

Talks on the 6th Chapter



Swami Venkatesananda

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For these five days, it has been suggested that we shall take up the sixth chapter of the Bhagavad Gita. Why is that so important? Is there any reason for it? There is none! It is just as good as anything else. Something has to be done - so we shall do that. And that is precisely the theme of the very first words of that chapter: something has to be done - do it!

anasritah karmaphalam karyam karma karoti yah
sa samnyasi ca yogi ca na niragnir na ca 'kriya? (VI.1)

You will probably recognise one word in this verse - yogi. And as a matter of fact, the other words are unimportant. Who is a yogi? What is a yogi? What makes one a yogi? Is the yogi some sort of a distinguished personality? That is the first and most important question. If the yogi is only a distinguished personality, then the yoga has missed the bus - I wanted to say the garbage truck, which is precisely what I meant. If it is something which is an exclusive privilege or monopoly of distinguished personalities, then it is better to drop it. It is not!

Yoga is not the monopoly of anyone. It is not something which distinguishes one from the others. So, all this scramble for the front seat must be abandoned. The yogi is a very common person, ordinary person, simple - you and me - without any need whatsoever, to pretend to be somebody other than just a man and a woman. Otherwise, the whole purpose of yoga is destroyed. Otherwise, we are already motivated by exactly the same motive which destroys our lives and from which we seek refuge.

Take your notorious asanas for instance, or pranayama. You may or may not consider this problem now. And I am not saying that all of you started this practice with the motive I am going to place before you, but most people come into it because some others - the yoga teachers, the yogis, have or had told them that: 'Practice yoga, all your tensions will drop away.' Hmm. Ahaa - is that so? 'I am tense and I want to practice yoga in order to drop all these tensions so that all these tensions may drop away.' Why are you tense? Or, why are you depressed? Why are you agitated?

For a very simple reason, the reason is extremely simple. I want to get something which I cannot get. I am forced to do something which I do not want to do. Is that right? There is no third reason for human frustration. Why do I feel frustrated? Why do I feel depressed or anxious or tense? I want to do something or to get something which I cannot, and I have got something which I cannot get rid of - or, I have to do something which I do not want to do.

An inner battle or conflict is set-up and you do not know what to do with it. Then you hear or read some yogi's declaration, that 'Practice yoga, all these tensions will drop away.' Which is true! Then, having come into this yoga, you are bringing the same problem again. 'I want to be the first. 'I' want to be a yogi.'

Wait, wait; this is what you said before, 'I want to be wealthy, I want to be this, I want to be famous, I want to have a lovely figure - and you could not have it and therefore you got frustrated. And now, the moment you walk into this yoga stuff, the same motivation creeps in through the back door! Only the words have changed. 'I am no longer ambitious that I should become a successful businessman, now I want to become a successful yoga teacher.' What is the difference? 'I do not want to be a distinguished personality in the social world anymore, but I want to be a distinguished yogi.' What is the difference?

You still want to become something which you are not. And there is always a threat that your ambition may not be fulfilled. And if the ambition is fulfilled, please bear this in mind too - it will leave you more anxious than you ever were! I am sure that I am not the only person who has achieved what he set himself up to achieve. I will tell you it is more dangerous to get what you want, than not to get what you want. If you do not get what you want, at least you keep going. If you get what you want, you are so terribly worried that that will be taken away from you - that it will go away, that it will abandon you - and all that will come to an end. I have heard this said by other people also, and I can see such thoughts coming into me too. 'It is too good, it can't last long.' Have you not heard this? Or probably you have said this, 'It is good, too good, it cannot last forever.' Naturally! Nothing lasts forever!

So, you are a distinguished person or you want to be a distinguished person, you cannot make it elsewhere, and you become more and more tense, worried, anxious, depressed. You come into yoga because it is billed as a cure for all this. Having come in here, you bring in the same problem, 'Here also, I must be a distinguished person.' Yogi is not a distinguished person. A yogi is the most ordinary character in the world. A distinguished person is still a distinguished person and not a yogi.

I have been with very great yogis, and I have observed them. My guru, Swami Sivananda. He wore fame, name, popularity - all that fanfare and trumpet as you wrap yourself with a shawl, with a blanket. A shawl or a blanket can slip off your shoulders without your being aware of it. That is what happened to him. He saw that these things attract attention - right, good. So you are attracted to him, and you go closer to him, and then suddenly, all that he shows you is his pure and simple humanness. Hmmm, I thought you are some kind of a genie that floated above the clouds. But no. A yogi is not a person who is anxious to distinguish himself. He is one with you. If that is not there, then he is not a yogi. He is a play actor. He is a hypocrite. Why is it so? Because, yoga is not an exclusive achievement! It is not the monopoly of any class, creed, nationality - but it is for all.

What must I do in order to become a yogi? Very simple, huh ... do anything you like! And therefore the Bhagavad Gita contains suggestions for all sorts of activity. If you want to sit and sing hare rama - go on, go ahead; if you want to go into the church and sing in the choir - please do; if you want to engage yourself in

some sort of social service - wonderful, very nice; if you want to shave your heads, put on orange robes, jump up and down along the roads - lovely, correct. No activity is of any special value, all activities are same. If you want to be a soldier and fight the war - please do; a butcher and sell meat - yes, correct, lovely, go ahead.

Then what is this yoga about precisely? That is what is yoga about: do what has to be done and forget it. Can you do that? Anasritah karmaphalam - can you do something at all, without considering what is going to happen? What am I going to get out of it? Where is this leading me to - so that I can manipulate again? Is it possible?

Is it possible for us to do something ... period - then you are a yogi. Then you are a yogi instantly, there is nothing more. Does it mean that yoga is impulsive action or mechanical action, automatic action? No! Incidentally, let us dispose of this. It is not part of our subject. Mechanical action is not yoga, habitual action is not yoga - for a very simple reason: when you are doing something mechanically, by force of habit, if you are able to observe yourself, you will find that that is not the only thing you are doing. If, as you are driving your car, it is not necessary for you to waste your energy trying to figure out, 'What must I do now?' But observe the mind, having handed the business of driving to the habit pattern, the mind is busy cooking some other stuff. Hmmm, that is the danger. So that, automatic action is not the total answer. In automatic action there is no motivation - quite right, but while this automatic action goes on, there are other thoughts, other notions, other feelings, other ambitions - which are motivated.

Yoga is not automatic action. In order to train himself in this yogic approach to life, the yogi sometimes recommends that you bring in the habitual actions, too, into the fold of conscious activity. So that, when you find that you are drifting off into a wonderland when you are driving a car, you say, 'No, I am going to be very attentive now to the road. I am going to watch the road, watch every bump in the road, watch the traffic.' Then suddenly, you find a new world! Why do you find a new world? Because, the dream world that you had been living in during that period - is gone! Now, you know what it is to live consciously.

Is that so important? