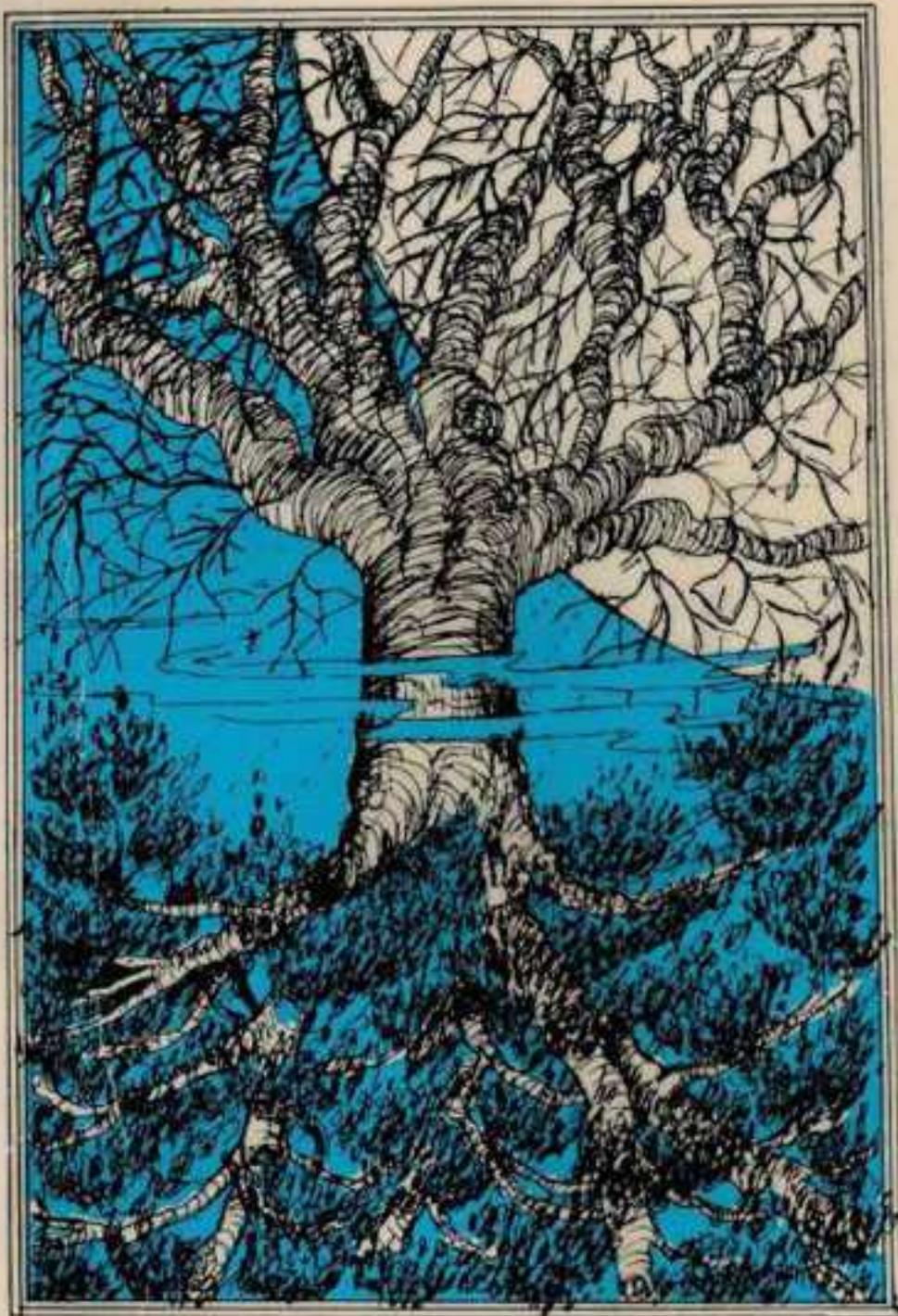
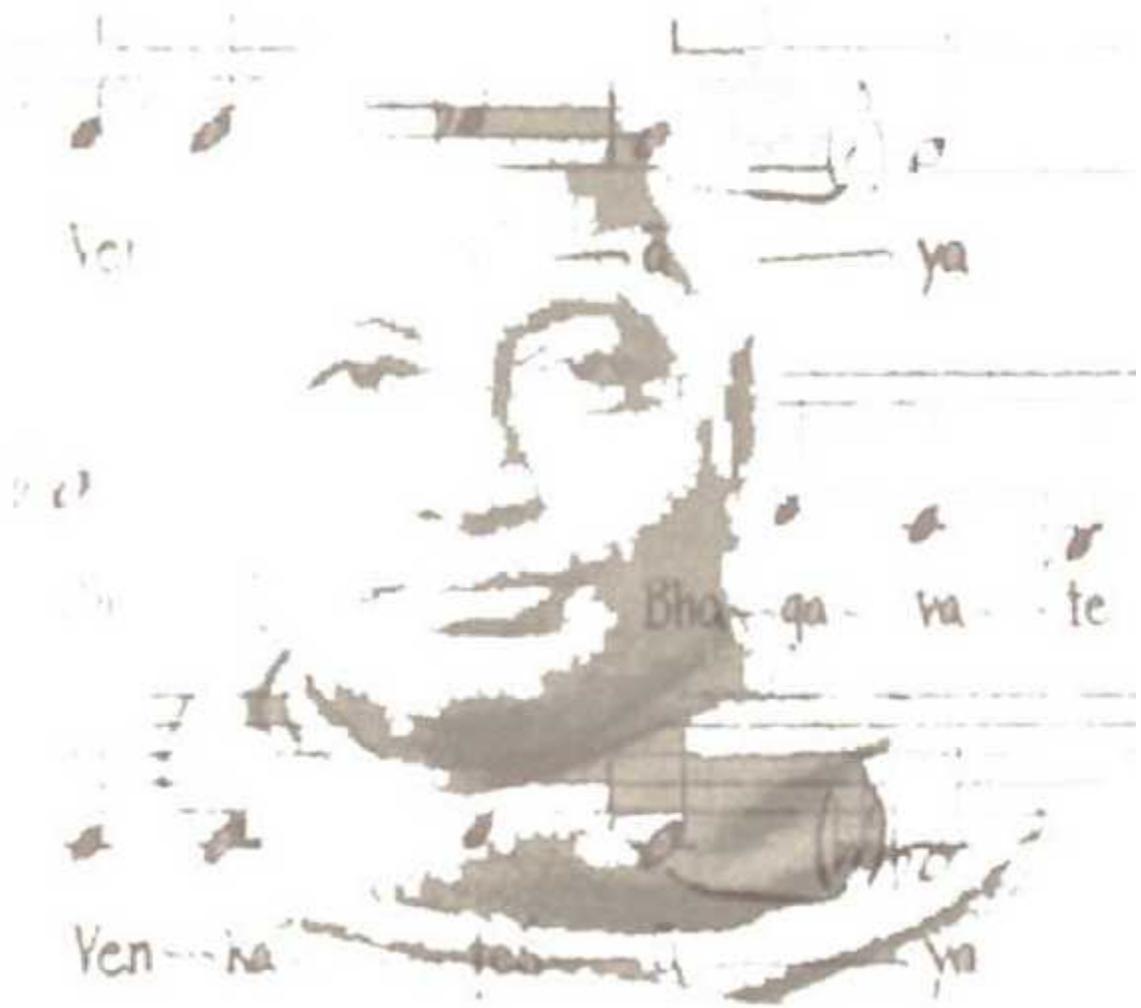


A Leaf From The Peepul Tree



Swami Venkatesananda

*Talks on the 15th Chapter
of The Bhagavad Gita*



Om Namah Venkatesaya
Om Namah Shivaya

The Bhagavad Gita
Chapter 15
A Leaf From the Peepul
Tree

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1. One

I thought we might return to our old friend, the scripture known as the Bhagavad Gita, and take just the fifteenth chapter for a closer look. Somehow this brief chapter has acquired a unique status. It is considered 'purusottamah yoga', but that is only because the word 'purusottamah' appears in the text. It is customary in the ashrams in North India for the monks to recite this fifteenth chapter every day before meals. The saints or the spiritual leaders hit upon a very nice idea. They thought that the best way to guarantee its recitation every day was to insist that it is recited as a pre-lunch ritual. That's the one thing we don't miss. We might miss having a bath, or other things, but food we don't miss. So, if you go to North India, you will find this extraordinary feature in the ashrams. As the server starts serving the food, somebody would give a cue, and the thunderous and ponderous recitation of this fifteenth chapter would commence. But then, since they have memorised and religiously repeated the verses every day for years and years and years, they could recite this chapter in their dreams, so that the mind is usually not associated with the sublime message of the Bhagavad Gita. Yet, I suppose the ancient sages were optimists; and so, they suggested: repeat this chapter of the Gita at least once a day, so that some time or other a little curiosity may be aroused in one phrase, one verse, and that might open a new avenue and lead us to a grand vision which is represented in the fifteenth chapter.

We will recapture the story of the Bhagavad Gita briefly. It is the story of a battle, and is contained in another epic called the Mahabharata. The epic of the Mahabharata represents the colossal destruction of humanity and the civilization that that age had built up so laboriously and with such great devotion. There seems to be a cyclical insanity that mankind suffers from. We build up and up and up, and then we love what we have built so intensely that we want to protect it. If you take it step by step, it is a beautiful thing. Not a single step is a mis-step, is at fault. Is it evil to progress? No. Is it evil to build? No. Is it evil to love what you build? Of course not. Is it evil to try to protect and preserve what you build? Of course not. And, if you think that now or at a future date somebody or one of his descendants might threaten the stability of what you have built, is it evil to defend it? Of course not. When you are nearly certain that 'they' who don't like what 'we' have built, are only waiting for an opportunity to destroy it, is it evil to deliver a pre-emptive strike? A pre-emptive strike is to hit him before he hits you. Who on earth is to prove whether what you fear might happen or not?

Each one of these steps seems to make perfect sense, but the whole thing adds up to a colossal destruction. A destruction of the very thing that we built with such great labour and love, and which we cherished with such great affection and devotion. That's it. It seems to be an inevitable process, very much like, on a modified scale, one's own body. How very diligently we nourish and cherish this body. But then it's own destruction seems to be inexorable. You cannot arrest it. The same thing happens on a mass scale, if you visualise the world as a round pebble, or just a single cell. Probably that is an dependent organism or part of an enormous organism called God. It is quite possible that that organism also has to

undergo the same changes inevitably. It grows and grows, till one of these days it explodes. The only trouble is that we happen to be part of that little organism.

In the Mahabharata, we are told that two cousins were born enemies. They were born, enemies or not. Our enemies are usually our erstwhile friends. Someone who has been very friendly with me, it is that person alone that can hate me. The closer the relationship, the greater the danger of it souring. We have got to come into some relationship with at least some people. As soon as you are born, you have got at least two relations, your father and mother. You can't escape. From there on, you are building, making relationships with brothers, sisters, husband, or wife. But with all of them, the yogi's prayer is: can we merely touch each other without getting caught up in each other's personality, and without staying too far away, aloof, and indifferent? If this is not practised, then either we disintegrate in loneliness, or we cultivate rather strong emotional or sentimental relationships with their terrible consequences. Either they lead to enmity or to heart-break on the part of one or the other of the parties.

We are told that these cousins were hostile to each other, and tried their best to destroy each other. One group was supposed to be vicious, wicked. They were not wicked when they were alive, but they are called wicked by the historians. Is that right? No community of rulers calls itself wicked, no, no! "We want to rule the world because we mean very well. We want humanity to prosper and we know how to bring this about." It is the historians who go back on paper in time, and call them wicked, vicious, and paint the other party as paragons of virtue.

Whom do I call virtuous? Whom do I call vicious? Is there any person on earth who is totally virtuous, whose conduct is absolutely pure and unblemished? Is there someone else on earth who is totally vicious? You don't find them at all. Buddha said this very beautifully: "No one is absolutely perfect, and no one is absolutely vicious; therefore, turn your gaze on yourself, and examine your own mind." That is more important than judging others. And that is exactly what Jesus Christ also said: "Judge not", because there is a lot of work you have to do on yourself, on your own mind, on your heart, and there is very little time to manipulate others.

The struggle between these cousins was a struggle for sovereignty, for domination. You have heard or used the phrase 'struggle for survival'. Taken individually, we don't survive at all; given the time, we all perish. Taken collectively, something survives in any case - humanity survives. Mankind survives, man dies. Survival is there. What exactly do we mean by survival? Well, "My culture, my religion must survive and yours may be destroyed." This thing which you call culture - which is not culture really, but which you call culture - the way you dress, the way you fashion your hair, your life-style and all this, is undergoing change every few years. What am I preserving, and what am I protecting? It's going to go in any case. Yes? Every few years, there is a change, and it must happen. So, there is no struggle for survival. The struggle is always for domination. There is absolutely no sense in a thing called 'struggle for

survival'. Individually, we perish, the culture changes, but mankind lives on regardless of who they are called.

In this struggle for power, for domination, between these two cousins, one was cheated by the other, and so, the other one went to an incarnate godhead of that period. Someone who posterity or history believes to have been an incarnation of God. God had come down to earth in person, in order to restore righteousness, destroy all viciousness, wickedness, and all that. That person was called Krishna. As far as we are concerned, in this context, Krishna is a great teacher, the author of the Bhagavad Gita. After he had personally taken the role of an ambassador for peace, he himself advised the righteous people that to declare war was the only way to restore righteousness on earth.

All this is debatable, questionable. But there is one interesting thing here. Throughout the religious literature of the world, we are told that God created the world and saw it was good. We are told that, if we are to be righteous and men of God, we should love one another. 'Thou shalt not kill', and 'Thou shalt love one another' - these commandments are found in all religious texts, all over the world. And yet, the religious texts themselves are full of descriptions of violence, of wars and battles.

Realising that, as long as there are two minds, my mind and your mind, as long as there are conditioned beings, they will create trouble for one another - and this means for themselves too, the wise sages who taught us to love one another in the first chapter of their teaching, went on in the third chapter to lay down rules which seem to have restricted the field of hostility. These rules, I believe, were almost scrupulously observed during the Mahabharata War. But there was a problem on the very first day. When Krishna, as a charioteer, drove the chariot of one of the combatants, and placed it right in the middle of the two armies, that prince looked around and collapsed. "Oh my God, I didn't realise that we are about to destroy our own people." It's an extremely noble sentiment, except that at that point it had no meaning, and Krishna philosophically urges this warrior: "Forget all that now, and do what has to be done."

That phrase 'do what has to be done', has been condensed into 'do your duty'. What is duty? Who determines whose duty it is? Probably even the word 'duty' is meant to mean 'due performance of what has to be done' - not merely 'doing what has to be done.' Due performance, in this case, means - with understanding, with wisdom, and with the right attitude, knowing the truth - then that action is duty. Who determines this? Only my own inner light can determine this.

This is the reason why this great teacher Krishna chose to discourse upon this great truth on the battlefield, to His student, disciple, Arjuna. Though Krishna was only a driver, at that moment He was the boss, and He taught the Bhagavad Gita to Arjuna. "You are looking at them as your friends and your enemy. You are looking at this world and all these people who are part of this world, and you are concerned, wondering whether what you are about to do is right or wrong,

constructive or destructive." That's our problem too.

Try to understand what the world is. If you understand what the world is, a new vision might arise; and that vision might decide whether this should be done or that should be done. It is an extraordinarily simple truth, which we have persistently ignored. It is not by manipulating the outside world, including the body; it is not in deciding whether I should do this or do that, whether I should fight or not fight, whether I should become a swami or continue to be a married man. You are merely fiddling with the external non-essentials of your life. Leave that alone for a moment. Reflect on the truth. When you have the vision of this truth, and when that truth is truly assimilated, it shall make you free; free from anxiety, free from fear, free from greed, free from hopes, free from expectation.

When you struggle in this life to free yourself from this or that, you jump from the frying pan into the fire; and if the fire is too hot, you jump back from the fire into the frying pan, which must have grown a little bit hotter by this time. That is the story of our life. We struggle all the time, not realising that life is not meant to be a struggle. Life came into this world smoothly, and it will exit smoothly also. And it lives, it is carried on beautifully smoothly. We create problems, on account of our own hopes, fears, and expectations. When something goes wrong in this, it has to go wrong. But there is a struggle to get out of that, and realise my hope through another mischief, another manipulation. Instead, let us be still just for a moment. This 'be still' is not a commandment to abandon activity, but the 'be still' is necessary to get this vision of truth, and to allow this vision to be assimilated and that truth to act.

