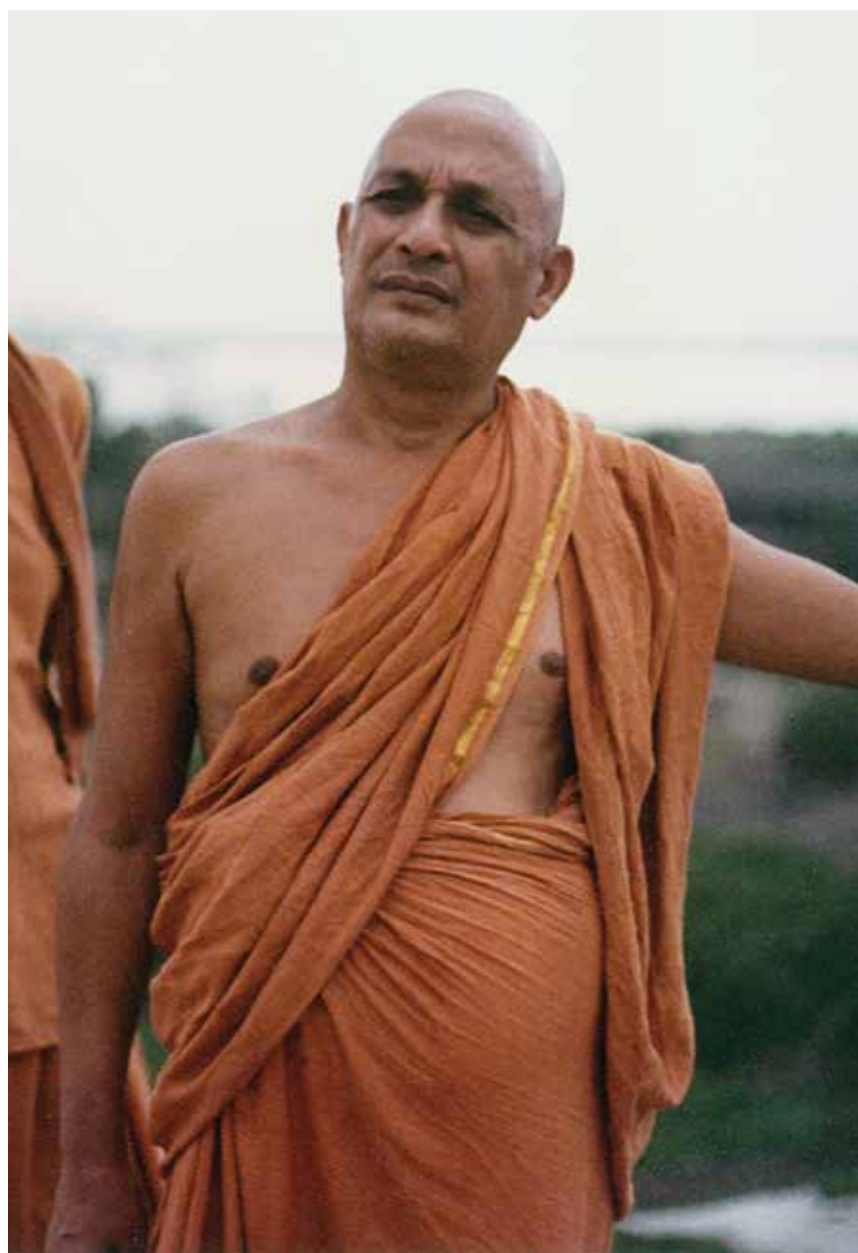
Main practices of hatha yoga

Ajapa japa is the most popular sadhana of hatha yoga as expounded by Gorakhnath. There is a very famous stanza by him: one should repeat one's mantra in such a way that one inhales and exhales it with every breath. In this way, one can practise one's mantra 21,600 times in twenty-four hours. When one is able to practise the mantra 21,600 times with inhalation and exhalation of every breath, there emerges from within a spontaneous sound known as anahat nada.

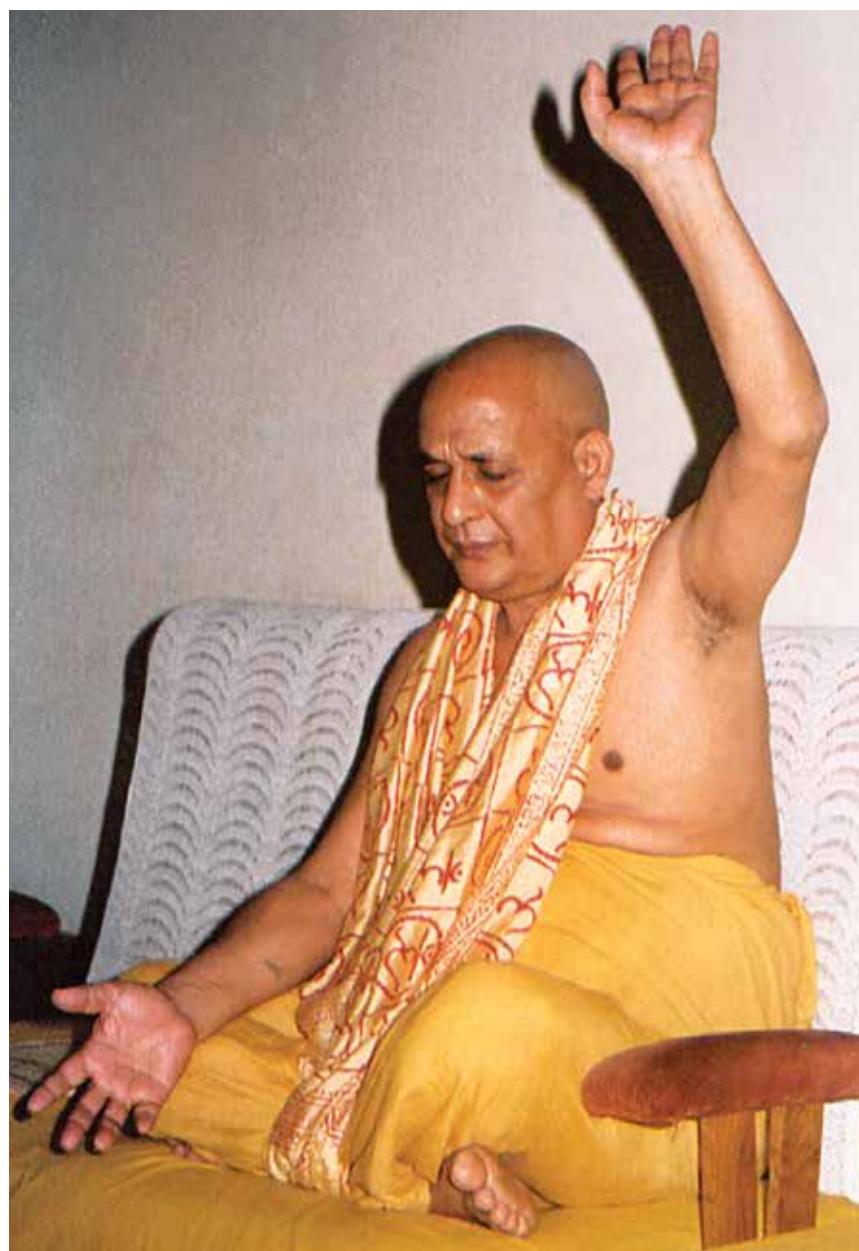
Aisa jaap japo man layi, soham soham surata gayi

Chhey sau sahasra ikkees sau jaap, anhad upaje aapai aap

There was a great Sufi, Al-Hallaj or Mansoor Hallaj. He used to proclaim, 'I am the truth, Anal Haq'. *Haq* means reality, *anal* means I am. Muslims thought that he was a fakir because









they thought he said, 'I am God', and hence they executed him. They peeled his skin off like one peels potato skin, but he continued to say anal haq. There came a time when he could not say it, as he had almost fainted. The Sufi tradition says that each and every pore of Al-Hallaj was resonant with the sound anal haq, anal haq, anal haq. The executioners heard it but he was executed anyway. He was simply trying to tell people that each and every fibre, and each and every pore of our body is resonant, with *nada*, sound.

After one hears this internal, transcendental and extrasensorial sound called *anahat nada*, enlightenment and illumination begins in the lotus stem. When one sees light in the lotus stem, each and every pore of one's body seems to be producing a sound as if singing a song. This is the couplet written by Gorakhnath.

The spine, the vertebral column is like the stem of the lotus and at its top is sahasrara chakra. When mantra is practised with inhalation and exhalation 21,600 times, at the rate of 15 per minute, which is 900 per hour, *anahat nada* is followed by enlightenment.

This is the famous sadhana taught by Gorakhnath to everyone. Gorakhnath was a very great devotee of *padmasana*, lotus posture. He always said that in the lotus posture, union takes place even at the lower level. Secondly he was a great devotee of all inverted poses, *sirshasana*, *sarvangasana* and *vipareeta karani mudra*. When he was asked why he praised these inverted postures so much, he said: the *amrit*, nectar, flows from the moon, the *ajna chakra* and it is consumed by the sun in the *nabhi*, navel. Hence the yogi becomes old, sick and dies. When *vipareeta karani* is practised, the flow of *amrit* is reversed and as a result the yogi attains what is called spiritual energy.

In tantra, the highest sadhana has to be performed specifically in four places. The yogi has to be very strong and courageous. This sadhana is not for everyone but only for those who are aiming at exploding the mind, just as one explodes nuclear energy. One place is the burial ground,

called *shmashanpeeth*. The second place is called *aranyapeeth*, *aranya* means forest. The third is known as *shyamapeeth*, *shyama* means a girl of the age of sixteen. The fourth place is known as *gurupeeth*, the place where one's guru lives. These are the four *peethas*, the four places, where the yogi can properly examine his mind. There are also four instincts which disturb the mind. Fear is one of them. Whenever one practises *sadhana*, fear creeps in at a certain point.

In all these four places, the yogi must practise *shambhavi mudra*, mid-eyebrow gaze. He should be able to hold *kumbhaka*, his breath at any point, not necessarily after inhalation or after exhalation but also at any point in the middle. This in yoga is known as *kevala kumbhaka*, when the breath stops at any point by itself without any effort on one's part, when one does not even know that it has stopped. When the breath stops it affects the mind and the mind stops. In reverse, when one stops the mind, the breath stops automatically, for they are interlinked.

Not only in tantra but also in the Upanishads it is said that the activities of mind and prana are interlinked. The raja yogis control the mind first. By the practice of raja yoga one can stop the mind, *yogaschitta vritti nirodhah*, and by this the breath also stops in *kevala kumbhaka*. If one finds it difficult to control the mind one should try to control the prana. When one is able to control one's prana, breath stops and immediately the mind also stops.

These are the two main *sadhanas* for the control of mind and prana designed in tantra. The third practice is *moola bandha*. *Mool* means root, but in yoga *moola* is the abbreviation of *mooladhara*. Instead of saying *mooladhara bandha* we shorten it and call it *moola bandha*. When one contracts the *mooladhara* centre or area, it is called *moola bandha*.

Mooladhara is situated in the perineum in the coccyx, in the male body. In the female body it is behind the cervix. When one contracts the *mooladhara* area it is called *moola bandha*. A yogi or yoga practitioner needs to master *moola*

bandha physically and mentally. If one does not practise mooladhara bandha mentally, one will never become an expert at it. When one practises moola bandha it is not merely the mooladhara which contracts. Most people contract the abdomen as well, which should not happen. When we ask you to move one finger, only one finger should move. The other four move because one does not have individual control on each part of the body. Generally when one tries to contract mooladhara, the bladder, intestines and urinary passage also contract. We do not want that. We want only mooladhara to contract.

It is clearly said that moola bandha is a contraction of the coccyx, perineum, and vajroli is the contraction of the urinary system. However, for the people who do not practise it or understand it properly, other parts also contract while doing moola bandha. Therefore, concentration is necessary. Moola bandha must be practised through the mind first and when one is able to place the mind properly on the particular spot only then can one have control of it.

Besides moola bandha the yogis taught vajroli kriya which is the contraction of the urinary system. Vajroli kriya is for men, and for women it is known as sahajoli. The nath yogis were also great devotees of amaroli or auto-urine therapy. In recent research it has been found that amaroli is rich in a particular hormone called prostaglandin which immediately kills ova. Thus it is a very good yogic treatment for those who do not want to conceive.

According to Gorakhnath and other nath yogis, female yoga practitioners are expected to practise amaroli and sahajoli, moola bandha and shambhavi mudra. Male yogis are expected to practise vajroli and moola bandha, not amaroli or shambhavi mudra. For them the prescribed practice was uddiyana bandha. These kriyas do not merely strengthen and recover the energy of weak intestines, but create a negative pressure at a lower level. Uddiyana bandha and nauli both create a negative pressure from the bottom which is directed upwards. The channels or nadis of the vertebral column, the

muscle fibres and blood vessels are enriched by the extra pressure which also provides an additional supply of blood. When one practises uddiyana bandha and nauli, the nadis located in the vertebral column are enriched by prana and blood supply is directed towards the brain which helps in the awakening of chakras, sushumna and kundalini.

It has been hinted in the *Kama Sutra* that 84 asanas should be learnt. There is no further commentary or definition. I have been thinking for many years which asanas they could be and have come to a conclusion about a few of them, not all. I feel somehow, that out of the 84 asanas which are taught by yoga teachers today, about forty to forty-five belong to the group of asanas hinted at by the *Kama Sutra*.

Purpose of hatha yoga

Coming to the point of awakening, the asanas such as bhujangasana should be considered tantric asanas. Hatha yoga is not independent of tantra. The teachers who teach hatha yoga are teaching nothing other than tantra. The ultimate aim of the asanas is to create a facility for the awakening of kundalini. One needs to first make a road and only then can one choose to drive a motor bike or car or anything else on it, but if one does not make the road then on what is one going to drive? In the same way if one awakens one's kundalini, where will it go? If kundalini wakes up at the bottom chakra somehow by doing some kriya, or mantra or by the grace of guru, or some kind of *tapasya*, austerity, where will one conduct it? The only channel through which this energy should and can be conducted is sushumna, the central nadi. If one conducts this shakti through ida and pingala it could create havoc in the world.

Therefore, before the awakening of kundalini one should be able to awaken sushumna. We are not talking only about the awakening of kundalini here but also about the awakening of sushumna. Sometimes one is confused because when one says awakening, one means kundalini awakening, but what about getting the road ready? Sushumna is the passage

between the earth and heaven. Earth means mooladhara chakra, as its *tattwa* or element is *prithvi*, the earth element. The *tattwa* for ajna chakra is *akasha*, heaven, or ether. Sushumna is the link between the two.

Sushumna is intercepted at four junctions: swadhishtana, manipura, anahata and vishuddhi chakras. They are like toll gates in big cities where one has to pay tax, and only then does the gate open otherwise one is not let through. The awakened kundalini shakti rises up to a chakra, and if that chakra is not functioning, it stays there remaining stagnant. Not just for a year, maybe for many lives, according to the texts on tantra.

Usually those who are very enthusiastic about kundalini do all sorts of funny things. They awaken the kundalini but it remains in mooladhara chakra. The kundalini manifests the qualities of the chakra it stays in. The qualities and attributes of mooladhara chakra is animalistic. It is the highest chakra, the sahasrara of animals.

Therefore, if someone has the misfortune of kundalini awakening without the chakra, the doors, being open, it will awaken all the animal instincts of mooladhara chakra.

Shashankasana, yogamudra, padmasana, bhujangasana, shalabhasana, dhanurasana, paschimottanasana, supta-vajrasana, matsyasana, sarvangasana, halasana, ardha matsyendrasana, sirshasana and surya namaskara create a mild awakening in the chakras, not a total awakening. If there is an abrupt awakening in the chakras through the use of drugs, or through a practice, you will not be able to handle it because you will not know what is happening to you. You can be sitting but feel the whole room to be moving round and round instead of the fan. Peculiar experiences happen. If you look at your mother, you may see her as your father; if you look at your father you may see him as a monster; you may look at your dog and it might look like a goat. Funny things happen. Hallucination takes place, in the awakening of chakra. The residing deity of these lower chakras is an animal, which represents *avidya*, ignorance.

When there is a mild awakening through the practice of asanas, the experiences which you have are also very mild. What are those mild experiences? You may dream of your guruji, you may see a temple like Tirupati, Kashi Vishwanth, or of Kali Devi – that is called mild awakening. You may become very happy and when you are out of the dream your body will be full of *ananda*, ecstasy, bliss. It is very important that the chakras are the first to be awakened, because they are the most obstinate and complicated system in our whole body. They represent the physiological, psychological and vital junctions from where pranic energy flows to the physical body, feeding the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems. They also feed the different systems like the reproductive, excretory, urinary and digestive systems. These chakras are responsible for supplying the necessary amount of energy to different organs of the body. These chakras are also responsible alongside, for allowing the kundalini to rise up and go up to ajna chakra and then on to sahasrara chakra.

Mantra

To awaken these chakras, one has to first practise asana and then pranayama. After pranayama one must practise mantra in stages. First one practises with the mala. One needs to chant the mantra *Om Namah Shivaya*, *Om Namah Shivaya*, *Om Namah Shivaya* mentally. Then one should repeat the mantra with the breath, thereafter in the frontal passage, then in the spinal passage with ujjayi pranayama, the deeper breath. Finally, the mantra has to be practised in each chakra. Each chakra has a certain number of petals except sahasrara which has thousands of petals. You need to stay mentally in each chakra and practise your mantra according to the time at hand, 10 times, 20 times, 30 times, 40 times in each chakra for fifteen days, twenty days, or one month. Repeat *Om Namah Shivaya* in mooladhara. If the mind goes out, bring it back. The problems of the mind are psychological in nature. All the problems which you face in sadhana with the mind are only psychological, they do not exist at all in reality. They

are there because you are trying to feel them. If you do not feel them they don't exist. At a particular time, during your practice of the mantra in mooladhara chakra, if the mantra is able to touch the proper point, you have achieved your goal. The mind gets elevated at once and concentration begins.

Then one needs to work on the next chakra and so on to ajna chakra, after which one needs to repeat the process. The mantra has to be practised again from time to time. One tries to awaken the chakras and sushumna at the same time.

Ida and pingala function twenty-four hours a day. During these twenty-four hours the five tattwas akasha, vayu, agni, apas, prithvi keep flowing. These five are the energy movements in the physical body. These tattwas are in constant motion like energy flow in an electric cable. Their movement is like quantum which go up and down in waves, not in a straight line. In this way, one tattwa is active for five minutes, five and a half, seven, seven and a half minutes and then it is replaced by another tattwa. Each tattwa has a colour. The five tattwas are represented by five colours which can be experienced.

Pranayama

The beauty is that the tattwas are also influenced by the flow in the nostrils. The breath primarily affects the hemispheres of the brain. This is the latest scientific conclusion. Secondly, it affects the lungs. It has been seen in very sophisticated scientific tests that during bhastrika pranayama, just as the nose and the abdomen are expanding and contracting, there are contraction and expansion activities going on in the physical structure of the brain as well.

Secondly, when one breathes in and out, there is an alternate effect on brain hemispheres. When one breathes through the left nostril, activities take place in the right hemisphere and when one breathes through the right nostril activities take place in the left hemisphere. These two nadis are known as ida and pingala. Ida is connected to the left nostril, pingala to the right. Ida is the cold *nadi*, pingala is supposed to be the hot *nadi*, channel or line. Ida is

represented by the symbol moon and pingala is represented by the symbol sun. Ida is called Yamuna and pingala is called Ganga. These two systems of breath are controlled by nature.

On *pratipada*, the first day of *Krishna paksha*, the dark fortnight, and also its second and third day, you will see that breath is flowing in the left nostril at the time of sunrise. After about an hour and twenty minutes it will change and begin to flow in the right nostril. It changes after every *ghari*, one hour and twenty minutes. That continues for three days. On the fourth day, the duty changes at the time of sunrise. It is not ida but pingala which flows. That continues for three days. On the first day of the bright fortnight, *shukla paksh*, at the time of sunrise you will see that it is not ida but pingala that is flowing. On the fourth day, the duty changes from pingala to ida. This goes on constantly and this influences not only your brain, but also your digestive system.

Unless one goes against the laws of nature, ida and pingala operate according to such a systematic order as I have put before you. From observing any irregularity in this process one can predict sickness. If it is the time for ida to flow and pingala is flowing instead, or instead of pingala, ida is flowing, be sure that there is something wrong with your system. It could be something very serious or it could also be a simple ailment.

When the breath does not change at all for one, two, three or four hours, you must understand that the system is wrong somewhere. In the science of swara yoga this has been explained in detail. The flow of ida and pingala nadis is intercepted for a very short period. When ida is closing and pingala is coming into force, there is a period of a few seconds when both nostrils are flowing together. Right and left breaths flow equally for a very short period, so short that one cannot notice it. At that time, when sushumna is flowing, if one knows it and sits for meditation, one does not have to fight with one's mind.

The problem happens when we try to meditate while pingala is flowing. We can never do it, because pingala is

the rajoguni nadi. When pingala flows we have hyperacidity in the body, enzymes flow, the heart rate is high. These are scientific conclusions through investigations. When ida flows, acidity is less, enzymes do not flow, the pulse is low, blood pressure is fine, there is dullness and inertia in the heart, and the metabolic rate drops. If one meditates at this time, one will sleep. If one meditates when pingala is in full force, one will not be able to meditate, only recall memories, expectations and reflections of one's life instead.

Before a yogi sits for meditation he should do something to awaken sushumna. How can sushumna arise? Yogis have given a very flat reply – through pranayama. Through the practice of pranayama preceded by shatkarma. The high potential and emphatic pranayama should never be practised without doing hatha yoga practices like neti, dhauti, basti. The body may contain fermented things, other toxins, and if one practises pranayama with all this rubbish inside the body, one does not know what will happen. Maybe nothing will happen but to avoid any mishap it is much better to do shatkarmas before we take to the practice of special pranayama like kumbhaka. Before practising *antar kumbhaka*, internal retention, *bahiranga kumbhaka*, external retention, mudras and bandhas one must undergo a full course of hatha yoga.

In hatha yoga there are practices like jal and sutra neti, dhauti kriya, kunjla, shankhaprakshalana and laghoo shankhaprakshalana. For people who have a very weak stomach, who are not able to digest food, there is vyaghra karma dhauti which is done immediately after meals. One can do tratak, vastra dhauti, nauli, kapalbhati except basti. These days basti kriya is not safe, because water is very polluted, even the Ganga. If one does basti, all the bacteria will go into the anus and cause a lot of problems. That is why we have given up the teaching of basti unless we have special arrangements.

Awakening of sushumna is very important. In swara yoga activities which should be done are specified when ida or

pingala are flowing. But when sushumna wakes up one must only meditate, do pooja, or at least not involve oneself in mundane activities. This is because it is only in a yogi or a criminal that sushumna awakens spontaneously. All hardened criminals have awakened sushumna. This is according to the system of swara yoga and I also have a little knowledge about it. Murderers can never commit a murder unless their brain has undergone a complete change. It is difficult to kill somebody, so very difficult. So when sushumna is awakened and one involves oneself with mundane activities, one is going to make mistakes. This fact is also indicated in the books.

I have spoken to you about the awakening of chakra, then the awakening of sushumna and lastly of the awakening of kundalini. Besides these three, a fourth thing has to be told. When kundalini wakes up it is able to reach sahasrara where the union of Shiva and Shakti takes place and where they remain for a certain period together as one. After that the yogi has to know how to bring it down, that is another point. Sahasrara is a place where Shiva and Shakti remain in eternal communion but both of them are expected to descend together through the same path through which they have ascended. They need to come down to the lower plane, to the mooladhara chakra, swadhisthana chakra, manipura chakra, and others. They play their lila, not maya.

Asanas are very important for the awakening of spiritual potential in man. Many people might think that asanas are physical exercises. They are that too. They give you a good body and it is perfectly all right, but that is a by-product. Incidentally when you practise asanas, asthma or diabetes is also cured. Scientists have accepted this fact and they have evidence for it, but that is not the purpose for which yogasanas were designed in the tantric system.

Asana means posture, position. The position of a fish, the position of a dog, the position of a serpent. If we practise these asanas correctly, they can safely lead us to pranayama. Pranayama is not inhalation and it is not exhalation. It is said in the *Yoga Sutras* (2:49):

Tasminsati shvasaprashvasayorgativichchedah pranayama.

The asana having been done, pranayama is the cessation of the movement of inhalation and exhalation.

The gap between inhalation and exhalation is pranayama. The inhalation *shvas*, exhalation, *prashvas*, is separated by kumbhaka, and kumbhaka is pranayama.

When one holds kumbhaka one either fills up the lungs completely or empties them. It is immaterial because the effect of kumbhaka on lungs or heart is secondary. Primarily it affects the lobes or hemispheres of the brain. There is also a peculiar fact which we have recently come to understand and investigate. When one breathes with awareness, the breath is registered in the frontal brain. When one breathes unaware, as everyone is doing, it is registered in the smaller brain. That is to say one has two computers, one computer registering unconscious breathing and another computer registering conscious breathing. Why so?

It is said in the yoga texts that this body comes with a determined number of breaths. Supposing one is ordained a certain number of breaths. If one exhausts them, one will die. Scientists have seen a peculiar phenomenon. When one breathes unconsciously, it is registered in the smaller brain. The moment one starts practising pranayama or conscious breathing, nothing is registered. It means one could have taken fifteen thousand breaths and there will be no entry of it in the brain. Scientists have been thinking why this happens? The bigger brain responsible for knowledge, for sankalpa, for the higher things, registers the conscious breathing. It is not responsible for death. In this respect pranayama has also much to contribute to your longevity, if you want it at all.

16

The History of Yoga

19 October 1981

Was the knowledge known outside India before it was recorded here? How did it spread and why was it forgotten? Why is there a sudden interest and revival of this ancient science?

In order to know and understand the correct history of yoga, we will have to rewrite its history. The history we read and know today has been written from time to time with certain political and colonial motives. History, when it is written, should have the motive to record events, not to fulfil and accomplish the designs of rulers.

The *Bhagavad Gita* was instructed to Arjuna at the end of the cycle of Dwarpa Yuga, at the beginning of Kali Yuga, and according to calculation, 5,100 years have already passed since then. When Hindus perform their daily pooja in the temple, there is a chanting of sankalpa in which every day one more day is added. That sankalpa is always correct because one day is added every day. There are references in the *Bhagavad Gita* from which we understand that the Upanishads were written much before the *Bhagavad Gita*. Out of 108 Upanishads, thirty Upanishads are minor, ten are major and the rest are simple Upanishads. Among these Upanishads many talk about yoga such as *Yogatattva Upanishad* and *Yoga Kundalini Upanishad*. They deal directly with yoga, the word yoga and the topic yoga.

In the *Prashnopanishad*, one clearly comes across the concept of *ida* and *pingala*. It is not called *ida* and *pingala*, but *rayi* and *prana*. *Rayi* represents the mind or matter and *prana* represents life. These Upanishads were compiled much after the Vedas.

The *Rig Veda* is the most ancient of Vedas. *Rik* means hymn, *richa* also means hymn. The other Vedas are *Yajur Veda*, *Sama Veda* and *Atharva Veda*. In the Hindu tradition there is reference to three and sometimes four Vedas. For the chanting of the *Bhagavad Gita* it is said:

Vedatrayi parananta tattvartha jnana manjari.

With the chanting of the *Bhagavad Gita* one will attain the knowledge of the three Vedas and the store house of knowledge of the meaning of *tattwa*.

There were certain sects who recognized only three Vedas and not the fourth, *Atharva Veda*, for the mere reason that it deals with all kinds of science such as magic, archery, and so on. The *Rig Veda*, *Yajur Veda* and *Sama Veda* deals directly with the *atman*, *Brahman*, the Supreme Being. The subject matter of all these Vedas is *Parabrahman*, or *satyam*, the ultimate truth, while the subject matter of the *Atharva Veda* is life. In the *Atharva Veda* there are references to *pranayama*, *yogasanas*, and different *hatha yogic kriyas* such as *neti* and *dhauti*.

Usha Sukta

The composition of the *Rig Veda* is very complicated because some of the hymns seem to have been written outside India, especially the *Usha Sukta*. There is a *sukta*, an ode to *Usha*, dawn. It is one of the most beautiful compositions in poetry ever written, giving a definition and description of dawn. Scholars feel that this hymn must have been composed where dawn is very poetic. It was not written in the Middle East, because when the sun rises there, it is frightful, as the temperature reaches a very high degree. In India, sunrise is a common event because it can be seen every day. One

can see the rising of the sun, 365 days of the year. If one goes to the Arctic area, the polar region, being able to see the sunrise is most wonderful because one has to wait for it for days together. Sometimes the sun does not rise for six months. One does not see the sun at all and one waits for it to rise. Then one morning when the sun rises, it can be seen for about an hour and it sets again. In Norway, above the Nordic region, thousands of people go every day to watch the midnight sun.

This hymn to Usha must have been written in such a land. There is a story in the Puranas that almost relates to a civilization at the North Pole. There was a rishi named Dhaumya. He arrived at a kingdom in the North Pole, which would not have been a snow bound region then. It must have been a thriving civilization. The prince and the prime minister's son were playing outside and they were very rude to Dhaumya. The rishi Dhaumya wanted to be guided to some place where he could rest for the night. These two kids misbehaved with him and Dhaumya became furious.

The next morning the whole kingdom was buried under snow. This story indicates the coming of the snow age in the North Pole. Prior to the arrival of the snow age in the North Pole, a civilization must have existed there. Some of the hymns of the *Rig Veda* like the *Usha Sukta* composed in the arctic polar region, where a civilization thrived, could not have been earlier than 45 to 50,000 years. If one is talking about 45 to 50,000 years, it gives us the latest date in connection with the history of yoga.

However, we have another difficulty here. 45,000 years ago a great continent submerged into the Atlantic Ocean. That civilization is known as the Atlantis civilization. According to my study, which is by no means complete yet, the Atlantis civilization was the mother of the yoga culture. This continent did not submerge all of a sudden. It must have taken a few centuries. The people migrated with the knowledge they had and went to different countries where they took the message of yoga.

The submerging of the Atlantis civilization and the history of the polar region must have taken place between 45,000 to 50,000 years ago. In the *Rig Veda* there are references to planetary conjunctions, which are called *graha*, or *yog* for the occurrence of such events. Some scholars like Max Müller, Griffith, and Wilson have pointed out that these planetary conjunctions took place 45,000 years ago. They have fixed the date of the occurrences as well. So we can say that these hymns of the *Rig Veda* were written over 40,000 years ago.

You can imagine how many centuries must have preceded it for the perfection of such a cultured, people, of a nation, which could write the most beautiful poetic hymns. A primitive culture could not have just emerged and started writing it. Hence, there must have been a culture already existing, much before the period of the *Rig Veda*. In the *Rig Veda* there is a clear concept of the philosophy of yoga: about dhyana, concentration and the processes through which one can awaken one's consciousness and elevate the level of one's atman.

In the earlier texts one does not find references to those yoga practices which relate to the treatment of diseases, because people were very healthy. They did not have the types of sickness we have today. Therefore, when they wrote about yoga, they only said that through the practices of yoga the realm of maya and avidya can be transcended.

In the *Ishavasya Upanishad*, the first of the Upanishads and the last chapter of the *Yajur Veda*, there are six mantras. They say that the spirit of those people who are involved only in the matter of the mind and senses enters into the area of darkness, but those who are involved in the path of the spirit, that is dhyana yoga, enter a still darker region. Further it is said that there should be a combination of the two; the world of the senses and the world of the spirit must evolve side by side. This is a clear indication towards a combination of both karma yoga and dhyana yoga.

Latin America

In 1973, when I was in Colombia for a big conference organized by our institution, I visited the south of Colombia. There are wild forests and not many people live there. First we went by helicopter, then by jeep, then I rode on a donkey. There were many people and swamis from different places with me. The name of that area is called San Agustin and it is considered to be a museum. There is no building, and it is spread over a very big area of forest maybe over hundreds of miles.

We took many photographs and printed them on the front cover page of the *YOGA* magazine. These stone carvings are so wonderful that they speak their story by themselves. I saw the stone carving of neti kriya, of a person holding a lota and practising neti. Of course there were stone statues of padmasana, swastikasana, siddhasana, vipareeta karani, bhujangasana, vajrasana, vrishchikasana and many other asanas, also of uddiyana bandha. There were hundreds of asanas depicted in that wild area, so now you understand how far this civilization has gone!

I have also travelled to different areas in Mexico and gone to different temples of Shiva in remote areas. They are not very well looked after by the government, but still the people of the locality take care of them. After a brief study, we have come to conclude that the civilization in Colombia preceding the invasion by the Spanish, Dutch, English people, of the different races of the Incas, Aztecs, Chibchas, were well conversant with the principles of yoga.

The story goes that when the Spanish invaded there was a temple in every community, which used to be at the top of the mountain where they consecrated their daughters. The priests used to live in those temples which were dedicated to Surya, for Incas were sun worshippers and did Surya pooja. They dedicated their daughters to that sun temple and used to dress in white and yellow. The yellow colour stands for *vasant*, spring, and the white colour is life. They used to live the life of sannyasins, though not much is known as to

what sadhana they did. It is known, however, that they did not mix with the general public at all and only worshipped Surya. Whether this was only the external Surya remains to be interpreted.

When the Spanish people invaded, they killed all of them. They packed all the gold and sent it to Europe. There is a written document about it. The letters written are now a part of the document of man's cruelty upon innocent people who were dedicated to spiritual life and a non-political culture. Spiritual people are not dedicated to the political culture; they do not understand it. Just because they do not understand the political culture does not mean that they have to be massacred.

It is believed that the king in Colombia, on one full moon night did some tantric ceremony and gold powder came showering on him. Due to his tantric worship he was completely buried under gold, and that is also the reason the name of the Colombian airport in Bogotá is El Dorado. This story resembles the story of Karna of the *Mahabharata* who did tantric worship in Munger which was his capital. He also received gold due to his worship of Devi and distributed the same gold to his subjects.

The people in Colombia are very rich in gold. In the museums you see nothing but gold. In Indian museums you find only Buddha statues made of granite and different stones. In Colombia you find that everything is made out of gold from plates to brassieres. I have seen gold brassieres finer than the ones our ladies wear, because they were expert and knew how to work with gold very well. These people had a long tradition of yoga. Then their culture was destroyed by the political system and this wild forest remained. San Agustin does not represent their culture.

Colombians should have named this museum after the last king who was murdered. The Spanish invaders invited him to surrender but he refused. They battled for days but could not win. Finally, the Spanish said that they should become friends. The Colombians were innocent and gullible.

The Spanish arranged a dinner for the king, who came unarmed and was killed. This museum should have been dedicated to such a man as that king.

Similarly, if you go to the south of France, to the south of Ireland, to Scandinavian countries, from there to Afghanistan, India, Tibet, South-East Asia and up to Vietnam, there seems to have been a belt where yogic science was very well known to the people. We have been collecting a lot of evidence in Scandinavian countries. There is a brilliant swami who has studied the yogic tradition in Scandinavian countries and has found in their old culture the concept of kundalini, ida, pingala, sushumna, and the awakening of the inner spirit. From all these details we come to a conclusion that the culture of yoga is very ancient.

Of course it came to a sudden halt due to political systems. Political systems everywhere are responsible for the destruction of all that is beautiful that man has created. The science of politics is a science that inherits total selfishness. Political systems are based on selfishness and the cult of power. Most power hungry men need to get power by hook or by crook. It does not matter which religion one upholds, it does not matter which religion one kills, it does not matter which frontiers one breaks and which ones one defeats – politicians are not interested in it. They are very selfish and conscious only of getting control of power. They can prove anything, they can say and write anything, and the history you read today is written by these people.

This is how the culture of yoga was destroyed little by little in every country because power went into the hands of the people who were not virtuous, but who became great heroes by killing people and waging wars. This is the way history was influenced by people.

Yogic renaissance

In the last hundred years we see a renaissance of yoga. However, this renaissance has taken place much earlier in time as well. In the fourth chapter of the *Bhagavad*

Gita, Krishna says how the tradition was known to saintly kings, *raja yogis*, who were destroyed in the course of time. Sri Krishna says, “Arjuna, I am reviving and teaching the tradition of that ancient yoga to you.”

From time to time there has been an attempt to revive this science. In general, the common man is greatly impressed by this knowledge. In the villages of India, everybody believes even today that they can overcome the difficulties of life through yoga. Even the people who do not know anything about yoga say that yoga is good if one finds a guru who can teach how to become free from *roga*, illness. This is the general impression, not only in India but everywhere in the world. People know that yoga is capable of solving the deeper problems of man.

In recent years of course, man has been very ill mentally and physically. Psychosomatic illnesses in particular have started to happen during the last hundred and fifty years. There was an industrial revolution, and a consequent revolution in other spheres as well. People became sick. The brave psychologists, Dr Sigmund Freud, studied tantra, the *Kama Sutra* and after him Dr Carl Jung studied yoga. He defined very clearly that the best system of disciplining the mind is yoga. Besides Dr Sigmund Freud and Dr Carl Jung, many other great scholars came to this country from the west and studied the possibility of integration of yoga into their society, and they succeeded.

When Dr Sigmund Freud read the second sutra of the *Kama Sutra* he was greatly moved. Just as you have the *Yoga Sutra* on yoga, *Dharma Sutra* on religion, *Samkhya Sutra* on Samkhya, *Brahma Sutra* on Brahman, and *Bhakti Sutra* on bhakti, there is the *Kama Sutra* on the science of sexual interaction. The second sutra says we should learn the *Kama Sutra* in order to facilitate our progress on the path of moksha. Which religion in the world can accept this? No religion can ever accept it! They have never accepted it. For everybody sex is the worst act one can ever commit, but in this culture, people are authorized to do it.

There are four methods through which man can strive for spiritual progress. Dharma, artha, kama, moksha, these are the four *purusharthas*, efforts, which belong to man and not to animals because animals do not do *purushartha*. For animals *prakriti* creates instincts, *prakriti* makes them hungry, and does many things. Animals do not do *purushartha*, but man can make the effort. What are those efforts and for what? Is one making the effort to make money, to become eminent or to transcend the limitations of life? The rishi says, that we do all four at different times. The rishi says, 'There was a time I made an effort, in order to accumulate *dharma*, virtue, good karma. There was a time when I made the effort in order to accumulate wealth for my wife, children, family, mother and father. There was also a time when I tried to fulfil my desires for women, money, property, for wife, children and my tribe. Finally, I realized that these efforts were the means to an end, and the end was moksha.

The rishi who wrote the *Kama Sutra* says, 'I describe the science of sexual interaction in order to facilitate humankind's progress on the path of moksha, so that people can treat the problems of their personality and mind'. When Dr Sigmund Freud read the sutra he commented, 'I never believed that there could exist a culture as old as the history of earth which could boldly say that sexual life was a way upwards and not a way downwards.' This sutra opened his eyes to a new vista of transformation in western society.

In the last hundred years, the interest in yoga has revived but that is not enough, because scientists have taken to speaking only about yoga therapy, and how to cure diabetes, blood pressure and asthma with it. In the last twenty years another cult has started. It is called the kundalini cult. These people talk about tantra and kundalini. These people understand that there is a power behind the present power, there is a mind behind this mind, there is a man behind this man, and there is a reality behind this reality. This state of mind which you have at the moment is not ultimate. It is just a transitional mind while you are passing through this phase.

This mind has limitations and that is why our knowledge is also limited.

Transcending the mind

We have to improve the quality of our mind. When man improves the quality of his mind, man can function better. How can you improve the quality of the mind? They say, by the awakening of kundalini. In the Puranas, which are stories from very long ago, there is one story about Lord Shiva and his engagement to Parvati. The day of marriage was fixed. Shiva went with his *baraatis*, his group of people, to marry and bring Parvati to Mount Kailash. When the marriage procession entered the city of Himachal, all the people who had come to receive the procession fainted. They say pregnant women had spontaneous abortion due to the shock.

