

THE MINE FIELD



Lectures on the 13th Chapter of the Bhagavad Gita --
"The field and the knower of the field . . ."

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The Bhagavad Gita Chapter 13 The Minefield

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The Bhagavad Gita
Chapter 13
The Minefield

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1. One

For these few days we are together, we will study what we call the personality. What is the personality, and how does one understand what it is? I'm going to use the 13th Chapter of the Bhagavad Gita as a basis, for the simple reason that you may be able to follow what is being said; and it will be easier for you to recapitulate whenever you want, because the text is there. We won't study the whole chapter, but only take a glimpse into it. If you are interested, you will go deeper into it. There are many factors and doctrines found in the 13th Chapter that you can study at your own leisure. The most beautiful view presented here is of the field and the observer - or the knower - of the field.

idam sariram kaunteya ksetram ity abhidhayate etad yo vetti tam prahuh ksetrajna iti tadvidah (XIII:1)

This body is the field. It is a phenomenon which can be observed, not only in the sense that 'I am seeing you', but in the sense that 'I can also observe what is known as my own body.' You may be tempted to think that what is being talked about is the physical body. The Gita doesn't say so. Idam sariram kaunteya. This body is the observable phenomenon, it is part of your personality. Etad yo vetti tam prahuh. He who knows, he who understands what it is, is the knower of this field. One who is able to understand this philosophy, is a wise man.

What does wisdom consist of? Wisdom consists of a correct understanding of what the body is, what the field is, and who the knower of this field is. If we do not understand this, we make a mess of our whole life - our physical life, mental life, moral life, and intellectual life. The whole thing becomes a complete mess, because we confuse the knower with the field.

How do I see? With my eyes. It is not the eyeballs which see, because, even when the eyes are closed, you can see - even a blind man sees something. For instance, there is an old Swami in India who has been blind since the age of five. He knows the scriptures inside out, and he has toured around the world. When you listen to him describe his experiences in London airport, those descriptions are a lot more graphic than yours. It seems as though he saw more of London airport than most of us; yet he has been blind since the age of five. With what does he see? We see with the eyes - no doubt, because we are incapable of seeing otherwise. You and I have got all the five fingers in good shape; so, we can pick up something, and put it into the mouth. A man crippled with arthritis perhaps cannot close his fingers easily, but can probably use all the four fingers as one and the thumb as the other, to hold a fork. So, the man who needs a fork is therefore less efficient than one who does not! So, he who does not need the eyes to see is naturally more efficient than the one who does. We need the eyes to see, because we are inefficient. But the seer is not the eyes.

What is it that becomes aware in you? It's an extraordinary and beautiful question, which unfortunately we have never bothered to ask ourselves, because we take it for granted. Or, to put it the other way round, we confuse the

instrument with the knower; we confuse the field with the knower of the field; we confuse the observed phenomenon with the observer, the observing intelligence. Therefore, there is all this muddle; and therefore, there is this fear that I might lose my eyesight. It does not matter at all if this eyesight is lost, the seer is still there. If an instrument is lost, alright, an instrument is lost. You cannot see the legs of a mosquito clearly. Do you regret it? No, you feel it once it punctures a hole in your back! You 'know' what it is. In the same way, at some other time in your life, you can't see the person sitting in front of you. No great loss, because the seer is still there, and the seer is independent of the field that he sees.

When there is confusion, there is ignorance and wrong action. From a wrong view of life, wrong action arises. Therefore, it is vitally important to understand what the observed phenomena are, and what the observing intelligence is. There is one other detail there, which I will give to you for your own interest.

ksetrajnam ca 'pi mam viddhi sarvaksetresu bharata (XIII:2)

On top of this, there is an intelligence which is aware, not only of the fragmented individual fields, but of the totality. I'll leave it at that. You and I are aware of a certain particularised individualised fragmented field: my body, my mind, my heart, my emotional being. I'm not aware of your body, your mind, your heart, your emotional personality. But there is one intelligence which is aware of all the fields. How do you know that such a thing exists? That is what brings about the phenomena on a cosmic scale - what you call evolution. Evolution is made possible because of that cosmic intelligence. It is not brought about by you, the individual. For instance, the change of seasons is not brought about by you. You can air-condition your own room or put a heater in it; but you have not brought about the change of seasons - winter, spring, summer, and autumn. So, there is the individual intelligence which is able to air-condition a particular small room, and there is a wider, larger intelligence which is able to air-condition the whole world. I'll leave you with that thought without going into greater detail, because the matter of immediate importance to us is an understanding of what you and I consider ourselves to be.

If I understand my personality, I'll probably understand you also - probably! The yogi adopts this approach, not because he is self-centred, but because he realises that this is the only point at which the truth can be understood. I cannot understand your mind however much I may try, because I have not understood who the understander is. If I don't know myself, I cannot know you. So, the yogi says, "Start with yourself, understand yourself thoroughly; then it's also possible that you will be able to understand others." Myself is the closest point at which I can deal with this cosmic phenomenon of being, at which I can observe the body. My body is not the only body, but it is the closest point at which I can observe phenomena. My mind is the closest point at which I can observe the function of not only my mind, but your mind also, my emotion is something which I can understand. When I've understood that, it is possible that I can infer - or at least make a valid guess at - how you may be feeling.

I am reminded of an incident in the ashram. My Guru Swami Sivananda was a diabetic. Once, after a serious illness, He was convalescing in a little town, and He had to have insulin injections twice a day. He could not give the injection Himself; so, He had to find a doctor or a trained nurse. A local doctor very kindly sent a nurse; and, after the first injection, Swami turned to me and said, "Ah, I think you will have to give the injection hereafter - that man was not using a needle but a crowbar". I got the fright of my life - I had never given an injection before that. Quickly I ran to a clinic, borrowed a syringe and needle, and they gave me some kind of double-distilled water. But how does one give an injection? Some doctor explained to me very simply: "You just pick up a little bit of skin and poke the needle into it". I thought it better to try it on myself, to see what I could do and what I should not do. I found that when I was pushing the needle into my own thigh, it hurt a little; so, I ran and found an other doctor. When you do it on yourself, you know how much it hurts; and so, when you do it on someone else, you realise it is going to hurt him also; and, being an elderly man of delicate constitution, it's possible that it would hurt more. I don't want to give him even that much pain which I think I can endure. That is the attitude of the yogi. He is not selfish, but he wants to experiment with himself, to observe his own body and mind and personality, in order that he might understand others, not because he wants to be self-centred or interested only in himself.

What is this field, what is the personality? What does it consist of?

mahabhutany ahakaro buddhir avyaktam eva ca indriyani dasai 'kam ca panca ce ndriyagocarah (XIII:5)

"The great elements, egoism, intellect, and also the unmanifested nature, the ten senses and one mind, and the five objects of the senses."

iccha dvesah sukham dukham samghatas cetana dhrtih etat ksetram samasena savikaram udahrtam (XIII:6)

Desire, hatred, pleasure, pain, the power that holds elements together, intelligence, fortitude - the field has thus been briefly described with its modifications.

All this constitutes what is known as one's personality - mahabhutany - the cosmic elements: earth, water, fire, air, and space. All things in this universe are made of these five. Buddhists usually stop with the four - earth, water, fire and air - but the other schools of philosophy insist that space is also involved in your body, at least to the extent that when the body grows, space yields. The other day, we were planting a tree. When you dig a hole, you find space, you don't find emptiness there. As you go on digging, you are making space, and on the other hand you are filling up space outside. We are playing with space, we are in space all the time; so, space is involved in anything that you and I do. These physical bodies are composed of these four elements: earth, water, fire, and air, plus space.

The beauty of the Bhagavad Gita, of yoga, is that we are not told to negate the body. For all of us - except an extraordinary few exceptions - the body is as real as everything else, probably more real than the mind, more real than the spirit; so, it is foolish to jump on one's own shoulders - it's a bit difficult! So, accept what you see, and find out its nature. You see the body. Don't say, "I'm not the body"; you

are the body. As a matter of fact, if it is chilly or cold, your cardigan and your shawl are also part of you. Only if we understand that, will we be respectful in our approach to the body, to the clothes that we wear - even to the environment. All these are important. I should keep them clean, and not pretend that I've gone beyond that, everything can be dirty, but inside I am absolutely crystal pure. Absurd! It doesn't work.

Whether or not ultimately you are identical with the body or different from the body, for the present you are somehow closely associated with it - it is part of the personality. Keep it clean, keep it healthy, understand it. The first and important understanding concerning the body is that though it feels so solid, it is not, in truth. You think that, because it is heavy, it must be a solid thing. When I was very young, I went to see a film concerning a great saint and yogi, a wandering ascetic. Before he renounced the world, he told his mother, "I'm going to renounce the world, but don't be afraid. I'll come back to be at your bedside before you are about to pass away". When she died, he performed the cremation himself and, as the body was burning, he stood there and extemporaneously sang a song which deals with the whole biography of the human being, from the moment of conception to cremation. Somewhere towards the end, he addresses God, saying, "Lord, I think I am this body that is eventually reduced to not even a handful of ashes". I used to think that this body of one hundred and fifty pounds must at least leave a bucket full of something when it is cremated. I thought 'handful of ashes' was only a figure of speech, and I dismissed it - till I was taken to visit an electric furnace at a crematorium. There was an african attendant to look after it. I saw a small tray, kept in one corner, and I asked him what it was for - "That, Swami, is in case the family want some ashes. If they don't burn the coffin also, I have a rough time, because there's practically nothing left, and these people are clamouring for ashes". Then I suddenly remembered this childhood film story, and realised that it was really true. When the body is independent of the coffin and firewood and so on, and it's reduced to ashes by itself, there is nothing left, because the major part of the body is water.

If I understand that the body is made mainly of water, some kind of fat - and of course there's some solidity in it, in the bones - I realise immediately why the personality is so weak. It is all water and jelly. Neither water nor jelly is really solid and firm, and therefore we are never solid or firm. Our mind is weak, our emotions are weak, and we love to flow down, never up. There is very little in us which aspires to reach higher up. We realise also why it is so easy for us to slide down into a bad habit. We battle and battle, to overcome one wrong habit, and establish the good habit. It is difficult to establish anything, especially good, for the simple reason that there's nothing solid in this body, everything is liquid. Leave it there, it flows down. I'm not joking - it is very true!

The yogis even went to the extent of identifying the factors in the body that relate to one or the other of these five elements. Whatever in the body is solid - the bones, etc. - is related to the earth element, which has its own tuning centre - the muladhara- at the base of the spine. When you tune into that center, you are

in tune with the earth element in the body. The earth element represents firmness, steadiness, and perhaps grossness; not only the good things but the bad things: obstinacy, pigheadedness and unrefined nature. All these belong to the earth element - good, bad and indifferent, the lot. When I understand that this body is composed of the earth element, I also realise that the personality has all these factors in it. And when I want to deal with this personality, if I am able to touch that tuning point, I know how to deal with it. It is possible for me with the help of that to restore some kind of a balance to the earth element in the body, in the personality. This is the secret principle of hatha yoga - all the chakras, and so on.