A very interesting chapter of the Bhagavad Gita is the fifteenth. Krishna paints a beautiful picture:

urdvamulam adhahsakham asvattham prahur avyayam chandamsi yasya parnani yas tam veda
sa vedavit (XV:1)

I think what you call the poplar belongs to the same family of trees known as 'asvatta' in India. It is a magnificent and beautiful tree. I have not seen many huge poplars, but the asvatta is usually enormous, and magnificent. Royal to look at. Visualise that tree. Arjuna had obviously seen many of these trees, and visualised that tree. But there is a change, there is a difference - the roots are above, and the branches below. It looks funny - but I can visualise a tree with roots above and branches coming out below. That's it. Such is the nature of this world. Beautiful, beautiful. If it is a tree growing in the normal way, you can uproot it and throw it away. Here, the roots are up, and therefore you cannot uproot this tree. You cannot destroy the world, don't try. You can destroy yourself to some extent. We'll come to that later.

'The roots are above' - symbolically, that is - the roots are fixed, rooted in the eternal, in the transcendent reality - which is not within your grasp. You cannot grasp it, you cannot understand it, you cannot touch it, you cannot manipulate it. 'And the branches are below' - these innumerable beings which you find in this

world, form the branches; and those millions of leaves are the words, the names that you have given to these innumerable beings. It is called 'asvatta'. There is a little bit of word play here. 'Asvatta' means the peepul tree, the poplar tree. But when this word is split into its syllables - 'sva' means tomorrow; 'asva' means there is no tomorrow. How do you understand that?

chamdamsi yaya parnani (XV:1)

To this tree, known as the world, there is no tomorrow. Which can mean either or both. Either that everyng is changing all the time and there is no tomorrow - the world of tomorrow is very different from what it is today, or you can also interpret to mean that there is no time to the reality of his world. It is rooted in the eternal, it is rooted in the timeless, and therefore, whatever you try to do to it, it is still eternal.

Creation is eternal, whether it is made manifest or it remains hidden, whether one part of it, one dust particle of it, known as the earth, exists or disintegrates. The totality of creation is eternal. There is, paradoxically, constant change. If it is constant, it is not changing; if it is changing, it is not constant. But such is the paradoxical nature of this universe that it is constantly changing.

urdvamulam adhahsakham asvattham prahur avyayam (XV:1)

'Avyayam' - this is inexhaustible. What a beautiful concept! I don't know when this was written, but the concept of the conservation of energy, conservation of matter, is supposed to be very recent. 'Energy can only change its form, its activity, but the quantum of energy in the universe is constant'. In the same way, the quantum of matter in the universe is constant, though shapes might change. 'Avyayam' - whatever there is in this universe, whatever there is in this creation, is unchanging, inexhaustible. You may see the water as cloud up there, or as a flowing river, or as the ocean, but the total quantity of water in the world is constant. It cannot be added onto, it cannot be substracted from. Such is the nature of this world.

adhas co 'rdhvam prasrtas taya sakha gunapravrddha visayapavalah adhas ca mulany anusamtatani karmanubandhini manusyaloke (XV:2)

'This tree grows and, as it grows, the branches seem to grow, and the roots seem to grow, expand and expand and expand'.

But it expands or it contracts, it grows or it does not grow - only in your own limited vision. Whereas, if you take any part of the tree, even one leaf, and enter into it, you will come right to the roots of this tree. You will come face to face with this truth. You'll come face to face with the reality, or God, whatever you wish to call it. So, instead of trying to manipulate this tree, instead of trying to embellish it or prune it, enter into it. Enter into the substance of this tree, into the mystery, the miracle of this tree, of the universe. In it, you might realise that when this false vision of a totally independent individual is discarded, you are one with all. You are the all. Acquire that vision, and let actions flow from that. That is the message of the first verse of the fifteenth chapter.

2. Two

Sometimes there is a sort of revulsion at the very mention of the word scripture, for the simple reason that the scripture is obviously old. All that is old need not be outdated. For instance, we are following the same way of eating as our ancestors of two million years ago, though we have invented other means also - feeding intravenously and all that sort of thing. But basically we have continued to abide by the simple law that, if you are hungry, put something into the mouth, not into your ears or into your nose. Some of these things, even if they are ancient, are still valid. But the objectors to scripture are right. We cannot blindly follow anything, a scripture or a person or anything whatsoever. Because, if we are blind, we are running the risk of being run over by something or falling into a ditch. Nothing that is done blindly is wise, absolutely nothing. So, the scriptures should not be blindly accepted, nor blindly rejected. But, we should have the courage, the sincerity, and the earnestness to examine them. They may have some relevance to me, and save me the botheration of going through the whole thing again, blindly.

There is a fantastic statement in the Yoga Vasistha: 'If a statement appeals to you, accept it, even if it comes from the mouth of an infant; if it does not appeal to you, reject it, even if it is God almighty who is standing in front of you saying this.' Without blindly accepting and blindly rejecting, we can examine, because the human problem has remained a human problem for as long as humanity has existed on earth. There may be superficial differences, there may be variations in the non-essentials, but the basics are the same. If I dislike you, I kill you. At one stage, people fought with stones; at another, people fought with sticks. All that needed a lot of courage, because you had to hit each other at arm's length. Then they invented bow and arrow, so that you could shoot from a distance - cowardice entered. Then we invented the gun, you don't even have to appear in front of your enemy, you can shoot from anywhere - more cowardice. And now, cowardice has reached its climax, though we think we are the bravest in history. One doesn't even have to be seen or known, one just has to press the button, and some hundreds of thousands of people are wiped out. So, the human problem is the same, though the method and the instruments used may vary from epoch to epoch.

That is the only reason why we feel that the scriptures may still be valid, provided we examine them in the light of our own understanding. In order to determine what has to be done in our life, we must clearly understand the context - the context being the world in which we live - and we should also clearly understand what action means. These two are dealt with in the first three verses of the fifteenth chapter.

We have learnt in our Sunday schools the catechism - where is God? God is omnipresent; who created the world? God; if God is omnipresent, how did he create the world; here is the son, here is the mother; the mother gave birth to him and he is outside of her right now; if God is omnipresent, is it possible for

something to be created and pushed out? No. Then, what do we mean by creation? One has to understand that.

I believe the first word in the Hebrew Bible - *breshit* - which has been translated into 'in the beginning', also means 'in the head', 'in the mind'. So, where has this taken place? In the mind of God. It is not outside of God, it is not outside of the totality of being - if by God we mean the totality of being. Sideline to this, it seems the Talmudic rabbis were very fond of polemics, and somebody raised the question, "Why is the first letter of the Holy Bible the second letter of the alphabet and not the first?" It is not 'A' but 'B'. And some wise man said, "'A' represents the supreme being Himself, and He is beyond all this." He doesn't come into this jumble, into this problem, into this nuisance. From that, all this happens.

The first words in the fifteenth chapter represent creation as an inverted peepul tree. Is it possible that this image of the creation is total imaginary nonsense, or is it possible that such a thing exists? Maybe it is true. I was watching the night sky once in the planetarium; they were describing the Leo. There, the instructor was, with his flashlight, linking some of the stars, so that the final result looked like the head of a lion. Similarly, it is quite possible that this cosmos or this Milky Way has the appearance of an inverted peepul tree. I have no quarrel with such a belief. It's only a belief. But, there is an important puzzle here. What do you call the tree? Do you call the tree the leaves, do you call the trunk the tree? Is not the whole thing the tree? From the smallest of root fibres right up to the leaves, flowers and fruits, the whole thing is tree. If that is so, we come up with a pretty shocking understanding that this creation has its root in God, it is nothing other than God. It has emanated from God, it is Him, and it is non-different from Him. He who knows this, he is a man of wisdom, a man of knowledge.

This mysterious tree called creation, as it grows, branches up, and what you and I call objects, are its leaves. They become objects, because you and I call them so. This is another very interesting puzzle. If I pull a girl's hair, she says, "Oh, you are teasing 'me', you are hurting 'me'." I didn't touch her at all, I was only pulling her hair. She says, "You are hurting me", because, for the time being, the hair is part of the 'me', the subject. The moment it is cut, it falls down, and it becomes an article. That which is an object now, was the subject a little while ago.

This is true of everything. Whatever is outside, first was part of myself, and for all sorts of reasons I projected this thing outside of myself, in order to look at it, in order to taste it, in order to enjoy it, in order to experience it - and it became an object. Having projected all these diverse objects, I give them names. That is what I believe the Bible says. God asks Adam, "Name all these", and then they were born as objects, with a name tag. These are leaves of the same tree. All these objects are not different and distinct from the creator Himself. The creator is the creation; the creation is the creator. And this formula is applied both to what you call the world outside you and the world inside you; the world of psychological categories; the psychological world of your own dreams, of your own fears, of

your own hopes, of your own expectations, of your own despair. That psychological world is non-different from the creator which is yourself.

My fears, my anxieties, my hopes, my rations, my joys and my non-joys, are nothing but me. They are my creation, and there is no difference whatsoever between the creator and the creation. This creation goes on and on and on and on, sprouting beautiful leaves, beautiful objects, and at the end there is action. Once again, the imagery of the peepul tree is beautiful. If you sit under the peepul tree, I believe the poplar also, when even the mildest breeze rustles the leaves, that's the most beautiful sound. I don't think I have heard such music under any other tree. It's so beautiful. That is natural to it. When the wind blows over the tree, the thousands of leaves rustle, and there is a sound, there is an action there. That activity is common to all. That activity is almost the inevitable sequel to this internal creation.

Activity is inherent in creation, in life. Krishna has already pointed out that not even for a single moment can you be inactive. But, if I have to be active, what must be my attitude, my motivation? Absurd! You don't need a motivation. Krishna's declaration was that you cannot be inactive even for a moment! If to be active is inevitable in life, what do you need a motivation for? That is one aspect of it. Another aspect is your catechism: who created the world? God. What is the purpose of my life? Do His will. What is His will? That which is not my will. Unfortunately, the catechists do not usually say that 'that which is not my choice' is the divine will. They usually say, 'follow the scriptures', or 'follow the priest' or somebody else.

I do not know the divine will, but I know when I am making choices, when I am exercising what I consider to be my free will. Krishna knows that; and He says you have no need to make a choice at all. Life makes its own choices. Life has come into being, and it seems to be capable of living in spite of all the attention that we bestow upon our own lives. Life seems to be capable of surviving the onslaught of its own creatures. What terrible things we do to life, and yet it goes on.

Do we have, or do we not have free will to choose? You have, as long as you think you have. I have talked to quite a number of very good friends, and usually, when they are young, they say, "Oh no, I'm not going to get married, it's a nuisance." Then something happens. Someone comes along and says, "Hi". Finished! So much for your free will and for your choice. Life decides all this, life chooses its own path.

When I choose to do this and not that, instantly there is something else that wakes up and says, "I want to do this and not that, because I want to get there, I want to gain that." I have a motivation. I have no idea what lies ahead, though I thought I was clever enough to figure out all those things. If your choice happens to coincide with the choice that life has already made - it happens sometimes - that is when you pat yourself on the back. Then you are more firmly confirmed in

your foolishness. When it so happens that the choice you make seems to work out, you are drawn deeper into this ignorance. Of course, if the choice proves wrong, you get frustrated, nervous breakdown, and all that sort of thing. I have never really understood how the nerves break down. One needn't live such a life of tension.

How do I know that life has its own choice, and the 'I' should be stopped from making choices with motivation, whatever it may be? Whether it is a good motivation or a bad motivation, motivation is already bad. How do I arrive at that point? Only when I see that all choices are ridiculous. Only when I see that action, as determined by me, is disastrous. Or, if you don't want to be realistic enough to call it disaster, at least call it useless, senseless.

If you treat me very nicely for the next few years, I'll still die; and if you treat me very badly for the next few years, I'll die. So, your affection or disaffection has nothing whatsoever to do with the end result. If you are the greatest saint in the world, you'll still die; if you are the worst sinner in the world, you'll still die after some time. If you are the most generous and charitable person, you'll die, and whatever you build, will come down, be destroyed, in course of time. Can I see that life, as determined by me, action as determined by me, is nonsense? Can I see that the choices that I make do not make any sense? When that intelligence, not the mind, not the emotional being, but that intelligence within realises this tremendous truth, then action happens. That action belongs to the root, to God. So, only that action in which there was no individual choosing, no motivation whatsoever, the action that happened, is divine.

Can anything happen without the Divine Will? No. Obviously not, because, being an integral part of this totality, no one can violate the cosmic law. But the individual who thought, "I am making the choice", and made a choice, enjoys or suffers as the case may be, whereas the Divine Will goes on inexorably. So, one who thinks he has free will and choice, is in a state of confusion. In that state of confusion, he functions without understanding either the world, the creation, or the nature of action.

na rupam asye 'ha tatho 'palabhyate na 'nto na ca 'dir na ca sampratistha asvattham
enam sarvirudhamulam asangasastrena drhena chittva (XV:3)

We'll discuss the first part today, and the second part tomorrow.

na rupam asye 'ha tatho 'palabhyate (XV:3)

You think you are seeing the world. The world you are seeing is nothing more than the projection of your own thought. You do not know what the reality of the world is, or you cannot know what the reality of the world is. The limited mind, the conditioned mind, the mind that has been educated - in physics, mathematics, chemistry, biology, zoology - is so restricted in its vision, that it is not possible for that mind to see creation as it is.

Even the most powerful eyesight cannot see my skeletal structure, whereas an X-ray plant is able to do that. What do I look like? Take it with a pinch of salt. What do you see of me? Nothing, absolutely nothing! Except a piece of head sticking out of the collar, and something like a sort of spoon and fork sprouting from the sleeves. That's all. The rest, you are imagining. That I am a man, you are imagining, you have not seen anything. And this is perfectly and absolutely true in regard to everything in this world.

We make just one little assumption, and we think we have seen something. From there on, we build an enormous structure, and call it the world, or different names. But we have still not understood what the real and true nature of the world is. Why? For the very simple reason that the understander has not been understood. We have not examined our scales, but we are weighing everything else on them. The weights are wrong, the weights are imperfect, the weights are limited, they are useless. And, with these weights, we are weighing everything, measuring all the things in this world. We are giving them names, calling them good, bad, evil, holy. Krishna says: first examine 'your' weights, 'they' are wrong.

na rupam asye 'ha tatho 'palabhyate (XV:3)

It doesn't have the form that you have projected on it.

The world exists; something exists - even 'the world' is a word. Onto that you have projected an idea, and called it a world. And you have tried to understand it without understanding yourself, which leads to endless misunderstanding.

na 'nto na ca 'dir na ca sampratistha (XV:3)

No one has yet determined how old this creation is, when it was born. You don't know my date of birth, you don't even know that I was born. How do you know that I exist? Yet we assert, "this is the truth". If, by God's Grace, we have been able to understand the ever changing nature of this world, once again we might be shocked that our understanding is totally limited.

Our understanding of life is totally fragmentary, and we have given this piece, a small fragment of our life, the dignity of the whole, which is an absurd thing. If I see this as a fragment, and if I realised its worthlessness, what would my attitude be? Totally different. If I knew myself as a part of this totality, my attitude to life would be different. If I knew that I do not know, that I do not understand this world, I do not even understand myself, the attitude would be very different. The attitude would be one of supreme, complete and total humility. One wouldn't be assertive at all. One who understands this simple fact, becomes truly humble.

na 'nto na ca 'dir na ca z sampratistha (XV:3)

We don't know when it arose, where it arose. We don't know how long this world will last - when we say 'the world', we don't talk of this earth, but all creation - we don't know its magnitude, and we don't know how it stands. These

are the fundamental questions that one asks oneself. "How does this cosmos stand?"; "on what is it based?"; "where is its foundation?". Is there a mansion without a foundation, a floating mansion? Would you and I be happily resting on a floating mansion without a floor? That is what we are doing in the world. We are getting excited about space stations and stuff and nonsense. We 'are' on a space station. The whole earth is a space station, infinitesimally small compared to the galaxy or something else. What is the power of gravity? What is an orbit? We use these words freely, without understanding the meaning, the sense - and it sounds glorious, very knowledgeable! We don't know anything. If we think we know something, that thinking blocks proper understanding.

That is the tragedy in our relationships too. "Ah, of course I know who you are." That's it! There starts misunderstanding. "I know who you are. I know you cheated me the other day, and therefore you are a cheat." That is the type of relationship that we forge amongst ourselves. We assume too much. A-s-s-u-m-e. That is assume, isn't it? - ass-you-and-me. You and me are both asses! When we assume that we know, that is when relationships take a sour turn. If I realise that I don't know myself, and I don't know you either, then I tread softly, softly all the time. My attitude towards life and all relationship remains one of humility, watchfulness, and love.