It was a frightening scene because Lord Shiva was riding a bull and he was followed by scary people who had no head, others who had eyes in the stomach or mouths above eyes, some who had two heads. Children ran back and told their mothers about this horrible marriage procession, and about the groom with snakes all over his body. The story goes that the moment Lord Shiva and the *baraatis* entered the portals of the palace where Parvati lived, there was a total transformation. Everyone became celestial and adorned with beautiful dresses, ornaments and flowers.

Then Shiva and Shakti were united in marriage and she came to live with Shiva in Kailash, Mansarovar. What is this story talking about? Is it simply talking about a god marrying a goddess? No. It is describing the event of awakening of a particular force in us. Shiva represents consciousness, *chetana*. Parvati represents *Shakti*, the primal, moving, energy. These are the two prime concepts of yoga. Of movements, one is ascension, the other is descent. Kundalini ascends from mooladhara to sahasrara. There Shiva and Shakti unite. Thereafter, both of them, Shiva and Shakti, descend down to mooladhara through the same passage. This is the concept of avatar. *Avatar* is known as an incarnation. Avatar

is a Sanskrit word which means to come down. Avatar means one who comes down. Shiva and Shakti in union descend automatically into mooladhara. All these avatars are the people in whom kundalini has attained its final goal in sahasrara. This is the tantric concept.

Even after this awakening takes place, one's vrittis follow one up to a certain extent. *Vritti* means instincts. *Kama*, *krodha*, *mada*, *moha*, *lobha*, *matsarya*, passion, anger, pride, infatuation, greed and envy are our instincts. These instincts are those attributes which have survived in us from our animal lives. They follow us for some time. One can see them in oneself even in a high state of evolution. Sometimes it frightens sadhaks – 'what is wrong, what is going on with me! I never faced such feelings for the last fifty years, I have purified my body and mind, I have renounced every sensual pleasure and have been performing penance, but still the same *rakshasas*, demons, are following me!' Sometimes the sadhak sinks into utter dejection because he does not know where he stands any more. He finds himself facing the same obstacles he faced fifty years ago. Despite fifty years of sadhana behind him, he experiences the same *kama*, passion, the same *krodha*, anger, the same *moha*, infatuation, the same *dwesha*, revulsion, the same *ahamkara*, ego. He does not find any difference in himself.

As a result, many sadhaks surrender to their own instincts because they think that if they have not made any tangible progress in spiritual life in the previous fifty years of austerity, they should permit themselves some enjoyment for at least the last twenty or thirty years of life that are left. This happens to many people. I have met many a sadhak who practises anushtana, purashcharana, mouna, reduces his body to a mere skeleton, remains in isolation in Gangotri, and then one day I see him walking away from it and I ask, 'What has happened to you?' He says, 'I find I am the same old person even after fifty years! There is no change in me.' I say, 'How do you know there is no change in you?' He says, 'Well, I am still infested by kama and krodha, every

day.' I say, 'But do you know what it means? Kama continues with man, instincts continue with man, but man progresses. Instead of paying heed to these instincts, the rakshasas that follow you, why don't you focus on where you are spiritually?' It is very difficult to assess one's own spiritual state and accomplishment. The guru can do it for the disciple, but a sadhaka cannot do it for himself.

If one has the patience to wait and if one can face these monsters, which are one's own instincts, if one can go on doing one's sadhana without any dejection, there will come a time when all these monsters, these instincts, will be transformed into vibhooti. Siddhis are vibhootis. What the saints and sages call siddhis is vibhooti. All these rakshasas will automatically transform into celestial beings. Then Shiva will also become the beautiful young boy who unites with Shakti.

There is another old story that talks about yoga. In the *Mahabharata* and *Srimad Bhagavatam* there is a story known as *Samudramanthan*, the churning of the ocean. When the gods and demons churned the ocean, they asked Vasuki to be the rope for churning. The demons stood on one side and the gods on the other side. Due to the churning they got fourteen things out of the ocean: Sri that is Lakshmi, Rambha the great damsel, *vish*, poison, varuni, wine, *amrit*, nectar, shankh in the hand of Vishnu, and the great elephant Airavat. If one studies the story, one will recognize that it is not a physical ocean that is churned but the inner ocean of consciousness which a sadhak churns. In that ocean are fourteen *ratnas*, precious stones.

If one is able to churn one's consciousness one will ultimately acquire these gems. How should one churn? First of all, in the practice of yoga, Mandarachal, the mountain used as a churning stick represents steadfastness. To use Vasuki as a rope is wonderful because kundalini has been represented everywhere by a snake curling around a Shivalingam with three and a half coils. When one breathes in ujjayi, up and down, one can try to feel that the snake is

going up and down, and up and down; this is the technique of churning.

In the *Srimad Bhagavatam* and *Mahabharata* there is a story of the death of Tripurasura. *Tri* means three, *pura* means city, citadel, and *asura* means demon. The demon Tripurasura, as the story goes, could never be killed because he lived behind three veils made of steel, silver and gold. Nothing could penetrate it. Then people approached Lord Shiva and Shiva killed him with his *trishula*, the trident. The three bodies are the gross, subtle and causal body. They are known as *sthula sharira*, *sukshma sharira*, and *karana sharira*. *Sthula sharira* operates while one is awake, *sukshma sharira* operates in dream state and *karana sharira* operates in deep sleep.

These are the three bodies which are close to us, and behind these three bodies is the invisible awareness of man. That invisible awareness must be conquered by every spiritual aspirant. The purpose of yoga should be this, and has been so right from the beginning. I have spoken of yoga which has undergone a lot of changes from the time of the Vedas to this date. I have given an objective interpretation of yoga. It does not matter if yoga can cure illness, we believe it can. Yoga can extend life by twenty years, we believe it. Yoga can also turn grey hair into black hair. It is okay to say it and we believe it. However, ultimately we come to only one point. Yoga is only yoga, and yoga means union.

It seems that man must be able to revive the spiritual nature in him so that he can understand the mysteries of this universe. Why was the universe created? Why is this worldly drama going on? Why should we die and be reborn? What is the relation we had with our previous underrated incarnation? Where do we stand in relation to this vast cosmos? Why do we exist? There are so many questions which cannot be answered by the mind or the intellect alone. To pierce this knowledge, to acquire this knowledge, it is necessary that man must have a different frame of mind, a different way of thinking. The problems of the world can also be solved if we help mankind to change the quality of their mind.

17

True Yoga

*12 October 1981, addressing a group of yoga aspirants of a
Yoga Teachers Training Course*

What is true yoga and who is a true yogi?

First of all, I must tell you that there is nothing like true yoga, and therefore, there is nothing like untrue yoga. Yoga is just yoga. The other side of yoga is bhoga. When the self is involved with the inner spirit, when the jivatman is consumed by the paramatma, that state is known as yoga. When the individual awareness, the *jivatma*, is involved in sensual objects and in the external mundane world, that state is called *bhoga*. In other words, when the atman is wedded to the paramatman, that is yoga, and when it is wedded to the mundane world, the external consciousness, that is called bhoga. Therefore, the more apt question would be: What is the difference between bhoga and yoga?

There is no question of there being a true yogi or an untrue yogi. There are only two epithets that can be used for the two types of individuals that we see in the world today: yogi and bhogi. Those who have their minds concentrated internally are yogis. Those who do not have control over the mind and whose minds are running after sensual objects are bhogis. Therefore, instead of asking what true yoga is and who a true yogi is, let us ask the question in the right manner: what is yoga vis-à-vis bhoga?

There are definitions of yoga in the *Yoga Sutras*, *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, *Srimad Bhagavad Gita*, *Srimad Bhagavatam*, *Yoga*

Vasishtha and other texts related to yoga like *Vijnanbhairava Tantra*, *Goraksha Samhita*. They all say one thing about yoga. By the practices of yoga, we can control the wanderings of mind and remove or reduce *tamas*, also known as *tamoguna*, and *rajas*, also known as *rajoguna* from the body. That is yoga.

What is the meaning of yoga? Delinking the mind from its constant connection with sorrow and pain is yoga. That is the definition of the *Bhagavad Gita*. Patanjali has said in the second sutra of raja yoga, *Yogaschitta vritti nirodhah* – stopping the wandering of the mind is yoga. Therefore, yoga takes place when the practices taught by our teachers bring about a unification between the mind and the spirit. It is in this particular context that there are different aspects of yoga like karma yoga for the purification of the mind, bhakti yoga for concentration and purification of mental tendencies, raja yoga for reorientation and channelization of the mental energy, and jnana yoga for the rationalization of the whole process. Tantra yoga is for those, who are weak in will and infirm in body. Similarly, there is laya yoga, hatha yoga, mantra yoga, kriya yoga and other yogas.

These forms of yoga are intended for different types of people, either to be practised in a combination or separately. Those who have a wandering mind and are tamasic by temperament should take to karma yoga. If such people were to involve themselves in dhyana yoga they would develop a state of neurosis or psychosis. It is said in the *Ishavasya Upanishad* that those people who have not perfected karma yoga, and those who do not practise meditation, enter into a land of darkness. Therefore, people who are tamasic by temperament and who do not have an evolved spirit, will have to adopt karma yoga as the main yoga.

Those who are emotional by temperament, which most of us are, should practise bhakti yoga, the yoga of devotion. When the mind, which is attached to mundane things, is directed towards the higher spirit, it is called bhakti yoga. In Sufi religion they use two words as *ishq mijazi*, the mundane

attachment, *ishq haqiqi* the higher attachment. *Ishq haqiqi* is bhakti, and *ishq mijazi* is raga. Being attached to worldly objects is called raga, and when the same force is directed to the inner spirit or *atman*, guru or God it is called bhakti.

Bhakti is an expression of man's innermost emotions. If one does not find a channel to express one's emotions, one gets hysterical, mad, crazy. Many people commit suicide. Those people who are not able to find a correct expression for their emotions, even in ordinary life are psychologically ill. One expresses emotions through paternal, maternal, marital or other relationships. We love our father, mother, husband, wife, children or friends; these are channels of emotional expression. At the same time, it is also necessary that one should be able to express emotions towards the higher being. Unless one is able to express oneself to the higher being, one will not attain concentration of mind or inner happiness. That is the essence of bhakti yoga.

In raja yoga the mind is trained just as one trains a wild horse. Its tendencies are properly pruned, its *vrittis*, its attitudes are reoriented by the practice of *yama* and *niyama*, *asana*, *pranayama*, *pratyahara*, *dharana*, *dhyana* and finally *samadhi*. The different forms of yoga are intended for different types of people according to their temperament. One finds four general temperaments in the world: dynamic, emotional, psychic and rational. We are a mixture of all four, but we are predominantly one of the four. We may be predominantly dynamic by temperament, but have other tendencies present in us at the same time. We may be emotional by temperament but have dynamic, psychic and rational traits in us as well. Raja yoga is for the people who are predominantly psychic by temperament. Jnana yoga is for those who are predominantly rational by temperament. Karma yoga is for dynamic people and for emotional people, there is bhakti yoga.

Tantra has an absolute definition which is not as philosophical as it is actual and pragmatic. In tantra, the rishis talk about a *chakra*, which is a space at the base of the spine. *Chakra* means circle; junction and also plexus. In the

physical body it is as small as a grain and is supposed to be the nucleus of the dormant potential in man, the energy which is yet to explode. Prana shakti, *prana*, the life force, by which we live, and operate in the world today, does not belong to the higher realm. It is *apara shakti* not *para shakti*. It is the lower mundane energy.

The rishis have conceived of a supernatural shakti, *para shakti*. The seat of that *para shakti* is in *mooladhara chakra*. *Mooladhara chakra* is the first centre in the realm of human evolution and is the last centre at the end of animal evolution. So *mooladhara chakra* is the highest centre in the animal kingdom and the first basic centre in the human kingdom. From this particular *chakra* originate and emanate three *nadis*. One from the right, one from the left and another in the centre.

The central *nadi* is known as *sushumna*, the one which emanates from the left is known as *ida* and the one which emanates from the right is called *pingala*. The three *nadis*, *Ida nadi*, *pingala nadi*, *sushumna nadi* emanate from the *mooladhara chakra* and go up to *ajna chakra*. *Ajna chakra* is based at the top of the spine behind the eyebrow centre or *bhrumadhya*, in the smaller inferior brain. The three *nadis* terminate but there is no union, *yoga* or *samyoga* between them.

The tantric rishis and hatha yogis had a very simple definition of *yoga*. When *ida*, *pingala* and *sushumna* unite that is called *yoga*. *Yoga* means confluence, *sangam*. *Ida*, *pingala* and *sushumna* are also equated with *Ganga*, *Yamuna* and *Saraswati*. *Ganga* and *Yamuna* are visible rivers, *Saraswati* is not visible. It is subterranean. In the same way only *ida* and *pingala* are visible *nadis*, not *sushumna*.

According to modern science, they represent the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems. *Sushumna* is a part of the autonomous nervous system; it flows within the framework of the spine and terminates in the medulla oblongata. A union has to take place which is called *yoga*. How does this union take place? *Ida* controls the mental

functions of your life, pingala controls the pranic functions of your life, sushumna does not control anything because it does not function under normal conditions. In most people except in yogis or sadhakas, sushumna nadi is called a sleeping nadi. It exists, but it does not play any part in the scheme of one's life. When sushumna wakes up, a simultaneous awakening takes place in mooladhara chakra. It is then that the kundalini shakti moves up through the awakened sushumna and union takes place.

Ida and pingala are in union with each other, but because sushumna is not united with them, the energy does not flow. When awakening of kundalini takes place and sushumna conducts that energy upwards to ajna chakra, that particular event is known as the union between ida, pingala and sushumna. In Vedanta it is said that the union between jivatma and paramatma is yoga. Religions say that the union happens between the devotee and God. There is always duality. In every definition of yoga there is a duality. In tantra there is not only a duality, but also a trinity. The union of the three into one, the confluence of the three channels is called yoga. This tantric definition is very important.

A few experiments have been made in meditation, and I can give you a glimpse into the process. Electrical impulse receivers were fixed on certain points along the spine, known as mooladhara, swadhistana, manipura, anahata, vishuddhi, and ajna chakras. A computer attached to the receivers could measure and map the fluctuation in the electrical energy flowing through each point in the vertebral column. During the practice of bhastrika pranayama conducted for twenty to forty minutes, it was noticed that the electrical voltage at those points increased to about twenty times higher than usual. That is precisely the reason why one must take care of one's diet when practising extra rounds of pranayama. When the energy in the body increases twenty or thirty times, one can imagine the psychological reactions one goes through. It is very important for us to know that whatever happens in the spine is conducted to the brain.

Scientists have come to one definite conclusion that in bhastrika, kapalbhati, suryabhedha, moorcha and other pranayamas, there is a peculiar awakening of the extra-electrical impulses in the central autonomous nervous system, not in the sympathetic or parasympathetic systems. An extra-activity is recorded. That is the evidence of the awakening of sushumna. The word sushumna is recorded as sukhman in the *Guru Granth Saheb*. Sikhs read the sukhman saheb but many times they do not know what this name means. They call it sukhman because according to Sanskrit grammar, the moordhanya *sha* in sushumna is also pronounced *kha*, making sushumna sound sukhman.

Sushumna is a particular channel which controls the autonomous nervous system and also most of the brain. We function at only one tenth of our brain capacity. Nine parts of our brain do not cooperate with the scheme of our life. If one divides the brain into ten zones, only one part is responsible for all the functions. Nine parts of the brain simply exist like a lump of grey matter.

The yogic-minded people, the rishis and munis tried to look into this. Is it possible for the whole brain to function in our day-to-day life? Why should only one part of the brain rule our life? Is it possible for all parts of the brain to assist us in our thinking, in the discoveries that we make, in the way that we conduct the workings of our society or family, or in the way we draw and paint or make buildings? The difficulty is that these parts of the brain are not at all connected with the inferior sensorial channels.

If a very big power house is not connected with a sub-station and the power lines of the city, then the city does not get any power. Sushumna nadi is the link between the lower and the higher world. This is a very important thing to know. An example to clarify this is, if an idea comes into your mind to go to Calcutta to do something like setting up a shop, the idea originates in a particular realm of your consciousness. The idea is immediately transferred to another area by which you begin acting. You go to the bank to arrange funds, to

the railway station to purchase a ticket and then you go to Calcutta. You can see how there is a link between the brain and the karmendriyas.

Besides the brain there are ten executives. Five are karmendriyas and five are jnanendriyas. *Karmendriya* means motor cortex and *jnanendriya* means sensory nerves. Speech, hands, feet, the urinary and excretory senses are called karmendriyas, senses responsible for action. They are like the field workers. Jnanendriyas are the sense of sight, the sense of audition, the sense of perception, the olfactory sense, taste and touch. These ten indriyas are responsible for fulfilling the idea that comes into one's mind. If there is no link between the mind and the senses, one will think, but not be able to execute the idea and fulfil oneself.

Sushumna nadi is similarly a link between the lower world and the higher world. The higher world is known as sahasrara chakra. This is the concept of yoga which has to be understood. There is no true yogi and untrue yogi or true yoga and untrue yoga. As long as one is walking on the path of evolution of the inner spirit, one is going ahead with the yogic processes.

Even if one does not practise yoga it does not matter, because the evolution that one tries to achieve by yoga will be accomplished anyway. It is only a matter of time. It will take one, two, three or four million years, or may be even more. If one can wait until that time, well and good, but if one cannot wait one will have to try to do something oneself.

Nature is working for us. It is the law of nature. There is something that is evolving, moving, progressing in us constantly in spite of the body. It does not die. It does not change. The body is only a conveyor or vehicle for it. The body changes, but that thing which evolves throughout is called atman. That is known as the self. That atman will ultimately reach the highest pinnacle of life by itself, even if one does not do any sadhana, but it will take a few million years.

Science has also spoken about the ultimate point of perfection in matter. I am talking about Darwin's theory of

natural evolution. In millions and millions of years, we will be able to evolve to that particular point when the lower mind and the lower prana will no longer be required to run this life. All functions will be conducted by a higher energy, which in yoga and tantra is known as kundalini shakti.



18

Karma and Akarma

*20 October 1981, addressing a group of yoga aspirants of a
Yoga Teachers Training Course*

Whatever the mind can register from the experiences of our life is known as karma. What it cannot register is akarma. According to the *Bhagavad Gita*, there is karma, akarma and nishkarma. *Karma* is an experience from your association with life. Literally, *karma* means action derived from the *dhatu* or root *kri*, to act, but it is something more than that. After all the bull also works, you can see a donkey working, a horse is also at work, but they do not experience it, they do not know it, and therefore it has no impact on their mind. When the work does not have an impact on the mind it means the effect is not going to be registered by it.

In human birth the association with karma is absolutely different. Therefore, it is said that every jiva undergoes its individual processes of evolution through the 84 lakh yonis, from amoeba to man and even to the yoni of deva. The human birth is a very important milestone. It is a fact and we say this not because we are human beings praising our own incarnation or existence. Other incarnations do not have any relationship with their awareness of the universe. If the human being does something or something happens to him, he inter-relates it with the universe. More than that a man, a human being is able to know his existence in relation to time and space, but an animal does not know it.

Animals exist, they react naturally to the urges of life, like anger and passion, but they do not know what they are enacting. A dog barks at you but it does not know that it is barking at you. You run away from it, and you know that you are running away from it and you also know that you know that you are running away from it. This higher function of knowledge of your existence in relation to time and space is the most important definition of man's character. Monkeys are very intelligent, the fox is very intelligent, and dolphins are extremely intelligent. Ants are so intelligent that before it begins to rain you can see them migrate to higher ground with their eggs. Yet, that is not the definition of evolution. That relates to a special sensorial capacity. Each and every animal has one acute sense, the olfactory sense. If you put a mango here, you will find a fly here within a minute. It gets the smell like a telex message and it picks it up immediately from any distance. This happens due to the acuteness of their olfactory system and that is all there is to it. Man has transcended the realm of *indriyas*, the realm of the senses. He has landed into a state of mental crisis.

When you transcend the *indriyas* and enter into the mental field, that is called a crisis, a transition, a complete transformation of the individual nature from one state to another state. One makes the transition from animal to human and later on, with *sadhana*, one makes the transition from human to *deva*. This human birth therefore is extremely important. You can understand and register each and everything that is related to your existence. This is known as *karma*.