Similarly, you can meditate upon the water element - its characteristics, its potentialities, its greatness, its smallness, its divine, undivine and neutral aspects. Then, contemplating on the personality itself, you realise "I'm wanting there, I have no strength". But, I also realise that, when water accumulates, it is dammed, it gains power. Water normally takes the line of least resistance, as most of us do. For instance, someone said, "Lead me not into temptation, because the only thing I cannot resist is a temptation. When there's a temptation I collapse." So, I see that this is my weakness, and I also see that, whereas water takes the line of least resistance, and flows down without any apparent strength, if it is concentrated, it gets a tremendous power, it can destroy everything. Now I realise that the element in itself is not weak or evil, but the way in which it is handled makes it either strong or weak. Once again, the yogis give you the tuning point. They say, "Concentrate on it, tune it, and restore the balance".

In the same way, the fire element. A fiery personality has a lot of charisma. There is the warmth of affection, of love, and there is also a destructive factor in it. If you get too close to fire, you get burnt. Like space, fire also instructs us to keep just a little respectable distance. If you are too far away, you freeze - life becomes not worth living - too close, and you're burnt. Can you and I come together and touch without being completely apart, cold, and indifferent, and without being totally caught up with each other and get burnt? One should know exactly the distance at which there is warmth of affection, of love, without being scorched by it. So, once again, I learn from this fire what qualities the personality has, what qualities it lacks, and where a restoration of balance may be indicated. At the tuning point, the yogi meditates upon the whole phenomenon, and restores the balance. Then you come to the air centre - you know the characteristics of air - and then you come to space. In all this, one needs to know, one needs to understand.

When Krishna says that the field - your body - is made of these five elements, it is not to say that the body is insignificant, it is just made of earth - not in that spirit. It is a statement of truth, which if understood can be of tremendous help in living rightly.

The body is made of these five elements, plus ahamkara. Ahamkara is nearly impossible to translate. In the sanskrit alphabet, you have 'a' in the beginning and

'ha' at the end. When you put these two together, you say 'aha'. When you close your mouth, immediately after it becomes 'aham'. Please remember that. Now go back to these psychic centres - kundalini centres - that we have been talking about.

The five centres are the throat - visuddha, the heart - anahata, the solar plexus - manipura, the genital region - svadhisthana, and the perineum - muladhara. Each centre is supposed to have a certain number of petals or radii, and each one of them vibrates in a certain manner. The yogis - who were able to - identified each one of these as a sound of the sanskrit alphabet. All the letters of the alphabet are found in these six centres. So, the human body is nothing but the vibratory notes of all these alphabets, the crystallisation of these vibrations. They put the first letter and the last letter of the alphabet together, instead of mentioning them all, and called it 'aham'. 'Aham' later came to mean 'I', the ego. So, the ego is nothing but the whole lot put together. You cannot isolate the ego.

What is ahamkara? Kara is action, so when this 'aham' begins to function, it is called ahamkara. The function of the ahamkara is merely to put all these sensations together. When you are listening to this, you are not listening merely to the words, but at the same time you are aware that the words come from me. How? The eyes see me, the ears hear me, and there is something in you that puts these two things together. It's a very complicated thing; and, because we are born with it, we don't appreciate it. I once taught a deaf and dumb girl how to say "Om Namah Shivaya". She could lip read, and she could read, but she couldn't utter a sensible sound. We struggled hard for 10 or 15 days. She put one hand on her throat, and the other hand on my throat, and tried to reproduce the same vibrations. And eventually she was able to say "Om Namah Shivaya". When she had done it, I wrote "Om Namah Shivaya" on a piece of paper, and showed it to her, and she didn't know what it was. I suddenly realised that she could say the word, but when she saw the letters, which she could easily read before, she could not relate one to the other. To her, the sound "Om Namah Shivaya" was something else. The audiovisual synchronicity was not there. It took a long time to bring that about. What is it that produces it? Because you and I have grown up with it, we don't appreciate it. What is it in you that synchronises these two: the sound symbols and the visual symbols?

That is ahamkara. It is not 'my' ahamkara; it is merely something which brings these vibrations together. When one sees the truth in this fashion, what we call vanity disappears, because we cannot possibly see a factor which exists, which can be identified as 'I am this' and 'This is my body'. So, a correct understanding of the personality, the field, enables us to understand each one of these factors correctly. When there is this correct understanding, life becomes infinitely better. One thing that disappears is what you and I have been identifying as the ego.

2. Two

We have been discussing what are considered observable phenomena - something which you can see for yourself, and have not yet graduated to the discussion of the observer. You can see for yourself that the body is made of the five elements - if you cannot see, there is some eye defect, or defective inner vision. The subtler aspects of these elements, which seem to have some effect on the mind too, are all easily observable if one develops this inner faculty of observation. If you cannot see, there is defective inner vision - or undeveloped inner vision. This is not the entire truth, the entire truth comes later.

mahabhutany ahamkaro buddhir avyaktam eva ca indriyani dasai 'kam ca panca ce
'ndriyagocarah (XIII:5)

The five elements, gross and subtle, plus ahamkara. Ahamkara is nothing but a word, which does not have a corresponding entity or reality, but which still is functional - like a point on the blackboard when you are teaching mathematics. Even if you are using a very fine writing instrument and not a blunt piece of chalk, as soon as you put a dot on a piece of paper and call it a point, you are bluffing; because, according to mathematical definition, a point has no dimension at all, and a dot has got a dimension, however small it may be. Then you realise that 'point' is a mere concept; it can never be shown. Yet, with the help of the point, you teach mathematics to your students; and, using a word which had no corresponding reality, you can also teach something. So 'ahamkara' is functional; but, being a word without a corresponding reality, you cannot possibly point to one particular thing and say, "This is ahamkara." It is a word that seems to have some sort of an application, until you find an inner awakening in which it is understood as something different. It is the same with the word 'soul'. No one has ever seen what 'soul' means; but it has a functional role to play in our lives. There is an unknown entity, whose nature is guessed by means of these words. When you want to point out a tiny little star which is hardly visible to the naked eye, you point to a bright star in the vicinity, in the hope that, after having located the bright star, the faint star will be seen. So, you use words like 'soul', 'ahamkara', 'ego', as if these things are solid entities; and then, while concentrating your attention upon them, and practicing meditation, at some point you suddenly awaken: "Is that what was meant?" Then you might even turn round to the teacher and say, "Why did you have to mislead me by using such confusing terms!" Unfortunately, one had to, in the beginning. So, please hang on to your soul; don't abandon it, but realise that such things do not exist as real entities. We go on using these words till something happens within, till this inner light is kindled, till the inner vision is gained.

The next is buddhi. If you have been following all the argument till that point, it is much easier to explain what this word 'buddhi' means. It is usually translated as discriminating intellect. This word 'discriminating' or 'discrimination' has come in for a lot of misunderstanding. Discrimination is used almost synonymously with wisdom. Discriminating intellect - the intelligence or intellect that tells you that this is good and that is not good; this is virtue, that is vice; this

is good, that is evil; this is right, that is wrong. I'm not contradicting any of these.

What is the difference between mind - which is mentioned a little later - and this discriminating intellect? What is mind and what is the function of the mind? What is intellect and why is it called discriminating intellect?

The function of the mind is to co-ordinate the sense stimuli. You see something, hear something, and smell something - there is something inside that co-ordinates all this, puts all these things together. This co-ordinating agent forms a perception from mere sensation. A sensation doesn't remain just a sensation, but becomes a perception. It is the so-called discriminating intellect which is supposed to distinguish good from evil, right from wrong, virtue from vice. But it does something else. Instead of using these beautiful words called 'discriminating intelligence', we might use the words 'divisive intellect'. For instance, a hot plate is always hot. As you put your hand on the hot plate, the sense of touch informs your mind that it is hot. The mind registers or perceives the heat of the hot plate; there's no doubt about it. But there is something else within us which divides this heat into several categories - just warm - ah, it's lovely - too hot - oh, it's terrible. Neither the hand, the sense of touch, nor even the mind does all that. The mind merely registers "It is hot". But, after a cold shower, that heat is welcomed! So, there is something else which divides the whole experience, making something acceptable and something not acceptable, something pleasant and something not so pleasant. This dividing intellect is called buddhi. Maybe it has been given a prestigious position which it doesn't deserve. Having put this crown of wisdom on its head, you worship it. For instance, people say, "Don't you have buddhi?", which means, "Don't you have discriminating intellect to know that that is bad, that this is good?" But I wonder who told you that that is bad, that this is good? Your buddhi has divided it - this is right, and this is wrong - and, having divided it, hangs on to it for your life. The moment you question that, the whole world seems to be shaking.

All this may be necessary. The discriminating intellect may be necessary, and the cultivation of this discrimination may also be necessary for entirely unspiritual reasons - for social, political, or economic reasons. For instance, I heard on the radio in India about ten years ago a good pundit declaring that, on Divali day early in the morning, you must all get up, have a nice bath, and put on nice new clothes. He says that these are all laid down in the scriptures. "This is the right thing to do, this is what pleases God." What kind of God is it who insists that I should put on new clothes on one fine morning? It is probably some kind of supermarket that pushed that bit in. Then he says that it is said in the scriptures that you must, after all this, light fire crackers! He uses the local expression for it, which means the cracker that comes from China. What kind of scripture is this that promotes chinese crackers on Divali day? I'm not objecting to this - after all, you have to wear some new clothes at least a couple of times in the year; so, why not buy it during the Divali? But you can see that, when these things are not seen as the observable phenomena, but are confused with the observing intelligence - which means they become the observer - they become realities - not merely

observed phenomena which are changing, but the reality of observing intelligence. Then these things become superstitions - fixed, rigid, unchangeable. So the point, instead of being a useful datum to build on, becomes the final fixture. There the whole thing has become perverted.

Krishna reminds us, "Remember, this is observed phenomena". Buddhi or the discriminating intellect - if you want to call it so, or the dividing intellect - if you agree with me, is merely there - as the observed, and not here - as the observer. You are allowed to examine it, and see how far it is valid, and where it is invalid.

When you go on observing the body - which does not mean the so-called physical body, but something subtler, like the mind, or the intellect - you realise there is something you can observe, which you can sense with a sixth sense, but whose character you cannot determine. There is something observable, but not defineable. Krishna, the Master, tells us that such a thing also exists. So, don't congratulate yourself that since you have been able to analyse the physical structure, since you have been able to look into the mind itself, and to see the play of the mind and the so-called ego-sense, you have seen all. There is something which you are unable to see; but even that is part of the phenomena.

In addition to all this, there are these ten: the sense organs and organs of action. Sense organs are the sense of taste, of touch, of sight, of hearing, of smell; and the organs of action - the motor faculties - are the sense of speech, of locomotion, of grasping, and all the rest of it.