3. Three

The student in the Bhagavad Gita, Arjuna, heard the exposition of truth from someone who is considered incarnate divinity, from God Himself. Years later, when Krishna was about to take leave, Arjuna, it seems, suddenly vaguely remembered, and asked Krishna a very interesting question. "When we were about to start this war, I was confused, and you said something marvellous. I have forgotten all about it. Will you please repeat the whole thing all over again?" So, if it happened to him, it could happen to us. What is our attitude when we listen to an exposition of truth, whoever may be the expounder? How can we retain and assimilate the truth that might be heard? You may consider this philological research, or a joke.

To hear, we use the ear. But the ear is not this organ that is stuck on either side of the face; I think that is more for embellishment - it looks very beautiful. The hearing is not done by these organs called ear. Hearing is done with another word which closely resembles hear: heart. You pronounce it in a different way, but it's a fault of the language, not of the truth. To hear is to hear with the heart, and 'ear' is in the centre of the heart - h-ear-t. That is pure word-play.

So, the true ear is right in the centre of your own heart. If you are able to hear with the heart, then you learn by heart. To learn by heart is not to memorise. Memorising, I think, we all did when we were at school, and you know what a struggle it was! Soon after we left the school, we forgot what we memorised. That is the problem of the students. But, when something is heard with the heart, which is the seat of life, of love, which is the seat - if you believe in this - of your soul, then it is never forgotten. This is the reason why something that touches your heart, whether it is love or hate, is never forgotten. All the rest is forgotten.

In order that what we hear may be indelible, one should learn to let life itself listen. Not the brain, not the mind - which is a bundle of memories, to quote my Guru, Swami Sivananda - not with the emotional part of our being, but with life itself. Can my whole life listen to it? When does it do so? When we realise that what we are listening to is vital to our life. We are not discussing an ancient epic, we are not discussing outmoded philosophy or theology, but we are discussing something which is vital to our everyday life. That's one. And number two, the heart is also the seat of love.

Here it may be love in the dualistic connotation. There must be love in our hearts right now, and only then can non-verbal transmission, non-verbal communication take place. Otherwise, you sit there arguing, and there is a sort of on-going censorship - this is allowed, this is not allowed. If the censorship is suspended - not abolished - so that, while hearing, the 'ear' that is in the centre of the heart, listens to the message, then it is possible that the message is received by the heart, heard by the heart. That is an extremely important factor while we are engaged in this discussion. Secondly, in order to explain something which may be comparatively new in our lives, we may have to use examples,

illustrations, similes, but these examples, illustrations, and similes, have a very limited service, a very limited use. Stretched beyond that, it will break. An example, or an illustration, or a simile, is meant merely to illustrate a certain facet of the truth, not the whole truth.

So, when we are told in the fifteenth chapter of the Bhagavad Gita that this creation is like an inverted peepul tree, a huge, enormous tree, a cosmic tree with its roots above, branches all over - above and below - that is creation. Action, life, notion, change, are part and parcel of this creation. That is, a part that cannot be parted. It is a fallacy to use the word 'part' where the thing cannot be parted. The hand is part of my body, because it can be taken away. But that which cannot be taken away, cannot be dissected, should not be called a part. So, in this cosmic totality, nothing can ever be removed, and therefore it is even unwise to call action an integral part of the totality of creation. Which means, nobody, nothing, no-thing in this universe, in this creation, is actionless, idle. That's science. Even in a rock there is tremendous activity of a different nature. You don't see the activity that goes on in the rock. Even so, a cosmonaut sitting half-way between here and the moon, looking at the earth, sees no activity.

There is a lovely story in the Yoga Vasistha, which compares, not the earth, but the whole of this cosmos, to a rock. Just as a rock might contain millions of small pieces, particles, even so this cosmos contains millions of stars. But basically it is just one total whole; and, in that total, whole, activity, motion, change happen constantly. Nobody can stop this; nobody can withdraw from this. Nobody can say, "I don't like this activity, I want to sit still." In that sitting, still there is action. The body is constantly bubbling with energy, and that energy is motion, and the motion is life, and that life is change. Even if I die, the body decomposes, and decomposition also involves change, involves energy, involves motion, involves action. Even in death there there is action. Never is there a single moment in this universe that action ceases to be. The whole thing is one. But where is it? In God's own mind.

na rupam asye 'ha tatho 'palabhyate na 'nto na ca 'dir na ca sampratistha asvattham
enam suviruddhamulam asangasastrena drdhena chittva (XV:3)

You don't see the truth or reality of this creation, don't worry about God! You don't see the true nature of an object, let alone the subject. On the other hand, you don't know yourself, let alone knowing others. We don't even know how this body functions. Once I was forced to read a few books on anatomy and physiology. It was earth shattering! What a fantastic piece of intelligence this human body is! I hope those of you who practise hatha yoga will bear this in mind. After billions and billions of years, scientists, the greatest of them, are still trying to understand the one cell, one molecule of this human body. They sound pompous and knowledgeable in their writings, otherwise the books wouldn't sell. But if you worm yourself into their hearts and ask, "What exactly is this? What is birth? What is death?", they will say, "I don't know." What makes the baby take its first breath? You can slap it, and you can do what you like; but if it still refuses to take its first breath, oh well, that is all.

na 'nto na ca 'dir na ca sampratistha (XV:3)

One does not know the true origin. Origin, in the sense - what was the first cause and how did that first cause become its own effect? In simpler language: which came first, the hen or the egg? Nobody can answer this question. And nobody can answer the question: how come this universe is considered limitless? Can you imagine something which has no limit? What does it mean that space has no limit? If I get up from here, and walk this way, I knock against a wall, and stop. But, if a man happens to tread on a spot on earth which has lost its gravitational pull, where is he going to stop? What does limitless space mean? This universe is established in nothing. Its nature is not known, its origin is not known. Do you see the tragedy of this truth? One does not know how it is held together, and what its limits are. Such is this marvellous tree which is described as the tree of creation, just for the sake of concrete visualisation and understanding.

What are we supposed to do with this creation or in this creation? When I ask myself that question, there is a division created in my own mind. When I ask what I must do with the medicine which was bought, that medicine is something which is outside of me, and therefore I want to know what is my relation with this thing, how many times I must take it or not take it. So, when we ask ourselves what must we do in this world, we are dissociating ourselves from this world. Is that possible? Is there any sense at all in this? Can I be dissociated from this world?

asvattham enam suviruddhamulam asangasastrena drdhena chittva (XV:3)

Examine this, understand this; it is firmly rooted. Where is this creation, this world, rooted? How did it take root at all? So to speak, you separate yourself from the world, from this creation; then, look at it, and imagine it is so and so, or it is something else. And then, by constantly repeating, "this is so and so", you think it has become so and so. I will give you, with your permission, a rather crazy example, just to bring home this little truth. A child is born to a couple. This you are familiar with, I think. The mother has had a boyfriend other than the husband and the child really is that boyfriend's. She does not want to expose this, and so she goes on telling this man, "Look! your baby, look! your child, look! your son." And the foolish, ignorant man goes on saying, "Yes it is my son, yes it is my son"; so that, in a few year's time, that really and truly becomes his son. That's it! What made this relationship? What confirmed this relationship? Nothing but a bluff. But the bluff, when it is repeated again and again, and believed in, it becomes 'truth'. You can put that truth in inverted commas.

Please examine all relationship. It's a crazy thing, if you begin to examine it. All relationship is tainted by this defect. The relationship is first assumed, and then repeatedly affirmed, believed in, and then becomes firmly established in our mind, in our heart, because of our foolish, obstinate persistence in this foolishness. Because we refuse to examine. What do I know about myself in order

that I might know something about him, and enter into some kind of relationship? I don't know anything. This confession or this observation, which leads to the understanding that these are all based on assumption, is the beginning of enquiry, the beginning of wisdom.

asvattham enam suviruddhamulam asangasastrena drdhena chittva (XV:3)

Please listen very carefully, this is a tricky concept again. This creation, described as an inverted peepul tree, has to be cut at its very root by a saw or a weapon called 'asanga'. 'Asanga' is usually translated as detachment or non-attachment, because the word is negatively formed - a-sanga. 'Sanga' means company, or attachment, or relationship, and 'asanga' is the opposite of all this. But people who don't want to use this negatively say 'detachment'. One must be detached from life. How can I be detached from life?

How can I be detached from the world? Then again the same routine is adopted here. Here is a young man. He is very deeply attached to his wife - a worldly man. And here is another man. He divorced his wife, he gave up his family - maybe his family gave him up! - he gave up everything, and he lives in this world completely non-attached, detached. An image is built in your mind. You are comparing this person with the other person who is attached to his wife. Assumption again. That's what I want to point out. You go on affirming that assumption again and again and again. It is not possible to be detached from the world, from creation, from life.

We often say that the swami 'has renounced the world'. My God, I am still here! Renounce the world - if I go into some space station and stay there for good. I'm still under a roof, still eating the same food as most of you do, still sleeping in a bed similar to yours, still attending to this body and experiencing pain and pleasure. What is renouncing the world? It is not possible to renounce the world. But there is a specific commandment - 'asanga'- do not come into contact with it.

This is also the burden of the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali - how not to come into contact with sorrow, with pain. In the Bhagavad Gita itself there is another statement:

tam vidyad duhkhasamyogaviyogam yogasamjnitam (VI:23)

Not to come into contact with pain at all, is yoga; not to come into contact with sorrow at all is yoga. If I am going to be in this world, which is inevitable - there is no if! - if I am going to be surrounded by other beings, other people or animals or whatever it is, how is it possible for me not to come into contact with this at all? That's the tricky problem, extremely subtle. And if you enter into it, it's a thrilling discovery.

When you have separated yourself from it, when you have pulled yourself away from that, it is then that you come into contact with it. This hand comes into contact with this face. The hand does not come into contact with itself. Why so?

Because it is the hand. You cannot separate this hand from itself. Can I similarly realise that I am not part of this universe, I am not part of this creation? The creation is - 'I' is not. The separation has immediately gone, disappeared.

'All of us are one'. Even that expression is inadequate, defective. The creation is one; the totality is one, indivisibly one. There are no parts to it, because no parts can be parted from the whole. There is a supreme oneness. When that oneness is realised, or when there is immediate realisation that you and I are one for ever and ever and ever, there is no contact, and there is no separation. There is absolute oneness. That oneness is called love.

This 'I love you' stuff is business, mutual gratification. You scratch my back and afterwards I scratch yours. I think the interesting part of the joke was missed out. You scratch my back first, and then I'll scratch your back. That is what all partners are saying. Not just one, both partners are saying this. There is no love at all in that. The love which is an expression of the realisation of this oneness, acts spontaneously.

I think most of you are familiar with Saint Paul's letter to the Corinthians, where there is a long statement of this love. Part of it is understandable on the basis of this: you don't expect anything in return, and you rush to one another's help without a motivation. If somebody happens to throw a flower, and it comes towards the face, the neck turns away. If it is some other object, like a piece of stone or a rotten egg, the hand covers the face without question, without motivation, without thought. The whole action is spontaneous. Unfortunately we use the word 'instinct' to refer to such behaviour. 'Instinct' was brought into disrepute by modern psychology. Instinctual drives are all something bad to be overcome sooner or later. So, all our lives we are struggling and struggling to overcome this instinct, and thus to make ourselves very intelligent creatures - which is total absurdity - instead of admitting that this is a fantastic phenomenon. We think that in our relationship there must be a justification, a rationalisation. We think we must love someone and not another. That leads to another absolutely crazy result. He is my friend, and if he sees me talking to someone who is his enemy, my friendship is also in danger. He says, "As long as you are my friend, you should hate my enemy." Why should I?

We also bring in the example of animals to rationalise family attachment. When our scientists and psychologists say that the birds have territorial instinct, and even the monkeys have the herd instinct, they are paying a tremendous tribute to the animals, and they are degrading themselves. When it comes to the territorial instinct and the herd instinct, we quote the animals, we side with the animals, which means an acceptance of the fact that they are superior to us. On the other hand, we have not examined them as one of them. We are only standing aside, and finding rationalisation for our own misbehaviour. They have no herd instinct. They stay together until the young ones are able to look after themselves; once they are able to look after themselves, they are on their own, totally free. They have no territorial instinct at all. They might want to build a nest for a certain

specific purpose, and once that is over, they go. But human beings brood and brood and brood over their children, till they are grandparents themselves, and call animals as witness to this! We think they are all attached, and they love one another in the way we love, and therefore we are all right. It is an absurd thing.

Can we love without any motivation whatsoever? Can we love one another, period, knowing that that is the manifestation of the oneness that alone is true? When such love takes possession of our heart, there is no contact at all. That is the beauty. You and I do not come into contact with each other, because there is no 'you', and there is no 'I'. Love alone exists. It is a magnificent vision.

tatah padam tat paramargitavyam yasmin gata na nivartanti bhuyah (XV:4)

The text is in the passive voice: "and then does one reach that supreme state from which there is no return". There is no return to this foolishness; there is no return to this ignorance. Once the 'I' is reabsorbed into the totality which you call God, by the direct realisation of the oneness of existence, in which there is no division, in which division is impossible, from there one does not return. You may or may not believe in the theory of reincarnation. What is reincarnation? It is quite simple. One molecule of whatever substance you wish to think of, starts from that root, and keeps on coming. Flowing, flowing, flowing. But where is it flowing? All within the same existence. Is that right? When there is this direct realisation of this oneness of existence, there is no reincarnation.

In another chapter, Krishna himself very beautifully hinted that it is that spirit that you are, that is neither born, nor will it ever die. Bodies are being born and dissolved all the time. New cells are being created, and cells are being disintegrated in that body all the time. So, on the one hand, there is this constant change, and on the other there is the constancy in this change. He who realises this, is never again deluded.

We go on and on in this foolishness, and think that we reincarnate, we go from death to birth. If I am dead, I am dead. How can I be born again? It is this foolishness that says, "I am this body", and which thinks I am dying, and which again thinks I am being born again. So, all this is in the mind, in a state of ignorance. Birth and death are not two. The truth is one alone. One cosmic being or one consciousness alone exists, and this cosmic consciousness is the spirit indwelling this cosmic creation. When that is realised, there is no separation from this cosmic creation, and therefore there is no contact with it. And therefore, there is no birth; there is no death; there is no sorrow; there is no suffering; there is no sin; there is no grief.

4. Four

tatah padam tat parimargitavyam yasmin gata na navirtanti bhuyah tam eva ca dyam purusam prapadye yatah pravrttih prasrta purani (XV:4)

This was the verse we were discussing yesterday. 'One should reach that state of being from which there is no return'. This has been interpreted to mean that what is called rebirth or transmigration stops there. If you take another view, nobody would quarrel. I am in a state of ignorance, and in a state of ignorance I exclude myself from the world, from all experiences. I consider myself someone apart from the world, which is an absurd thing. That is the nature of ignorance. By contemplating this unity of creation, I enter into it. 'Enter into it' is again an absurd expression used by an ignorant person. There is the realisation that I am non-different from creation; not even that I am part of creation, I am non-different from creation.

There is a fairly shattering statement in the Yoga Vasistha where the guru says that there is no essential difference between a god and a worm; both of them are made of the same substance. Thus, there is some amount of intelligence, and there is some amount of material, physical substance, and their interaction is called a creature. And whether that creature is called a god or a worm, that's it. You can call it anything you like. So, there is a realisation that I am non-different from this world, I am non-different from any of you.

You and I. This dualism is born at the same time as thinking starts. The moment a thought is born, that thought creates a division. It has to have a subject and an object; the subject depending upon the object, and the object depending upon the subject. Is that right? There is no you without me; there is no me without you. This is brought about by thinking.

How do you know? The yogis have a very simple way of dealing with that question. There is a state, which is common experience, in which this division does not exist - sleep. When you are fast asleep, neither 'I' exists, nor 'you' exists. Why is it so? Because, in sleep, the thought process is suspended. Not brought to a conclusion, but suspended. The moment sleep comes to an end, and thought begins to function, the I-you experience arises.

There is no harm in there being a thought process, and there is no harm in there being an I-you relationship, as long as it is directly realised that all this is part and parcel of the one infinite consciousness - the ocean and the waves. When you talk of the ocean and the waves, you are suggesting that the waves are apart from the ocean. When you talk of the waves playing upon the surface of the ocean, you are suggesting that there is this thing called ocean, and that there are things called waves which are playing upon its surface, which is absurd. The waves are the ocean. Then, why do you want to call them waves and the other thing ocean, whereas the truth is that the totality is one, an indivisible ocean? There is no harm at all, as long as, while using these words and expressions, there is the inner consciousness that all this is one.