The donkey carries his load, it is not a *karma*, the horse pulls the cart, it is not *karma*. A bull draws the plough, it is also not *karma*, but when the bull knows that it is drawing the plough and the farmer is exploiting him and it feels sorry about it, it creates a *karma* for itself. When a donkey begins to think, 'This dirty, *dhobi*, the washerman, puts such a heavy load on me after he tempts me with a carrot,' then the donkey creates a *karma*. When the very soul of man is

affected by an experience, it is called creating a karma. You can open a bank account in the name of your dog tomorrow with five hundred rupees, and see what happens to the dog – he will just sit there with the pass book and keep on barking. Nothing affects it because it does not relate with its own little items of existence.

Doctrine of karma

It is said in the Vedas that of all the beings that live, the most important and difficult to attain is the human birth. After having obtained this human birth, we control the various experiences of life that we undergo, with the strength of our own spirit: our experiences with other people, with our own desires and passions, with our own tragedies and comedies, with our own good and bad intentions. The reactions of all these which settle in our mind is karma. In this particular respect the shastras say that the entire range of karma is divided into three main categories. One is known as *sanchita karma*, accumulated, second is *kriyamana karma*, current, third, *prarabdha karma*, karma which you are undergoing, suffering or enjoying.

Accumulated karma means those karmas, those experiences, those involvements in life which have been registered by your consciousness but have not yet been able to influence your life at the moment. They are somewhere there, just like a fixed deposit which has not matured. Kriyamana karma is like a current account which you are operating every day and its effects and consequences are being registered by you in your soul, in your *karan sharira*. It is only being registered, that is all. Prarabdha karma is also known as agami karma. Prarabdha means fate, that which is to happen. In Sanskrit the word *pra* is a prefix, and *arabdha* means something about to happen. The mango tree and its fruits are an example of prarabdha karma – like the experiences of your life, your involvement and relationships with them. There comes a time when they begin to affect the actions of your life. They interfere with the present actions of your life, the state of your

health and the processes of your thinking. They interfere with your family circumstances, with each and everything according to nature.

When for the first category of karma, the fixed deposit karma, the maturity happens, the karmas begin to mature and put forth consequences and results which become a part of your experience. You either enjoy or are tortured by your experience. This doctrine of karma, according to the yoga shastra with sanchita, kriyamana and prarabdha karmas, is an outstanding feature of Hindu philosophy. It is not that others do not have this concept, but others have a different version of it altogether.

This doctrine of karma, this *karma siddhanta*, is the basic philosophy which not only explains the shape of your existence, it also defines and explains the shape of the whole cosmos. What is your relationship with the external nature, what is your relationship with the other stars and heavenly bodies? All that can be explained only because of *karma siddhanta*, the doctrine of human karma. If we carefully study the theory of natural evolution by Darwin; the theory of mental evolution by Kapila in Samkhya philosophy; the theory of spiritual evolution by Shankaracharya; the Upanishads and Vedanta, we come to the fact that the body and mind combination is what you are. In human beings, the body and mind are highly developed, not the spirit. We are trying to develop it by the practices of yoga, Samkhya and tantra.

The mind is highly developed, therefore the mind and body react with each other very quickly. If you receive a telegram with bad news, you have diarrhoea because the body immediately relates itself with the mind. If something happens to your beloved, son, daughter or wife, you develop some sort of pain, fever, cough, or some other reaction because the body and mind relate with each other very quickly. However, it does not affect the soul. Nothing affects the soul because nothing can penetrate it. When you are in turmoil, when the scales are heavily loaded against you, when

you are in utter dejection and disappointment and when the affairs of life have become thorny for you, at that time, your spirit opens and unfolds itself to you.

That is called grace in Christianity; the grace of God, Divinity, the higher Being, the Spirit unfolding itself unto you. You begin to see grace in the forms of bliss, ecstasy, blessings and kindness. At that time, you come in touch with people whose spirits are highly developed. The moment you come in touch with these people you begin to relate with their spirit. You are not able to relate with your spirit because it is not possible, but you are able to relate with their spirit which is highly developed. When you are able to relate yourself with their spirit, spiritual development begins in you. So, we should talk about physical evolution, mental evolution and spiritual evolution.

You are not the sole owner of the karmas which are intrinsically related with the whole process of evolution, of the karmas which you do and the experiences which you have. Everybody is a shareholder of the experiences of every other person. We share experiences and many times that is precisely the reason for our unhappiness. Sanchita karma, kriyamana karma and prarabdha karma can be explained like this: if you have a loaded revolver and it is in your belt it is sanchita karma, you can fire but you do not. If the revolver is in your hand, you have not fired it, but you are ready with your finger on the trigger, that is kriyamana karma. If the revolver is in your hand and you have pressed the trigger, that is prarabdha karma. Once you have pressed the trigger, you cannot do anything else. Prarabdha karmas have to be undergone no matter who you are.

In Hindi there is a very famous poem by Kabir, which says that we are all normal human beings and we must undergo the inevitable consequences of karma. The only difference is that the wise man undergoes them with total awareness, and an *ajnani*, an ignorant man, undergoes the whole process by cursing his destiny. He lives his life, weeping, crying and cursing. He beats his chest, and does all kinds of

frantic, hysterical actions. This is how he undergoes his own experiences. That is the only difference. The wise man, who is a realized man and the ignorant man, both have to undergo the rigors of prarabdha karma. Rama, Krishna, Buddha or Christ, Mohammed, no matter who they were, once they were born in the human body, they had to undergo the necessary prarabdha karma, they could not escape it because no one can escape it. This body and this human birth has got its own sphere of experiences. The moment you are born in the womb of your mother, you start karma. Birth is the first karma.

It is said in one of the Upanishads that the soul enters the womb in the fourth month and in the sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth month the soul becomes aware of its own existence. Then the soul thinks and prays, 'O God! Why have you put me in this dark shell? It is really painful.' Before birth, the soul remembers its previous incarnations and what it has been, what it did, what happened in previous incarnations, as an animal, as a human being. The soul looks at the whole sequence of events like a film, and then it says, 'Okay, this is enough, in my next life, I am not going to repeat these things, I give you my word. Please take me out of this dark shell, this womb of my mother,' and it comes out crying.

The moment the soul comes out it is called being born; that is the yoni, the present incarnation determined. The moment the soul comes out and inhales the earthly air, or *vayu*, with the first inhalation, the *pooraka*, the soul forgets all that it has seen in the film and the promises it had made. It forgets all its repenting and starts playing the same games once again. It repeats the process of fall after fall, and does not know where to end the whole game.

The Upanishads say that, if by chance the man comes across knowledge like yoga or Samkhya through saints, divine beings or shastras, he does not really remember his past lives but something happens to him. It revives the memory of the past, and it begins to try and stop further turns of the wheel of his life. The *Bhagavad Gita* says the same thing. The

man remembers something when he sees the ashram, the scripture, or a congregation for satsang. Suddenly he begins to experience peculiar feelings in life. He starts challenging the values which he is living, he starts questioning the reality of the existence of life. He starts doubting the very way he has been living his life, whether it is going through marriage, business, factory, children or politics. He starts challenging, questioning and doubting. He starts analyzing each and everything with which he related himself in the last twenty, thirty, forty years. Where is the necessity to review his relationship with his own existence? Why does he review it? He begins to review it for comparison and to contrast it with his present spiritual evolution. Otherwise he would not have found the necessity to do it. Then he begins to say, 'I think my relationship and involvement with external life has gone too far. If my relationship with my physical existence continues like this, perhaps my spiritual and mental evolution will stop.'

As far as the prarabdha karmas are concerned, you should completely forget about it and not repent anything. However, the sanchita karma, the experiences which are already stored in your subconscious mind can be totally annihilated. In the *Bhagavad Gita* it is said that through the fire of knowledge, meaning higher knowledge, you can destroy the whole stock of karma. It is very difficult to understand this process and how it happens.

Samskaras

Whatever experience you have in life is registered. Every experience is registered. The registering computer in your system is known as *sukshma sharira*, the astral body. The *Kayasthas*, a caste of accountants for the ruling class in India, called this phenomenon by the name of a deity, *Chitragupta*, who is considered to be the registrar of karmas. *Chitra* means pictures, *gupta* means hidden. *Chitragupta* means hidden pictures. What are these hidden pictures? Whatever karma you do, whatever experience you come across, will register and become a picture. This hidden picture exists in the

sukshma sharira. The entire lot of experiences are processed there. After processing, its symbolic image or stamp is placed there. For example, you have one son only, and at the age of fifty or fifty-five, you come to know that your son has died in an accident. This is like a film and your whole subtle body registers it. When you get a shock, you are dejected, disappointed and broken, and that experience is registered. After two days you happen to come in touch with me or some other person and I give you good ideas and a lot of inner help. After that you slowly get over the death of your son. You regain peace of mind and balance and continue with the obligations of life.

After some time, you begin to see funny dreams, but you do not see your son or his death, you may see anything else, you may see that a tree has been chopped and has fallen down, or the fish in your hand has just slipped out. I am trying to explain that every experience you have in your life is not registered in the brain exactly the way you have experienced it. It is saved in a specific manner, like the negatives of photographs. Every picture has a unique negative, every experience has a negative, which is called archetype or *samskara*.

There is a difference between karma and *samskara*. When an experience is registered in the astral body, in a particular form and shape, it is called *samskara*. These *samskaras* have peculiar shapes, and it can be said that everybody has billions of trillions of archetypes in their little small brain. These *samskaras* keep influencing the body, mind and soul. They activate a definite natural law of action and reaction. Nevertheless, the whole process of action and reaction is not automatic; it is not merely mechanical. An intelligent process directs, guides, controls and manages all those activities. A very intelligent director works behind the scenes and you do not even know about it.

These *samskaras* come in various forms. When you practise austerity, *tapasya*, penance, at a certain level you have an expulsion of the *samskaras*, which come out in hideous

and frightful forms, in the form of ecstasy, trance, hysteria, visions, in the form of what you call psychotic experiences. You may see angels, devas, animals, you can smell jasmine and hear many types of sounds. All these are samskaras that are coming out and expressing themselves.

When we discuss the topic of karma, we talk about the whole life process. The scriptures say that those who have attachment with the things they are related to create karma. Those who are detached, but still associate with the things they are concerned with, do not create any effect. That is called akarma. There is a story about it, like a parable. A sadhu and a *margi*, a village guide, used to live side by side may be in the same compound. One day the poor *margi*'s goat died. The *margi* was really affected by it and he cried and lamented for it. The sadhu went there, as they were friends and said, 'What happened to you *Margiji*?' He replied, 'My poor goat is dead.' The sadhu said, 'It does not matter, everybody has to die. Nobody is immortal. Do not be sorry about it because the goat had to die one day or the other. If you had died first, the goat would have cried and since it has died first you are crying. Somebody had to die first.'

The *margi* came to his senses with these wise words and he was consoled. After two years, the sadhu's calf died, and he felt so much sorrow that he did not step out of his *kutir* for three days. The *margi* thought, 'What happened to Sadhu? Is he sick?' So he knocked on his door, opened it and found the sadhu in absolute gloom. He asked, 'What has happened to you?' He said, 'My calf is dead. I have not eaten for three days.' The *margi* said, 'Why don't you come out of the house?' 'No, I do not feel like it. I am so sad.' The *margi* said, 'But you know that nobody lives for ever. The calf had to die for which you are weeping and if you had died instead, the calf would have wept.' The sadhu said, 'Don't give me all this wisdom.' The *margi* replied, 'But I am only giving the views you gave me when my goat died.' The sadhu said, 'You are foolish. That goat was yours and this calf was mine!'

In the death of the margi's goat, the sadhu was facing the situation of akarma, he was not relating himself to the death of the goat. If he had not related himself to the death of his own calf, he would have been what you can call a yogi. The calf was essentially related to him because he loved it. Not just love, even hatred works in a similar way. When you hate someone you know it, and the same reaction sets in. Love and hatred are two sides of the same coin and therefore one has to try to practise, one has to try to live the experience of akarma.

I give a simple example. A treasurer in the bank sits there and counts millions of rupees every day. Nothing belongs to him and he only gets five hundred rupees a month. If this fellow begins to help himself to those millions every day, he will go mad, because there are certain aspects of life with which we have to associate but not relate ourselves. It has to be like that, but we do not know where to relate and where to associate. Training has to be imparted to a human being about where he should relate himself and where he should associate and just be a participant.

When you have a son you relate yourself with him. You relate yourself with your husband, wife, son, and other people you love or hate but when you go to the factory to be employed you do not relate yourself, you associate with the people there. You relate yourself only to the five thousand rupees which you get every month, the bonus you get every year, the provident fund or any other bonus at the termination of your services, that is all you are concerned with. If the factory was to be closed down, you would not mind it if you are capable of getting another job somewhere else. Akarma and karma have nothing to do with the nature of expression. Akarma is not actionlessness. Akarma is not the state of inactivity. Akarma is a state where you are *akarta*, not the doer.

Sri Krishna and Durvasa

There have been two great souls in our history, one was Durvasa, and one was Sri Krishna. Sri Krishna was known

as *mukhya nitya brahmachari*, the one who is an eternal brahmachari, and Durvasa was known as a *mukhya nitya upvasi*, the one who fasts eternally. The gopis came to the conclusion that something was wrong with the reputation that people had given them. How could Durvasa who could eat one hundred laddoos at one time be called a mukhya nitya upvasi; and how could Krishna who lived along with gopis and who charmed them with the music of his flute be called a mukhya nitya brahmachari?

It so happened that one day in the month of Shravan the gopis wanted to do pooja in Durvasa's place across the Yamuna. When they went to the *ghat*, the river bank, there was no boat to carry them to the other side, to Mathura. Some gopis asked Krishna what to do. Sri Krishna said, "Ask Yamuna that if Durvasa has never enjoyed food, please do part your waters and let us pass." So the gopis prayed to Yamuna, the waters receded and they could reach the other side. When they had finished the pooja, they asked Rishi Durvasa how to get back across the Yamuna. Durvasa told the gopis, "Ask Yamuna to make a passage for you only if Krishna has never enjoyed the company of girls." The gopis went to the riverbank, prayed and Yamuna gave them safe passage.

Now the gopis were even more confused and when they met Durvasa the next time they asked him how this could have been possible. Rishi Durvasa explained, "When your *ahamkara*, your ego is not involved in the affairs, no matter what they are, then you are not relating to it. You eat but you do not relate yourself to the food. When you enjoy but do not relate yourself to the enjoyment, the actions are not going to affect you. Krishna has descended, not to live life, but to guide life."

That is how he explained: Krishna has descended as an avatar, not to live life but to guide life. He moves with the gopis, not to enjoy, not to live with them, not to affect their destiny, but in order to guide the whole of humanity. The gopis of course were very beautiful. It says in the *Srimad Bhagavatam*, that gopis were the shakti of the Supreme Being.

They had incarnated themselves in the forms of girls and boys in the village of Mathura. Krishna, the Supreme Being, came, and he played a lila with the gopis. It is something you can understand.

If you act in a drama at the theatre and you play a particular part involving love and hatred, tragedy and comedy, do you become mad? No, you are only playing a part; you are just enacting some emotions. So Durvasa explained to them that the ego should be kept aloof without attachment, involvement, without relating yourself to the events of life. If you continue to discharge your duties and obligations whatever they may be, you are making no karma. When you do not create a karma, then what are you doing? It is called akarma.

The Maidservant and the Prostitute

Imagine you have a maidservant. She serves you in your presence and your absence. She is honest, good, learned and loyal. When you are sick she keeps awake the whole night and is worried about your health. Many family members have been looked after and brought up by the maidservant for many years like her own child. There is nothing to prove that the maidservant does not relate herself to you or your child. If you go deep into her feelings, she does not relate herself to you. She associates. She is simply associating but she associates so perfectly that there seems to be no difference between relation and association.

One day, she receives a telegram saying that her father is sick and is on his death bed. She is disturbed, cannot eat and cannot sleep. In the morning she can get on a train and go but she is disturbed and restless through the night. You tell her, 'What has happened to you? Relax now and you can go tomorrow.' She does not understand this because she is related to that man, her father, although they have had no association for a long time. She has been living as your maidservant for the last thirty, forty years. She is associated with your family and children, not with her family and

children. However, she is related with her family and children not with your family and children. She is associated with you, not related.

When she goes to see the father, she remains there for a month or two because after the death of her father she is very sad. You write her letter that she should come back now, that the children have come home on vacation, somebody is sick, or there is nobody to look after the kitchen. She only writes, I am coming, I am coming, I am coming, but she never comes.

These things prove exactly how one has to have involvement with the experiences in life. What are the experiences of life? They are very limited. It is said *raga, dwesha, kama, krodha, lobha, moha, mada, matsarya* – attachment, aversion, desire, frustration, passion, anger, greed, infatuation, arrogance and jealousy is life. Desire plus frustration and love plus hatred makes up the whole of life and experience. If you can have a proper relationship and understanding of your present relationship with the affairs of life, then you do not produce a samskara.

Akarma does not produce samskara, karma produces samskara. There is another story about this subject. There was a prostitute, a dancing girl. A swami lived in his ashram which was right in front of her house. Every day this girl used to hear kirtans being sung. Whenever she used to be with a man, she used to hear this music and get diverted. She would say, ‘O what a nice kirtan is going on!’ She was aware all day of the kirtan, and the bhaktas coming and going through the ashram. In the daytime, she used to intently watch people from her balcony coming to the ashram with coconut and flowers, all neatly and nicely dressed.

On the other side, the swami used to sit on his balcony and think, ‘She is a wicked woman, all the men go there, she is a prostitute and lives a dirty life. I do not like her.’ His mind used to go through this thought every day. One day both of them died and found themselves before *Dharmaraja*, the chief justice of the supreme court of God. They both stood there and the judgement was pronounced. “This lady goes to that

seventh star and this swami is to be put in an ordinary hell.” The swami said, “What! Me in hell and she goes to heaven?” Dharmaraja said, “Yes.” The swami replied, “No, there is something wrong with your judgement.” Dharmaraja said, “There is nothing wrong with the judgement.” The swami said, “I practised kirtan, bhajans all my life, and this girl was living with many men and everybody knows it.”

Dharmaraja said, “It is all registered here, the kirtan, bhajan, everything is written here, there is nothing wrong, all the entries are here. And for the girl . . . yes, dancing, drinking and smoking and all kinds of other things, I see it is all here. All these things have been scratched out, all these evil debts have been written off because her entire mind was totally aware of the spiritual atmosphere, the grand and noble experiences which she was witnessing through your ashram. Even though she lived with any man at any time, her whole soul used to be there with you, singing the kirtan and when she knew that there was going to be a kirtan on a particular day, on Ekadashi or Poornima, she saw that nobody came to her on that day because for her the man was not as important as the kirtan. So naturally it is not her action we are going to judge but her intention, *bhava*. We are going to judge her deeper emotions.

A man’s karmas are not to be judged by their external structure but by the internal motives. What were you doing? You were doing pooja, getting up at three o’clock, doing asana or pranayama and going to the ashram, but in your mind you were thinking all the time of that girl with a man. Your mind was completely overwhelmed, permeated and controlled by an idea which was not defined by you to yourself, but it was there. So that awareness has written off all your good investments.”

Not beyond the limits

I would say it is very difficult. Just by living a good life you do not make good karmas and just by living a bad life you do not make bad karmas. It is the *bhavana*, it is the intention, it

is the motive behind it which makes it happen and which is more important than the karma itself. Therefore, remember, by distributing blankets to poor people, you may not ensure a seat for yourself in heaven. A pooja or a dharmic deed may not necessarily ensure a place high up for you. If your motives are free from any kind of personal relationship and if you can just associate with all things that come to you in your life, you do not create karma. If you can disassociate yourself or remain unrelated with births, deaths, accomplishments, successes, failures, prosperity and poverty, in your life, then you do not create karma.

Through the samskaras that they create, karmas go on sowing seeds which are responsible for our incarnation, the *janma*, life, the *punarjanma*, next life, and the *aarwaagaman*, the coming and going, the recurring business of life and death. This phenomenon of coming and going from one life into another is a very prolonged process, totally dependent on your relationship with your life experiences. If you can understand them through the eyes of jnana, you can get rid of them.