In addition to these ten senses, you have the mind - even that can be observed. One has to be extremely careful here. The mind is part of the observable phenomena. But it can be observed only by oneself. My mind is not an observable phenomenon for you, you cannot read my mind or influence it. When you think you can, all that you are doing is sitting and wishing "May this happen, may this happen." It is even possible that you give me hints of what goes on in your mind, and I respond to it. In responding to it, I generate the same thoughts that you have been praying I should. You can make suggestions, you can make hints, but I have to take them. If my mind is weak, I'm taken in quite easily; but that does not mean that you are reading my mind. You do not know my mind, unless you have gone beyond your own individuality, and are one with the Cosmic Being. I'm not saying it is not possible at all; but, so far as we are concerned, it is not possible. It is best, therefore, to deal with one's own mind, not trying to imagine that one can read another person's mind. But the mind can be seen, can be observed. One must train oneself and develop this faculty. The mind can be observed, and must be observed; with what? We'll come to that later.

What are the senses? The eyeball is not considered the sense of sight - it is a gross sense organ. The sense of sight itself is very delicate, subtle, and beautiful. It is that organ with which you see something in a dream. The gross organ of hearing is the ear - the inner ear, the middle ear and all that; but the sense of hearing is that which operates when you are dreaming you are talking to

somebody and listening to them. It is beautiful. With what do I see in dreams, with what do I hear in dreams? That is the sense of sight, the sense of hearing. Contemplating that you enter into meditation.

What is the field in which these senses function? These things have never occurred to us normally. You see something - what is it that tells me that this is a lady and not a cow? How is this seeing possible? How is a sensory experience possible? What is an experience? Supposing the mind is totally absent - you are dull, drowsy, sleepy, and just sitting. All sorts of things may be happening there, but there is no experience at all. Why? All the inner senses have been switched off, so that the senses do not function within, and therefore no experience is gathered. You are just sitting there - fast asleep, with eyes open, but without any experience whatsoever. Even though the senses were apparently functioning, in reality they were not. The ears and your eyes at least were open - but there is no experience.

Now, what is an experience? And, where do the sense stimuli become an experience? It's an extremely interesting adventure if one is really interested in it. Whereas only light waves enter the eyes, and only sound waves enter the ears, what makes possible the experience of seeing and of hearing? If you are keenly interested in this, it is then that you begin to understand the dynamics of experience. If I know the dynamics of experience, then I am not easily taken in. I am not easily drawn into an experience, I don't become a slave of those experiences. Something may be pleasant. But, if I am able to recognise the entire dynamics of the experience, I can stop it, I can start it, I can let it flow, I can reverse the flow, I can do what I like. But, if one has not trained oneself in this, then, the moment the experience arises, you become a complete and total slave. Anything that you are ignorant of concerning yourself enslaves you. That is why the understanding of the field, the ksetra, the observable phenomena, becomes so vitally important to us.

The yogi is not scared of experience, but intensely aware of it. Can this awareness be so strong, constantly, that it is able to observe the experience as it happens, without blindly walking into it? You are not asked to lead a dead, dull, stupid life, with no pleasure and no pain, like a zombie. On the other hand, the yogi regards what is called the normal human being today as a zombie. You think you are intelligent, you think you are enjoying yourself - you are not! You are a slave, you are being sucked into it, because you do not understand the various factors that constitute the body, or the body of facts which you can observe. You have never learned to observe. Therefore, they don't exist as observable phenomena for you. You are caught up, and there is only confusion or misunderstanding.

iccha dvesah sukham dukkham samghatas cetana dhrtih etat ksetram samasena savikaram udahrtam (XIII:6)

Sukham, dukkham - happiness, unhappiness. Likes and dislikes: I like this, I don't like this; I love this, I hate that. These are also observable. These exist in

nature, you cannot deny it. Likes and dislikes are like repulsion and attraction in physics - these are basic principles in electro-magnetism. They exist in nature, and no-one is going to deny their validity. Can you see these feelings of likes and dislikes arising in you? No. "I like this." That's all. The liking has become the I, the deciding factor. You are not observing this liking arising in your mind, and then deciding, "Alright, I like this, I will do it", or "I don't like this, I don't want to do it." You are being sucked into it. I like this, ok. I dislike that, I won't look at it. There may be likes and dislikes in life, just as like poles attract each other, and unlike poles repel each other. That sort of phenomena exists in nature, and the same thing might exist in the body and in the mind - as for instance, the hand likes to touch something soft, and if there is something hot, thorny, or prickly, the hand draws away from it. It is natural. But are you observing this, or are you sucked in, unconsciously, unaware?

Doing anything unaware is not accepted in yoga. Anyone who goes through life unaware, whatever may be his qualifications, is called a zombie - which means most of us. Become aware of all this, and live a full life, a life of wisdom. Become aware of what goes on in the mind. For instance, to give you a fairly simple illustration: supposing I am a diabetic. I look at a chocolate and I say "I love it", but I don't want to eat it, it doesn't suit me. That is what the yogi wants - nothing short of it. Become aware - this is what I like, and this is what I don't like - and then act.

In the same way, one experiences happiness and unhappiness - become aware of this. Don't get blindly trapped in such concepts: "Oh, this is happiness. So, I must run after it." "This is unhappiness. So, I must run away from it." Become aware of all this. When you are aware of it, you are creating a little distance, a space between you and that experience. In that space, you can manipulate, you can create something beautiful - your own heaven. In conditions where others go under, calling it unhappiness or tragedy, you may be able to blossom, just because you have created that space between you and that experience, a space through which you are able to observe these things, instead of being blindly drawn into them.

There is a subtle distinction between likes and dislikes - happiness and unhappiness. Visualize yourself - your body, your mind - as hollow as this hall, with cross ventilation, so that the energy from outside is able to flow through all the time. Happiness and unhappiness are like the air entering the hall, likes and dislikes are like the air leaving the hall, the thing being exactly the same. Energy entering, flowing into you, is called happiness and unhappiness; the energy flowing out of you is called likes and dislikes. Happiness and unhappiness are what are happening to you; likes and dislikes are what flow out of you. Quite likely, happiness and unhappiness are merely happenings. Happiness and happening sound very much alike to me. I always see that there is a lot of happiness in unhappiness - just a little more perhaps! The whole of happiness is in unhappiness, plus a little more. So, there is no serious difference between all these. It is the intellect, the buddhi, that tries to figure out that this is called

happiness and that is called unhappiness. The experience is the same. Happiness and unhappiness exist in the world. Look at them, realise that these are observable phenomena. Observe them, become aware of them, and perhaps later you will see that there is not too much of a difference between a happening and happiness.

In order to grow into all this, one must start with the fundamental; that is - to become aware of it.

iccha dvesah sukham duhkham samghatas cetana dhrtih (XIII:6)

There seems to be a cohesive element that keeps these things together: the organs of the body, the memories, and the experiences of the past and the present. What is it? Calling 'I' energy and using such words may or may not be necessary - but become aware of it. I cannot at the present stage completely eliminate memories of the past - no-one asks us to do that - but I can become aware of them. I can become aware when the memory springs up into action. If I am able to achieve that, I can determine at a given moment that I will not allow memory to act. I - whatever the 'I' means - must act, not the memory. In order to achieve this, I must first become aware of the existence of this storehouse, of memory - the collection, the garbage dump - which exists in me.

Those who think that yoga is some kind of wool gathering or hallucination, might probably realise now that the yogi does not want any hallucination to take over, no denial of what might be real right now. The yogi is not one who demands that what is real to you must be just abandoned. You cannot abandon it! What is real to you is real. The yogi merely says: "Examine it, look at it, become aware of it. If, while becoming aware of it, it disappears, it isn't worth having." This is quite different from saying that yoga means abandonment of all unrealities. How do you know they are unreal? Become aware of them. The past, present, and future seem to be very real; come on, put them together, examine them. There is something holding all these things together. Examine that something. If, while examining them, you discover some other truth, well, that's your discovery. That's a new truth, a new reality - that's your reality. And, when you make this new discovery, the old one - which you now realise to be unreal - ceases to be. That's the beauty. There is no fooling oneself here.

3. Three

Likes and dislikes, pain and pleasure, happiness and unhappiness, and all the rest of it, exists. But the one thing that is absent in reality is an entity that can justifiably own this. It rains; it is not my rain, it is not your rain. There is sunshine; it is not meant for me, I cannot own it. The statement 'The rain is not mine' assumes that there is something else which is mine. If you say, "There is nothing, neither an entity or factor which can claim ownership of the rain", it makes it more correct.

One can see quite clearly that happiness and unhappiness, likes and dislikes, also exist, right from the rudimentary attraction and repulsion in the molecules. I'm treading on very dangerous ground, so you must also be careful. Don't draw any inferences or conclusions from this. It is quite possible that the molecules in this body may be attracted to one person, and not attracted or even repelled by another person. Even that may be possible. But what is non-existent is an entity that can say, "I like this - I dislike that."

If you have observed little babies, you will probably understand this. But again, this is not something which can be intellectualised or conceptualised. Even a baby that hasn't a fully developed ego, which doesn't have an identity, seems to be drawn to some and not drawn to others. It is your mind that has assumed the existence of an entity, and therefore a relationship - I like you, I don't like you. We are familiar only with this, and with this biased mind we look at that infant, and weave some kind of theory. I've seen some infants who would jump out of the crib when they look at me, for instance, and it is quite possible that the child for the time being may not then go to the mother; and another baby whom you would expect to respond favorably to a swami may not even want to look at him. There's absolutely no rhyme, reason or rationalism in all this, because your rationalising intellect assumed the existence of an entity which could from there on evolve a relationship based on "I like this, I don't like this"; and this entity may not exist at all! You are assuming this entity and building a whole lot of theory - a dogma or a doctrine - over it. That may not exist.

Don't ask, "Why does he like him?" or "Why does he not like the other person?" That 'why' is absurd. Merely see that this attraction and repulsion exists in nature. I have often been surprised by this boy-girl relationship. Suddenly, a girl falls in love with one boy, and I wonder what she sees in him. Probably she sees nothing in him, but feels drawn to him. Why? I don't know. My mind asks the question 'Why?' because it assumes that there is one entity that is responsible. It may not be at all. It may be that these likes and dislikes exist in the world, and there is no entity to claim ownership or authorship.

I often use the following analogy. It is not complete and total. My own eyes are weak, they're not young, and when they look at the sun shining on a white concrete wall, they want to look away; but when they look at green foliage, they like to rest on it. So, one can see that the eyes like soft green colours and do not

like glaring objects. It's possible, in a similar way, that the personality - which is an observable object - is attracted to some and repelled by some. There is absolutely no sense in the question why. In the same way, happiness and unhappiness exist. Neither happiness nor unhappiness can be 'mine' or 'yours'. Can we pass through it, without trying to hold it? Can that experience be allowed to flow? It is flowing. No unhappiness has ever clung to you - it is gone if you don't obstruct it - not if you hold on to it with this thing called a fictitious entity. That mental creation or idea is the I - there's nothing else called the I.