It is not possible for the mind to understand this, because the mind, by its own thought process, must divide. The mind cannot understand or express unity, and therefore, while listening to this, it is important that the mind is not brought into operation. The moment mind starts functioning, it projects thoughts, and thoughts must divide - I-you, this-that, I-the world. So, there is some state of consciousness, of awareness which is not confined to the mind, not confined to the thought process. There is a state which can become immediately aware of the oneness, of the unity. Awareness or consciousness, being consciousness, is conscious of itself as unity, and therefore one must work through the mind into this consciousness.

tam eva ca dyam purusam prapadye yatah pravrttih prasrta prani (XV:4)

It is a beautiful expression. The thinker, who has so long been regarding himself as a distinct and separate entity, separate from creation, separate from the totality, says, "I don't want to be separate any more. I surrender myself to this totality, to that source from which the entire cosmos has emanated."

It is an extremely beautiful and interesting step. Please remember that this step is taken after all the previous ones have been taken. It is not as though this surrender is possible for an immature person. Only a mature person knows how to surrender.

When you surrender yourself totally, there is no desire left. Please note that I didn't say that there is no thought left. Thought can function. Just as thought is the function of the brain or the mind, just as speaking is the function of the vocal system, seeing is the function of the eyes, even so thought can go on. But, in that thought process there is no desire, there is no craving. Craving and self-knowledge are two opposite poles. Where one is, the other is not. So, the person who is mature, who has understood this cosmic unity, he alone can surrender. What is surrender? That previous foolish idea that I was somehow different and distinct from the cosmos is surrendered.

Very often people make it sound as if God is enriched by our surrendering ourselves, whereas a few great saints of India have sung very beautifully of this process of surrender. Mirabai, I think, says, "Ah, I am very clever, because I have surrendered myself to you, and in return I have gained you." It is a first class bargain. The drop joins the ocean and gains the ocean, becomes the divinity of the ocean. There is no loss, but there is no gain in the sense of 'I gain God consciousness'. So long as 'I' is there, there is no God consciousness. This surrender is an extremely beautiful and delicate art, which only a mature mind, a mature intelligence is capable of.

A reason why we are told that in most accidents the little ones survive, is that they do not resist the accident. They are thrown, and they fall down somewhere, quite safe. Long ago, I read in a medical book of some of these untimely deaths by

drowning. The scientist says that autopsy proves that the last experience of a drowned person is one of happiness. I really don't know how they managed to find that out. I guess they read the message of the nerves, or probably the dead person is smiling. But there is some sense in it. There is pain as long as you are struggling against the water that surrounds you. As long as that feeling, that division that I am drowning in this ocean, in this water, is there, there is contact with pain and suffering, psychological and physical. Once that division is abolished by surrender, then you become one with the ocean, one with the water. That's it. There is no longer pain, there is no longer suffering.

tam eva ca dyam purusam prapadye yatah pravrttih prasrta prani (XV:4)

So, the mature person realises that this oneness cannot be fragmented. This oneness cannot be partitioned. It is one and indivisible. This realisation immediately frees the individual from vanity and delusion.

*nirmanamoha jitasangadosa adhyabmanitya viniivrttaminah dvandvair vimuktah
suhhaduhkhasamjnair gacchanty amudhah padam avyayam tat (XV:5)*

Superiority or inferiority complex are again the products, the effects of division. When there is no division at all, who is superior to what? Who is inferior to what? In this verse are given the characteristics of the enlightened person. These qualities are therefore the concomitants of enlightenment. They cannot be separately acquired and put on. These are not like cosmetic tricks which one can apply to one's face. There is no application here.

You cannot 'become' humble. When there is this inner vision, this inner realisation of the oneness - that you and I are indivisibly one - then humility happens, oneness happens, and superiority or inferiority complexes drop away. Not because you want them to. I am suffering from a superiority complex, and therefore I am going to eradicate it. How do you do that? By thinking I am inferior to you. When I think I am inferior to you, inwardly I know that I am superior. It's total hypocrisy.

These qualities cannot be applied. They cannot even be cultivated. They are not plants, flowers, and fruits, to be cultivated. And if you want to take that example, then you do not even cultivate vegetables. You sow the seed, and it is the earth that knows how to turn that seed into a sprout and the plant into a vegetable and so on. So, even here we merely plant this inner vision, and the rest of it happens. Once the mature person has acquired this vision, and has surrendered himself to the totality, then vanity disappears, and he suffers from no delusion, from no illusion, from no wrong understanding. When right understanding arises, wrong understanding comes to an end.

Jitasangadosa - we came across this thing yesterday. Sanga - attachment or contact. Here, Krishna tells us that this contact or attachment is an error, a defective vision. One can even deal with this attachment in a very pragmatic way, by examining if attachment is in fact true. What is this attachment? You are

attached to me; but, if I collapse here of a heart attack and I pass out, would you all come with me? If I have cancer, would you also take half of it upon yourself? Then, what is attachment? Can we examine and see if this attachment is true in the first place, before we assume that it is attachment? I am attached to you, and therefore I must detach myself. All this is nonsense. It does not happen. While detaching myself, I am reinforcing the attachment, which means that, morning, evening, and night, I am going to think of you, in an attempt not to think of you.

Our religious teachers have unfortunately instilled more of 'thou shalt not' than 'thou shalt' into us, and the more the 'shalt not's come, the more we concentrate our attention upon them. I have a funny theory: if only that God had not asked Adam and Eve not to eat that fruit, probably they would not have. By telling them 'do not', a temptation is created. So, it is better in our dealing with our children or our students not to give too much emphasis upon what should not be done. Leave it alone. Even so in the case of attachment one cannot say, "I must detach myself". One can enquire into this whole phenomenon called attachment, and see that it does not exist. It is assumed.

That was exactly what My Guru Swami Sivananda used to do. If a person is sick, do all that you can to help him recover. If he is dead, throw the body away. But, society closes in on us, and helps us to continue this hypocrisy called attachment. I am suggesting that this thing called attachment is nothing more than an imaginary nothing called attachment. One should directly examine it, instead of trying to figure out that attachment is natural. When the intelligence looks into it, then the imaginary relationship drops away. When there is maturity, naturally there is love.

nirmanamoha jitasangadosa adhyabmanitya vinivrttaminah (XV:5)

And they are very well established in truth. Truth is not a static phenomenon, like the earth, or this room, where you can sit, where you can remain established. What is truth? What is truth is truth. To be able to sustain this spirit of enquiry into truth, is itself truth. Not to take anything for granted, but to be constantly alive and alert, open constantly, without coming to a conclusion. You struggled and struggled and reached this awareness; and then you come to a conclusion that this is truth, this is the atman, which means you go to sleep at once, and the old foolishness returns with redoubled force. That is not the yogi's approach at all. The man who is established in truth, never comes to a conclusion. To be all the time enquiring, searching, observing what is truth in everything, that is called truth. Truth is not a static phenomenon. Truth is not a set, fossilised substance. Truth is constantly changing, constantly moving. The whole universe is truth, and that universe is constantly active. One must understand this activity.

adhyabmanitya vinivrttaminah (XV:5)

One who realises this has no desires at all - vinivrttaminah. You realise that in this world nothing necessarily happens because you desire it to happen. It is an extremely simple fact of our daily experience; yet, we do not learn. The world or

this creation takes no notice of your own private longings or desires. Whether we desire it or not, illness comes to us; whether we desire it or not, happiness or unhappiness comes to us; whether we desire it or not, affluence or poverty comes to us; whether we desire it or not, honour or dishonour comes to us. Then, why should we desire? Why should we run after them if they are running after us? That is a simple question. One who sees this, desires nothing, knowing that whatever comes will come.

dvandvair vimuktah suhaduhkhasamjnair (XV:5)

'He is free from all these dualities, pairs of opposites, like pleasure and pain'.

The dualities called pleasure and pain, honour and dishonour, happiness and unhappiness, are all born of the first division 'I' and 'the world', 'I' and 'creation'. When that division has taken place, then, from then on, innumerable divisions take place. First 'I' and 'you', then the next thing must be 'I like you', or 'I don't like you'. The next thing naturally is 'I am happy in your company' if I like you, or 'I am unhappy in your company' if I dislike you. One follows the other. Can we go back to the root and uproot the whole thing?

I am reminded of Kipling's famous poem 'If', where he calls this happiness and unhappiness imposters. That is precisely what Krishna mentions here. They are only words. Happiness is a word, and unhappiness is a word. The major part of unhappiness is happiness. Is that right? When you write the word 'unhappiness', the best part of it is 'happiness'.

What is called happiness, and what is unhappiness? One man's food is another man's poison. The man producing and marketing rice feels happy when the price of rice goes up; the other who has to buy rice is miserable. What is happiness and what is unhappiness, except these words? Here again, can we enter into the word and examine it, see if there is truth in it? 'Sukha' means happiness, 'dukhka' means unhappiness. But there is an interesting sidelight to these two words. In sanskrit the word 'kha' means space. 'Sukha' is a happy, good space; 'dukhka' is a bad space, that's all. It is a mere psychological space in and around us, and it is up to us to fill that space with something good. Then we enjoy that as happiness. And if the same thing is filled with wrong thoughts and bad vibrations, then that itself rebounds on us as unhappiness. 'Sukha' and 'dukha' are not definable states, or definite experiences. They are completely relative, if not imaginary. The yogi is not interested in them at all.

gacchanty amudhah padam avyayam tat (XV:5)

I don't know if you are interested in sanskrit. This is a beautiful expression. Krishna does not say that he is a sage or a wise man or a clever man. 'Mudha' means a fool, and 'amudha' is non-fool. One who is a non-fool is not attached to anything, does not give himself to any cravings, is not cheated by pleasure and pain. He is well established in truth, and he reaches the supreme.

If the idea occurs to us that it is quite simple - we have a list here, nirmanamoha

jitasangadosa - I must be free from vanity and delusion, I must be firmly established in truth, I must be desireless, I must be free from pain and pleasure, and then I become a sage; the whole thing has entered through the back door. You immediately become proud. Proud of your being a sage, a holy man. And, through these holes, pleasure and pain come in, vanity comes in, craving comes in, the whole lot. So, Krishna is very careful. Don't call the wise man a wise man, then you will ruin him. Merely say that he is not a fool.

na tad bhasayate suryo na sasanko na pavakah yad gatva na nivartante tad dhama paramam
mama (XV:6)

This supreme state of consciousness, this supreme state of self-realisation cannot be found in any light other than its own light. You can't find this truth with the help of the sun or the moon. What is the light that reveals the truth of existence, of this cosmic oneness? Its own light. No other light is of any use whatsoever. Therefore, one who aspires to reach the supreme state of self-realisation must resort constantly to this inner light, the light that is independent of external sources. Once you have offered yourself to that, there is no return. Once a bucket of water is thrown into the ocean, that bucket of water cannot be taken out again.

5. Five

There are two approaches to truth, or the discovery of the reality. One, which in your terminology might be considered scientific, is analytical, and was there even in the oriental systems. There was a system where they went on splitting and splitting and analysing and analysing. The other is the synthetic approach. That is discovering the general principle, rather than splitting it into particulars.

The scientists go about trying to find out what the truth concerning anything is, by getting hold of a big thing, a flower for instance, breaking it into the petals, crushing the petals to find out what sort of molecules they have, and then crushing the molecules to discover their structure, and so on and so forth. If you are going to spend about fifty years finding the truth about a single flower, when are you going to arrive at the truth concerning the whole cosmos? That is one difficulty.

The Indian oriental sages also did similar acrobatics. What is the nature of that reality which exists for all time? They started with three things, the world, the soul, me. And then, there must be something higher; because all sorts of things happen here for which we are not responsible, and over which we have no control. So, there must be a god. God, world, and man - three. That was not quite clear. What is this creation called the world? It has got three things in it: bright, dark, and grey in between. These cover the nature of all living beings. They called it by different names - sattva, rajas, and tamas; but that is not important. They also felt that these were absolute categories. That is, if you are an intelligent person, you are intelligent for ever and ever; if you are a dark person, you are hopeless for ever and ever. So, some are eternally in heaven, and some are eternally in hell. So, the three became five, dividing, dividing, dividing.

Then the sages said that it is not possible that God, who created sun, which is boiling hot, also created the polar ice-caps. So, either this God has got several deputies, or He has got messengers and assistant Gods - one God in charge of thunder, one God in charge of fire, one God in charge of rain, one God in charge of air. So, that poor God, who was one for some time, has also split up. It is not all that simple. I am deliberately over-simplifying. Then they came to man. There is a body, there is a mind. There is a distorted mind, there is a straight mind. So, this goes on and on endlessly.

The Gita approach, on the other hand, is synthesis. Is it possible to discover the unity in all this madness? What is the common factor in all these, and can we go from there to see if the commonness may still be maintained? What bothers you is not God, it is the world you live in. God has not bothered anybody. Luckily for Him He is invisible, otherwise we would bother Him! I hope you don't mind a joke about the Bible. God disappeared when He found that His own son Adam disobeyed Him.

What is God? Leave Him alone, because He is not our problem. The world is our

problem. What is this world basically, fundamentally? Where does it come from, and where does it exist? How does it function? The oriental philosophers resolved the whole thing into what we call God. Unless you regard this God as a person, specially anthropomorphic, you have no problem with this. If God is infinite, there can be nothing outside. If God is omnipresent, there can be nothing outside, and this whole universe exists in that God for ever and ever.

How can this diversity exist in unity? These oriental philosophers were very clever, and they resorted to our day-to-day experiences: a man who is sleeping and dreaming, dreams of hundreds of other beings. Where are they? In him. Who created them? He. Where did he create them? In himself. If that is understood, then, exactly in the same way, the first word of the Jewish Old Testament is also clear: the whole world exists in His mind, nowhere else. If God is infinite and omnipresent, the whole universe exists in Him, is non-different from Him. That seems to make all our problems ridiculously irrelevant. That seems to make life over-simplified. Well, if you find any difficulty, says the oriental mystic, examine, but not analytically. Get hold of one thing, and get into it.

We discussed pain and pleasure briefly yesterday. Pain is a word; what is the corresponding reality? Pleasure is another word; what is the corresponding reality? There is an experience, a neurological sensation. Pleasure is a neurological sensation - I won't even say one type of neurological sensation - and pain is a neurological sensation. What is the difference? Is there a valid, real difference beyond the fact that these two are called differently? Examine it. Don't go by what somebody else says.

When it comes to pain and pleasure, what is the reality? When you examine that, you are in meditation. You may be anywhere. You may be enjoying yourself, or you may be suffering what others call pain, but you are meditating. What is this phenomenon? What is this extraordinary reaction of the nerves? It is a pure neurological phenomenon. But not so. Behind that neurological phenomenon, identifying it, is a concept. The concept that this is pain, and that is pleasure. Where does this concept exist? In my mind of course. What is this mind, where does that mind exist? Inevitably, you jump into God.

That is briefly what is described as the peepul tree, and getting hold of even one leaf, getting into the root. One must be vigorous and strict in this investigation. I suppose you know what 'investigation' means. To vest means to put; invest is to put in. So, whatever you are investigating, put your whole self into it, and don't try to slip out. What we usually do is to slip out. We try some kind of investigation, and half way through we find it a little uncomfortable; so, we slip out.

In this synthetic process, there is discovery of the truth wherever we turn our attention. That is Krishna's description of the world. Dismiss God if you like, it is not so important, but get hold of the world and the phenomena and the experiences. Get hold of anything, anywhere, at any time, and investigate it, get

into it. When you learn how to get into it, you are in meditation constantly. If you find this difficult, then the yogis give you some technique, which is meant merely to help you get into it, to help you investigate. When we have disposed of all that, still there is 'me'. I am the one that is investigating; I am the one that is looking at the world; I am the one that is suffering; I am the one that is enjoying; I am the one that is forming concepts. Who is 'me'?

mamai va mso jivaloke jivabhutah sanatanah manahsasthani ndriyani prakrtisthani
karsati (XV:7)

'Amsa' is extremely difficult to translate into English. It is not 'part', but it is like a cell in our own body. If, one by one, all the cells are taken away, you don't exist. So, the cell is an indistinguishable of your total being. That's it. It is not a part. So, what is called 'jiva', says Krishna, is He Himself, God Himself, the cosmic intelligence itself. It appears to be a part but it is inseparable from it.

Just to give you something in your own language: what is called 'jiva' is called 'Eva' in the Bible; the story is exactly the same. One can even say that what is called 'Adam' in the hebrew scriptures, is called 'atma' in hindi scriptures, and is called 'atom' in science scriptures; it is exactly the same. How does Adam become Eve? Adam 'became' Eve. There is a slight puzzle in that story. God created Adam; so, He was capable of creating some being out of almost nothing. If He wanted to create a playmate for this first man, He could easily have fashioned another one and put it next to him. But He didn't do so, according to your story. He put this man Adam into sleep, took out a rib, fashioned a woman, and gave her to him.