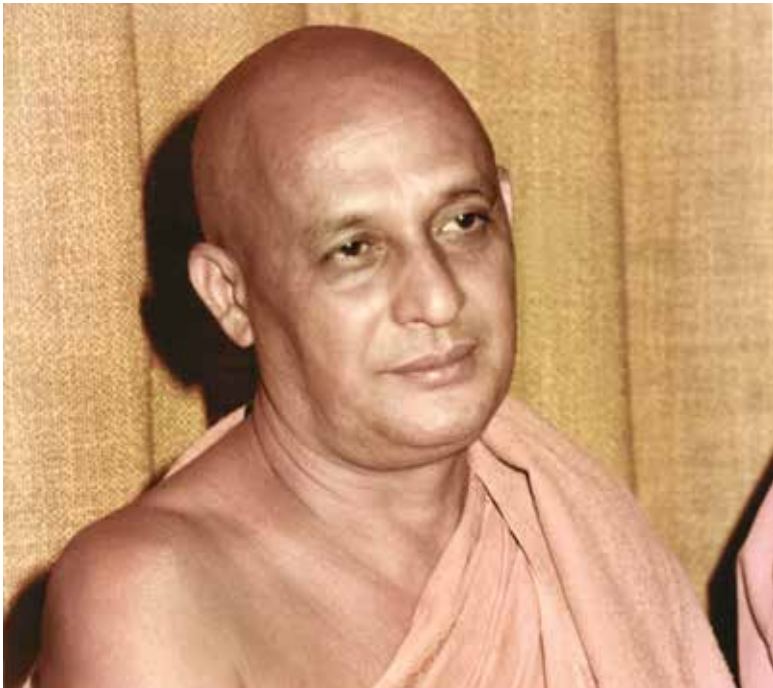
The *Bhagavad Gita* has said, if you do not relate yourself with experiences of life while you eat, breathe, dream or sleep then you have not done any karma and there is no entry in the ledger of karmas. The rivers meet the ocean and keep on doing it year after year, century after century for many millions of years, but the ocean remains constantly within limits and does not go beyond its limits.

In the same way, there is a rise and fall of desires and passions every now and then in an individual. Desires and passions relate to every movement your mind functions with. In the life of an individual, they rise and fall every now and then, waxing and waning like the moon. Desires and passions do not produce samskaras unless one reacts or relates to them. The permissible limit of reaction to remain free of samskaras is called discipline or restraint.

Be happy to some extent. Feel your problems to some extent, feel your hatred and love to some extent. Do not

go beyond, do not lose yourself, in the abyss of desires and passions. If someone dies it is alright, feel for it. If someone is born it is fine, feel for it. If you get a lot of money it is okay to feel happy for it and if there is loss in life it is natural to feel sad for it. However, there is an optimum limit of feeling, within which one may react. Do not go beyond that limit, just like the contained ocean. When desires and passions rise and fall, they act upon the individual, but if he does not react to them and maintains equanimity, like the ocean, he will attain peace.

It is not a passionless man who attains peace but a man who experiences the rise and fall of passions but keeps them within the limit. He knows where to draw the line when it comes to feelings. He knows where to end passions and reactions. Such a man accomplishes peace, not the man who is affected by the intensity of his own desires.



19

The Ideal Society and Sannyasa

*21 October 1981, addressing a group of yoga aspirants of a
Yoga Teachers Training Course*

In an ideal society would everybody be a yogi or sannyasi, or would it be better for some to remain as householders? Or is it possible in this present age for people to live household lives and aspire to be yogis?

Spiritual evolution is the right of every living being, not only of human beings but other lives also. They are all progressing and evolving for their spiritual enlightenment. Human beings for instance acquire this physical body with a lot of facilities. Nature has provided man with a lot of facilities to attain enlightenment. Those who attain enlightenment are known as rishis, munis, yogis, jivanmuktas and videhamuktas. These are the names used generally in the Hindu tradition for those who have come to the ultimate purpose of life, *atmajnana*.

Sannyasa has nothing to do with enlightenment. It is a way of life which can be practised by anybody. We have not understood it because of our utter neglect of the cultural idea of this land. Sannyasa is a word which has nothing to do with renunciation or negation. It is not a negative word. *Nyasa* means trust. *Sam* is a prefix which means complete. When you dedicate yourself to a particular purpose completely, that is sannyasa.

For example, you have 40,000 rupees and you create a trust out of that money. You felt a trust should be created with

the money which should only be used for medical aid to the poor. That is the purpose of the trust. The 40,000 rupees will be used only for that purpose. You cannot use it to get your daughter married, or for the medical care of your child. You cannot use it for anything else because the purpose has been earmarked. The money has been set aside or apart, as one calls it. When you set yourself apart for a particular purpose, then that is sannyasa.

What qualities do you have? You have emotions, imagination, a physical body, talents, educational qualifications, social and political resources, maybe even intuition. That is the wealth you possess. How are you utilizing that wealth? Most people are misusing it. They utilize their total resources for those things through which they get nothing but pain.

How are you utilizing the capacities of your body? How are you utilizing the capacities of your intellect? How are you using your intuition? How are you using your academic qualification and political, economic, social resources? If you think deeply, you will clearly feel that you have not been investing them properly for a good cause. The cause for which you have been using your wealth has only brought you rejection, frustration and disappointment. You have been working extremely hard, utilizing all your resources and what is the ultimate outcome of your act? To what end are you striving?

So the wise thought, 'Let me not use these resources for anything else except . . .' I decided that all my energies and capacities would be used for the renaissance of yoga. Nothing else. I know homeopathy, medical science, acupuncture, natural sciences and naturopathy. I knew yoga much less than I knew the other subjects but I realized that yoga was necessary and from that time, I dedicated all my faculties to the renaissance of yoga – and that was my sannyasa.

When Chaitanya Mahaprabhu went to his guru and begged him for sannyasa, his guru said, 'No sannyasa for you because you can realize the self living as a householder.' Chaitanya Mahaprabhu said, 'I do not want it for myself.'

I want to spread His name for which I want sannyasa.’ Then the guru said, ‘Right you are,’ and ordained him into sannyasa.

Spiritual sadhana, yoga practices, tantric practices and so on are not the aim of sannyasa. If you want to do sadhana, pooja and bhakti and want to take sannyasa you are very wrong in your thinking. As a householder you have greater facilities to do sadhana, to understand the mind and come nearer to the truth of life, because you are suffering. When you are suffering you understand things better than when you are not suffering.

Therefore, an ideal society does not mean a society of sannyasins. Also, the ideal society does not consist of people who are reckless, aimless householders. To say that *grihastha ashrama* or the life of a householder is a boon for spiritual realization is also not enough. There are millions of aimless, reckless householders who know nothing about life. I am not talking about them. I am talking about the people who know what should be the aim of their life. They have wife, children and property, but they know what they should do.

There was a young man who came to me many years ago and then he met my guruji, Swami Sivanandaji. Swami Sivanandaji sent him back and did not give him sannyasa. He went back to Calcutta and lived with his wife and children. For thirty or forty years he lived the life of a sannyasin in the role of a grihastha. When I was in Calcutta in 1945 or 1946, I went to his house for a meal and I saw how he lived. In the course of time, he became a very rich man, one of the big industrial magnates of Calcutta. He had decided that whatever amount he earned from his industry, business or trade, would go to his guru, except for what he needed for his family. I remember that in one year he sent five million rupees out of the profit he made. One day he took me to Gangaji. I could not bathe there because the water was dirty and smelling, but he took a bath there every day. I asked him, ‘How can you take bath in this dirty water?’ He said, ‘Ganga is my mother and I will bathe in her as long as I am alive

and I can breathe.' So that was how he dedicated himself to a great purpose.

I also remember another man who was well known in Bombay. He was not a disciple of Swami Sivananda; he was a disciple of Swami Nirvan of the Vedanta Society in Amritsar. He was also not given sannyasa. He became a very big industrialist in Bombay, and sustained the whole movement of Vedanta in the North-West frontier region. There are many such people dedicated to the renaissance of spiritual life. I believe in a society which is a mixture of all types of people. If you only have mangoes in a garden I do not call it a garden. You must have mango, jamun, lychee, guava, then that is a garden. I am not pessimistic; I am optimistic. The whole world has different types of people and you cannot erase them.

If everybody becomes Hindu, Muslim, Christian or communist, then this world will not be a good world to live in. There has to be unity in diversity, and if there is no diversity there is no spiritual life. The mere fact that there are so many people dedicated to spiritual life, doing their own sadhana in their own way and have been working well for spiritual enlightenment is because of diversity. When you think that all people become sannyasins or nobody becomes a sannyasin, everybody should be married or nobody should be married, then this is not a very sound idea. You have your own evolution and I have my own and no two people think alike. There should be no set definition about God or about the path to enlightenment, for nobody knows it. Whatever is written in the books is not final. Books can never be final, not the *Bhagavad Gita*, Upanishads, Koran or Bible. They cannot be final. They can be final only for a man with a higher consciousness.

Gunas and diversity

The *Mahimna Stotra* says that on account of differences in man's nature and inclination, there are straight and crooked ways to reach the common human destination. As rivers flow

from the north, east, west and south, and finally mingle with the ocean, there are various ways of living life and various ways to believe, think and practise sadhana or religion. But finally every effort merges at one point, the destination.

This is called the principle of diversity. There need not be unity in so far as the means are concerned. However, there has to be unity so far as the aim is concerned. If you want to go to London, everybody need not go from Munger. You can go from Bombay, Calcutta, Madras or Delhi. According to the Hindu concept, in an ideal society everybody should study their own nature first, and then fix a way of life for themselves according to their own nature.

The shastras have indicated that the mind is made up of the three gunas. The body is also made up of the three gunas, it is not just bone, marrow and flesh. Everyone is a composition of the three gunas on the physical, mental and emotional planes. The three gunas are sattwa, rajas and tamas. Most people in our society are predominantly tamasic, others are predominantly rajasic or sattwic. Therefore, there is a vast difference in the nature, quality and attitude of people. It cannot be the same, it should not be the same, and we should not visualize a society of unified ideals. It is very dangerous.

This danger finally reflects in the political ambitions of people. If one is predominantly tamasic, one must live like that, if one is predominantly rajasic one should live like that, and if one is sattwic, take sannyasa. If one's mind is desireless, passionless and has nothing to hanker after, when cravings have been satiated, one is dwelling in the presence of one's own self. One's mind is clear. That is the sattwic state.

In that sattwic state one's sadhana will be different. As it says in the *Bhagavad Gita*, whenever your mind goes out of the point of concentration, becomes restless or *chanchal*, bring it back again by discipline and control, to the point. This is the sadhana of a person who is predominantly sattwic. He should use force and discipline to bring his mind back to the point of concentration.

If this same sadhana is done by a rajasic person, he will have to go to a mental hospital. If a person who has passions after passions, is ambitious, whose psycho-emotional structure is imbalanced, is filled with conflicts, if he were to withdraw the mind by force and discipline it back to the point, he would start going into a schizophrenic state. That is what happens to many people when they do sadhana because they are not practising sadhana according to their nature and evolution. They are practising sadhana according to their idea of the superiority of sadhana.

In the same way, if your body is sick, your digestive system is impaired, your nadis and physical cells are not pure, and you sit for dhyana, what will you see? Visions, frightening figures, all kinds of funny things. Therefore, first of all, you have to examine your own level of evolution.

How can you examine your own level of evolution? In Chapter 14 of the *Bhagavad Gita*, Krishna instructs Arjuna on *gunatrayavibhagayoga*, the classification of the three gunas. He says the three gunas, sattwa, rajas and tamas, operate in the life of everybody, and according to that operation the individual projects himself differently in each situation.

When tamas is predominant, you become indolent, lethargic, procrastinating and you love sleeping. When you are predominantly rajasic, you are attached to activity, greed, restlessness, ambitions and fantasies. When you grow into sattwa you have *jnanam*, higher awareness, inner awareness. These are some of the definitions given in the *Gita*.

These three gunas are a reality, they are forces which have been working within us right from the beginning of our incarnation in this living kingdom, not only when we are born as a human being. Each and every jiva, creature, living substance is controlled, guided and directed by these threefold forces of nature.

Purusha and Prakriti

Moola prakriti is the creator of the entire creation, cosmos and planets. Moola prakriti has the three forces, sattwa,

rajas and tamas, controlling one's movement, operation, evolution, disintegration and the whole process of life. This is a concept which is different from religion. I am talking about the concept. In religion there is a God sitting somewhere and from there he is administrating everything – killing the person, bringing him to justice, punishing him, and throwing him in hell and so on. This is the concept of religion but it is not the concept of Samkhya, yoga and tantra.

Purusha and Prakriti are the two eternal forces. I am using the word eternal and therefore you must remember that I am talking of two eternities and not one eternity. This is based on the philosophy of Samkhya, yoga and tantra. In religion also there is an eternal duality: Vishnu or Narayana and Lakshmi. Do you think Lakshmi was born and Narayana was not? Both are unborn. Therefore, you are talking about two eternities, not one eternity.

In the same way, there is purusha and prakriti. *Purusha* means consciousness. *Prakriti* means the doer, the executive, *kriti* – *pra* is the prefix, *kriti* means doer of work. The definition of purusha is one who sleeps in this city; that is the literal meaning – *Puri tasmin shete iti purushah*. *Puri* means city, *shete* means sleeps. The one who sleeps in this city is purusha. Here the word city denotes dormancy, one who is hidden or dormant in this body. Just as fire is dormant in wood, energy in matter, butter in milk, or oil in the sesame seed, there is something which is hiding, unknown or dormant, in this physical body or life, yet wanting to manifest itself. That is called the *purusha*.

This purusha is neither an actor nor the doer. He does not do anything; he is the *sakshi*, the silent witness, but he is a force, like electrical energy. He is the force behind, but he is not the *karta*, doer, nor the *bhokta*, enjoyer. He is just the *drashta*, the seer. He sees the whole game. Prakriti is the executive.

Purusha and prakriti are two different realities. Prakriti is not a part of purusha, and purusha is not a part of prakriti, they are two and not one. In the *Bhagavad Gita* it is said (13:20):

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

Know thou that Prakriti and Purusha are beginningless; and know also that all modifications and qualities are born of Prakriti.

It means that the *Gita* is talking about two eternal realities, not one eternal reality. Religions talk of one eternal reality. Everybody says it, but nobody has seen it. Nobody can see it. You cannot claim that what you are saying is the truth. Reality can be one, two, three, or reality can be multiple. Why do you say it can be the reality only if it is one? Why cannot the reality be two or three? Why cannot the reality be a thousand? Is multiplicity a defect of truth? No.

Therefore, in Samkhya they talk of purusha and prakriti. Prakriti is made up of the three gunas, sattwa, rajas and tamas, which constitute the whole of prakriti. Through these three forces, prakriti controls all objects, the mineral, vegetable, animal, human and the invisible kingdoms.

We should think of an ideal society in terms of the laws of nature, not according to the ambitions of politicians. Politicians have always wanted to develop a society of one ideal, one religion, one language, one dress, one slogan, one flag – this can never be an ideal society. It will be the most cruel, intolerant, barbaric society and history has had evidence of it. History has not one but many evidences of such a so-called ideal society where everybody would want the same of everything, wear the same, pray the same way, pay homage to God in the same way, believe in the same name, chant the same name. It is very difficult for us to accept that. We know very well that all children who go to school will not go to university, or all children who go to school have not necessarily gone to the primary classes first. Everybody has a different class.

If everybody has a different class on account of intellectual difference, then why not have different classes for spiritual differences? We are all spiritually different; we are all

evolutionarily different. We are not the same. We are not going to attain realization on a certain date on the calendar. You may not get self-realization in this life, and someone may get it immediately. Evidently, we have different classes here as well – tamasic koti which means the tamasic class, rajasic koti, the rajasic class, sattwic koti, the sattwic class.

Based on this difference, there is the provision set aside by rishis for sattwic people – sadhana, food, social interactions, and political affiliation. This is written in the smritis, not merely in the *Gita*, Upanishads or *Ramayana*, but also in the smritis and samhitas. If you read it, you will know how they have framed the method for different types of people.

One smriti says you must not look at sense objects. They are poison, they will kill your soul and therefore a wise man must get out of all such conditions. He must completely get rid of all his attachments. He must consider all sense objects as the cobra's venom. That is the way for people who have attained the level of sattwa. In another smriti they say, 'No, you must live with your wife, your husband, your child, you should keep your money like this; you must behave like this; this should be your attitude, you must fulfil your obligations, desires and karmas.'

People want to criticize the diversity inherent in Hindu religion. They say that it is contradictory, 'You are talking so many different things which do not really agree with each other. At one level you are talking of renunciation, of Buddha, Mahavir, Bharat and Shankaracharya and on the other hand you talk about rishis married to women. Or rishis having extra martial relationships. What is one to follow – this or that?' Wise people say, 'If you are fit for that, do it. If you are not fit for that, leave it.' According to this, the wise have designed the four ashramas in order to give everyone a chance and opportunity to fulfil their existing desires. If desires are not there, then it is okay, you can go straight ahead in spiritual life, but if they are there, then you have to fulfil them.

The ashrama and varna system

The first ashrama is called brahmacharya ashrama. The second one is grihastha ashrama, the third one is vanaprastha ashrama, the fourth one is known as sannyasa ashrama. If you are desirous of acquiring knowledge, live with a guru and discipline yourself, go to brahmacharya ashrama. If you want to discharge your obligations to your ancestors, satisfy your desires, passions and greed, if you have predominant desires and cravings and want to acquire wealth, money, children, relatives, you need to enter into grihastha ashrama.

When you begin to realize that the grihastha ashrama has now come to an end for you, and you no longer need to live for your desires or compulsions, then just make a few changes in your life – and that is vanaprastha ashrama. You should then withdraw yourself from certain religious, social and family commitments, stop attending marriage, *shraaddha* or funeral, and other ancestral ceremonies. You retreat and let others do it. When you become steadfast, established in the vanaprastha ashrama, then take sannyasa. This is the general rule.

At the same time, rishis have said that if you begin to realize even before entering the grihastha ashrama that you are not someone who wants to fulfil desires or hanker after accomplishments, then do not enter into the grihastha ashrama. Jump straight from brahmacharya ashrama into sannyasa ashrama. There are two ways according to our system, one is called *krama* which means step by step – brahmacharya, grihastha, vanaprastha, sannyasa. The other way is called *vidwat* which means through awareness. When you become aware, transcend one of the ashramas if you can. Go straight from grihastha ashrama into sannyasa, or straight from brahmacharya ashrama into sannyasa. Or do not even enter into brahmacharya ashrama like Shukdeva, Shankaracharya, and the four Kumars: Sanak, Sanandan, Sanaatan and Sanatkumar did. They became aware of a greater reality the moment they were born and did not enter into the life of a brahmachari. They immediately became

sannyasins. However, that does not mean everybody can do it.

These ashramas are not organized to create a society. This is the greatest point of difference between Hinduism and others. In ancient Hindu society, everything was organized in order to facilitate the path of *atmajnana*. We facilitate a society with family and marriage so that people will be able to succeed in spiritual life.

In other forms of society, because of their insecurity, everything is organized in order to have a strong nation and society. When the temperament of the people of a nation is insecure, they organize their society with discipline, with a pope, religion and cannons, not to facilitate self-realization but to create a strong society that will face the dangers from invaders. People of this country never did that.

I am not trying to defend the caste system and modern society. Different people very obviously have different aptitudes and abilities. For that reason, we had four varnas: brahmin, kshatriya, vaishya and shudra. We did not draft everybody for war. It is not necessary. If we train everybody in the military sciences, it is a waste because everybody is not ready for it. There are people who by temperament are pacifist, artistic, intellectual and for their evolution, their tasks are different.

I may want to study but there are people who want to fight, who are kshatriya by temperament. If these people become the head of an institution, they will beat everybody up. These differences come about according to different temperaments. You have to organize people and society in order to streamline and channel their energy. Some go to office, some are married and have children, some enjoy socializing, some drink, some don't, some eat meat, some don't, some prefer perfect marital relationship, some are open to extra-marital relationships. Why so many different categories? What is the aim behind it? If you are doing all this in order to fix your karma, and exhaust your samskaras, then this society is very well organized for that purpose.