An experience comes and goes, you call it happiness or unhappiness - it's not a serious problem. You can call it by conventional names; for instance, if we have a lovely lunch, nobody is going to call that unhappiness. That happy experience has come and gone. That was a lovely casserole we had for lunch; but, if it stays in any one part of this anatomy for a little longer than you expected it to, it is unhappiness. Unless this happiness experience is allowed to pass right through, it becomes unhappiness. If you hold it anywhere, it becomes unhappiness.

So, the happy experience must be allowed to pass through, because it does pass through. Life doesn't stop for a single moment. The whole world is in a state of flux. As you tasted that delicious lunch, it formed an impression. All experiences form an impression. But, an impression formed in something which is flowing, is a momentary impression, like writing on water. Before you have finished one letter, it is gone. That is what life's experiences really and truly are. As you experience them, an impression is formed, but it is effaced in the next moment. But, strangely enough, the mind generates a thought which thinks it can remember, can perpetuate the experience. Look at this very carefully. It is tremendously interesting. If you see it, you're enlightened, liberated. As this invisible stylo of the mind draws on these flowing waters of life a symbol to represent happiness, even as the stylo is writing, it is gone, because the experience is momentary. It cannot be captured, perpetuated, or immortalised; but, being an intelligent principle - unlike water, which is non-intelligent - it thinks it is capable of permanently registering that experience. That is what you call memory.

Memory is the mind's feeble attempt to register and perpetuate an experience which is, by its very nature and essence, momentary. That is made possible because the mind is intelligent, sentient. It does not mean that the experience is perpetuated, but a corresponding concept or word is perpetuated. We have a few mothers here. It is quite possible that, when you had your first child, you felt blissfully happy. Can you re-experience that now? You can remember - which means that the tape can be played once again - but it doesn't have the emotional impact. It is not the experience, but the shadow of the experience, in exactly the same way as a movie picture is merely a shadow of the original acting. It is just nothing, a shell. In that word 'shell' there is one unnecessary letter. If you drop 's', you realise what all this really amounts to - hell.

In that attempt to register the momentary experience, a thing called ego arises -

otherwise there is no 'ego' as we usually use the word. Ego sense is there - it is what holds the body together, and what links the body and mind for the time being - otherwise you wouldn't know your name or how old you are. The ego which keeps the body together, which co-ordinates the sense stimuli, and operates this computer called the mind, is there, but not the ego in the sense that we use it, e.g. I had a nice time yesterday. There's no 'I' that had a nice time yesterday - it flowed away yesterday, and there is nothing except the memory of the most pleasant and the most unpleasant experiences. Strangely enough, you don't remember everything about yesterday - only the extraordinarily unhappy and happy experiences, because only these two become interesting. Therefore, the ego is moulded of these memories.

The word 'me' that we use so freely is nothing but the first two letters of the word memory. There's no me, except the memory itself, and it is the me that owns the likes and dislikes. The hand likes soft things, and is repelled by the hot plate, but the memory of the hand having been burnt by the hot plate is owned by the ego, by something that says, "I'm here - I remember it, it happened to me". It didn't happen to you, it happened to the finger! The ego or the memory assumes the role of a mineness, me. I am unhappy, or I was unhappy - I am happy, or I was happy. Unhappiness or happiness do not belong to anyone. They are there in life, they come and they go. I don't mind any happiness coming to me, as long as it will go away. I don't mind any unhappiness coming to me, as long as it will go away too. So, why bother about it?

If that truth is clear, then the next few verses of the 13th chapter are highly interesting. This is the field, and there is a knower of this field. There is an intelligence that is aware of this field, which is awareness itself. This is the field: the body components, the mind, the dividing intellect, the ego sense that keeps all these things together - pleasure, pain, happiness, unhappiness, likes and dislikes. All these are true, are real entities, are real things - or they are the objects of the awareness of awareness. The intelligence, the awareness in you, is able to observe all this without being involved in any of it. When you say, "This happiness is mine", you get involved in it, you make a shell of it - a hell of it - and get into it. If you are able to see the truth - which is that these are part of the flux of phenomena - then you are not involved in it. Experiences pass through you. From one end, they approach you as experiences, and they leave you as expressions. They don't stay, but pass right, through you - which is very beautiful.

If this simple fact is realised as fact, virtue arises from it. Discipline, virtue, holiness, wholeness - these are the concomitant factors of such a vision. If that vision is not there, your virtue is stupid, hypocritical. When you see this as a fact - not as a thought - when you are fully saturated with this truth, the way you will live is right living, is wisdom - jnana. Jnana is not intellectually understanding all that we have been discussing these past three days. That vision itself lives. I can't live it. When you say, "I have to live that truth", again you are creating a thing called 'I', who has got to live that truth - which is not true. If you get into that trap, then you are going to refer back to the book again, "Now, what have I got to

do? This is how I'm going to live" - naturally there is a why to it. Why do you want to live like that? "Because I want to become famous. I want to be called a great man or great woman." It is of those stupid thoughts that the 'me' is formed. That is why it is so difficult to break down that me. The me that says, "This happiness happened to me, this unhappiness happened to me." The me that says, "I want to live like that", is creating an artificiality which is not natural, which is not true.

If life flows on - I wanted to say 'if life were allowed to flow on', but even that creates a me - with all that there is, the intelligence observes all this - seeing that this is happiness, this is unhappiness, "I like this" and "I don't like this", and this comes and this goes. There is no permanent entity called the 'me' that is involved in any of these. The mind functions in this way, and the intelligence observes that; the intellect functions in this way, and the intelligence observes that; the ego sense arises, and keeps up some sort of a continuity, and the intelligence observes that. All these are objective factors which are observable phenomena for this intelligence.

In that state of affairs, virtue arises spontaneously, without any effort whatsoever. That virtue is wisdom, jnana, and that virtue happens because of jnana, because of wisdom. You are wisdom, because that intelligence operates without any motivation whatsoever; it is merely witnessing the stream of life flowing uninterruptedly. That awareness - which is not involved in this happiness and unhappiness, likes and dislikes - keeps flowing - and this intelligence, which is everywhere, observes.

Krishna gives us in the next few verses a long list of virtues.

amanitvam adambhitvam ahimsa ksantir arjavam acaryopdsanam saucam sthairyam
atmavinigraha (XIII:7)

Humility, unpretentiousness, non-injury, forgiveness, uprightness, service of the teacher, purity, steadfastness, self control,

indriyarthesu vairagya anahamkara eva ca janmamrtyujaravyadhiduhkhadosanudarsanam
(XIII:8)

indifference to the objects of the senses, and also absence of egoism, perception of - or reflection on - the evil in birth, old age, sickness and pain,

asaktir anabhisvngah putradaragrhadisu nityam ca samacittatvam istanistopapattisu
(XIII:9)

non-attachment, non-identification of the Self with son, wife, home and the rest, and constant even-mindedness on the attainment of the desirable and the undesirable,

mayi ca'nanyayogena bhaktir avyabhicarini viviktadesasevitvam aratir janasamsadi
(XIII:10)

unswerving devotion unto Me by the yoga of non-separation, resort to solitary places, distaste for the society of people,

adhyatmajnananityatvam tattvajnanarthadarsanam etaj jnanam iti proktam ajnanam yad ato
nyatha (XIII:11)

constancy in knowledge of the Self, perception of the end of true knowledge.

He concludes this list with a dramatic statement: this is declared to be knowledge, and what is opposed to it is ignorance. This is wisdom, this is self knowledge. Whatever may be your conception of wisdom, if it does not contain these elements, it is not wisdom. Other than this, all else is ignorance.

adhyatmajnananityatvam tattvajnanarthadarsanam etaj jnanam iti proktam ajnanam yad
ato'nyatha (XIII:11)

This definition of jnana does not mention knowledge of scriptures or doctrines, or understanding of all that we have been discussing so far. Let us look at some of these virtues. Amanitvam adambhitvam ahimsa ksantir arjavam - humility or unpretentiousness. You cannot understand humility unless the non-existence of this thing called ego is realised. If that is not realised, it is possible for that so-called 'me' - the memory wanting to crystallise itself - to be capable of fooling everybody. I don't think it fools itself, but it fools everybody else. For example, you greet everybody by bending down and, while you are doing this, someone sees you, and over the breakfast table you hear Peter whispering to Mark, "Look at that lady, she is so great, so wonderful, yet whenever she greets someone, she is so humble. That is how we should all be." When you hear this, the 'me' jumps up, "Ah, they're talking about me. I did this and they're appreciating it, so I must do a little more. Now I must earn a reputation for being humble, for being totally self-effacing." Someone wrote to Swami Sivananda once, 'There is no-one in the world who is as full of humility as I am.' What a fantastic humility! You cannot understand this - it's not possible - because, what understands humility, is this fictitious 'me' that puts together a few bits and pieces of memory, and constructs an entity called myself. That self is all the time looking for self-aggrandisement; how to become more and more important, more and more famous, more and more great. That is not virtue at all, though it may appear to be great virtue on the face of it. Such virtue is often deliberately promoted by the community, because it suits them. If you are humble, simple, and hard working, it's good for me - I'll give you some more work! Society is fond of this 'do good'. If you 'do good', you are supreme in society; everybody will glorify you, praise you - and milk you a little more. But that virtue is viciousness; it is also dangerous for yourself, because, after having passed through all that, finally the frustration comes. I've seen this, not only amongst swamis, but amongst great yoga teachers, film actors etc. As soon as the self is created, the whole picture is vitiated, distorted, and from there on the self is looking for what suits itself. If what suits itself is also what is regarded as virtue by the community, it will do it - not because it wants to be virtuous, but because it wants the approval of the community. That is not virtue. There is something disastrously wrong there.

If you understand what we have been discussing during the past two or three days, an understanding of the facts concerning life emerges, and in that inner light there is the clear vision that the self does not exist. That is all that you and I need know.

When you realise that there is nothing called self, then there is true unselfishness. The other type of unselfishness that you and I practise is a game played by the same self, in order to gain some more weight. The virtue practised by you to gain admiration, name, and fame, and all the rest of it, is vice. And it is nearly impossible to get rid of it, because, as you go on along that path, people will naturally encourage you more and more, because it suits them. You will even gather around yourself lots and lots of disciples - I promise you! If today you proclaim that you are going to be a complete vegan - you won't even touch milk,

yoghurt, or butter, and that you'll eat cow's food only once in the morning, and won't even look at anything else in the afternoon and the evening - you'll have an enormous number of followers. Then you look around - those followers are not following you, they're pushing you. They won't follow you, but will form a gang around you, and proclaim your greatness. "What a great man my Guru is - subscription fifteen dollars to have a look at him", or "My Guru is supremely great, just to see him is marvellous. Twenty five dollars for an interview"; or "He doesn't touch money. Fifty dollars if you want to talk to him." This is gangsterism! As Swami Shuddhananda used to say, "They're not followers, but swallows."