As in the hebrew scriptures, so in the oriental ones. If there is a puzzling statement like this, one does not dismiss it offhand, but one investigates. There is a meaning, which is that this Eva is non-different from Adam, and Adam himself is non-different from God, because it is God's breath that brought him into being.

That is precisely what Krishna says here. Once again you are caught in verbal distinctions. You consider the different words to be reality, and you cling to ignorance. I think the biblical story conforms to the oriental belief that this confusion arises only in a state of ignorance - Adam being put to sleep. If he was awake, it wouldn't have happened. So, what is called God and what is called the human soul, whether male or female, are non-different. The difference is verbal and nothing more.

Now, we come to another example. Please remember that these illustrations are meant to aid comprehension, not as a substitute for comprehension. They have a very limited scope. Once you have reached that limit, you must drop the illustration, and get to the truth. When you see a dark cloud, and you think it is going to rain, observe this. When you are flying through rain, you can see rain like a dust; when you are flying through a dark cloud, you don't find any distinction at all, it is homogeneous. And yet it is a supreme mystery that that single mass of water doesn't descend all at once. Why doesn't it do so? Scientists

give you all sorts of explanations. In that cloud, there is water without division, but with division potentially present. If, potentially, the drop formation was not present in that dark cloud, there would be disaster.

That cloud, the totality, is like Adam or God, and the single drop is Eva. This happens not in a state of vacuum, but where there is moisture already. Our atmosphere contains plenty of moisture. The whole earth is shielded by vapour, so that there is water rotating in water, water flowing in water, water raining in water. There is water going up, and water coming down.

In exactly the same way, in the supreme being, God, there is potentiality of individualisation. There is potentiality of infinite manifestation. Not just you and me, not just blonde and brunette, but infinite manifestation. If you and I do not know this, we have not travelled far enough. That is one of the reasons why some of us believe that it is quite possible that there are living beings on other planets and so on, but we may not recognise them. There are millions and billions of germs and micro-organisms in the air right here. We don't recognise them, we can't see them, we are blind.

This potentiality of individualisation is infinite in the infinite. I wonder if you have ever walked through the bush, and asked yourself a simple question: why this variety of leaves? Some of them have been named by botanists, and millions of other species have not been so christened. Why this variety? Merely to inform us that, whatever happens in the infinite, is infinite. If there is such incredible diversity, that is the beauty. That each individual is the infinite, is the beauty of the infinite, the glory of the infinite.

There is a lovely mantra which is used while the father names his child. "My son," says the father, "you are my own self, may you live long." Naturally, it is when the father is on his way out that he says, "let me at least leave a duplicate on this earth". The son is non-different from the father; the creature is non-different from the creator. So, the distinction being purely verbal, infinite creation in infinite god-head is just plain infinite. This is a bit of word exercise. If you can mentally visualise the word 'individual', and sort of space it out, indi-vi-(sible)-dual: indivisible dual becomes individual. There is an apparent duality, but that duality is indivisible. This good God gave us two eyes, probably to help us realise this. We have two eyes, but the vision is one. It is fantastic, isn't it? With two eyes, somehow the two images converge into one. And so, anyone who sees diversity, is in trouble. To go back to our cloud. As that individual drop comes down on to the ground, it attracts to itself the characteristics of the material on which it falls. If it falls on the ocean, it becomes salty; if it falls on a clear water lake, it is added to it; if it falls on filth, it appears to have imbibed the character of filthiness; and - I don't know how far this is true - some people say that it is one drop which enters into the pearl oyster at the right time, that becomes pearl.

mamai va mso jivaloke jivabhutah sanatanah manahsasthani ndriyani prakrtisthani
karsati (XV:7)

So, I am the jiva. You can visualise this individual, this one single drop, falling as a jiva. As it falls into what appears to be matter, what appears to be limited mind - because, in this infinite creation, there are infinite things called earth, or air, or fire, or space, or thought - it takes on that characteristic. So, whatever be our characteristic, whatever be the differences in our character, there is still this fundamental indivisibility from God. That is a great thought, a grand concept.

This is the central message of the Bhagavad Gita. The Master says, "You do not have to jump from the frying pan to fire, from one religion to the other, from one cult to the other." If you go on jumping from one cult to the other, you will eventually join the biggest of all cults, the diffi-cult. All the other cults have a limited number. This diffi-cult has no limit at all. There is no need, because that which is infinite, is present in each one. What is needed is an immediate and radical change in one's own inner outlook.

God is not confined to any religion. As a matter of fact, all the religious traditions and teachings were, in their own small way, efforts made by their founders in order to help us reach this grand vision. As each successive generation produced its own saints and yogis, they adapted the method or the approach to suit the people of their times, and therefore all these differences arose. Very often, what they thought in those days, may not be applicable to us in toto. We have to take the spirit, and investigate it.

There is a mantra in the Venkatesa Puja - worship of the statue:
om am atmane namah
om pam paramatmane namah
om jnam jnanatmane namah

The devotee offers flowers on his own heart or head. Why? It is the divine within that worships the divine in the image. I cannot see God; so, they say, worship the statue as God. God, being omnipresent, is present there also. You are not asked to worship the statue, but to worship it as God. The divine within worships the divine there. While doing this worship, you are investigating, you are getting into the spirit of it. In the same way, they tried the hatha yoga techniques, and in the same way, they tried the raja yoga techniques. Meditate and, while meditating, investigate each thought as it arises. See if through the vrittis, the concepts, the feelings, and the experiences, you can come down to this same truth - the infinite consciousness.

mamai va mso jivaloke jivabhutah sanatanah manahsasthani ndriyani praktisthani
karsati (XV:7)

Watch carefully, it is so simple, and so beautiful. As the jiva, which is non-different from atma, from God, falls into this world, it attracts to itself the sense experiences - hearing, smelling, seeing, tasting, touching, feeling. This is inevitable, is that right? Whether you are educated or uneducated, cultured or uncultured, whatever be your nationality, these five sense experiences are common to all beings. Some may not even have eyes as you and I have, but they

have sight in their own way; some may not have ears formed like we have, but they hear through the whole skin. The sense organ may not be there, but the sense experience is there. Then, the jiva, being pure intelligence, it somehow identifies itself with this experience, and 'I am the experiencer' is born. This is the whole teaching of raja yoga.

You can play this simple game whenever you like. It's very interesting. When you look at somebody or something, what is it that says 'I see'? Not the eyes. The eyes do not know that this is an ugly face or that is a beautiful face. What is the ego? Where is the ego born? If you practise this for a little while, probably some of these prejudices will drop away, and you will not make any judgments any more. You will realise that it is your own inner ugliness that sees ugliness in the other person. That is quite simple. But it is not the end that we are looking for. As you go on with this exercise, if you are able to deal with the experience at its own source, then, when and where - where is the most important thing - does the idea, the concept, or the notion, arise? All the other mischievous concepts arise from that.

A six million dollar question with which we conclude today. If you find the answer, your life will be so rich that you won't be looking for the six million dollars! Is there an ego - the next two words are absurd - in me? Is there an ego that is permanently resident in this body, shooting out and reforming all these notions or gaining all these experiences? Is the ego itself a subject that is born with every experience or expression? Is the ego a permanent entity, or does it come into being or perish from moment to moment? It is a fantastic question. I don't know if there is a verbal answer to it. If you investigate the ego, and go into it, then you might find the same thing: there is this infinite consciousness in which all this goes on from eternity to eternity.

6. Six

To continue with the fifteenth chapter of the Bhagavad Gita.

mamai va mso jivaloke jivabhutah sanatanah manahsasthani ndriyani prakrtisthani
karsati (XV:7)

Here, the individual is not described. What is the individual? Who am I? What am I? Unfortunately, in our case, the enquiry obviously starts with whatever assumption we already have. If the assumption is that I am this body, we start the enquiry from there. Am I this body? What happens when this body drops dead? What happens even now if some limb is lost? I am sure you are familiar with all the controversy connected with these surgical operations and things like that. If I lose a couple of my teeth, has my soul also been diminished to that extent? All sorts of strange questions arise if we consider that I am this body. Does it mean that, as I grow larger, this soul grows larger, and as I grow thinner, the soul grows thinner? Then we don't want to slim at all. Does it mean then that the elephant has an enormous soul, and that the ant has practically no soul at all?

It does not need much of an intelligence to realise that whatever I call me, the soul is not the body, because it came in at some time, and it seems to leave at another time. One, the first, was called birth, and the other will be called death, though we see this not in ourselves, but in others. So, the enquiry goes from there. When it is undertaken by conditioned beings, limited, finite, beings like we are, the enquiry begins from what we assume to be now. But when there is a revelation, the revelation comes from above, and it comes with tremendous authority.

You have heard this word authority before. Authority is related to the other word, author. If you are the author, if this is your original thought or creation, then you are the authority, and all the others are public address systems or tape-recorders. We repeat what we heard from somebody else whom we regard as our authority - though we have not seen or heard 'that' authority - and, none of us being perfect listeners, we adopt the gossip technique of adding and subtracting a little bit to make it more palatable, which means more diluted, perverted, more polluted.

So, who is an authority? The authority is one who is the author of the whole thing. In the Bhagavad Gita, we are told that we are listening to the teaching of God Himself - that is what the belief is. And when the authorship of a scripture is ascribed to the creator Himself, that scripture is called a revelation. So, Gita can be considered a revelation in that sense, and the teacher, Krishna, is the authority. Not only because, in our language, he knows, but because he was the one who made all this. God is the supreme intelligence from which the whole creation has emerged, in which it exists, and into which it will be dissolved eventually, none of these undergoing any change whatsoever. The divine does not undergo any change, nor does matter, which is part of His nature, undergo any vital or fundamental change. Any change that takes place is superficial. So, this

divinity is the authority, because He is the author.

Psychologists are crying aloud that there is crisis of identity in the modern world, that man does not know who he is, what he is. I am not sure. What they really want is that I should know what I am as taught by Professor Freud, or what I am according to the teachings of Doctor Jung. Then, I don't know what I am. Which is true? The complaint is true, the plaint is true that I do not know who I am. We are not talking about self-knowledge now, but a diligent, sincere enquiry into this will radically alter our attitude to life, and our nature, our behaviour towards one another.

If you and I were to realise or understand even intellectually that this body is only flesh, we might still look after it, but not at the expense of the spirit, not considering it to be the ultimate, as we do now. If we even superficially understood that we are all indivisible parts of this total being, perhaps we might hate each other less, and love each other more, though these expressions are totally inadequate. If we realise that perhaps what we have devoutly called 'soul' is a cell - the word soul may just mean cell - in a larger cosmic organism, it is quite possible our attitude to one another might undergo a radical change.

It is in the absence of a direct knowledge of identity that we identify ourselves with one or the other - I am a Hindu, I am a Buddhist, I am an Indian, I am so and so, and all that sort of thing. Where is the need for it? The need arises because I do not know what I am, and there is only a vague intimation that I am. I am not satisfied with that, I want to know what I am. So, I pick up any label and stick it on my forehead - this I am - and I feel quite satisfied. It is an atrocious thing. I don't know if you appreciate the gravity of this. The mischief that flows out of it is incredible. Immediately after this identification tag, is born a sort of gangsterism, the fantastic pronoun 'we'. You have heard this 'we' - we Swamis, we Brahmins, we Indians, or we Belgians. I have never understood how this 'we' is born, unless it is a royal we or a pontifical we - just one person saying 'we'. I may be very fond of my son, and he may be very fond of me. We may be close to each other in so many ways, but if I collapse and die, I go alone not with him. What do you mean, 'we'? When there is ignorance of the identity of the self, this wretched thing called 'we' is born.

The 'we' is supposed to bring about a cohesion amongst us, to bring us all together for our mutual prosperity. Watch out! The man who says that is very clever. He says, "Let us all hang together so that I may prosper at your expense." All this, my church, my temple, my society, is a terrible thing. Watch carefully. If to identify myself with the swamis of the world is going to promote my welfare, so that we are going to help each other and push each other up to self-realisation, enlightenment, I'm prepared to do that. But it does not happen. In any community you would think that they who are saying "we, we, we" all the time, would be hanging together. They are not, they are hanging each-other. And it goes on dividing and dividing and dividing till one family says 'we' against 'they'. The 'they' being a direct correlative of the 'we'. This 'we' is a deadly destructive

thing, and it is born when I am ignorant of the identity. When the identity is not known, there is a vacuum, and there is fear. If one undertakes this enquiry, if one is able to see that this whole is nothing but a cell in that cosmic being, that you and I are basically one - not parts of the same one, but fundamentally one - the whole world would be a better place for each one of us to live in. In that one cosmic body, there may even be opposing forces, white cells, red cells, all sorts of things may be doing their own work; that is no problem at all. There is no ignorance of the self, there is no ignorance of one's identity.

mami 'va mso jivaloke jivabhutah sanatanah manahsasthani 'ndhiyani prakrtisthani
karsati (XV:7)

I told you the other day that this word 'amsa' is extremely difficult to translate. I thought of a common example that is given in indian philosophical verse. 'Amsa' is a part which cannot be parted from the whole, which is a contradiction in terms. The only example that is appropriate, though not entirely adequate, is space, just this space. There is one difficulty here. Space is apparently unintelligent; but when we talk of God or the supreme being or the infinite consciousness, we do not regard that as unintelligent. If one can visualise that there is intelligence everywhere, and four walls and a roof spring up, then that enclosed space is comparable to the jiva or the individual soul .

Does it mean that since the walls are there, the roof is there, the space has somehow been mutilated or parted from the totality? It is not possible. Even as you are building the wall, the space is still there. In a mysterious way, space coexists with the wall. And it might happen after some time that the space just seems to shrug its shoulders, and all the bricks fall down. It says, "I was, I am, and will be the same." That is the famous name of God - which he revealed to Moses - in the hebrew text: Adonai - I was, I am, I will be what I have always been, that which has never altered. Space has never been altered.

Please listen carefully. For the time being, one speaks of a room; for the time being, one speaks of a hall; for the time being, one speaks of an internal space and an external space. These are nothing but words. What are you? You are nothing but the infinite, but temporarily you speak of yourself as Mr. So and So or Mrs. So. and So. How come that I can think I am Swami Venkatesananda, I am a small man? Because, in that particular space, as it were, there is a thought floating which thinks I am Swami Venkatesananda, I am a swami, I am a poor little Indian. But, the fact that this thought is floating here, has not diminished its inseparability from the totality, from the whole. The fact that this little thought is floating here does not make it any less grand than a divinity. The realisation of this is the immediate cure for all your superiority and inferiority complexes.

Many of you have a lovely mantra, Soham. This is a yogic formula which means That I am, I am That, I am He. I often suggest to some friends, use it for your japa, but use it in a practical way also. Whoever you think of, whoever you see, a poor man, a vicious man, or a great saint, Soham - I am he, there is no difference. The difference is merely in the thought that is floating in this ocean of

consciousness right now. It may change in the next minute. The whole thing is a play of words and thoughts.

sariram yad avapnoti yac ca 'py utkramati svarah grtvai 'tani samyati vayur gandhan
iva 'sayat (XV:8)

That little thought cloud travels; and, as it travels, it seems to be enclosed in a body, it seems to enter into a body. Having entered it, it experiences. From one body to the other, it seems to travel. It is only a cloud of consciousness, a cloud of awareness, not a cloud of unknowing.

vayur gandhan iva 'sayat (XV:8)

'Like wind wafting incense,' this soul, this piece of consciousness - sorry for the words - floating in cosmic space, now entering this body, now entering that body, on and on and on.

srotram caksuh sparsanam ca rasanam ghranam eva ca adhistaya manas ca 'yam visayan
upasevate (XV:9)

The soul comes into contact with matter, and there, reaches out to experience the world, to experience its own surroundings as it were, the surroundings being non-different from itself, non-different from God. It is a beautiful thing.

When we say 'a soul enters the body', what does it mean? To give a very inadequate example: if you hold a mirror towards the sun, you will see the sun inside the mirror in all its brilliance. If the sun is strong, you would not even be able to look at the reflection. It glares, it blinds your eyes. But the sun is not there. The sun cannot enter into that mirror, and yet it 'seems' to have entered into it. That is the beauty. It is in that sense that the soul or the divine consciousness has entered into the body. It has not entered into the body, it's there all the time, omnipresent. It is that cloud of awareness, that little cloud of thought pattern which keeps floating in this cosmic consciousness, that at one place thinks now I have entered this body and I shine through the body. Just as the mirror might radiate the same sunlight, the body and the mind seem to radiate thought, feeling, intelligence. But, since this intelligence is associated with what appears to be material body, there is experience - seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, smelling. All these experiences spontaneously happen.