The vision of the ideal society that I have in my mind does not consist of people with uniform temperament. I have great respect for sannyasa. It is a big part of my mind, but at the same time I can think practically. I am not idealistic in that way, because I know what can happen and what should happen and what cannot happen, and what should not happen.

My grandmother was a Tibetan. All her behaviours were very funny. Her guru used to come and they were all funny people. At that time, I was a student and maybe I misunderstood them but even now I think they were funny. They had cloaks and the sleeves used to be so long, that they could not bring their hands out. My grandmother used to say, 'My guru has renounced all karmas. See, he does not even bring his hands out. It means he has to be fed.' So we used to feed him with a spoon. The bigger the sleeves the greater you are, because you are not working. I could not understand it.

What has man's activities got to do with realization? Karmas do not taint you as long as you are not attached or related to them. How can they taint you? You can do anything and remain free of karma. There is a story in the *Mahabharata*. A yogi had attained a siddhi. When he was sitting underneath a tree and practising *trataka*, a pigeon above his head passed its droppings on him. When he looked at the pigeon it was immediately turned into ashes. He left the place and continued his journey. He went to a house and called for *bhiksha*, alms. The reply came from inside, "Please wait." It was a female voice. He waited for an hour and ultimately got furious and thought, "This lady does not know me. I will just burn her to ashes". The lady called out from inside and said, "I am not the pigeon." This man was wonderstruck. What happened? Who is this lady who knows everything?

Finally, she came out with alms. The yogi said, "How did you know about the pigeon?" She said, "Well, I know it, that's all." He asked again, "How did you acquire this *vidya*?" She said, "I don't have time to tell you this because my husband is

very ill and cannot get up. He is struck with paralysis. I have to give him a bath, feed and fan him and make him sleep. You had better go to this place to get this answer; I am giving you the address.”

The yogi went to that address as directed. He found that he had come to the shop of a butcher, a slaughter house. First he thought that perhaps he had come to the wrong place. The butcher was sitting there and called the yogi by his name. To the yogi’s amazement the butcher said, “The lady sent you in order to know the secret of her attainment. May I tell you something about it?” The yogi said, “I don’t think you can tell me that at all because you are a butcher. You kill and eat animals every day. You are doing such a horrible job, how can you attain knowledge, *vidya*?”

The butcher said, “All right, I am not going to tell you anything. You may go to the person who is perfect in this area. I will give you the address.” As directed the yogi went there and found that he was in a shop of a baniya, who was selling flour, rice, spices, chillis and all kinds of things. He asked the shopkeeper about his quest. The baniya whose name was Vaishya told him, “Look here, you cannot judge one’s spiritual evolution by his external manifestation. Enlightenment, higher awareness, atmajnana, samadhi, kaivalya, nirvana or moksha is the quality of the atman, not of the body. It does not matter who you are and what you do. Your soul can find absolute enlightenment through the practices which are natural to your evolution.

That lady is dedicated to her husband. That is her sadhana. The butcher is dedicated to his parents, because he has to feed and sustain them. That is his sadhana. You are a yogi. You have no wife and child. You are dedicated to trataka and other practices. That is your sadhana. Why do you say that only a religious person can find enlightenment, or only a person who is pure, ethical, moral, puritan or orthodox can find enlightenment? Why don’t you say that a dancing girl, a prostitute, a baniya shopkeeper can also find enlightenment?” Sri Krishna says in the *Bhagavad Gita* (9:32):

*Maam hi paartha vyapaashritya yepi syuh paapayonayah;
Striyo vaishyaastathaa shoodraastepi yaanti paraam gatim.*

For, taking refuge in Me, they also, O Arjuna, who may be of sinful birth—women, vaishyas as well as shudras—attain the Supreme Goal!

Even women who have no time for sadhana, except for cooking and cleaning, all through the day; or the vaishyas who are constantly preoccupied with profit making; or the shudras who are always engaged in cleaning the rubbish of your streets – these three can also attain the transcendental state. It is a beautiful sloka. What to talk of the rajarshis, the brahmins and the great spiritual masters! Enlightenment is definitely available to them.

Spirituality

We must first of all accept the diversity in our society. We who are dedicated to yoga and those who are aspiring for sannyasa must remember one thing. Whatever we do in society, whether it is the way we want to organize our family or our entire society, should have just one aim – to be able to acquire atmajñana. If the society is a well-organized society, the disciplines are perfect but the incentive and inspiration is not spirituality but sensual enjoyment, then it does not matter how many countries you conquer. It does not matter how much wealth you amass. It does not matter how long you exist in the annals of history, a black day is definitely waiting for you. Nature is very cruel. Prakriti is unforgiving.

Nations have been effaced from the face of the earth. There came a time when there was not even a mention of them in history, no matter how powerful they were and how many countries they had conquered from east to west and from north to south. No matter how much they wanted to fix their language, their code of conduct, social structure, and political systems on us, they did not survive.

It says in a poem, that there is something in this culture that has helped it survive, even though the scales were highly

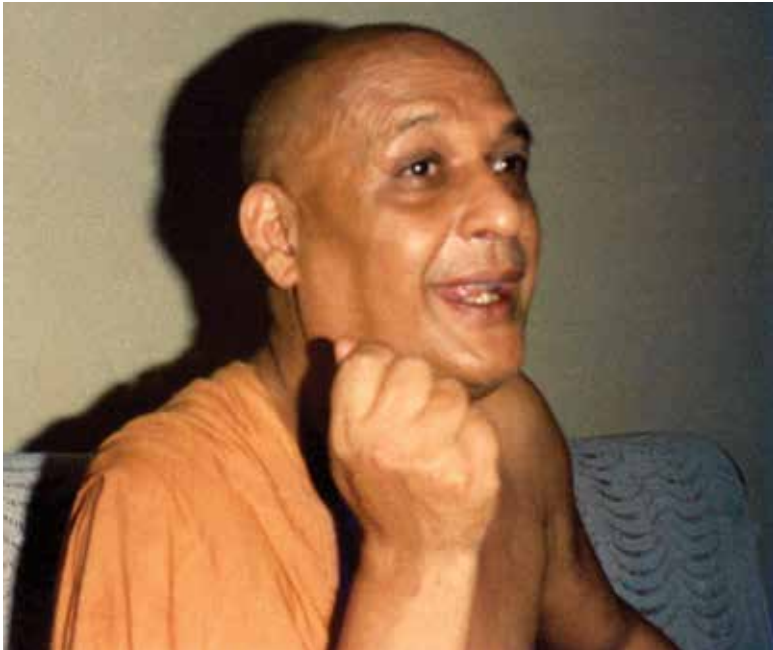
tilted against it throughout history. Even though the times have been against it for more than a thousand years, yet it has survived as a culture and philosophy. This has happened because of the diversity in its society. The ultimate purpose of life is to attain the higher consciousness called atmajnana. Some call it advaitanubhuti, samadhi, kundalini awakening, or nirvana. Jains call it kaivalya. Therefore, those who are ready to take sannyasa must immediately step out of the portals of their life. There is no use delaying it. Those who cannot take sannyasa should live like sannyasins, upholding householder's sannyasa, which is called karma sannyasa. There is also rishi sannyasa, for sannyasins in family life, with wife and children.

Those who cannot take karma sannyasa, which is the householder's sannyasa, because the wife may fight or misunderstand it and then something wrong may happen, should live like a householder but feel like a sannyasin. Associate with everybody. Do not commit yourself to any one person because you do not belong to each other. Your meeting is just an incident. Like two boats on a river or like passengers on the platform waiting for the train. Even if you cannot manage to maintain the attitude of a sannyasin because you are too attached or infatuated by the things of life, fulfil it and finish it. Eat, eat and eat till you do not want to eat any more. Then do a complete shankhprakashana of your personality

I remember a nice story from the *Shvetashvatara Upanishad*. Two birds are sitting on a tree, one on the top branches and the other at the bottom. The bird at the bottom eats one fruit. It is bitter, so he tries another one, which is also bitter, so he spits it out. The bird at the top sits quietly, without eating. The first bird then goes to another tree, pecks at a fruit, finding it bitter continues to peck at one fruit after another. Then it asks the other quiet bird, "Why don't you eat?" The quiet bird says, "No, you eat, I am all right here." The bird at the bottom tries another tree and finally realizes that among the fruits it has been eating, it has not found even one sweet

fruit. It has only been tasting and spitting. Trial and error, trial and error throughout life. Then the bird which was completely established in its glory and silence said, “How long are you going to continue this game? Find one sweet fruit and then finish this process.”

The other bird said, “I have not come across a single sweet fruit.” “Then what are you trying to do?” the quiet bird asked. “I am trying to find at least one sweet fruit.” The quiet bird said, “You know why I do not eat. I have seen that all the fruits are bitter. I have gone through incarnations and incarnations, *janam* after *janam*, in many lives after lives. I have gone through this experience, and I have found that all the fruits that I tasted were bitter. I have ultimately come to the conclusion that there is no use trying to find a sweet fruit on this tree. That is why I am looking at your game, and sitting quietly. Why don’t you be established in the same glory?”



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Satsang

26 December 1981

What is the part played by time and maturation in the problems we face in life, and when you are learning yoga techniques such as kriya yoga?

I think there is no problem as such. One must follow what one can understand. By the practice which you have understood you will evolve your consciousness and your quality of mind. As you develop the quality of mind, the items which you did not understand become a bit clearer in time. Many times we see that we are not able to comprehend and understand the whole subject but only parts. It is because our mind has certain limitations. Many times we try to understand things through intellect and logic, it is not always possible. Particularly in the case of kriya yoga this should not happen. Kriya yoga has ultimately been developed on the basis of pure hatha yoga and raja yoga. Through the practices of asana and pranayama, a certain awakening takes place in the brain and chakras. Whenever you are confronted with a problem in reference to your sadhana, it is much better to leave it to a little experience and development.

When I was a child I used to practise mantra. I could not understand why one should practise the name so many times. I did ask a number of people but I could not understand, although they did give me some sort of proper reply. As the

years rolled by I had a transformation of mind and the quality of mind changed. I understood things without any difficulty.

Is satsang a simple question and answer session or is it a form of deeper communion, and can it be conducted by any sannyasi or only one who is perfected in sannyasa?

Satsang is a combination of two ideas. *Sang* means association and *sat* means reality or the truth. Whenever you are attuned to the reality or the truth within yourself or outside, that is known as *satsang*. Satsang is not necessarily a session of questions and answers. Within you there are the lower self and higher self, the two personalities. The lower self is ignorant, and the higher self is full of knowledge. When the conversation takes place within your self between the lower self and the higher self, that is satsang.

It is not possible for everybody to invoke the higher self. Most of the people are on that level where they have a self filled with conflicts, confusions and ignorance. Therefore, at that time, they need an external personality to represent their higher self. As I am here to answer your questions I represent your higher self. This is the spirit of satsang. The knowledge can be acquired by two known ways. One of the ways is known as tuition, the other as intuition. In tuition, an external personality represents your higher self, and in intuition your higher self is awakened and you get an answer through it.

Anybody who can answer your questions is not considered qualified for satsang. Whether it is your higher self which you have evolved and raised or whether it is a person outside of you, he should represent the higher consciousness. Merely attending to satsang through intellect is not enough. One has to have some sort of communion with one's higher self. The higher self is omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent. That alone can give you a proper answer. Therefore, every sannyasin cannot conduct satsang, but if he has evoked and raised his higher self, surely he can.

Do particular faculties of a chakra manifest while awakening that specific centre or only once the chakra is fully awakened?

It is a very important question. There is a confusion which is attached to the awakening. Awakening is a very general terminology. Awakening of chakras is completely different from awakening of kundalini. Awakening of sushumna is also quite a different event. Even awakening of mooladhara chakra is not awakening of kundalini. In the systematic practices, first of all the awakening of the chakras takes place. If awakening can take place, it should take place in each and every chakra from mooladhara up to ajna. Even when the awakening takes place in these chakras, either in one or all of them, it still does not mean that kundalini is awakened.

By concentration on bhrumadhya you can awaken one chakra, the practice of uddiyana bandha can awaken another chakra, by practising your mantra or any bija mantra you can awaken almost all the chakras one by one. As a result of this awakening you can have very good psychic experiences also. That does not in any way mean that you have awakened your kundalini.

From incarnation to incarnation, with the yoga that we have been practising some of us may have already awakened the lower chakras in our previous incarnation. Although we have been trying to awaken mooladhara, swadhisthana or any other chakra, it is not necessary that these chakras may be awakened. We may have evolved even beyond manipura on account of our efforts in a previous life. In any case, it is essential that all our chakras are awakened before we make an attempt to awaken sushumna.

These chakras are like junctions. From here the energy is distributed to different parts of the body. From here the lowest and highest energies are distributed. After the awakening of the chakras you have to awaken sushumna. Sushumna is a direct link between the lower self of consciousness to the highest consciousness. It is in a dormant state, and when sushumna wakes up then only the attempts should be made to awaken kundalini.

When awakening of kundalini takes place, it passes through sushumna. When it passes through different chakras and does not find any obstruction, it goes further. When it finds an obstacle in a chakra which is not awakened, it either stays there or returns. When awakening of kundalini takes place, and ascendance also takes place, then the different chakras begin distributing the higher energy to different parts of the body. Therefore, we should try to awaken all the chakras.

Through the practical experience of yoga, we are convinced of its benefits; so how can we introduce it to the people without presenting it as propaganda, and still respect their ideas?

Yoga is a life-saving science. It is not a religion, and it need not be propagated. It does not need an organization; it only needs totally dedicated teachers because the science of yoga is a very vast science. The teacher must have an all-comprehensive knowledge of the external and internal sciences. This question came to me about ten years ago and I fixed it properly. I do not have to propagate yoga. People will need it and I teach them. If humanity needs yoga we shall teach. If humanity does not need yoga we will not teach. We are not going to convert you. Yoga does not convert or compel. It is not passing you from one tradition into another tradition. It is a system of transformation of the totality of consciousness of the human being.

If humanity wants this transformation, we shall transmit it. If this transformation is not necessary, we can close the ashrams. We do not worry about propagation.

What is the difference between an aspirant, disciple and sannyasi? How do we judge what is the right step to take and how do we take the right step living in a western society?

One who aspires is an aspirant. If you are aspiring for sannyasa you are an aspirant. If you are aspiring to have the experience of the divine, you are an aspirant. If you are

aspiring to be a chela, disciple, you are an aspirant. Every form of evolved thinking is an aspiration. The aspiration for sannyasa is a very high quality of aspiration. To practise sannyasa while you are a householder is the highest quality of aspiration. When you are involved with the matters of discharging your responsibilities and obligations, and trying to understand your place and relation to the events of life and to react positively to every experience of life, you are a higher quality of aspirant.

Sannyasa is a very difficult aspiration because it is hard to extricate useless items of life. The different desires, which you manifest are not original and natural, they are imposed on you by virtue of your social training and therefore when you are aspiring for sannyasa, you have to realize what is essential and what is not. It is not only with reference to the objects outside. It is something to do with your inner awareness. Though sannyasa has much to do with the external systems of life, it is not the total definition of sannyasa.

Sannyasa is a type of awareness. Some are born with that awareness, and others do not have it, and therefore this kind of sannyasa is an aspiration. When you have a guru and you consider yourself a disciple, you follow his spiritual instructions for your spiritual illumination. You are solely guided by his spiritual instructions. That is your discipleship. However, as you go through the pavements of life from moment to moment and feel that you have been wasting a lot of mental, material and emotional material uselessly, at that time you begin to think that it is very important for you to unite with your inner self.

Again and again you try to withdraw yourself from material consciousness to spiritual consciousness. Again and again you withdraw your mind from oscillating from one point to the next. Again and again, you try to make your mind more and more tranquil and peaceful, and still you have excitements, emotions and stimulations. If you are unable to do that, you look hither and thither for the way and you try one method or the other. You look into books and you

look for a guru. Every time you have the aspiration in your mind, 'When shall I break myself from the lower limitations of life and unite with the expansion of the cosmos.' That is called the aspiration. Such a man is called aspirant or a sadhaka, who is doing sadhana.

Where does kriya yoga stand in comparison to other yogic practices such as japa, ajapa japa, kundalini yoga, yoga nidra? Is it sufficient to practise kriya yoga or should some other techniques be added?

Most of the practices handed down to us in the name of yoga belong to the tantric or the agama tradition. The tantric and yogic tradition are not two traditions, but the yogic tradition is an off shoot of the tantric tradition. Yogic tradition belongs to the *dakshina marga*, or right hand path, of the tantric system. There are two traditions in tantra; the vama marga and the dakshina marga. Yoga belongs to the right hand path. The practices of ajapa japa, japa yoga, hatha yoga, mantra and kriya yoga belong to the dakshina marga. It is not totally independent of other practices of yoga.

The hatha yoga practices of asana, pranayama, mudra, bandhas ultimately lead to the perfection of kriya yoga. Therefore, the various limbs of agama yoga, including kriya yoga, are different branches. If you have practised hatha yoga and ajapa japa, it will be easier for you to assimilate kriya yoga. The tradition has it that when you practise kriya yoga it is not necessary that you practise any other form of yoga. The purpose of asana is to awaken the chakras in a mild way. The purpose of pranayama is to awaken sushumna, and the purpose of kriya yoga is to awaken kundalini.

Before the awakening of kundalini, awakening of the chakras and sushumna must compulsorily take place. If the awakening of chakras and sushumna has not taken place, but if the awakening of kundalini takes place, then it won't be an ever-lasting experience. Therefore, before the practice of kriya yoga one should have practised asana and pranayama. The practice of mantra is also necessary because mantra

helps to liberate the mind from its deep-rooted attachments and neurosis. Side by side with asanas, pranayamas, mudras and bandhas, the practice of mantra is a necessary step towards kriya yoga.



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Satsang

27 December 1981

Addressing a group of kriya yoga aspirants from France

Swamiji, how can we know if sannyasa is a part of our dharma, and especially if there is no doubt about the aim, but only about one's capacity or readiness for initiation?

Everybody must try to practise the spirit of sannyasa in day-to-day life. Only then can he decide to disidentify from karma. As long as one is attached to karma, one is involved and bound. One keeps moving in the same vicious circle of action and reaction. In order to liberate oneself from this chain of action and reaction one has to evolve the spirit of sannyasa in oneself. This can happen at any time without any preconditioning.

Sannyasa as a spirit, an attitude and sannyasa as an order are two different things. It is good if one can become a sannyasin but if one cannot, one can at least live like one. The eighteenth chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita* defines sannyasa in totality. Arjuna asks, 'I want to know the essence of sannyasa. How can I become a sannyasin and what would be my obligation?' Krishna replies in the following way, 'Some people think that renunciation of all obligations is sannyasa. Others think that renunciation of the obligation is not necessary but renunciation of the consequences is necessary. I think that it is neither renunciation of the action nor its consequences that is necessary. One must strive to give the best possible expression of one's life to everybody. Always strive to do good action. Dedicate yourself to the welfare of

others, and constantly follow a path of self-purification. This is the essence and spirit of inner sannyasa.'

What are the different stages of development in kriya yoga and up to what stage can we safely practise it?

When one practises kriya yoga, a very normal process of evolution of consciousness takes place. The practices of kriya yoga do not cause any psychic or mystical symptoms. There are other forms of yoga, like kundalini yoga, which lead to fantastic experiences, some of which one may not even be able to face. The practices of kriya yoga do not bring about such fantastic experiences. However, they help one transform the very quality of one's consciousness due to which one can have a constant higher experience of total life.

Psychic or mystical experiences cannot be called an experience of total life. Experiences in dreams or during meditation are also not a part of total life. Total life experiences are those in which one does not lose even an iota of any dimension of consciousness, when one is just a normal being. Total experience is being aware of the inner world while simultaneously being aware of the external world. It is this total life experience which kriya yoga aspirants aim for.

I have been praying to mother Kundalini, should I wait for her in another lifetime?