Supposing David has proclaimed that he doesn't touch tea or coffee - they're all tamasic. This has been proclaimed everywhere; so, all of you have gathered here in order to admire this non-coffee drinker, and have his blessings and all the rest of it. Then it so happens that he has some stomach upset. He consults a very famous doctor of Ayurvedic in Madras, who gives him a bottle of oil, and insists that this oil must be taken with a cup of coffee. Now what do you do? David tells me, his secretary, "I would like to have a cup of coffee". I say, "Ah! You are going to take coffee? O my God! What's going to happen to our reputation with all these people here?" I am even prepared to sacrifice him for the moment; it doesn't matter if he dies; because, what are these people going to think? All this is tragic. I'm not saying that the virtues are nonsense; but, all these virtues are found in the men of wisdom, or all these virtues constitute wisdom. It is quite a different approach.

Look for the truth and, while you do so, virtue arises, wisdom arises. There's absolutely no difficulty there. See the truth for what it is, as it is, without getting hung up on any of these theories, and the truth shall set you free. That freedom is called virtue, that freedom is called wisdom. In that, there is absolutely no effort. You don't have to struggle and strive at all to be virtuous. You cannot possibly make an effort at being humble. Effort put into humility will only turn into vanity - subtle vanity, and therefore more terrible.

The next virtue mentioned here is ahimsa - non aggression, non injury. You cannot cultivate ahimsa. When you try to cultivate it, either you are hurt yourself, or you hurt others. In life, unhappiness is floating down the stream. If you allow the self to arise in the context 'I am unhappy because of you', that self wants to blame somebody, to find somebody who is responsible for that unhappiness. Having been hurt, you are left with only two alternatives. Either you are going to practise ahimsa and suppress your grief, thinking "I won't hurt her. She is vicious, but I won't mention it." Then you're hurting yourself! Or you can blow up. Then you are hurting someone else. Instead, see that unhappiness as a whirlpool in the stream that keeps flowing down. I'm not the author of it, I am the river bed. This whirlpool comes, and it's gone. Then another one called happiness comes along - "Oh lovely, come, come" - then it goes. There is nothing called self which could relate itself to any of these experiences, holding on to them as 'my' experiences. Only when that is not there, is your ahimsa natural.

What does it mean? If she picks up that tape recorder, and throws it in this direction, the eyes see the tape recorder coming, and immediately the spine springs into action. That's all. Or, if this young man somehow gets it into his head that the swami is hopeless, and comes and raises his fist high up over this head, this hand jumps up and stops it. Ahimsa doesn't say, "Alright, my friend, hit me on my bald head." The 'me' that says that, is humbug! It's not easy to understand; because, if you make an image called ahimsa, you're trapped. So, what I'm going to say is even more tricky. He comes with raised fist, the eyes see that, and there is instant action. The legs may jump up, you hold those two arms and push - he may get hurt, that's a different story. Was there ahimsa? No. Was there aggression? No. Was there even self defence? No, none of these things. There was action - there was mere seeing, and the seeing itself was action. It is quite possible after this whole drama that the same hand that pushed him down might pick him up lovingly and carry him to the hospital. All that is possible, and therefore nothing can be predicted. If you can understand that, then you go back and read the Mahabharata, you will understand how great sages were even supposed to have taken part in war, fighting and killing; but they did not kill.

Such a man of wisdom, such a sage who has realised the non-existence of the thing called self, even if he appears to kill the whole world, has done nothing. That ahimsa is something supreme, something marvellous to realise.

4. Four

Life is full of happiness and unhappiness, likes and dislikes etc. If the intelligence is able to observe all that without getting caught up in it, there is virtue. Let's say, for instance, that dislike flows from you. There is no 'me' to respond to it and say, "She is disliking me." Dislike is flowing from there, that's perfectly alright; rain is falling, dislike is flowing - then there is no reaction. Even if this gentleman gets up and clenches his fist and says, "Now get ready!" there is no 'self' to feel that he hates me and wants to destroy me. When the self is not there, what happens? There is just action - whatever it is. One action could be that he hits; and the legs get up and run to the hospital. Or, the legs get up, the arms spring up, and grab him by the collar or throat. But, in all this, there is no self which gets hurt.

When the self does not exist, is there evil action? Please don't twist this, and say therefore, "Well, if I am selfless, I can do what I like". You will not do what you like. We should not put the cart before the horse. The horse comes first; and the horse is the realisation of the simple truth that there is no self to respond, to react. It is the self all the time that reacts, and all reaction is sinful. Never mind whether society calls it virtuous, glorious, or righteous. Any reaction is unrighteous, unspiritual, and evil; because the reaction presupposes the existence of a self, and therefore that is selfish action. Why? When the self is discovered to be non-existent, all action from there on is going to be absolutely natural, which means - in theological language - God's Will. What happens from there on is God's Will.

If there is no motivation, no self, and therefore no selfishness at all, what would you do which would be considered evil? Do not all our evil actions spring from the idea of self? Lust, anger, greed, jealousy, envy, and aggression, all spring from the acceptance of self as an entity. When that is seen to be non-existent, where do evil actions come from? That is self restraint - restraint of the senses or control of the mind and senses, in the sense that they are freed from the myth of a self. That comes first. Without that there is no virtue.

If your guru says, "You are glorious", and you feel you are glorious, vanity has arisen. That which says, "I am the chosen one", has already chosen to be evil. It sits there on your right shoulder, watching: "Is everything going right? Ah! My guru is great, he has blessed me, and I am going straight to heaven." When something goes wrong - "Well, I think my guru doesn't understand me quite well." You'll be away, because that self idea has been blessed and confirmed, and that was what was looking for heaven. Then, when it seems to be a bit shaky, immediately we're into the next corner and grabbing some kind of pleasure here, thinking, "Why wait for heavenly pleasure?" That is the source of all evil. People become swamis and sannyasis hoping to attain eternal bliss. Suddenly, when they discover that this is not leading even to bliss here, leave alone eternal bliss, they turn - at least 180 degrees - as fast as they can, to run back into some kind of ecstasy, sextasy, drugstasy - anything they can grab. "All those years are lost, we

must make up for all the lost time!"

So, self restraint - or restraint of the mind and senses - is when there is the direct realisation that the self - which had been assumed to exist, and which therefore motivated all my thoughts, words, and deeds, so far - doesn't really exist. Then, suddenly the senses and the mind have lost, not their energy, but their reactionary momentum.

In the Bhagavatam, there are stories where great sages and saints have meditated upon God; after 5.000 years of meditation, they open their eyes and they are directed to a lady. They get married and beget 100 sons. What sort of story is that? The story indicates that, in their case, there was no private desire that "I want to get married and enjoy married life", there was no 'I' there at all. In meditation, the 'I' is realised to be non-existent; it is not dissolved, it is not discarded, it is not killed, it is not destroyed - it is not there! When you dig deep into what you have been considering the self - I - peeling layer after layer to discover what is this stuff, this substance or this entity that I have been accepting as I, as the 'me' - that is meditation. Eventually you discover the 'I' is not there at all! So, what was the big deal? Why did I have to go to the kitchen and eat? The stomach was eating, and the mouth merely dispatched it. The life force was there, and it felt hungry, and it is eating. It doesn't need an 'I', a self, to do that.

What was the self? You dig deeper and deeper, and find more and more nothing. Then you begin to wonder, not what have I been doing, but who has been doing what? What is this thing that I have taken for granted to be the self that exists? Good grief! It doesn't exist! It is not your mind or your brain that sees this, but something deep within you at the gut level, something that is aware now that you are alive. That sees it. Something that enables you to take one foot forward when it is very dark in the room - that realises that there is no self. One more step, and you realise something beautiful - but one has to be very careful with this teaching - that for 58 years this self has ruled all my thoughts, words, and deeds. No, even then it was the hunger that was eating, the eyes that were seeing, the mouth that was talking; and when you thought you were doing something glorious, and somebody else thought you were sinning, even then all these natural things were happening. Nothing unnatural ever happened!

If in his days of ignorance he had picked up a club, and clubbed this head, and sent the swami to the hospital, even then there was nothing unnatural in that act, except for the fact that there was a self which became angry! Nature has fashioned that hand with the faculty of holding; therefore, the hand picked up the club and not the nose; and the feet which are endowed with the natural faculty of locomotion walked from there to here; the arms which have got the swivel movements went up and came down. When the club came down on the head, it had to crack. Nothing unnatural happened. In the state of ignorance, when the self idea still prevailed in him, that self said, "I am angry. This swami shouldn't have said this to me. I am going to beat him up." These ideas arose in him, no doubt, but where? Who entertained these ideas? The self. And what was the self?

Nothing. For instance, you dream of a robber breaking into your room, and that he jumps on your back. You yell. Your wife says, "Hey, don't disturb my sleep." You wake up - it was a dream; but your pillow case is wet, and your heart is thumping. How can something which was totally unreal give rise to a realistic experience? Because, at that stage, the robber was real; so, the heart started to palpitate and sweat broke out all over the body. When you realise that it was all a dream, your heart resumes its normal rate, and the sweat disappears, and that's all. Even so, while he was in ignorance, and the self idea was very much there, it was the self idea that was furious, and it was the idea of the self that willed, "I am going to break the swami's skull." As long as that idea is left to prevail, so long the karma is there, and the self idea goes round and round and round.

How can something which is non-existent produce all these realistic effects? It is possible - like the robber in a dream; but, when you wake up, you realise that nothing that happened is related to the self. Whatever happened, happened. Nothing unnatural can ever happen. Let's take for instance this Bible teaching: "If it be not the Will of the Father, even a sparrow does not fall" - the idea being that nothing in the world happens that is not the Will of God. If that is so, how do you reconcile the moral teaching of evil? Evil exists as long as the idea of self is allowed to prevail, and that will prevail as long as you do not uncover - or discover - that the self has never been an entity, a reality.

It is implied in the Biblical teachings, but explicitly stated in Vedanta, that, when you attain self realisation - which means the realisation that the self does not exist - all your karmas are burnt, there is no more karma. And even if such an enlightened person destroys the whole world, it is nothing; because, the world has been created, and so must come to an end. This is not a doctrine or a dogma, this is not even a teaching that can be intellectually grasped, understood, and practised. If one tries to 'practise' it, that can lead to comic, if not tragic, errors. I'll tell you of one comedy, and one tragedy.