We discussed this the other day. When the eyes are open, there is seeing. But at the moment of seeing, what is it that says "I see"? Where does that thought, that I-ness arise? That is the mischief maker. The senses function, let them function. Eyes see, but not I see; ears hear, but not I hear. Immediately this truth is understood or realised, psychological sorrow ceases at once. We are living in a society where these words 'I see' are used. Please use them, but inwardly realise that there is an error in the expression. There is no need to change language as many people have suggested. We are not talking about words; we are talking about the inner feeling.

utkramantam sthitam va 'pi bhunjanam va gunanvitam vimudha na 'nupasyanti pasyanti
jnanacaksusah (XV:10)

Whether the soul resides and functions in this body or has left it, it is associated with the body as it were, but not more than the mirror is associated with the sun. While residing and functioning in this body, it is receiving any number of sense experiences and radiating any number of expressions. This is another beautiful thing. If you go back to this space analogy, there is cross ventilation. The four walls are standing, and air enters from one place and goes out of another. Yet, we use different expressions. When it enters, we receive it; when it goes out, we send it away, exhaust, whereas the fact is, air moves in space.

In exactly the same way, various actions and events take place in this universe. If you can visualise me sitting here, and if you have what Krishna calls 'jnanacaksusah' - the eye of knowledge, probably you see the thoughts, understanding, flow from behind the chair, piercing through - but here it is called inspiration - and coming out of the mouth. When it comes out, it is called speech. Is that clear? Here it is called an experience, and there it is called an expression, but essentially it is all one and the same. It is merely movement of energy in the same consciousness. There is absolutely no difference. And the one thing that is totally absent is the ego sense.

What have I got to do with this? Something jumps up within us at that moment, and says "I am speaking", and even "I am experiencing inspiration." Silly nonsense! The inspiration is a gift. I do not own it, it does not come from me, I am not the author. And the less the ego sense obstructs by jumping up and down in the process, the more free the flow of inspiration is to flow from there to there. It is a lovely expression, isn't it? The two 'theres' being the same - not from here to there, but from there to there. It is one infinite flow.

sariram yad avapnoti yac ca 'py utkramati svarah grtvai 'tani samyati vayur gandhan
iva 'sayat (XV:8)

We started the discussion by describing what a jiva is, what an individual soul is. But here, suddenly, without rhyme or reason, Krishna uses a new, rather shattering word, "isvara". Now the jiva has become God. It may sound blasphemous to many ears, but I think at some stage or the other one must also break that shell. There is no fundamental difference between what is known as the jiva, the soul, or the individual self, and what is called God, or the cosmic self, the cosmic being. The difference is the thought that there is a difference. And that thought will not disappear as long as you feel that there is a difference. It won't disappear, because you are holding on to it. If I am utterly convinced that I am a limited being, and continue to cling to that imagination, nobody on earth or in heaven can save me.

You might ask, "Shall I say yes, I am the infinite being?" Yes. But it is not only in saying. When you open your eyes, what do you see? Do you experience that you 'are' the infinite being? Or, do you say, "I would like to think I am the infinite

being?" Om. Immediately there is doubt in the mind. I am still the swami, why should I say I am the infinite being? That's it. You are trapped there. On the one hand, by continually saying I am wicked, I am hopeless, I am an ignorant being, this affirms and reaffirms perpetually that I am the limited being; and, on the other hand, it is not enough merely to verbalise a feeling that I am the immortal Atman. Something else seems to be necessary; that is what one does in enquiry.

utkramantam sthitam va 'pi bhunjanam va gunanvitam vimudha na 'nupasyanti pasyanti
jnanacaksusah (XV:10)

It is that divine source, God Himself, who plays all these roles. It is God Himself who dwells in all these, though He transcends them all, exactly like space. There is no qualitative difference in space between a small room and a big room. There is no qualitative difference in space between the jiva or the individual soul, and God who is the cosmic soul. We are essentially saying it is this isvara, it is this God, this divinity, that pervades all, and is responsible for all the events in history - not the events of this world, of this earth, but of the cosmos, creation - the continuation, preservation and its eventual dissolution in a moment. It is He who is responsible for all that goes on. In that, even you and I are nothing but words and corresponding concepts, without a reality or substance.

This root, says Krishna, is not seen by idiots. The other day we came across a very nice expression:

amudhah padam avyayam tat (XV:5)

The non-idiots - as I translated it - reach the supreme state. Here, the antithesis is given to us:

vimudha na 'nupasyanti (XV:10)

I am sure that even if you do not know sanskrit, you will recognise the sound. There it is 'amudha' and here it is 'vimudha' - very idiots, those whose eyes are closed, whose vision is blurred by self-willed ignorance - they do not see this truth. There are none so blind as they who will not see.

pasyanti jnanacaksusah (XV:10)

They who are endowed with the spiritual eye, the eye of wisdom, they realise this. 'Jnanacaksusah' does not mean some sort of third eye which could be drilled open by a surgeon using a silver drill. It is the eye that is wisdom. One who is endowed with this inner eye, he realises this truth, and is therefore instantly free from sorrow and sin.

7. Seven

What you call individual soul has been called up in our imagination so often, so frequently, and for such a long time, that it has almost become a fact. Haven't you heard that, if you tell a lie for long enough, and vehemently enough, it becomes truth? That is what seems to have happened. In the absence of self-knowledge, this fictitious concept has acquired the stature of truth; and, having bestowed upon this fiction the glory of truth, we go round and round suffering and wailing. We don't know any other truth.

We know what we consider untrue, and we know what we consider true. I am here; I am. This 'I am', as a personality, as an individual soul, seems to be beyond all argument, so that we don't want even to consider the whole thing again, till someone gives us a knock and reminds us that this is as real as a dream. You and the world outside exist only because I am still dreaming, only because the fictitious individual soul continues to dream.

utkramantam sthitam va 'pi bhunjanam va gunanvitam vimudha na 'nupasyanti pasyanti
jnanacaksusah (XV:10)

There is movement, there is consciousness, and there is intelligence everywhere, not merely in a thing called 'me', not merely in a thing called 'my soul'. In a manner of speaking, even a table is intelligent enough and good enough to stand on its four legs, and to support a man sitting on it. It is a fantastic thing. The whole universe is indwelled 'by' this intelligence - indwelled in a manner of dualistic speaking - and 'in' that cosmic intelligence.

That cosmic intelligence is also completely filled with energy. Watch carefully. The nature of energy, being motion, movement, there is motion, there is movement - the movement of the lips for example. And the nature of intelligence or consciousness being such, this consciousness is aware of this movement. This consciousness is aware of itself, which you call self-knowledge, and this consciousness is aware of the movement, which unfortunately you recognise as an independent existence called jiva or the individual soul, Adam and Eva. They are non-different, indistinguishably one. But, because this consciousness is aware of itself, and is also aware of the movement that takes place within itself, a fictitious idea of an individuality has arisen.

This thing called jiva is another fictitious thing. That is not to say that what you and I are seeing now is hallucination. That is not the meaning. The meaning is that, in this cosmic consciousness, worlds and worlds of energy are whirling around, but there is not one individual, one jiva, which could be designated as being distinct, separate, outside of the totality.

There is one simple, logical question that is asked by Vasistha - which knocks a lot of sense into us if we are receptive. He asks, "If it is true that all this is cosmic consciousness, with the energy floating around everywhere, why do you call it by another name?" It is cosmic consciousness isn't it? You need to have a different

name to designate only that object which is different from something else. If both of them indicate the same thing, the same reality, why do you want another name? And yet we love these names, we love these words. We can use the word 'we', we can use the word 'jiva', we can use any word, as long as it does not confuse our intelligence, as long as it does not create the hallucination that I am an independent being, separate from you, separate from the cosmos, separate from the totality. If that illusion is not there, go on using the words 'you', 'I', 'we', anything you like. Words are not to blame. The whole universe, the whole cosmos, or whatever there may exist beyond this cosmos, is all one consciousness; and that consciousness is completely filled with energy. That is what is; naught else is. Movement being natural to this energy, that movement happens in infinite spots in this infinite consciousness. No one is going to quarrel with this; no one is going to stop it, as this goes on rising and falling, rising, existing and falling.

vimudha na 'nupasyanti (XII:10)

It is this billowing of energy and consciousness that goes on all the time, but fools don't see this. 'Vimudha' - not just ordinary fools, but confirmed idiots, don't perceive this at all.

pasyanti jnanacaksusah (XII:10)

They who are endowed with the eye of wisdom, the eye that 'is' wisdom, wisdom that is the eye, they see it. How do they see it? Do they see it through what are called fleshy eyes? Maybe. That is not the usually accepted sense, but I am giving it to you - even that is possible. The eyes of an ignorant person are fleshy eyes, because of the foolish idea, concept, or feeling, that I am real, I am a soul, I have got a body, I have got a mind. The eyes of an enlightened person - probably even the physical eyes - are avenues of enlightenment. In their eyes, the world looks very different.

Sri Ramana Maharshi used to be fond of this quotation, I believe: 'if your eyes are of wisdom, then you see the whole universe as cosmic consciousness.' If what functions behind these eyes is ignorance, then of course you see the world as a playground of havoc, lust, anger, passion, ignorance, delusion, fear, hopes, and all this. The difference is merely one of a person who is dreaming and who 'knows' he is dreaming - he is not affected by it - and the person who is dreaming and 'thinks' that that dream is real - he is in trouble. When a person is having a nightmare, then nothing in the world can help him, except awakening; because, as we go on wandering in this world of ignorance, through our own foolish action, we confirm this ignorance. We repeatedly affirm the hallucination as if it is real, so that it becomes real, as it were.

The yogis, when they strive, they understand; because, their striving is of a different quality altogether, not just jumping up and down, standing on the head, or putting forth a lot of effort in a wrong direction. If I want to be enlightened, I

move towards the light. I don't even have to move towards the light; it is enough if I turn towards the light. My Gurudev Swami Sivananda used to say, "Know what you are seeking, and then seek." Only then will you have a sense of direction. If you are facing in the wrong direction, you are sunk. With every extra effort you put into your life, you are moving further away. How do I know what I seek before I seek? Turn towards the light first, for, since the basic problem is of spiritual ignorance, nothing but self-knowledge can solve it. Since the basic problem is complete and total ignorance of the true identity of oneself, no amount of changing names and cosmetic changes will produce lasting benefit. If you are dreaming, the only solution is to wake up, nothing else will do.

How does one wake up? There is a funny story which illustrates that even this is not as easy as you and I imagine. One may wake up from a nightmare or an hallucination, but how do I wake up from a sort of hallucination which I have accepted to be truth? There was an emperor who was suddenly stricken with a peculiar disease - he slept twelve hours non-stop every day. From 6.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. he was awake; and from 6.00 p.m. to 6.00 a.m. he was asleep. I don't know how far the story is factual from here on. From 6.00 pm to 6.00 a.m. he dreamt the same, continuous dream. He dreamt that he was a beggar walking around in tattered clothes, standing with a beggar's bowl in front of people's houses asking for alms; being entertained in some houses, and being pushed around in other houses. Two twelve-hour periods of completely diametrically opposite experiences; we all have it, though not so dramatically. One morning his royal attendants gently woke him up at 5.59 o'clock . Because he woke up one minute early that day, he remembered the whole sequence of the dream. Whoever approached him, he asked the same question, "Is this true or is that true? Am I a beggar dreaming that I am an emperor; or am I an emperor at night dreaming that I am a beggar? Who is going to answer this question?"

Nobody could answer. Then it is said a strange creature of a sage, whose limbs were crooked, came into the palace and the king asked him the same question. "Which is true?" That man looked straight into the emperor's eyes, "Neither. That is one type of dream, this is another." In that stillness, there is self-knowledge, there is enlightenment. So, when you are caught up in this dream, no amount of struggling is going to help.

yatanto 'py akrtatmano nai 'nam pasyanty acetasah (XV:11)

If the consciousness is not awake, if the self-awareness is not there, then whatever you may be doing, whatever religious practices you may be undertaking - pilgrimages, fasting, puja, worship, chanting - none of these is of any use. If there is self-awakening, all these are of tremendous use, because, in every one of these activities, in every one of these actions of the yogi himself, he sees the striving of the divine.

What is the difference between the yogi and the non-yogi here? The yogi knows that if I am practising yoga, even that happens in this cosmic consciousness, God

- if you don't want to use two words where one will do. I am not practising yoga, it is God, His Grace, He Himself. I am not serving anybody, it is His own energy that is moving. I am not worshipping, it is He who worships Himself. In the case of the yogi, there is this inner awakening, in which the shadow of the 'I' has disappeared. He has been awakened to the truth that, through this 'I', this ego, this thing called the individual soul, it is but one cosmic consciousness, one God, one light, that shines.

To the same reality we give a nick-name and call it atman, or jiva, or I. The words are of no great consequence; but, when you peel off those labels, the reality is one. The yogi sees that. He might still continue to use these nick-names, almost giving you the suggestion or feeling that he is also egotistic; he is not. He might say, "I am meditating now", knowing that there is no 'I' that sits and meditates. In this particular space, meditation happens. He might say, "I am speaking", even though inwardly he knows that in that cosmic consciousness which is full of cosmic energy, that energy stirs. He knows that, and therefore he is not deluded. There is no delusion in that space.

One might say then: is it not right to suggest that the fool is also in the same boat, except that in that piece of space there is foolishness floating? Yes, quite right. In this space, there was brilliance, inspiration, talking, meditation; in the same space, a little bit of illness or confusion or dullness or dynamism might float. But, once awakened, the yogi is ever awake, and he realises that this is the same cosmic consciousness, the same cosmic energy which right now has taken another form - not I. That is the beauty.

My Guru, Swami Sivananda, was very fond of asking this very simple question, "Do you know which guna is operating in your personality now? Do you know which vritti is causing you to think in a certain way?" That is: you are not that influence; this is a passing mood. Even the yogi is subject to a certain sequence of moods; but, there is no delusion, there is no confusion. There is no need to struggle against the mood; let it pass. In the case of the yogi, there is no identification, even with these passing moods. In his case, the effort means enlightened effort, an understanding that even spiritual effort happens. It is not I who am performing yoga, sitting and meditating, or sitting and worshipping, but all these things happen by the grace of cosmic consciousness, in God, and with His own energy.

One formula that we often use says, "God Himself, for His own satisfaction, performs all this. He Himself does this. May He be pleased." That is the prayer of a devotee. And the same inspiring formula or thought is given to us in the Bhagavad Gita later on in the eighteenth chapter:

*yatah pravrttir bhutanam yena sarvam idam tatam svakarmana tam abhyarcya siddhim
vindati manavah (XVIII:46)*

'You can obtain perfection here and now in your everyday life, if that life itself is realised in truth.' What is this life? It is not my life. It is a foolish idea that I

consider life to be mine. Life is this cosmic energy, which fills this cosmic consciousness. There is no me, and therefore there is no my. There is no my life. Let it flow.

Still there is the feeling of an 'I-ness'. Even that is part of this cosmic being. It is not a real fragmented personality that thinks I am. Even this ahambhavana, this feeling of 'I am', arises in the cosmic whole. Let it, there is no problem. This feeling 'I am', when it arises, it generates action which flows towards other personalities, other 'I am's in this universe. When the truth is realised that this is indivisible, in spite of the fact that there are infinite 'I am's arising every moment in this universe, there is no harm, nothing is lost. Each one of these individual 'I am's enters into relationship with the other infinite 'I am's, serves them, works, and receives love and gifts.

All these have emanated from the same one cosmic principle, and all these exist in the one cosmic principle; and that one cosmic principle adores itself through the medium of one another. So, this 'I am' worships the same cosmic being, God, in all of you, through whatever action happens. If I am speaking or doing something else, through all that, as flowers of offering, the one cosmic being, the one God is adored and is worshipped. One who knows this as, a fact, not entertains this as an idea, is instantly freed. He does not go from here, he does not return to this world, he does not incarnate or reincarnate, because all these things happen in the hallucination called individual life. When the fragmented individuality itself is seen to be fictitious, there is no such reincarnation.

A verse which Gurudev often used to repeat begins: 'You are unborn'. You are not even born, leave alone not dying! What was born, was this idea, this conjunction of three things: one, the 'energy', which is consciousness at a certain spot, and, strangely enough, a certain deluded 'idea' that that cell in the cosmic body of God is somehow independent of the totality, independent from the whole, and the 'feeling' that I am different from you, and that 'my' welfare, 'my' security is independent of yours, that 'my' security often depends upon the destruction of your security, 'my' happiness depends upon the destruction of your happiness.