I think she is very kind and gracious that she is not coming to you. About two months back, I took a fancy to one of my disciples, and did something to awaken not the kundalini, but a stage just before the kundalini. It was only after doing it, that I realized that I had taken a big risk. The person began to shout and I thought she would awaken the whole ashram. Then I had to do something to pacify her. It is easy to awaken the kundalini but not easy to face it. There are very simple practices that can make one feel it.

In the eleventh chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita* there is an episode, when Arjuna requested Krishna to show his cosmic form. Krishna refused, but Arjuna insisted. Due to

his persistent demand, Krishna finally relented and told him, 'Okay I will grant you the divine eye of intuition, and you will see the cosmic form.' Then he turned on the switch. When Arjuna saw it, he was horrified. He saw the totality of experiences, and he could not handle them. He prayed to Krishna, 'Please withdraw this drama, I cannot withstand it. I want to see you in your benevolent form.'

You are praying to Kundalini now, 'When will you come?' and if she comes you will say, 'When are you going back?' I do try different things on different people from time to time, but I find that the awakening of kundalini must happen to us in stages. First, we should face the experiences pertaining to the awakening of the chakras. Then we should be able to handle the experiences pertaining to the awakening of the sushumna. Only then should the awakening of kundalini take place.

Once I helped a disciple with the awakening of kundalini, and he said that he was terrified and scared. I told him, 'But that is your experience.' He said, 'I understand, yet I am afraid.' I told him, 'I had caused it and controlled it. So why are you afraid?' The boy just said, 'No, no, no.' After many days, I asked him whether he was doing japa. He said, 'No, I am not doing it, because I am afraid of having that experience again.'

The awakening of kundalini is a very difficult experience. Please pray to Kundalini to give you so much strength that you may be able to bear all types of experience. So that you may be able to see thousands and thousands of brilliant suns, handle the fear of death, understand the dissolution of body and not wonder whether you are going mad. Pray for mental strength, even though this experience may never happen.

The second chapter of Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* quotes in sutra 19 the four stages of gunas as being vishesha, avishesha, lingamatra and alinga. Can you explain what these grades are?

In the *Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali, the gunas are supposed to follow four stages of evolution known as vishesha, avishesha, linga and alinga. *Vishesha* means qualified,

avishesha unqualified; *lingamatra* means with symbol, and *alinga* without symbol and form. Both the microcosm and macrocosm are subject to evolution of *gunas*. *Gunas* are actually attributes of total matter or *prakriti*. Matter can be in a tamasic state, which means it is dormant, and not evolving at all. At a certain level of evolution, there is vibration in the realm of matter and it moves towards expression or manifestation. That is how creation takes place.

The cosmic mind is a type of protomatter. It has two poles opposite each other. One is the positive pole and the other the negative pole. In reference to consciousness, they are known as time and space. Time represents the positive pole and space represents the negative. During the tamasic state of *prakriti* these two poles remain apart from each other. When *prakriti* evolves into the state of *rajoguna*, there is mobility and vibration. This movement takes place in relation to time and space.

Time and space are the two categories of the mind. Without time and space, the mind is non-existent. Our mind is a part of the cosmic mind. Whether it is the individual mind or the cosmic mind, time and space are its two categories. As long as time and space are separate, matter is in the tamasic state. That state is called *alinga*, without manifestation, without any form. When time and space come together like the two opposite poles of energy, they unite and commune with each other in the centre of the cosmic mind, which is the nucleus of matter. As soon as time and space unite, an explosion in matter takes place. Matter spreads all over in thousands, millions and trillions of fragments. These fragments make nebulae in the external world while in the internal world they make thought patterns. This mental shakti is known as consciousness, and this state of evolution is called *lingamatra*, in which matter assumes a form.

When union takes place, when the explosion happens, when nebulae form within and outside your mind, creation begins to take place. In the first stage, creation is very unqualified, because there is only a quintroplication.

Permutation and combination takes place within the realm of prakriti all the time which is responsible for the progress in creation. After some time, evolution becomes very clear and creation is established. This unqualified process is known as *avishesha*.

Maybe three, four, or five million years ago, this must have been the position of the entire creation. Finally, the worlds have come to a point of stability and that state is called *vishesha*.

In the *Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali, the sutras refer to the mind and its evolution. When consciousness becomes extrovert, there is an order, and when consciousness is introvert, there is a reverse order. The order in which consciousness becomes extrovert is alinga, lingamatra, avishesha and vishesha. In meditation, *dhyana yoga*, the whole process has to be reversed.

From qualified one goes back to unqualified, from unqualified one goes to lingamatra, from there back to alinga, where there is no form and no name. When one sits for meditation and sees many things, that stage is called qualified consciousness. Then one enters the psychic realm, and sees funny and fantastic things. That stage is called unqualified consciousness. Then one goes further and sees just one point, maybe *Aum*, Shiva, stars, or just one point. That stage is called lingamatra. Finally, everything dissolves and there is nothing there. There is no seer, there is no object to see, there is no meditator, there is no point of meditation, everything finishes. That stage is called alinga. These are the four stages of consciousness and they are affected by the gunas of prakriti. You have to understand the gunas in relation to matter and mind. Since we are a part of the cosmos we cannot explain ourselves beyond the cosmos.

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Satsang

28 December 1981

We ought to work without expecting and making resolves, but how do we know that we are progressing on the right path?

First of all, you have to decide, what the purpose is of what you have been doing. The definition of progress can become different according to the destination which you have fixed. In the scheme of nature, the purpose of everything is self-expression and evolution. We are a part of the cosmic process; we are not totally individual. We cannot segregate ourselves from the cosmic process. Many times we live with a very limited vision and feel that we are totally individual without having anything to do with the cosmic processes. We are happy or not happy, successful or not successful. Our achievements are assessed in relation to the successes and failures in our material existence.

For example, if you are practising yoga, concentration and meditation and you have visions and experiences, you feel that you are going the right way. If your mind is oscillating, dissipating, wavering and restless, you feel that you are not going in the right way, or perhaps you are losing the track. Another example, if you are married, have a wife and children, and everything goes well with them, you feel that you are going the right way. But if something happens between you and your wife or children, you think everything

has gone wrong. The same thing happens with many aspects of human life because we are totally rooted in the material aspect of life. We do not relate the happenings of our life to the cosmic processes. We want things to happen as we want and not as they should happen according to the cosmic will.

As we transform mentally and emotionally, things become different. When we were children, we were attached to toys. As we grew, the items of attachment and interest changed, as well as the quality or nature of our frustrations. When you are able to realize that you are a part of the cosmic processes, you will accept everything, whether it is accomplishment or failure, tragedy or comedy, it matters nothing.

We are born in order to evolve and express ourselves. In the lower realm of incarnation, our expressions were very much limited. In the higher realms of creation, our expressions will be spiritual and related to kundalini. The lower realms of expression were instinctive. The present realm is intellectual. The coming realm is going to be intuitive. Therefore, we must look at every event of life as a phase and area of expression, not as an area of a particular assessment.

In as much as happiness is an experience, unhappiness is also an experience. If you succeed in life, that is an experience, and if you fail in life isn't that an experience? Do you think that happiness, success, love and beauty alone is life? Is not tragedy, frustration also an experience in human life? You can realize this when you are completely detached from the material aspects of your aspiration. When you are deeply dejected and totally frustrated you are close to the processes of cosmic evolution. It is written in the Bible (Matthew 19:24): 'It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.' The total aspect of life has to be reassessed.

The modern culture to which we have been initiated is not the ultimate definition of human culture. It has given us conveniences, but it has made us very uncomfortable where our inner life is concerned. Most people really do not have

the experience of poverty, which is an experience in itself. In some ways it is a very comfortable experience, there may be less or no conveniences, but there is so much of peace, inner awareness and passionlessness. Therefore, saints and sages used to impose poverty upon themselves, and led that life. Whether it is the spiritual life or the material life, whatever comes to you take it, and take it not as a gain but as a rich experience, which is enduring, total and complete in itself.

There was a saint in India, who was a professor of mathematics in Punjab, western India. One day, while delivering a lecture on mathematics, he received the news that his wife was dead. The news was given to him on a small slip of paper while he was in class. He continued to conduct his class. When the class was over, the students asked him, 'Sir, what was the chit? What was on that note?' He said, 'One mortal is less.' They said, 'Who is that?' He said, 'Your professor's wife.' He went out totally composed. His colleagues said, 'Your wife is dead. You should go back home. You must feel sad, cry and pray.' He said, 'What for? Thousands of leaves fall from the tree every day, millions of meteors fall from the sky, people keep dying every moment, and nobody cares, why should I care? What has happened is a part of the cosmic process.' In the course of time, he came to be known as Swami Ramatirtha. He was a great inspiration to thousands of people in India and abroad for many decades. One of the greatest intellectuals in mathematics in this country, he became one of the greatest saints because he realized the happenings in his life are part of the cosmos.

In the eleventh chapter of *Bhagavad Gita*, there is a discourse between Krishna and Arjuna on karma yoga. Krishna told him that he had to fulfil his duties without feeling himself to be the doer, because in the cosmic scheme, things have already been taking place. The present has already taken place somewhere else. Just as a film is being projected now, but before that it has already been made, in the same way happenings are pre-planned and predestined, because the laws of nature are inexorable. There is absolutely

no anarchy, the laws are determined in every field, material and spiritual.

Krishna gave a vision to Arjuna in which he saw that the things that were to happen had already happened. The battle was over in the vision; the armies had already fought the war. The warriors, the chiefs, the captains were already dead. Krishna was telling him, "These things have already happened, you just play the part of an instrument, that is your responsibility and participation." If that is your philosophy of life, then there is no need to worry about the fruits, results or consequences.

Does the spiritual name imply what the person should strive towards, or what the person's qualities are?

The spiritual name first of all indicates your inner spiritual person. The spiritual name is beyond nationality, religion, culture and tradition. It indicates your evolution. The physical body has a name given by your elders or priests, but the spiritual name has to be decided by the guru looking into your inner nature. At the same time, it indicates the way you have to proceed. You cannot be anything; you cannot be everything. There are millions of faculties that exist, and everyone should decide one goal and one symbol.

When my guru gave me the name, he indicated that that was my spiritual personality. Besides that, he also wanted me to aspire to perfect that state. Therefore, I have been striving for that. *Ananda* means bliss, *satya* means absolute. So I have to strive to experience absolute bliss. I should try to achieve this irrespective of anything that happens in my external life.

In India there is a very important tradition. On the ninth day after the birth of the baby, the information of his time of birth, the planetary constellation and other heavenly factors is given to a wise man. Then his zodiac sign or *rashi* is decided. On the basis of that, quite a few syllables are discovered and a name is designed for him. That becomes his name. Someone may be a hopeless man, but he has an exquisite name like *Amarnath*, immortal lord, immortal consciousness.

When you select names for your children, your choice should not be just a choice, you have to discover the type of being that has come into this body. The child is born through you and is from your body. You have contributed no doubt, but only sperm and ova. Out of millions of sperms and millions of ova, millions and trillions die, but some have united to make one a criminal, a Napoleon, Mahatma Gandhi, Jesus Christ, Moses, Krishna, Arjuna, or me and you.

What energy must have flown through that sperm and ova! It is not merely a combination of chromosomes. There should be something else that the sperm and ova must be carrying, combining, creating and integrating. That is the vibration of the energy of the soul. That soul finds the expression through your body. The name of the soul is called the spiritual name.

What was it about Sivananda Maharaja of Rishikesh that attracted you?

The destiny of guru and disciple is linked. No matter how much they try they cannot run away from each other. They follow each other life after life. The disciple is always on the lookout for the guru, and the guru also is on the lookout for his disciple. Guru is not senior and disciple is not a junior element; they are complementary units; they make one whole. Guru is the transmitter and disciple is the receiver. If there is only a transmitter and there is no receiver can you imagine what will happen? Radio stations singing but there is no radio and no transistor. There has to be a combination between the transmission and the reception.

Guru is the power in the powerhouse of energy, and disciple is the conductor, carrier and communicator. Prior to my coming to Swami Sivananda in Rishikesh, I had already been to a number of great men in this country. I had had initiations into the dakshina marga and vama marga. At the age of eighteen, I was initiated by a yogini into vama marga. After I left my home I met another yogi, who gave me instructions into dakshina marga. Whatever I learnt from them was very important for me. I was contented.

However, there was something in me which did not make me stay with them. I was not sure that what I was experiencing was the real experience. Then I met a sadhu with matted locks on the train. I did not really know who he was because I was a convent-educated boy, therefore, my vision was totally westernized. I thought he was a magician, but then he was smoking. I asked him, 'Can you give me a cigarette?' He gave me and said, 'Where are you going?' I told him that I was going in search of a guru. He seemed to be a very wonderful man. He said, 'Okay I will tell you where to go.' After a few stations he asked me to get down from the train. That was the station called Baderi, and he told me the train I had to take to Rishikesh.

In Rishikesh, I went and lived for about five or six days going to different ashrams. Fortunately, I went to one ashram whose head was a great wise man. He wanted to know why I had come to Rishikesh. I said I had come for a guru. He indicated that I should go to Sivananda Ashram. I went there and met Swami Sivananda on 19 March 1943, at nine o'clock in the morning. He asked me why I had come. I said that I had been meditating for many years and come to a point of experience where my consciousness became completely inert and hibernated, and that I did not know how to get out of that crisis. I said, "I have lived both ways of tantra which has given me a lot of willpower. I can manipulate my mind, my emotion, my willpower and others as well, but I am unable to go beyond that point and manipulate that state of mind."

He just gave a very brief reply, "Stay here, serve your guru. Undergo sufferings, purify your mind." It seemed to be very logical to me because unless the mirror is clean you cannot see your face. If your mind is not pure, you cannot see the self. There is no use going into higher realms of meditation without pacifying the mind. Because I had a strong mind, I forced myself into the higher realm. But then there were certain preparations which I had not made. I had not subdued my ego. I had not exhausted my karma. I had not undergone the necessary suffering for the purification of

the soul. I had just followed the academic side of yoga, not the real side of yoga. I had forced myself into meditation.

I can definitely say that the time I lived with him was the most fruitful and most deeply impressive part of my life. He was not a scholarly type of personality. Though he has written over 250 or 300 books on different subjects he was not a scholar. He wrote of his experiences. He was very simple. Not at all shrewd. Very intelligent, very wise, but not clever. You could easily cheat him. If you give a lot of money or jewellery to your little baby, anybody can take it from him. For him it was the same. You could take anything from him.

For some time, all my communication was physical. Then a chain of astral communications took place. I do not work on my own. Nor do I think too much. I am the most relaxed person, because I know I have a commander, and I am a servant. He tells me to do it, I do it. If he does not tell me to do it, I will not. If he tells me the right thing and the consequences are positive – perfect; if he guides me and the consequences are negative – perfect. I do not own any allegiance to success and failure, because it is not my work. I am the servant, instrument or medium. That is why I am happy to be a disciple of Swami Sivananda.

What is the difference between psychology and spirituality?

Psychology is the science of the mind, and spirituality is the science of the spirit. The main premises in psychology is that the basis of man is not nice and not good. It is said that the basis of man's consciousness is primitive and therefore uncultured, there is a lot of sin and guilt in it, and therefore you have abnormal complexes, inhibitions, and so on. In spirituality, the premises are entirely different. It is said that even though you look bad, the basis of your existence is beautiful. You may be a thief, criminal or debauchee but that is your external personality, the basis of your personality is *satyam*, truth, *shivam*, auspicious, *sundaram*, beauty.

Psychology deals with the external manifestations of human behaviour. If you are unhappy it deals with

unhappiness, or if you are frustrated it deals with your frustration. It goes back as far as your mind is connected with your senses. In spirituality, the spirit of man is immortal, eternal and beautiful. In order to evolve and express himself, man plays many roles, therefore when you enter into meditation psychology comes to an end and spirituality begins.

In the states of pratyahara and dharana, you are dealing with a mind which has overcome the conflicts. In the state of *dhyana*, meditation, there is no mind. When the mind has been completely withdrawn and isolated from the sensorial channels, the metamorphosis or transformation takes place. The awareness of 'I', the doer, comes to an end. The feeling of time and space falls flat. For the time being, there is total inner awareness without the awareness of time, space and object. This state of dhyana yoga is not a psychological product. It is a spiritual fulfilment. When the senses and the mind are withdrawn, then there is emergence of the spirit.

The senses and the mind are subject to time and space; they are subject to duality. The spirit is not subject to time, space and duality. When you have the idea of duality you are in the realm of the mind. When you do not have the awareness of duality, you are in the land of spirit. In the *Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali and in other scriptures related to dhyana yoga, it is said that in meditation the mind is free from all notion of objectivity. *Dhyanam nirvishayam manaha* – in meditation the mind is freed from all notion of objectivity.

As long as you are in the realm of the mind there is a triad of awareness: the seer, the seen and the process of seeing. I am looking at you: I am the onlooker, you are the object and there is a process of looking – of which I am aware. This is called the triad. This process is attributed to the psychological states of mind. When we get into the spiritual plane, the triad does not exist. The first four sutras of the *Yoga Sutras* state what happens when you cross the barriers of the mind, what happens when you cross the barriers of modification of the

mind, and what happens when you transcend the mind – the seer is established in his own nature.

Who is the seer? You know seer means one who sees. The eyes are not the seer. The mind also is not the seer, the buddhi and the emotions are not seers. They are objects of perception. The real seer is your own self. This self is known as *purusha* or *atman*. It has been given various names by different saints. You can very conveniently call it God. He is the seer and nobody else. When the mind is transcended, then the seer becomes free from psychological connections and associations.

At night, you separate yourself from all duties and obligations, in the same manner the self frees itself from all its association with the senses and the mind and is established in its own nature. What we are trying to do in yoga is transcend the mind and senses. Senses and mind belong to a lower quality of awareness. With the mind and senses, we are aware no doubt, but our awareness is very limited and conditioned. If you are able to transcend your mind and senses, you do not become unconscious but you develop superconsciousness.

It means after transcending the mind and senses, you develop a higher awareness. This higher awareness is not conditioned or limited. If you develop this higher awareness, your perceptions, reactions and emotions will be completely different. Consciousness is not a static substance. It is ever progressing. It has been progressing from the tamasic state to the rajasic, from the rajasic state to sattwa, and from sattwa it will become free from the gunas.

According to Samkhya and yoga, when the mind is subject to sattwa, rajas and tamas, it is conditioned. In dhyana and samadhi, the mind does not move within the categories of the three gunas, it is beyond the gunas. Therefore, first we pass through a psychological state of affairs and later we make a transition into spiritual life.

In Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* (2:16) it says that suffering which has not yet come should be avoided. How is it possible to put this sutra into practice in everyday life?

The original sutra of Patanjali related to this is: *Heyam duhkhamanagatam* – Suffering which has not yet come should be avoided. According to yoga, pain has its own definition. When your experience is following an agreeable path, it is called happiness, and when it is following a disagreeable path, it is called unhappiness or pain. Therefore, we should try to educate our mind in advance so that our mind is not affected by the disagreeable events.

Mind is progressing through different experiences. When the quality of the mind is changed, its actions also become different. At one level of mind, it is experiencing happiness, yet the same can be the cause of unhappiness at a later stage of transformation. Therefore, to avoid the painful experience, it is very important for the aspirant of yoga to change the quality of the mind.

According to Samkhya, the cycle of birth and death is called painful. Whenever the soul falls down from the height of knowledge to maya and temptation it is known as pain or *dukha*. The spirit is immortal and eternal, but it associates with the mind and the senses, and therefore follows its course of experiences. It comes down from the pristine glory of samadhi. Due to ignorance and desires, it is born again and again, it tries to experience life every time and wishes for a better taste of life. Every time it tastes life, it is always bitter. It causes one pain, but one repeats the same adventure over again. This is called in Samkhya the cycle of pain.

If one has to get across this pain, the only way is that one should try to put an end to this coming and going. The pain that is to come can be avoided by the accomplishment of *jnana* or knowledge. There are two phases that the mind undergoes. One is known as *sukha*, pleasure, the other as *dukkha*, pain. Pleasure and pain follow each other like the cycle of day and night, or like the seasons. Pleasure is the cause of pain, and similarly pain is the cause of the experience of pleasure.