A great master was discoursing on the theme "Whatever is done, is all done by God", when a young man happened to walk in. "God pervades all, and it is God alone that is everything. Whatever happens in this world, happens by the Will of God." "What a fantastic teaching!", thought that young man. "But, why should I stay and listen to all this going on all the time"; and he went away. He was in ecstasy, in bliss - oh so high! As he was walking along a village road, a mad elephant was running amuck. The mahout was trying to control it, but it was uncontrollable. So, he shouted, "Hey! Get out of the way, otherwise the elephant will trample on you." The young man was in ecstasy, "Ah, this is God, that is God, everything is God. There is nothing that can happen in the world without God's Will." The elephant picked him up, flung him about 20 yards, and he fell into the mud. He was bruised a little bit, his ankle and wrists twisted. He got up in agony, "Dash this holy man, he is completely bogus, his teaching was horrible. That is what landed me here." So he went straight back to him and said, "What kind of guru are you? You said everything happens by the Will of God alone. An elephant just picked me up and flung me into the mud." The holy man said, "Please narrate

the whole thing to me step by step." He said, "I was walking along the road, contemplating your most inspiring teaching, I was in ecstasy. There was this elephant God coming in front of me and there was a mahout sitting on top who said? 'Hey! Get away, get away.' I thought, elephant is God, I am God, this is God, that is God, everything is God. Who is to be afraid of whom? This elephant picked me up and threw me aside." The teacher explained, "Whatever happened was perfect. When this mahout God told you to get away, what made you refuse to listen to him? The elephant no doubt was God, but then the mahout sitting on top was also God. Why didn't you listen to him?"

So, when you try to apply this philosophy, you make a mistake somewhere. And where? That is another nice story. It seems somewhere in the Punjab there was a very handsome young swami, a very charming, beautiful, brilliant man. Girls liked him, and he also liked girls - it's not surprising, he was young and handsome. He also taught the philosophy that we are all one, we are all God masquerading in these several forms. And so, if a beautiful God comes into my room, well, that's also God ordained. So, I have a nice time. That was the idea. The people in the neighbourhood were a bit worried, but nothing could be done - the girls felt attracted, he also responded to them, and this thing was going on; but all the time under the cover of this philosophy that you are God, I am God, and God ordains that you must come to me, and both of us enjoy God, that's all. Nobody could put the fear of God into this fellow. It seems that a very beautiful young woman - who was also equally clever - stepped forward, and said, "I'll fix this boy." Although there was a beautiful garden outside, he used to take the victim into the house; but this girl wouldn't enter. The swami greeted her, she also greeted him, and she wandered into the rose garden, admiring the roses. He followed. Suddenly she sat down beside the rose plant. He thought, "Alright, she is not going to succumb so easily. Well, never mind, a little more time doesn't matter" and he lay down with his head on her lap, and started stroking her, 'Ah, what a beautiful God has come today. God is beauty, goodness, truth. What a beautiful God it is." She said, "Yes, yes maharaj," She had brought some prasada - you don't go empty handed to see a holy man. She picked up one of these sweets, and held it in front of his mouth. "Oh, this lovely God has brought some sweet God." He took it in his mouth and chewed it. Then she picked up another sweet and held it in front of his mouth, and he opened it again, busy looking at her beautiful face. In the mean time, she put her hand down and picked up a little mud, pressed it into the shape of the same sweet, and the third time she held the hand before his mouth, the mouth opened again and she dropped in the mud, saying, "God gives God to God." He jumped up. "Hey! What have you put in my mouth?" She gave him a resounding blow, and said, "You rascal, you could distinguish between sweets and mud, and not between man and a woman? All are God to you, but this sweet is God, that mud is not God?" That fixed it. I believe he just absconded.

So, this philosophy is not to be - I wanted to say intellectually understood, but I will rephrase it - intellectually confused. You cannot understand it intellectually, because the so-called intellect itself is the product of the self. First, there is this

idea of the self, and this idea of the self itself expands into what you call intellect - otherwise there is no intellect! There is what is called the cosmic intelligence, but it is not the cosmic intelligence that understands this philosophy, because cosmic intelligence is the philosophy. What arises in it, with each experience, is a momentary or a temporary experiencer; and, when that experiencer is assumed to be a real entity, then that becomes the self. It is not the self. Because you see the shadow on the wall for a long period, you think it is there. Very much like the movies - a film is projected there; because you see it for some time, you think the face is there. It is not, nothing is there. Then, having assumed that it is there, the self is there. Whatever thoughts happen beyond that, that self thinks, "They arise in me." They do not arise in the self. There is no self! If this is understood by that which sees, 'I am alive' and 'this is my friend', even when it is pitch dark, that is the inner light. When that inner light discovers this truth - that there is no such entity called a self or the ego - there is natural restraint of the senses and the mind. It is totally effortless. If something happens, it happens only because it is Divine Will, because self is not there to project its own will. So, this is not a doctrine or truth or fact which can be understood by the mind or the intellect. The mind or the intellect itself must examine the hidden springs of our own actions.

Now, the other point of view. We are seekers. We have not reached that point where the self is discovered to be non-existent. We have yet to discover it. In our attempt, what do we have to help us? How do I discover the existence or the non-existence of the self? For the present, the self does exist - I want this to happen, I am hurt, I am pleased, I am happy, I am unhappy, I love you, I hate you. These are the normal expressions now, and for the present I want to discover where all these emotions arise. If I know where they arise, I know from where - which means the self. If I see that there is an entity called self sitting there, I will contradict all the teachings and say, "No, nonsense, I have seen a lovely little doll with 4 hands and 16 fingers sitting there. It is projecting all these thoughts and experiencing all these experiences. So, your teaching is nonsense."

In order to discover whether or not such a thing is real, the mind has to be turned within, upon itself. You are going to observe the source or the hidden springs or motivations of each one of your thoughts, words and deeds - which means, your attention is powerfully introverted, your energies are concentrated and flowing within. If you do that, you will probably discover that what are known as sinful or evil actions are already defused. For instance, he is angry with me. He comes to hit me, and I am upset, I am angry too. Why am I angry? Who is angry? Where does that come from? If I know where the anger rises, I know where the self is, because I am angry. As I am examining it, I forget to hit him - this doesn't concern him at all. I am only interested in the source of my own anger. I probably hurt a little, the initial hurt being the trigger which sets the whole process in motion. But, whereas before I would react immediately and violently, now, as soon as I am hurt and anger arises, I want to know who it is that generates this anger, if there is a self that is hurt, and if there is a self that wants to respond with anger. You see the point? There is self restraint, restraint

of the mind and the senses.

This is restraint of the self or the mind and senses as sadhana, spiritual practice. At our stage, we are to do this constantly. If one is doing this constantly, there is naturally no evil prompting. Life goes on. In that life, no unrestrained action is possible, no unexamined action is possible, and therefore no evil, no sinful action is possible. A little bit of effort is involved, but not towards restraint. This must be very clearly understood. I am not suppressing my anger, I am not telling myself, "To get angry is unspiritual, it is sin; so, I won't get angry." There is no suppression here, there no expression here. There is examination. This is the beginning. In the initial stages, I am hurt, I am angry, and therefore I am looking at the anger. Later, when the self doesn't exist, I don't even get hurt.

Once the self is discovered to be non-existent, self restraint becomes natural. There is not even this effort. There is nothing to get hurt.

5. Five

If virtue is motivated, it is not virtue, it is a motivation, it is selfishness. As long as there is selfishness, there is no virtue. As long as one doesn't enquire into the nature of truth, the assumption of selfishness will continue.

Right from infancy, we have been brought up on the idea of the self. From the time that someone told you that you were 'so and so', you are being moulded into an identity, a self. The self is created by thought, and sustained not only by thoughts, but by the environment. Somebody feeds it, somebody hurts it, somebody pampers to it, somebody pats it on the back, somebody kicks it in the pants. Whatever is happening, it is assumed as a fact. As long as this fact is assumed, so long this thing called selfishness will not go; and as long as selfishness is there, virtue is nonsense. You will be virtuous only as long as it suits the selfishness.

If you look at your own religious history, you will understand this much better. Even what is called a religious doctrine or dogma is accepted only as long as it doesn't hurt that selfishness. For instance, when Henry VIII couldn't marry, divorce and remarry, the doctrine was changed. And it goes on right through religious history, political history, and the social history of the whole world. I gave you an example from your religious history, because you are more conversant with it; but we have the same thing in India. As long as it doesn't hurt you - which means the selfishness - so long this is good and that is evil. The moment this thing that is considered good pinches me, I change it - then evil becomes good, instantly. Why is it so? Because that concept of goodness, of virtue, was based upon the selfishness. Selfishness will not go away by waving a magic wand, or by merely sitting in a corner and asserting it is gone. Why? That which is not, cannot be removed, cannot be destroyed. How do you destroy an hallucination? You can wake up - but that's not destruction of the hallucination.

One must first awaken to the simple fact of life, which is that I have created this selfishness, and I am being ruled by it. Every thought, word, and deed, that proceeds from me, arises in this selfishness, or is polluted by it. It is twisted, perverted by this selfishness. Without assuming that it is not real, and without assuming that it is somehow destroyed, without indulging in such gimmicks as, "I have repeated my mantra 15,000 times, and so my selfishness is gone" - one must honestly, sincerely, and seriously, investigate it. What have I been calling selfishness, what have I been considering the self? Does such a thing exist? Then you come face to face with what was described earlier on in the thirteenth chapter of the Bhagavad Gita as the ksetra or the field. The body, the mind, and the senses exist, the organs of action exist, there is a sort of discriminating, dividing intellect that also seems to exist, and there is a coordinating agent which is the ego sense - but to whom do all these belong? They don't belong to anybody, they belong to themselves. Then, there is no entity called self which claims ownership to any of these things! It is from that understanding that all the virtues really and truly spring.

If that is understood, then these few verses that we have been studying become very clear. It is then that one is truly humble, it is then that one truly becomes non-violent, non-aggressive. It is then that one does not do violence to one field in preference to another field. It is not that you are not hurting yourself or me - the 'me' doesn't exist, and therefore 'you' also doesn't exist.

Is there a way of life where one does not commit any aggression towards one or the other? This is a field, and that is also a field; this is a body-mind complex, and that is also a body-mind complex. In order to promote the happiness, the peace, or the prosperity of this, I don't exploit that. In order to promote the prosperity and the peace of that, one doesn't have to punish this. Then there is ahimsa.

When you study the Bhagavad Gita with a ready made commentary, if you have a question, there is usually a ready-made answer. For instance, what is this? Chocolate. What do I know about chocolate? Nothing, but she told me it was chocolate; so, while eating it, I have a feeling that I know all about it. Even so, when you read a translation or a commentary, you go away with the feeling that you have understood, because somebody told you that was true. Who made the author the authority? It is like politics: you elect someone and put him in a position of power, and then you salaam. My God, we put him in that position! This is true of our whole life. We join together and hoist him up as our authority. Who decided that he knows everything? We did - and having put him up on the pedestal, we bow down; and thinking he is a wise man, we follow him. He might not be wise. It is quite possible that we were wrong in the first place!