Somehow this mysteriously arises. One does not know where and how this happens. Maybe it was merely a passing mood; but then suddenly, the passing mood becomes a confirmed fact of existence. As Buddha cautioned, it won't do merely to beat about the bush, and try to discover which came first, the hen or the egg. When the house is on fire, said the Buddha, your first concern is to put it out. We'll talk about the composition and the origin of fire later.

We realise that there is this misery, this psychological sorrow, unhappiness, 'duhkham'. 'Duhkham' means the space in which this 'I am' exists for the present. This space is distorted and filled with perversion, with confusion, with conflict. 'Duhkham' means unhappiness - 'kha' means space, 'du' means bad, evil, distorted, perverted, confused, conflict ridden. Once the awareness that this confusion arises in this space is caught hold of, and that confusion is directly

looked into, vicara - not examined in the sense of why did this arise - is it because I have got a psychological problem connected with my childhood, or maybe my karma? - then you go round and round and never solve the problem - one is awakened to the fact that this is a passing mood. Even if it is going to last for a hundred years, it is still a passing mood, it is going to come to an end. Everything comes to an end.

When you have that optimism or realism - it is not even optimism - then that terrible load that we have been carrying for so long, the load called confusion, the load called conflict, the load called ignorance, drops away. However long I might have been in this confusion, the moment of awakening is the supreme moment. For however long a cave might have been in darkness, the darkness is dispelled the moment you press the switch of a flashlight when you enter that cave. So, for however long we might have been in the state of confusion and conflict, the very moment the light is on, the light of self-knowledge, of self-awareness is on.

yatanto yoginas cai 'nam pasyanti atmany avastitham (XV:11)

A fool, 'acetasaḥ', who has not got this self-awareness, however much he tries, he is not able to perceive this truth. But, the yogi who has been awakened to this awareness, he reaches this, he gains this self-knowledge instantly, because his whole being is turned towards the light.

How do I awaken myself? Gurudev used to say, "When you get knocks and blows in the daily battle of life; when your mind is duly turned towards the spiritual path." One of the awakening influences is the suffering and the pain and the trouble that you and I are subjected to in this daily life - disease, death, of relatives, loss. All these are blessings. All these are the soundings of the alarm clock. Wake up! Some of us don't wake up, we find other remedies. The most infallible remedy for this slumber of spiritual ignorance is satsanga. That is, a remedy which is highly extolled by all the saints and sages. If we come into contact with holy men and their teachings - if the holy men are not present, their teachings are present, the scriptures are present - and if we make a habit of studying the scriptures, some day or the other, one light seed, one thought seed, is bound to fall on the fertile soil of your heart, at the appropriate moment, and the truth will begin to germinate, and lead you to the goal of self-realisation.

8. Eight

We have been talking a lot about movement of energy in consciousness, and about that consciousness becoming conscious of that movement of energy, and also about the concept that the soul leaves this body and goes away. Such expressions are used because expressions have to be used to express a teaching - not because they are reality, not because they are truth. Truth cannot be expressed. In teaching, one should take great care not to confuse the word or the expression with the truth.

Where does movement take place? Movement can only take place in space, movement implies space. And, what is space, what are words like 'large', 'small'? We say they are relative, and movement again is relative to the objects that are said to be in motion. There is no movement as such; and, space, again, is a completely relative concept. The space of one experience, the waking state, is quite different from the space of another experience, the dream state. In dream, the whole space is in this little head, or maybe I don't know where the dream takes place. In your own little room, in your own bed, the whole world exists. And it is quite possible, if you are somehow aware of the dream, that you step aside, and you can see a whole universe in that dream, and yourself apart from it.

This may sound a way-out oriental view. I had a glimpse of an occidental or accidental parallel to it. There was a neat little book - I have forgotten its title - which I saw in California. It consisted of two sets of photographs, one set of receding perspectives, and the other, the converse. The first picture among the first group was of a young girl sitting outside her little house, and sewing, and showed us only the girl and the garment. We are told that every picture was taken ten times more distant than the previous one. So, if this picture had been taken three feet from the girl, the next one was taken thirty feet from her, and you could see the house and some trees and things in the background. When you are viewing the sixth or seventh photograph, you are viewing the whole galaxy. We don't know where that girl was, she is not seen in the picture at all; she probably dissolved into some kind of nothingness in the third or fourth picture taken three miles away. That's it! If you go to that distance, that which was clear, which was a moving object, gets integrated into the background, and it is no longer a moving object moving independently of the earth's own revolution.

On the other hand, we have the other pictures. The same girl was sitting and sewing, and on her finger was one sugar or salt molecule and a mosquito. The illustrator tells us that we are going to go into it, and then the space expands and expands and expands, like a Disneyland affair where you drive into an atom. These are all relative terms. One must appreciate the truth that motion is totally relative, and there is absolutely nothing called motion in itself.

In the Yoga Vasistha, there is a beautiful story of a group of young men who had resolved that they would only aspire for that position from which they would not be thrown down, from which they would not be dismissed. What was that

position? Only one position is fit to be aspired for, and that is to be creator of the world. They took counsel among themselves. How does one become the creator of the world? One boy said, "It's quite simple, close your eyes and meditate: I am the creator of the world, the whole universe is within me. If you open your eyes in the middle and find that you have not yet become the creator, you have opened your eyes too early, you have not meditated long enough, deeply enough."

Please watch carefully now. I am the meditator, meditating. I am going to be the creator of the whole world, of the whole universe. I do not want to open my eyes until I am quite sure that I am the creator of the universe, and since I am never certain that I have become the creator of the universe, I don't open my eyes. A few years hence, what has to take place naturally, takes place. The body, which had no part to play in this contemplation, except sitting, decomposes and drops away. The body was not the meditator, it is the spirit within that is the meditator, and that contemplation, I am the creator of the universe, is still there. A thought floats there. Space, being but a magical creation, being relative, doesn't enter into this problem at all; and so, the world creation takes place in that space. There is no problem there.

That also explains all the problems concerning reincarnation and so on. All reincarnation takes place in one's own heart, in one's own consciousness. It is not a question of going somewhere, it is not a question of attaining self-realisation, it is not a question of searching for it. It is something too deep and distant and difficult. It is subtle. All these words are themselves the obstacles to self-realisation. Once you have made up your mind that something is difficult, it is going to be heavier and heavier and heavier. You are not going to do it, because you have decided it is difficult. So, when I approach this problem with lack of faith, lack of confidence, then it is going to be difficult throughout.

This self-realisation is not difficult, is not distant; it is no problem at all because the self is real. In order to bring home this wonderful truth in an extremely simple, homely way, Krishna resorts to a few common illustrations.

yad adityagatam tejo jagad bhasayate 'khilam yac candramasi yac ca 'gnau tat tejo
viddhi mamakam (XV:12)

In order to find this omnipresent God, in order to find this cosmic being, where must I go? Is he somewhere nearer than here? Is there a spatial distance to travel? Krishna says, look at the sun. How radiant it is, how luminous it is. That luminosity is myself, is God. One has to enter into the spirit of it, not merely listen to the words.

yad adityagatam tejo jagad bhasayate 'khilam (XII:12)

This light of the sun illumines the whole world. That is me, that is mine, that is God's.

yac candramasi yac ca 'gnau tat tejo viddhi mamakam (XII:12)

The reflected light of the moon, that is also divine. These beautiful lamps, they are also the divine.

We discussed another verse a few nights ago: that truth, that God, is not illumined by any light in this world; not by the sun, nor by the moon, nor by this fire. Krishna suggests that that is precisely the mistake that you have committed. God is the subject, and not the object. You have endeavoured to look at God, to look at the absolute, to look at the self, as if it were an object - I want to realise, I want to see, I want to experience that. Whatever that is, is your own projection. If you see a world outside, it is a projection of your own consciousness; if you see ugliness or beauty outside, that is what came out of you.

Do you wish to contradict this? Then the yogi would suggest, stop thinking that way. Do not think an ugly thought, do not project any image on to that, do not read anything into it. Just become aware of this. Would it still appear ugly to you? No. You wouldn't even know in a dualistic way what that is. You wouldn't characterise it or style it, or even stick a label that it is ugly or beautiful on it.

God is not an object to be seen. I still remember a public meeting in 1950 which Swami Sivananda addressed. It was presided over by a chief minister who had turned to Him and said, "Swami, I want to ask you, have you seen God, and can you show Him to me?" Usually the master ignored such comments, but this time He didn't. As soon as He stood on His Feet He said, "God is not something which can be seen by your physical eyes as if it was an object. God cannot be shown, it is not a plaything." It was a fiery speech. God is the seer, not only the sight or the seen object. God is all the three - the seer, the seen and the sight. God is not the subject which projects an object. God is not an object which can be seen by the subject. God is the all. The all can become aware of itself, but no part of the all can become aware of the totality.

No finite thing can ever become aware of the totality. I, being finite, limited, conditioned, cannot aspire to become aware of the total being. That is an absurd thing. On the other hand, it is the ego, the self, the little conditioned being striving to comprehend the infinite that is seen and experienced as the world. It is very simple. When I see you through the eyes, I see the form, but not when I turn my ear towards you. If you speak, if you make a noise, I can hear; so, you are now a sound, not a sight. Each sense is limited to its own field; the subject is limited; and the object is limited to the faculty of the subject. And, since I am a finite personality, when I try to grasp you, I have to grasp you in my hands, so that I have to limit you. The unlimited becomes limited, when handled by a limited being. The infinite becomes finite, as it were, when it is comprehended by the finite mind and intellect. This is the problem.

So, can the I, can the ego ever attain selfrealisation? Nonsense. Can the I, can the ego see God? Nonsense. Swami Sivananda sang very beautifully, "When shall I be free? When I ceases to be." That is one thing which we resist. We do not like

to lose the ego, to cease to be. You know this famous joke, don't you? Everybody wants to go to heaven, but nobody wants to die! But without dying you cannot go to heaven. That's a problem. Only when it is directly understood that the omnipresent God alone is true, and if there is a thing called 'me', even that is an inextricable part of that cosmic whole, it is then that this fear of losing the 'I-ness' is dispelled. It is then that that which is, realises itself, becomes aware of itself, as the cosmic whole, the cosmic consciousness.

gam avisya ca bhutani dharaumy aham ojasa pusnami cau 'sadhah sarvah somo bhutva rasatmakah (XV:13)

The light of the sun, the moon, the stars, the fire, the lights, the lamps, all these sing the glory of this one universal cosmic being. If you think that the light of the sun and the moon is far away, and even the fire is untouchable, and electricity is even more dangerous, Krishna tells us that all these are not distant at all, for the divine enters into the very earth, enters into the very physical being of all and sustains them as vitality. Your very vitality must remind you of the divine, because this vitality is non-different from the total cosmic energy available. It is not as though I have a certain vitality that must be preserved by eating all sorts of nice goodies, because the intelligence tells you how to live. Please, let that intelligence function. But there need be no fear that, when this vitality leaves me, I am dead. I am dead already, because I didn't exist in the first place. I exist like the shadow which seems to play on the wall, but is neither real nor unreal.

The vitality that fills this body, the vitality that fills the earth, and produces food, that is 'soma', the very essence of the food, the very essence of the plants, that nourishes the living beings. There is an intimate and beautiful relationship between the living beings and the plants. Take, for instance, the recycling process between the plant and the animal kingdom. When you look at that, it is a most beautiful thing. There is such perfect reciprocity, there is such a perfect recycling arrangement in nature, that, left alone, it would function eternally. The body that is sitting in front of you and talking to you is nothing but recycled potatoes and bananas, a little bit of curry and yoghurt. And then, little by little, it discards what it could not digest and assimilate, and that forms food for the plants. Unfortunately we throw it all into the sea now, so that in about ten thousand years, when the sea bed becomes earth, it will be very fertile ground. How intelligent and how beautiful this whole set-up is! That is divine.

gam avisya ca bhutani dharaumy aham ojasa (XII:13)

In all beings, I am the ojas, I am the vitality,

pusnami cau 'sadhah sarvah somo bhutva rasatmakah (XII:13)

and, in the plants, I am the sustaining power, the vitamins. Do you still think that God is some distance away?

aham vaisvanaro bhutva praninam deham asritah pnanapanasamayuktah pacamy annam caturvidham (XV:14)

"I am," says the divine, "the power, or the shakti, the energy, that resides in the bodies of all living beings as the digestive fire, Vaisvanara". There are two vital forces in each body, called prana and apana, and their interaction results in energy, the digestive force, which is able to digest and assimilate the different types of food that is eaten. What a marvel this is! Right in the centre of our own being, there is the divine as the digestive fire, the gastric fire.

The more you think about it, the more amazed you will be. No power but God's own could really and truly digest all the rubbish that is thrown into this body. It is impossible. Most of the things that we eat are even officially considered poisons, like your intoxicating drinks. What are intoxicating drinks? They are drinks which produce toxicity in your body. That is what the word means, I am not inventing it, I am not coining it. And you go on drinking and filling the body with toxicity, and yet we are alive! God, you are the only one who could do that. Isn't it a marvel that in spite of the completely diverse food that we consume, all of us grow the same type of nose? Isn't it a marvel how that gastric fire digests all this food and assimilates it - assimilates means the food becomes as me, as similar to me - so that a blond girl and a dark haired girl, both of them living on a pure milk diet for one month, remain a blond girl and a dark haired girl? That intelligence, that energy, which is divine, is able to do all that, is able to achieve wonders.

We do not contemplate these simple home truths that are extremely close to us. That is the fundamental message of hatha yoga. Not merely to perform some gymnastics, some nice exercises, which are very good in themselves, but the hatha yogi, or the one who performs these yoga asanas, yoga postures, must devoutly contemplate the mystery of his own body. What a beautiful thing it is. Then, the performance of yoga becomes a daily thanksgiving to the Lord, and a daily communion. While you are performing the yoga asanas, you are really contemplating the Lord. That should be the spirit of the yogis.

sarvasya ca 'ham hr̥di samnivistō (XV:15)

'I am seated in the hearts of all'. It is beautiful. The word 'all' means just all. It is not parts of human beings, it is not parts of living beings, it is not parts of growing beings, it is parts of all. Which means, a particle of sea sand right in the heart of all beings, in the heart of every cell, perhaps, of the body, and in the heart of every thread of this shirt. So, we do not have to go anywhere to seek for God. He is, and nothing else is. And, if the mind seems to forget to think, in that, there is God. It's the most beautiful thing, because the next line in that verse says:

mattah smrtir jnanam apohanam ca (XV:15)

I have not come across any scripture in the world where this bold statement is made by the divine. I am not only the light, but I am darkness, for there is nothing other than the divine. 'Smrtir' is remembrance, memory - that memory itself is the divine. 'Janam' is wisdom - wisdom is divine. 'Apohanam ca' and their absence also is divine.

A person who says, "I don't know", knows that I don't know, or, what is more usual, he does not want to answer your question, he does not want to seriously enquire into it. How do you know that you do not know, merely because you do not want to take the trouble of enquiring into it; and so, you take the easy way out, and say, "I do not know, enlighten me?" Nobody can enlighten you, because the light of lights is in your own heart. In the heart of every cell of your body, this divine light shines in all its radiance. If you think that you do not know, if you think you are ignorant, even that is made possible by this divine intelligence. That which in you is aware of this ignorance, is not ignorance; it is awareness, and that awareness is divine. Instead of fiddling with this objective knowledge, which you do not know, drop that desire for an experience. Then there is awareness, which itself is divine.

vedais ca sarvair aham eva vedyo vedantakrd vedavid eva ca 'ham (XV:15)

'I am the goal of all knowledge' - all branches of learning, all branches of knowledge, are from the divine, and proceed towards the divine. 'I am the end of the Vedas' - I am the end of knowledge. When the knowledge is assimilated, what does it become? It becomes wisdom, pure awareness. Whatever be the knowledge, whether it is mathematics, physics, science, or philosophy, if it is thoroughly and completely assimilated, so that it does not stay as a dead weight on the brain, the knowledge must lead to wisdom, must lead to a spiritual awareness. That is called Vedanta. 'Veda' means knowledge; 'anta' means end. When knowledge, as subject-object relationship comes to an end, it shines in its own light as pure awareness, in which there is no distinction between the knower and the object of knowledge.

That is the end of the list, as far as we are concerned in this chapter. How, from a look at the sun, Krishna brings God-consciousness closer and closer and closer to our very self. How, in that process, the object - the experience - and the subject - the experiencer - seem to merge into one. This is yoga. Unfortunately, we are strangers to this daily occurrence, not experience, but daily occurrence, which is sleep. Sleep is an extraordinary daily event, where the sleeper, the sleeping, and the sleep, become completely integrated into one. It is because of the fact that, in sleep, the sleeper, sleeping as an act, and sleep as an experience, have merged into oneness. There is absence of pain, absence of unhappiness, absence of restlessness. It is a blissful state, in a manner of speaking; and, that can be had through the day and night if one can avoid this division from arising. One who is able to achieve this, rests in that cosmic oneness, even though he is forever active. In his case, the experiencer and the experience become one. In that state, even if, in the eyes of others, you are suffering from pain, you do not experience it; in that case, even if, in the eyes of others, you look unhappy, you do not experience unhappiness. It is a beautiful state, which is promised to one who practises yoga.