The wise ones say you should avoid both very carefully. When the mind is neither affected by pleasure nor pain, it experiences anandam. *Ananda* is not jubilation, gaiety, bliss or happiness; it is complete freedom from both conflicting experiences. When you realize happiness and unhappiness, yet you remain unaffected by it, that is the state of ananda. That is the reason why swamis have ananda in their name.

In kundalini yoga they talk about six chakras, in hatha yoga seven, but I have also heard about another three, surya chakra, chandra and lalana chakras. Are all the chakras connected to sushumna? Could you explain if the structure of the chakras relates to the physical centres only or if they are symbolic representatives of the consciousness moving through different planes?

Chakras are junctions intended for the distribution of energy to different parts of the body and existence. *Chakra* literally means circle, cycle. They are always in motion like the wheels of a motorcar or bicycle. The wheel of a bicycle is also known as a chakra. When there is awakening of energy moving through the chakra, they begin to move very fast. Therefore, in every realm of existence or evolution there are chakras.

Even below mooladhara there are chakras, which we have already transcended and gone through. Even as in our evolution, sahasrara is the highest, in the lower evolution mooladhara chakra is the highest. We do not talk about the chakras of the lower evolution because we are not concerned with them.

We talk about the chakras starting from mooladhara up to sahasrara because these chakras relate to our cycle of evolution, which relates to human consciousness. That is in relation to mind, buddhi, intellect. Between mooladhara and sahasrara there are more than six chakras, but all of them are not important. Therefore, they are not usually listed. In fact, sahasrara is also not a chakra. By mistake we have been using the term sahasrara chakra.

Then there are invisible and non-physical chakras above and beyond sahasrara chakra, heavenly or divine chakras. You cannot see them but they are there. These chakras are connected with sushumna only. Sushumna flows from mooladhara up to ajna. In ajna chakra, there is the confluence of the three nadis – ida, pingala, sushumna. Within the framework of sushumna, there are six chakras enumerated in tantra and other scriptures. Lalana chakra, is not in the framework of sushumna, although it is a very important chakra. The six chakras in the framework of sushumna are interrelated, interconnected or located in the region of sushumna.

Beyond ajna chakra, in the cranial region there is bindu chakra. Although there is a little difference in different scriptures, but by and large the agreement is that there are only six chakras. The seventh one is not a chakra. That is the ultimate point where you have to arrive. If you compare this concept with the religious concept, you come to know about the seventh heaven. The seventh heaven relates to sahasrara. The six relate to the chakras on the way.

Then there are also seven planes which relate to consciousness. The seventh plane, the ultimate is not on the way. Scholars, thinkers and saints agree on the chakras, but in kriya yoga and sometimes in other practices also efforts are made to awaken other chakras. For instance, in kriya yoga there is a practice to awaken the lalana chakra which is considered useful for the absorption of nectar. Besides this, within the epiglottis, there are other chakras, and these chakras can be awakened by the practice of khechari mudra and neti kriya. Awakening these chakras helps to stimulate the nectarine glands in the brain.

23

Satsang

29 December 1981

Addressing a group of kriya yoga aspirants from France

Can you tell us something about the Purana?

The first scripture of the ancient Hindu tradition is known as Veda. The actual name is shruti. *Shruti* means that which is heard. This implies that these Vedas were revealed from the higher soul to the lower soul. The higher soul spoke and the lower soul heard it. The hymns of the Vedas were heard, and therefore they are known as shruti. When they were transferred to the disciples by the guru, and the disciples learnt them by heart, they came to be known as smriti. *Smriti* means memoirs or memoranda. However, the shruti and smriti were very abstruse. They needed to be illustrated and exemplified. Hence they were rendered in the form of narratives and stories which are known as Puranas. There are eighteen books known as Puranas. They are stories of kings, rulers and of common people, but they have a deeper meaning. I will narrate one story from a Purana.

Once the divine beings and the demons decided to churn the ocean, just as one churns butter. They believed that churning the ocean would reveal many important things. So they brought in the huge Sumeru Mountain to be used as the wooden staff and a serpent to be used as a rope, and the ocean was churned. Have you seen the churning of butter in the countryside in India? There is a wooden pole, with a string attached to it, and the buttermilk is churned with it.

In order to churn the ocean, they used a big mountain and a big snake.

The two parties churning were the divine beings, the *devas*, and the demons, the *rakshasas*. Devas, the divine beings are calm, quiet and non-violent people, while the rakshasas, the demons are aggressive and violent people. In the course of churning, there emerged fourteen items or elements known as the fourteen jewels. Of those fourteen, one was wine. Now the question arose, as to who was going to have it? The rakshasas said, 'We will have it.' They snatched the bowl and ran away.

After finishing off the wine, they started churning the ocean once again. Then emerged poison, very deadly concentrated, absolute poison. Everyone near it began to burn. Who was going to have this poison? The devas and rakshasas both refused. Meanwhile the poison was scorching everyone. Finally, Lord Shiva volunteered to drink the poison. Lord Shiva is a sannyasin, and he does not care about the difference between birth and death. He drank the poison but did not gulp it down. He kept it in the throat in vishuddhi chakra.

The third churning brought up nectar. Devas and rakshasas began to fight for it. The rakshasas wanted to have it because they knew that if they drank the nectar they would become immortal and would never die. The devas were worried because they did not want this to happen. They continued to quarrel over this. Finally, Vishnu came in the disguise of a beautiful damsel. Vishnu is considered as one of the trinities in Hindu religion. He reposes on a coiled snake on the ripples of the ocean with Lakshmi massaging his feet and Brahma springing from the lotus at his navel.

Vishnu in the form of a beautiful damsel began to dance. The rakshasas became very happy when they saw her dance. She led them on, "Look here, I love you. I will give you nectar." For the rakshasas, the most enchanting word is 'I love you'. They were enraptured when she said, 'I love you'. When a young beautiful woman tells a man 'I love you', what more can he want? Here of course, I am talking about the

rakshasas. They agreed and left the distribution of the nectar to her. She made everybody sit in line in such a way that the rakshasas were at the far end of the line while the devas were at the beginning of the row.

One rakshasa understood the trick and mingled with the devas, pretending he was not a rakshasa. While the distribution was on the devas saw through his deceit that he was not a deva but a rakshasa. By the time they realized this he had already had the nectar. They chopped off his head, so that at least the lower part could not be immortal. From that time the head of this rakshasa is immortal.

This is a very long story which symbolizes the emergence of higher faculties from the depths of human consciousness. Human consciousness is like an ocean and the two tendencies that are in us, the positive and the negative, are represented by devas and rakshasas. The constant conflict that goes on within us is between the two forces of nature within us.

When we try to enter the depths of our consciousness, we develop our faculties. Many faculties are exploited by our negative personality and similarly many faculties are exploited by our positive personality. In the course of this process, we also discover the nectar within us.

This story is from the Purana. Apparently it is a fantastic, funny story, but going into its deeper meaning one understands that it is showing people a way, a method, principle, philosophy and reality. It also symbolizes the entire process of the awakening of kundalini.

Whether one follows a religion or is an agnostic, whether one is a vama marga or dakshina marga tantric, whether one practises austerity and penance, the ultimate purpose is to awaken one's kundalini – to discover one's immortality. It is said by every saint that when one realizes one's own self and attains nirvana one becomes immortal. Mortality belongs to the body. The body does not migrate or transmigrate. It is the ego that transmigrates. The soul is beyond these two.

The body is not the self. The mind, the emotions, the vrittis are not the self. The self is beyond the category of

mind and body. That self is immortality. Once you are able to discover that atman, you are immortal. Immortal in the sense that you belong no more to the perishable body and the transmigrating mind.

There are many more stories which depict various truths about spiritual life. Although the stories in the Puranas have the characters of kings, queens, emperors, warriors and fighters, the ultimate purpose of these stories is to enlighten you about the spiritual processes which are so intricate and abstruse.

Out of all the Puranas the most important is the *Srimad Bhagavatam* not the *Bhagavad Gita*, which is a different book. The *Srimad Bhagavatam* is translated in almost all languages, and out of those the most amenable translation should be from the Krishna Consciousness sect.

There was another scholar, who passed away two years ago in Switzerland. He was a great scholar of the *Srimad Bhagavatam*. You must have seen him in Zinal many times. I heard him in 1945 in Rishikesh, discoursing on the symbology of the *Srimad Bhagavatam*. Swami Sivananda initiated his wife into the mantra from *Srimad Bhagavatam*, *Om Namoh Bhagavate Vasudevaya*.

The story is strung around Sri Krishna who is supposed to be an incarnation of the absolute. He had eight regular wives, 16,000 kith, and many girlfriends. Krishna represents purusha, the eight wives represent the eightfold *prakriti* or nature. The 16,000 kith represent sensorial experiences. The character Krishna in the *Srimad Bhagavatam* represents the purusha depicted in Samkhya philosophy. If you study the book, the entire Samkhya philosophy, yoga philosophy, and *samadhi* or supernatural awareness will at once become clear in your mind.

I will end with one more comment on the *Srimad Bhagavatam*. Sri Krishna loved Radha very much. Radha is supposed to be a very beautiful girl who Krishna met only once. They were never married and could never marry each other. Today you will find that only her name is associated

with Krishna: Radha-Krishna. Samkhya propounds that purusha moves with his own unqualified awareness which is never to be seen.

Hence *Srimad Bhagavatam* says that consciousness is beyond spirit. Radha and Krishna are an integral part of each other. They do not live in bodies. They are one, but are two aspects of reality in one. In samadhi these two, the spirit and consciousness are separated and that experience of separation is known as nirvikalpa samadhi.

Can you explain about incense, how it is made, its purpose and effect on the body?

The modern incense which we usually burn are fragrant substances. I am not sure about them having psychic significance nor have I delved into this subject. People like them because they are fragrant. They have a nice aroma and contain some hypnotic substance that lulls the senses, offering tranquillity and composure. In my opinion, this is the extent of its significance and purpose.

There are other natural substances which have a very deep psychic effect on the system. Very few people know about them. The perfume of the fumigation caused by the musk of the musk deer is very important. The musk deer has a fragrant substance present in its navel. For spiritual healing in India, another substance is used for fumigation. In ayurvedic texts it is known as guggul. The crystals look very much like gum. It is used when someone is thought to be haunted and obsessed by a spirit. That substance is put over a little bit of fire, and its smoke fills the room in which the man haunted by the spirit is seated. It has been found to be very effective in these matters. Whether the person is haunted by a spirit or not, whether the person has a psychological or psycho-emotional problem, the fumigation definitely causes a psychic change in him.

Similarly, there are many other substances which are used for different purposes in ayurveda. In the civilization of the Aryans of ancient India and even today among Hindus, the

system of *havan* or fire oblation is practised. In Sanskrit it is known as *havan*, as *yajna*. On certain days, people light the fire, using only a certain type of wood. A mixture of barley, sesame, clarified butter from cow milk, and a few herbs are offered to the fire with the chanting of mantra, a certain number of times as prescribed. This is considered to be a very important practice for healing the sick mind and body.

It is also considered to be very powerful in changing the structure of the destiny of man. The *yajna* performed for a sick person is called *mritunjaya yajna*. From this you can understand that the fragrance or the fumigation from the *yajna* causes not only psychic but also cosmic changes.

I can give you a true example from the life of a great scholar whose name was Sir John Woodroffe who preferred to be called Arthur Avalon. He is the author of authentic books on tantra which have been translated into most principal languages. He was the chief justice of Calcutta high court during the British rule. One day, after he completed dictating a judgment to his stenographer, his mind changed. He dictated another different judgement which he had not planned to dictate. This kept happening to him and he did not know what had gone wrong.

He consulted some of his colleagues. They said that the two parties, the defendant and the prosecutor, were performing *yajna* for gaining victorious judgment in the controversy. When one party completed their *yajna*, it influenced the mind of the judge to give a judgement favourable to them. When the other party completed their *yajna*, that counter-influenced the mind of the chief justice. The British chief justice could not believe it and he could not deliver that judgement. He went on leave and later studied that science.

I am not talking about mantra or the process of influencing anyone, but about fumigation with different aromas that can cause changes in the mental structure and in the structure of the cosmos. We need to study the science of incense. We should not use incense indiscriminately because

these days incense is not made mystically and psychically. A base substance is collected, certain aromas like chameli, rose, and many types of fragrant substances are simply added to it.

Near Badrinath, at the height of 14,000 feet, at roughly about 4000 metres above sea level, there is a place known as the valley of flowers. In the month of September and October one can see flowers, so enchanting and fragrant that one gets hypnotized by the mere sight of the valley. People are not allowed to visit that valley now. A lady from France went to the Himalayas. She was a naturalogist. She visited the valley of flowers, smelt the flowers and became psychic. She began to see visions and figures. She had to be brought back to Delhi and then sent back to France.

Some fragrances have an effect on the hemispheres of the brain, nerves, glands, nervous system and the whole body. In a Hindu temple you will find that the deity is waved with light and incense. Such incense is considered important in the awakening of the chakras. Personally I do not attach a lot of importance to incense.



24

Bhakti Yoga and Karma Yoga

31 December 1981

Addressing a group of kriya yoga aspirants from France

Swamiji will you give us the definition of bhakti yoga and karma yoga?

You are asking about bhakti yoga and karma yoga just a few hours before your departure! Had you asked me this question the first day, I would have given you the shovel and asked you to clean the whole garden. Karma yoga is the medium for purifying the mind. By the practice of karma yoga, you express yourself, you expel the samskaras. Through the practice of bhakti yoga, you can bring about concentration of mind. When you pray, chant and use a mala there is better concentration. When you do your karma, you acquire samskaras, but when you practise karma yoga, you eliminate samskaras.

There are two books, which I can tell you to read. You should read the *Bhagavad Gita* and you will understand about karma yoga. This is the dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna. In the midst of the battlefield, Krishna instructed Arjuna about performing one's duties without ego. When one's personal ego is involved with the performance of duties, it acquires karma or samskara, which is responsible for birth and rebirth. If one isolates one's ego from one's duties and obligations, one becomes free from every type of attachment. When actions are performed without attachment, they become karma yoga. Karma yoga, in the course of time, frees the soul from past karmas.

After you have practised karma yoga, you should take to bhakti yoga. In the order of sadhana, karma yoga is the basis and foundation. After karma yoga, practise bhakti yoga to acquire one-pointedness of mind. After bhakti yoga you should practise raja yoga. After acquiring concentration through bhakti yoga you can achieve meditation in raja yoga. After raja yoga you should practise jnana yoga. In jnana yoga, you will contemplate only upon the formless, nameless atman. If your mind is oscillating, you cannot concentrate on the self. The purpose is to realize the self. In order to realize the self, the mind must be purified and concentrated. You should be able to enter into meditation and concentrate on the nature of the atman, which is pure knowledge, pure bliss and total existence.

You can contemplate on the nature of the self only if your mind is very efficient. Bhakti yoga is very difficult, as it always gets mixed with the lower form of emotion. Once Ramakrishna explained bhakti. He said, the totality of emotion between man and woman, the totality of emotion between parents and children, and the totality of emotion between a greedy man and his wealth if directed to one particular person is called bhakti.

You love your god, your deity, your ishta devata, with your whole mind, and therefore there is no dissipation of emotions. There is a parable about it. Once a Muslim priest was praying. Muslims pray five times a day and during prayer, they just spread the prayer mat wherever they are and start their practice. It does not matter even if it is in the middle of the road. It was prayer time, this priest spread his mat and began to practise his namaz. A young girl was going to meet her lover and she was totally engrossed in his awareness. In this state of forgetfulness, she stepped on and walked over the mat of that Muslim priest. This Muslim priest noticed it and was very angry. He shouted at her, but she did not hear because she was only thinking about her lover. He shouted again, and when the girl did not respond, he left his prayer and chased her. He stopped her on the way and said, 'You

wretched woman. Did you not know that I was praying? You walked over my mat and polluted it.' Suddenly the girl came to her senses. She said, 'I was thinking about my boyfriend, because it is very late and I have promised him to come at this time. I was so anxious to meet him that I did not really notice you praying.' Then she paused a little and asked the priest, 'But what kind of love do you have with your beloved that you noticed me stepping on your mat?'

This is an example of lower and higher bhakti. In higher bhakti, one does not care what happens to oneself. Many saints have been executed and burnt alive, but they did not worry about it at all. When a Sufi called Akbar used to say repeatedly, 'I am the reality, Analhaq,' the Muslims were very angry with him. They said, 'He says he is the reality, so he is insulting God.' They arrested him, and finally they peeled his skin off his body. Even when the skin was being peeled, he continued to repeat the true utterance, 'Analhaq, Analhaq, I am the reality, I am the reality,' or *Aham Brahmasmi*. Even his nerves and every fibre in his body was resonating with that sound.

In India, we have thousands of such stories known to us. One of the most widely known stories in India is the story of a great princess, Mirabai. She was the queen of a very important state in western India. She became so God-intoxicated, that she did not mind the tortures inflicted on her by her husband. She lived such a complete spiritual life that at the end of her life, her body completely dissolved into light. She did not die a natural death. She was neither burnt, nor put in a grave. She simply entered into the shrine and became light. Thousands of songs composed by her about the intoxication of love are sung daily by Hindus even today. She was mad about God. For her, God was her beloved, her husband. That is called supreme bhakti, *parabhakti*. Parabhakti and jnana yoga are one. When the mind is saturated with supreme love and one is not able to think of anybody else except God, and when everything else becomes completely insignificant, one is not only a bhakti yogi but also

a jnana yogi. The difference is between jnana yoga and lower bhakti. Lower bhakti should also be practised since it helps to discipline the mind and the senses. You go to a shrine, you sing kirtan, you practise mantra, you chant, this is also important but it is not parabhakti. You can practise any yoga on the basis of bhakti yoga. Therefore, bhakti should be the centre of all your practices. Those who have bhakti for the divine, well and good. Else you can practise bhakti on guru.

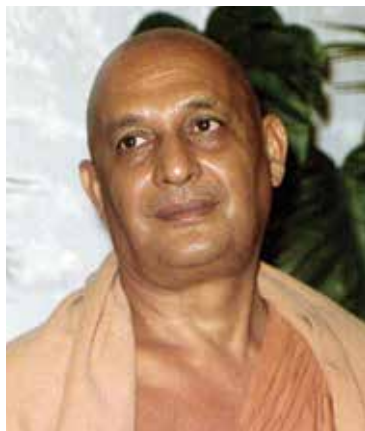
Why do Hindus use a form for worship?

Hindus know that God has no form. We know that Saraswati is not a woman, that Kali and Durga are not women, that Vishnu does not have four hands. Still people keep an idol in the temple so that if their higher soul is manifesting, at least it will manifest in the form of Durga and Lakshmi.

Many times people come to me and tell me that they are experiencing a ghost. They say that a bad soul is haunting them and it comes to them in the night. I know what is happening to them. I just give them a mantra and tell them that they should meditate either on Shiva, or on any form that they like. They do it and get better. That bad spirit, which they said was haunting them, was not a spirit or a ghost, but their higher spirit. It was their higher mind, which can manifest at any time with kriya yoga or without kriya yoga. It can manifest when you are drinking, when somebody in your family dies, when you are in great pain and agony, when you are tired, or when you are contemplating on good and bad things. There is no particular control on it. It can manifest in anyone at any time irrespective of one's spiritual life. If it has a medium, you will see the higher soul in the form of your guru. If you do not have the form of your guru, and you practise kriya yoga, you will feel peculiar if it manifests. You will wonder what is happening to you. The hall will seem to be very big, the fans will seem to be whirling in an odd manner, you will not feel hungry, you will feel as if you are levitating. All kinds of funny things happen if one does not choose a medium. So it is safer to be a disciple.

Notes

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



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

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

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



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

Teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati, Volume IX is a compilation of talks, question and answer sessions given by Swami Satyananda at Ganga Darshan Vishwa Yogapeeth in 1981. He addresses aspirants who have come for yoga training courses, ashram life or just to be in his presence. With clarity and simplicity, he inspires the audience to deepen their understanding and expand the application of the teachings of yoga and spirituality



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