So, it may be essential that we need some scripture or texts, but merely to remind us, to set alight this quest in us. It is not indispensable. Ramana Maharishi even declared that he was able to attain enlightenment because he had not read any books. But, having been to school, unfortunately we have already been polluted. So, in order to get rid of worldly book knowledge, we bring in scriptural knowledge. The scriptural knowledge is not purity or wisdom in itself, but it gets rid of the other rubbish. And then you bring in enquiry - direct realisation - to wash out even that scriptural knowledge. The direct experience is the only authority.

indriyarthesu vairagyam anahankara eva ca janmamrtyujaravyadhiduhkhadosanudarsanam
(XIII:8)

Indriya is the inner sense - for instance, the sense of sight as distinct from the organs of sight: the eyeball, the retina, and the optic centre in the brain. All these are instruments with which the innermost sense sees. The innermost sense is that with which you are able to see in your dreams.

What is the object of the sense of sight? This book is an external object of the sense of sight; but the experience of perception is an internal object of the sense of sight. The object does not only refer to something that is external to the body. Inwardly, you are able to perceive something; so, even that is an object.

Therefore, all sensory experiences are themselves objects of the senses.

The word 'vairagya' has been literally mauled. What is vairagya? Dispassion - and what is dispassion? The opposite of passion. I am passionately fond of my wife, of food, of money, etc. And dispassion means what? I was passionately attached to all these things and, now that I am a spiritual man, I must kick them away. That is passionate hate! The first was passionate attachment, and this is passionate hate. In both, the common factor is passion. Where is dispassion here? Previously, I was passionately in love with you; now, I am passionately hating you. It's the same thing.

Sanskrit words have got at least 20 or 30 meanings. Which one you pick up to translate a particular word, in a particular context, depends entirely upon you. This word 'raga' also means coloring. I still remember a very beautiful incident in our life at the Ashram with Swami Sivananda. Once, Swami was discussing some business with his immediate disciples - it concerned withdrawing the rights of publication of a book from a certain publisher in Madras. Two or three disciples said, "Yes, we can do that." One disciple intervened and said, "Swamiji, he has been popularising the book by bringing out quite a number of editions, and he's doing a good job. Why don't we let him continue publishing this and obviously getting some profit out of it?" Swami turned towards him - he wasn't angry, he wasn't critical - he looked at him with a faint smile on his face. "Whenever you go to Madras, you stay with him, hm?" It was not suggesting corruption or perversion. He said, "Yes Swami." Swami Sivananda then explained, "I am not saying that, because he is your host, you are defending him, but the mind becomes colored". That is what you call prejudice. It's extremely difficult to detect this, because, who is the detective? The mind itself. The colored, prejudiced mind pretends to look at itself and exonerate itself. It needs an extraordinarily alert intelligence to discover this.

When you go on being friendly with someone for a long time, the mind becomes colored; that is called 'raga'. When the mind is colored in that manner, then the observer - the intelligence that looks through the mind - does not see what is. The truth is not seen. What is seen depends upon the coloring of the mind. So, 'vairagya' means removing this coloring.

To begin with, I realise that there is this coloring in the mind. You don't need to be an enlightened person in order to realise that the mind is colored. The trigger is quite simple. For instance, I think he is the most gentle man on earth, the most kind, the most enlightened. I'm quite prepared to swear that he is - not because I like him. Whenever that thought arises in me, I immediately bring to mind someone who hates him, and who says he's no good, he's unreliable. Suddenly, I begin to wonder why I think he's a good man. Why does someone else hold the opposite view? What does your mind normally say? "Oh they're prejudiced." At that very moment, jump into the bathroom and look into the mirror. "They are prejudiced, no doubt, but you are also prejudiced." Like Peter, you will deny it, but you know it is true.

This coloring of the mind cannot be detected by thought, because the thought arises in the colored mind. No amount of thinking is going to resolve this difficulty till one acquires what the Bhagavad Gita calls tapas. As long as there is prejudice - which means, jumping to conclusions or a judgement without proper investigation - examine it. This too will lead you directly to the assumption of the self - e.g. he has been good to me, he has done all that I, the self, wanted him to do. He has always been nice to the self - which means, making it fatter and fatter and fatter - so, the self naturally feels happy in his company.

indriyarthesu vairagyam anahamkara eva ca janmamrtyujaravyadhidukhadosanudarsanam
(XIII:8)

When you investigate in this manner, the self is seen for what it is - a shadow, an assumption, a word without a corresponding reality. Recognition of the unhappiness of life - that birth is miserable, childhood is miserable, and youth is miserable in its own way - is another beautiful quality, which is wisdom. Let us go back to the other idea - that there is happiness and unhappiness in life. But there is no ownership of this happiness and unhappiness. Life is full of defects - not my life, life is full of imperfections - not my imperfections. These are inherent in life. Old - not my old age - is miserable. Face it. Illness - not my illness - is a state of unhappiness, of imperfection. When you realise that these are the facts of life, you don't get worked up over them. You don't have to pretend to be a young man, there's no need. It doesn't mean that you get reconciled to it. What do you mean 'reconciled'? The very idea of reconciliation means you are fighting it. "Oh well, I accept." What do you mean, 'accept'? Have you got a choice? The very fact of acceptance presupposes that you think you have a choice - that you may accept or you may not accept.

Can you observe and see life for what it is? That it has a beginning called birth, that it has an end called death, and in the meantime there is old age, disease, illness. All these are part of life not my life, not your life. To see that, is wisdom. Does such a man characteristic reveals that.

asaktir anabhisvngah putradaragrhadisu (XIII:9)

"He is unattached to son, wife, house, and wealth." What does it mean? If all these qualities we have been discussing so far are supposed to exist only in Swamis and ascetics and those who don't have anything to do with the world, this last characteristic has no meaning at all! Why should someone come and tell me, "Oh Swami, you shouldn't be attached to your wife and children"? I have none! The fact that this is mentioned here specifically denotes that the yogi could just as well be married and have children and property - but that expression is wrong! He doesn't have a wife, he doesn't have children, he doesn't have property. The property is there, and he is there. The person whom society calls wife is there; they were living together, and there were a few more new arrivals into the world. Society calls them his children. What's wrong with that? In his own heart, there is no feeling that she is my wife, or these are my children - even if he doesn't have

any doubts at all concerning that. When there is no self or selfishness, the house is still there, the wife is still there, the children are still there - but there is nothing within which springs up with the idea that these are mine. The body and the mind etc. constitute the field - but all these do not constitute a 'mine' field, a battle field with lots and lots of 'mines'. Because this field is without the 'mine', it is able to live quite happily, securely, and peacefully.

When, through enquiry, the self is seen to be non-existent, then the mineness has no business to be there at all. It doesn't arise. That does not mean that I should avoid you and run away, because then I am still creating a self. When I avoid getting involved in a family situation and run away from it, when I disclaim the responsibility for children, then I am creating this self again. "I don't want to have anything to do with you". One man is passionately attached to you, and I am as passionately detached from you - but both of us are passionate in relation to you. It doesn't work that way.

We have to find the more direct route, which is to observe, to investigate, and to see if in all this field there is a thing called self, who can thence forward own these components of the field: the body, the mind, and all the rest of it. Only that investigation can lead us to the discovery of the non-existence of the self - which means, that selfishness and mineness are out.

The last of the virtues mentioned in this huge list I have not dealt with them all is:

tattva jnanartha darsanam (XIII:11)

Tattva is truth - as well as entities, objects, things; jnana means knowledge, wisdom; artha means an object, as well as a word; darsanam is to see. Tattva jnanam is knowledge concerning the categories which we have been discussing so far, the field and virtues etc.

Artha darsanam. What do all these mean? We have been discussing this thing called self; we have been discussing wisdom, virtue, and all the rest of it - the field. What do all these really mean - stripped of the words? What do all these mean - in fact, in truth, in reality? Not thinking; because, when you think about these psychological categories and the mind, you are diluting water with water - a waste of time.

We cannot discover the truth concerning the contents of the mind by thinking about it. Every thought adds to the composition of the mind, and increases the complexity of the mind. I must find another way. I cannot abandon this investigation, and I see that thought cannot solve this problem. I am afraid, as it were, to throw up another thought, knowing that it's another pollutant, another complication.

At that moment, the mind becomes absolutely still. When this happens, there is

tattva jnanartha darsanam - then there is seeing, vision. Seeing does not mean seeing with the eyes, or even the inner sense - it is used merely to suggest that it is not thinking, that it is not logic, that it is not reasoning - it is not this, not that. Whatever we are left with, after negating all this, is seeing.

Only this inner sight or insight is able to bring about the vision of truth - the vision of truth which is wisdom, the vision of truth which is virtue, the vision of truth which is freedom.

6. Six

We shall deal only with the most vital part of the thirteenth chapter - as it relates to our life. Is virtue, even if it is natural, an end in itself? Am I a good and righteous person because I value this goodness? If goodness or righteousness is not based upon the vision that we have been discussing, the question seems to be popping up every few days, "Why am I doing this?" For instance, "I am honest and sincere, and others who are dishonest and insincere are more successful than I am - at least on the basis of what other people say - and they lead a more comfortable life." The question, "Then, why am I doing all this?", is bound to arise.

So, even here there is a flow. First of all you observe the field: the mind, the body, the senses etc., and you realise there is nothing called self. Virtue arises from this vision and understanding. But it doesn't stop there, it seems to flow on to something else - described in the next few verses, which are sublime. My Guru Swami Sivananda used to love this very much.

sarvatahpanipadam tat sarvatoksisromukham sarvatahsrutimal loke sarvam avrtya tisthati (XIII:13)
sarvendriyagunabhasam sarvendriyavivarjitam asaktam sarvabhrc cai va nirgunam gunabhoktr ca (XIII:14)
bahir antas ca bhutanam acaram caram eva ca sukmatvat tad avijheyam durastham ca'ntike ca tat (XIII:15)
Krishna introduces this part of the discussion with dramatic statement:
jneyam yat tat pravakasyami yaj jnatva 'mrtam asnute anadimat param brahma na sat tan na'sad ucyate (XIII:12)
"I tell you what should be realised, and if you realise this, you'll attain immortality, supreme peace, supreme bliss." Jneyam means 'what has to be realised', not in the sense of intellectual understanding, but direct experience or direct realisation.

The previous field - the psycho-physical complex - is to be observed, and this one is to be realised. It's a subtle but tremendous distinction between the two. That is, the field is initially observed by an observer. When you look within yourself, you see that there are all these sense organs, the five elements, a mind, a dividing intellect, and a cohesive principle. In all this, there is an observer with some kind of a closed circuit television, who observes the internal factors. We didn't touch that observer at all. If the observer is there, and is able to understand that there is nothing called self which could own all these factors, virtue arises. The self disappears and virtue arises - that is natural; but there is still an observer.