The particular yoga that is hinted at in these few verses has previously been elaborated in the tenth chapter, and it is called vibhuti yoga. 'Vibhuti' means

manifestation, or the manifest Glory of God. Gurudev used to recommend it to everybody - practise vibhuti yoga. How does one do that? There are certain objects mentioned in the tenth chapter, and here in these four verses. For the present, please remember they are still objects. These objects have been designated divine. We heard, the light of the sun, the moon, the fire, and the lamps, are divine. So, every time we look at these, contemplate the divine; that light is of God. When we take food into our hands, the energy in this food is divine, is from God. You put it into your mouth, and you begin to wonder, it is the energy that is divine that is receiving it, assimilating it. Gurudev himself used to practise this. When He came out of His room, and when He saw the Ganges, He remembered this is a manifestation of God. Salutations to God. And then, He used to greet us "Om Namo Narayanaya; Om Namah Shivaya" - in the hearts of all, there is the same divine.

If one diligently and sincerely practises this, it is quite certain that, in a manner of speaking, consciousness seems to expand, or the narrowness into which we have confined ourselves, begins to give way, and there is gradual expansion of consciousness. And, as the consciousness expands, the little I, the little ego, the little self, seems to melt away. It is not as though one may experience some lights and visions and all that. You may have such experiences. The wise man does not look for them, because an experience is still an experience in the realm of duality. It is the desire for experience as an object that created a split in the consciousness, as it were - not really. Even if these happen, the yogi still feels that that is another manifestation of divine glory. The sincere yogi does not long for experiences of any kind whatsoever, but offers himself to the divine in total adoration, love, and surrender. So that: when shall I be free? When I ceases to be. When the salt doll jumps into the ocean, it is instantly enlightened as to the depth and the vastness of the ocean.

9. Nine

The mind, being a limiting factor and a limited entity, a conditioned being, is afraid to remain supportless. Therefore, the mind hangs on to some idea, some object. It creates an object, whether physically present and tenable, or totally imaginary, a concept like dreams, visions, ideologies, and notions. Even if you want the mind to dwell upon a thing called the infinite, it must again create an image of the infinite. That is the nature of the mind, that is the quality of the mind, that is the problem of conditioning.

A limited thing cannot stand alone; therefore, it works on the basis of 'and therefore'. It must have some kind of a logic, a reason. The mind dare not face a fact or the truth which defies logic or reason. Either it will go to sleep or it will go crazy. And, it functions only on the basis of 'either-or', because both these, 'either' and 'or' are conditioned, limited concepts. 'Either this', the mind can create a circle around it, comprehend it; 'or that', once again that is a limited quantity, a conditioned being which the mind can draw a magic circle around and comprehend.

The mind cannot comprehend something which is neither man nor woman, neither god nor demon, neither human nor beast, neither this nor that. Such a being - it must be a ghost, disembodied. That's it. When it is confronted by these 'neither nor's, the mind still wants to create a thing called a ghost. It is still creating an image, a something which is vapour-like. So, when it comes to what we have been discussing so far, cosmic consciousness, infinite life moving and floating in infinite consciousness everywhere, the mind boggles and escapes from this rather unpleasant situation by saying, "Therefore this infinite consciousness is one unity, is one indivisible whole totality." That either the infinite consciousness is one or many, is the truth. Foolishly hanging on to this concept again, the mind says, if one is the truth, then the many is an illusion. But, if it is an illusion, why do I see? The ghost again!

At some point, this logical game has to come to an end. That is called logical conclusion - that point where logic comes to its own conclusion, saying it is not possible. It is not possible to comprehend this logically, because whoever created this world, if it was created at all, did not create it logically. Creation is not logical - psychological, yes, physiological, yes, biological, yes - but not logical. So, at that point, logic must give up, and then you enter into the realm of truth which is 'neither-nor'.

This supreme puzzle, the supreme secret, as Krishna Himself says a little later, the mind cannot unravel and solve, because it itself is a product of the self-limitation that arises in consciousness. And so, it is not possible for the mind to ask itself and find the answer to the question, why has this self-limitation arisen? Why did Adam disobey God? Why did the first man commit the first sin? A wise mind, a mind that is mature, can appreciate that this is limitation. The 'either-or' is a limitation; 'this or that' is a limitation. 'Neither-nor' is the door to the reality,

not the reality, but the door to the reality. Therefore, you find in the Bhagavad Gita, in the fifteenth chapter itself, quite a number of contradictory statements. So far we have studied a few of the verses of this chapter which suggest that the truth is one, indivisible whole. The cosmos or the cosmic being is not an assembly of spare parts. It is a total being from which nothing can be subtracted, to which nothing can be added. But,

dvav imau puruau loke ksaras ca 'ksara eva ca ksarah sarvani bhutani kutastho 'ksara
ucyate (XV:16)

'There are two kinds of purushas in this universe'. Very often 'purusha' is taken to mean the individual personality. But you may take it to refer to the cosmos or to the individual, because now there is no real distinction between the two. For better comprehension, one may look at one's own being and recognise it. What applies to oneself, the microcosm, applies to the cosmos, the macrocosm.

dvav imau puruau loke (XV:16)

Purusha literally means 'that which dwells in and rules a city'. If this body is considered a city, Krishna tells us there are two divine beings that rule this little city. If you consider the whole cosmos as the city, there are two rulers there, too. What applies here, applies there. Who are they? Watch this carefully. 'Ksara' and 'aksara'. One is ever changing, and the other is never changing. Therefore, there is a duality, of course there is - and Krishna is even going to tell us there is a third thing, a trinity, not merely a duality.

What is the changing personality? That which is changing in me is the personality. That undergoes continuous change. I was once really amazed when Gurudev Swami Sivananda said something so beautiful. He was writing brief biographies of swamis and ashrams. One day, He was sitting in the office, writing. Suddenly He took His spectacles off, looked at us, and asked about a certain swami. He was a great swami, but then he abandoned being a swami and got married. That was considered unworthy of a swami in India. We kept quiet. The decision of whether to include him in this book or not was his. Then He said, "Yes, I'm going to write about him. The man falls; a good man becomes bad, and a bad man becomes good. This is change."

The personality is constantly changing and, in order to support this change, the ingredients, the raw materials, do not change. All sorts of things can be made out of a piece of gold. The form keeps changing - there is a bracelet or a golden calf, but you cannot give me formless gold, because, in the limited, conditioned existence, there is nothing which is formless. Therefore, the personality will always have some form, whether recognisable to us or unrecognisable to us. But what happens to the substance that undergoes the change, the gold in the bracelet? That is changeless, that remains gold.

To come back to our personality. The personality goes on changing, the moods of the mind go on changing, the physical body goes on changing; but, what is the

fundamental substance of which these are made? That does not change.

ksarah sarvani bhutani kutastho 'ksara ucyate (XV:16)

'Katastha' - that is the unchanging substratum, the unchanging reality. There is another aspect to it, that is: change happens when there is limitation, or, a limited vision perceives change. Change and limitation go together; change and conditioning go together. And, this change and changelessness are together; the conditioned and the unconditioned are together. It's a beautiful thing.

If you can pay a little extra attention now. Events and activities of great importance, great comedy and great tragedy - whether it is com'edy' or trag'edy', the end is the same - are happening here. These are of terrible consequence to us, wonderful consequence to us, but only in relation to our limited vision. When the vision is limited, changes are observed. When the same vision becomes unlimited, that is, when you look at Cape Town from the moon, probably you do not recognise it. From there, the earth is seen as probably less than a golf ball, and on a world map the size of a golf ball, Cape Town is just one drop of ink, and there is absolutely no change in it. Changes take place only when the vision is limited. In the eyes of the unlimited, unconditioned, none of these changes is ever true.

uttamah puhusas tv anyah paramatme 'ty uduhrtah yo lokatrayam avisya bibharty avyaya isvarah (XV-17)

There is something even grander than this. It is different, it is beautiful. Krishna, who insisted on non-perception of difference, Krishna, who emphasised that differences should not be emphasised, Himself suggests these two are already there. One that is changing, the other that is not changing; one that is conditioned, the other that is non-conditioned; one that is limited, the other that is unlimited. There is a third one! It can neither be said to be changing, nor non-changing. Neither-nor. It does not fall into any of your categories, it is not a pigeon to be pigeon-holed - 'it is'. If you want to say anything at all, just say it is, and keep quiet.

Listen carefully again. Because people ask questions, the mystics give answers. They would prefer to be silent. Like the greatest of all great teachers, Dakshinamurti is said to have instructed His disciples in silence. When learned men approached this teacher and expressed their doubts, without the use of words, He merely looked at them, and their doubts were cleared. Why could He not talk? Because talking produces confusion. When you say something, you have already fallen into the trap of the mind's either-or, the mind's comprehension and limitation. You cannot speak of the unlimited, which is the reason why Buddha said, "Do not measure the immeasurable with words." Words are measure, thought is also measure, and the division which is inherent in expression cannot express the undivided, the unlimited, the unconditioned.

So, in the personality and in the cosmos, from a limited point of view there is

change, from an unlimited point of view, there is no change. It is merely a matter of how close and with what limited vision you are looking at something, and how comprehensive and unconditioned your vision is.

The mind can vaguely surmise the existence of these two. That's it. There it comes to an end. Which is the truth? Which is the reality? Both? Is it possible for the ever changing and the never changing to live together for ever and ever? What is their binding factor? What is their substratum? What is the truth concerning all this? When that question arises, the mind comes to a standstill. The next step has to be revelation by grace. The mind cannot transcend itself. When it transcends itself, it is blown to a hundred thousand million pieces. The conditioned becomes unconditioned by grace alone, not by the effort of anyone on earth.

uttamah puhusas tv anyah (XV:17)

So, Krishna merely hints there is a truth, but that is not to be talked about. Though,

paramatme 'ty uduhrtah (XV:17)

people, sages, mystics refer to it as the Supreme Self.

yo lokatrayam avisya bibharti avyaya isvarah (XV:17)

And, that Supreme Self pervades the entire universe, the three worlds. You have heard this, it is usually translated 'earth, heaven and hell'. It may very simply mean the world of our waking experience, the world of our dream experience, and the world of dreamless sleep.

What is that consciousness that is common to all these states? The mind can answer this question to a limited extent, though, as I repeat, the personality keeps changing. Any guess that you make of my character, of my personality now, is wrong tomorrow morning. The dreamer seems to be quite a different character to the waking character. When the dream also comes to an end, when this person sleeps totally unconsciously, is he dead, is he enlightened, is he an idiot? That personality again seems to be completely different. If this change goes on and on and on, is there something which is real in all this, or am I several personalities rolled into a convenient skin?

It is that supreme self or cosmic consciousness, that permeates every atom of existence, and enables us to live and to function here. It is that cosmic consciousness that is responsible, indirectly, for even the dreams to take place, and it is that cosmic consciousness that functions when nothing seems to function, when I am fast asleep. I do not know if you appreciate this. I think God invented this sleep merely to shock us into some kind of wisdom. You think you are running this funny world. Stop that arrogance. When you are asleep, and you do not even know who you are, the world still goes on. That lesson we still have

not learnt.

What is that consciousness? It is not possible for the mind to understand it, though yogis who have striven to understand the waking mood of the mind, and who are capable of entering into the dream state and even the deep sleep state without losing consciousness, have glimpsed that reality, and called it the supreme self. It is that cosmic consciousness that pervades not only all the worlds that might exist in creation, but the very three states of your daily experience.

yasmāt ksaram atito 'ham aksarād api ca ' ttamah ato 'smi loke vede ca prathitah
purusottamah (XV:18)

Krishna says, "Because I am the divine that is beyond expression and experience, I transcend the perishable and the imperishable." That reality is neither this nor that, neither the perishable nor even the imperishable, because these two have still been capable of being brought into conceptualisation. At least you think or feel you have understood it. You feel it is possible to have a glimpse of this truth. Even that has to be dropped, by merely saying neither-nor. And therefore, this cosmic consciousness is supreme.

yo mam evam asamudho janati purusottamam sa sanvavid bhajati mam sanvabhavena bharata
(XV:19)

He who knows that all that can be known, is within the realm of conditioning, of limitation - whether the limitation appears to be of the nature of changing substances or of the unchanging - is not a fool. What can be known is that even these two are concepts and not the truth. This is all that is possible for the mind to grasp, and the mind stands bewildered there, frozen. The man who knows this, recognises the changeability of changing phenomena, and looks for the unchanging. Then he realises that even that is a mere concept. It is a marvellous thing. Then you do not judge anything, anybody, anywhere, at any time. When both these concepts are given up, you cease to be, and you have also given up your foolishness.

sa sanvavid bhajati mam sanvabhavena bharata (XV:19)

'Sarvavit' - he is a wise man, he knows everything. What do we mean by saying that a sage or a yogi is omniscient? He knows what has to be done, and when, and how, and in what manner to do it. I have seen a great master who was an example of this. All the noble eight-fold path of the Buddha is contained in just this one phrase, 'sarvavit' - he knows. When is the time to do the right thing, and what is the right spirit? Your action may be right, but the time and the place may be wrong. 'Sarvavit', he knows all this.

sa sanvavid bhajati mam sanvabhavena bharata (XV:19)

'And he is devoted to God in all ways', because he knows that that truth or God is the ultimate reality, unknowable, beyond thought and word. The knowable being, the permanent and the impermanent divinities or structures in this

universe, the conditioned beings in this universe. He knows that it is that reality, which sustains, fills, and animates this entire universe, which 'is' the entire universe; so, he is devoted to this divine being or cosmic consciousness with all his heart and soul. There is not a single aspect of his personality which has not been sanctified by this vision which is something fantastic. His whole life is sanctified; therefore, his relations, his work, his appearances, are sanctified.

iti guhyatamam sastram idam aktam maya 'nagha etad buddhva buddhiman syat krtakrtyas ca bhanata (XV:20)

This is the greatest of all secrets. Why is it so? Because we only communicate words. We hurl words at each other, and words have no meaning at all. When I hear a word, the meaning arises 'in me', the meaning 'is' in me. The meaning, the truth, does not become clear within oneself, as long as the heart is impure - because of conditioning, limitation, desires and cravings, hate, pride and prejudice, and all the rest of it. The meaning, the truth, does not become clear within oneself, if the mind is unsteady and distracted. It is only the mature mind that can discover the meaning of these words. Otherwise, the words are heard, the heart does not hear. And therefore it becomes a great secret. If the mind is silent, undistracted, and enters into the heart, and listens from there, then the meaning becomes clear. Then, in the words of Baba Muktananda, 'Shaktipata' happens. Then, direct transmission takes place.

idam aktam maya 'nagha (XV:20)

'This truth can only be revealed by the divine', not by us talking to each other. The divine within you must reveal this, and the revelation will come when the mind has once again ceased its struggle, and the heart has ceased from evil and wicked ways. There is a suggestion here that one does not necessarily follow the other. That is, you cannot say, "I am going to steady my mind, and purify my heart. Now God, did you see? Come on!" It's not a command performance. Do your job and wait. As Jesus said, "Knock and it shall be opened." Your business is to knock, don't expect anything more. Revelation is a matter of Grace.

etad buddhva buddhiman syat krtakrtyas ca bharata (XV:20)

One who knows this great secret, as revealed by the divine, within his own heart, is 'buddhiman' - he is wise. Not intelligent, not cunning, not clever, but wise. Wisdom is something totally different from our business cleverness. Cleverness can get you a lot of money, and a lot of headache, ulcers, and blood pressure. To go back to the Buddha's teaching - wisdom is that noble eight-fold path. This wisdom covers your entire life, enriches you entirely.

krtakrtyas ca bhanata (XV:20)

This phrase has unfortunately been mauled by most commentators. 'One who does what has to be done'. When you realise this truth, as revealed by the divine, in your heart, then and only then you do what has to be done, not what your mind nor your emotional personality, nor your instinctual being dictates. In the light of

this revelation, you do naturally and spontaneously what has to be done, from moment to moment, and that is a sign of wisdom. This is the end of the chapter, the last verse of the chapter. Do not try to start from here. Start from where we started, and gradually build this vision. This expression occurs very frequently in the Yoga Vasistha: gain this vision, and let your actions spring from that. The vision of truth first, and then the actions follow. 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God', and the rest will flow.

Om Tat Sat