Who is that observer? Is it possible to observe this observer? What does that mean? This is what is meant also when we were discussing the repetition of the mantra. When you focus all your attention upon the source of the mantra, the observer is there, and observes that everywhere is this mantra. The whole universe is a mantra, and I am sitting in the middle. Who am I? Who is the observer? That question was left unanswered, both in our discussion of the mantra, and in our discussion of the Bhagavad Gita, so far. Is it possible to observe the observer? Which means - you are creating another observer - it's a meaningless, purposeless game, because the observer is the observer. Who is to

observe the observer? When you realise that problem, that which functioned as the observer so far, collapses.

I am looking at you. What is 'me' that is looking at ? Can I look at that? There, that which was observing, collapses. You realise the absurdity of the whole thing; so, it collapses. When it collapses, there is realisation. Why? Because, that which has been observing the observer is not an inert substance, but pure intelligence. It is pure intelligence - it cannot become unaware. Awareness in itself can cease to be aware in a subject-object, dualistic way, but this awareness itself cannot disappear. That is why, in the Yoga Sutras, the Master says that even sleep is a form of awareness.

abhava pratyaya 'lambana vrttir nidra (Yoga Sutra 1-10)

Sleep is when the awareness says, "I am aware of nothing". Therefore, I sleep. Now I am aware of you, and later, when I lie down to sleep, I am aware of my own hallucinations and imaginations. Then, at one point, I don't want any of these, I want to be aware of nothing. Why? Because the awareness can never become unawareness - it's a contradiction in terms, an absurd statement.

So, the awareness being aware all the time, remains awareness. At present, it is aware of you, an object. When this awareness is turned within to examine the internal psycho-physical factors, it becomes aware of all those different factors: the body, the mind, the intellect, etc., the experiencing agencies. Who is it that is aware of all this? Who is the subject, who is the observer of all this? When that question is asked, the same awareness becomes absolutely still. It is possible that for a few moments you may begin to wonder: "Is not the observer in all these - up to that point - another fragmented piece of the observed material? Was he out of this field? Was the observer in all these dualistic observations not part of the observed?" Naturally!

Up to that point, we have only been thinking, using our mind, the dividing intellect. So, up to that point, the observer also has been part of the observed. Why? When the observer is observed - the last part of the game - and there is stillness, there is pure observation, without an observer. The moment a division is created, the intellect springs up and 'mineness' springs up - 'I', 'mine'. When that comes to an end, or when there is total inner stillness, this dividing consciousness also disappears. Then we are in what is known as self realisation.

sarvatahanipadam tat sarvatoksisromukham sarvatahsrutimal loke sarvam avrtya tisthati (XIII:13)

When this divided observation - which creates a subject and an object - ceases, nothing else ceases, all these things remain as they are. But something else has happened, some tremendous change has taken place. Because, just as the awareness continues to be aware - helplessly, motivelessly, choicelessly - even so, sight continues to see, choicelessly, motivelessly. What else can sight do? Hearing continues, eating continues, digestion continues, living continues, walking

continues, talking continues - because these faculties are there. This is a head, no one is going to say that this is a pumpkin. But there is nothing to say that this is my head. There is no my head, and there are numerous heads. That's what this verse means.

sarvatahpanipadam tat sarvatoksisiriromukham sarvatahsrutimal loke sarvam avrtya tisthati
(XIII:13)

"With hands and feet everywhere, with eyes, heads, and mouths everywhere, with ears everywhere, He exists in the worlds, enveloping all."

Everywhere, there are hands, arms, legs, and feet. Who is there to say these are my legs? What for? There is no entity to say these are my legs. These are legs, of course they are - everywhere these are legs - not only these legs, but the legs of mosquitoes, of flies, of seagulls. Everywhere there are eyes - eyes and eyes and eyes - and all eyes are endowed with the faculty of vision. There is absolutely no problem. Everywhere also there is pain and pleasure, happiness and unhappiness; but, there is no my happiness or my unhappiness. They don't belong to anybody; they don't belong to me, because the 'me' is not there. Visualise this - it's fantastic, even as imagination, even as an hallucination. Of course, if you are able to go over the whole thing, and realise it, it must be superfantastic.

There is even the ego sense that keeps all these faculties together, and all these limbs together; but, beyond serving as a cohesive force, this ego sense has no other role to play in life. There is no one who can say, "This is my body", or "This I am" - that is a foolish idea that arose in the mind. What is wrong with an idea? There is no harm - but the idea is inoperative - it has no strength, no reality behind it. It is a word without a meaning, like most of the words that we use: 'sorry', 'thank you', 'bye-bye'. "I am this", "This is mine", are words with no meaning whatsoever. No one has ever investigated if there is a corresponding reality, entity, or truth, behind all these words.

So, there is a head - of course there's a head; there are these legs - yes, there are these legs. It is even possible to say there is some pain in some part of this body. Absolutely no problem. There are millions and billions of bodies, and in exactly the same way there is pain, suffering, happiness and unhappiness everywhere - but no one to say: "This is my happiness", "This is your happiness", "I am unhappy", "You are unhappy". There is no one to say that. If you want to, please say it, but even that has no meaning - you use some meaningless words. No harm, because, as long the throat is there, it is going to make some noise. "I am happy" is one noise; "I am unhappy" is another noise. "I love you", "I hate you", "I am jealous of you", are other noises. These words have no meaning at all, no basis in truth. Why? Because this 'I am' itself is missing. A fundamental thing, self, is missing, and all the other ideas related to this fundamental misunderstanding are absurd. "I dreamt I had a son last night." Shall we betroth him to your grand-daughter? You can go on - you can even celebrate the wedding; why not? Since the whole thing is hallucination, imagination, why not have some more?

So, when it is actually realised that an entity called 'self' who owns the body - and all that is related to it - is itself non-existent, does it destroy anything? No. The disappearance of the self does not make anything in the whole universe disappear, except your misunderstanding. If you still want to have your misunderstandings, please yourself! Nothing disappears, only the wrong notion or the wrong idea you had, which led to the tragedy in your life of thinking, "I am suffering, I am unhappy, but he is happy". All such silly ideas disappear. There is no need for this. None of these have any basis in reality. It is not as though when you attain self-realisation, some kind of dreadful demon will go away. There is nothing to disappear - the reality can never cease to be, and the unreality that you think you have discarded was never there.

What did you achieve? Nothing, absolutely nothing. So, self-realisation is absolutely nothing. It's a glorious non-attainment. You were sleeping and dreaming of all sorts of nightmares, and you wake up and ... what happens? Nothing happens - the room is still the same room, the bed is the same bed, your night clothes are also the same as they were. What happened to all those nightmares, the robbers and thieves etc? They are not there. You go on thinking, "When I woke up, the thieves disappeared and everything was alright - I am safe"; but then suddenly you realise that they were not there in the first place, nothing went away. Everything is exactly as it is. What happened? Nothing happened. You just woke up, that's all. There is absolutely no hoo-ha about it. But, that is glorious. This horrible nightmare we have been having comes to an end.

Suddenly you wake up to realise that 'I' thought, and when 'I' thought, I arose as a self. Suddenly you realise the 'I' thought, "This is my body, this is my head, these are my limbs, and I must look after them even at the expense of others". Then life becomes a battlefield. I begin to observe, to investigate, to see if there is a self which could be identified as 'this is the self'. To this the body belongs, to this the wife, the husband, the children, or the property belong. After investigation I discover that this doesn't exist; there is no such thing as self.

The characteristic of that investigation is awareness. I turned my attention upon this awareness, in order that I may become aware of this awareness, and suddenly I realised that I was shouting at the mirror - the image in the mirror. Which one is me? How am I going to answer that question? 'I' collapses. When that collapses, it is then that observation without an observer arises. You see the beauty here? First you observe all this, and then you realise that all this observation involved an awareness. Can I become aware of this awareness? How? Now I am looking into the mirror; am I seeing the mirror, or is the mirror seeing me? Who answers that question? Am I seeing my reflection, or is my reflection seeing me? There you freeze, this game comes to an end, and there is pure observation, pure awareness without an observer, without a subject and an object.

That awareness continues to be aware, but without creating an object; and that

awareness is everywhere - not only in me - in this body and this mind - but everywhere. That awareness is - sarvatahpanipadam. Everywhere it has got heads, everywhere it has got legs, everywhere it has got feet - everywhere it smiles, and everywhere it weeps, and everywhere it goes on. There is happiness - that universal awareness laughs there, that universal awareness cries and weeps some other place.

Even if we are not in that state, try to dramatise this for a few moments. You feel tremendous relief even merely visualising this truth. Then you see a baby smiling, you are thrilled. It is that universal awareness smiling there - it may be still weeping here, but never mind. So what!

sarvendriyagunabhasam sarvendriyavivarjitam (XIII:14)

The senses function because of this awareness. This awareness is not my awareness. Awareness 'is', and therefore even the error called 'mine' arises. A thought arises because of awareness, and it is a thought that later fools itself that it is the self. But, where is it without the awareness? A thought is awareness - so, even if you say it is my awareness, that 'mine' itself arises from this awareness. There is seeing - seeing happens because of awareness. There is hearing - hearing happens because of awareness, but awareness in itself does not have any such distinction. It is the eyes that see the five fingers, the five fingers themselves are unaware of their distinctions or their different characteristics. The eyes see them differently, because the eyes are able to see, and the eyes are able to see because there is awareness, the ears are able to hear, the tongue is able to taste, the skin is able to touch, the nose is able to smell, all because of awareness; but these characteristics are not needed for the awareness itself.

It is even much simpler than you think - this shirt has a couple of sleeves and a collar and buttons. Throw it down there, it is nothing but cloth. So far as the cloth is concerned, it does not have sleeves - cloth is cloth! What do you mean 'sleeves'? When you wear it, you designate these as sleeves, and this as collar. But, in cloth, there is no such distinction.

In the same way, in that awareness there is no distinction at all - it is pure awareness - homogeneous, solid awareness. But, what are known as the sense faculties function because of the awareness. When that one small factor is realised in what is known as the individual, suddenly we also become aware that this awareness is indivisible. Though it looks as if he is able to see and hear, and there are people who are not able to see or hear, so there seems to be some kind of a split in that awareness - you realise that it is not so. Even in the case of the deaf girl, it is only because the physical instrument is not working that deafness has arisen, not because there is anything wrong with the awareness.

avibhaktam ca bhutesu vibhaktam iva ca sthitam (XIII:16)

Amongst diverse beings, this is the undivided totality - undivided, but apparently divided. There is one tree, and in that tree you call this roots, this the

stem, this the trunk, branches, leaves etc. It is just one tree - there are no such distinctions, and yet the distinctions appear to be there. Very good. We accept the appearance of the division, but they are not real divisions. In the same way, the whole universe which is pervaded by this awareness, is nothing but this awareness; and it is this awareness - call it God now, if you want - that has all these innumerable heads, legs, feet, ears, and eyes; not me, not you. It is That that is listening through all these ears. This can enable us to sustain this mood of righteousness and virtue. It is a beautiful vision - undivided amongst diverse objects, though appearing to be divided.

That is the truth. He who realises this is free - from what? From the nightmare that didn't exist. That is self-realisation.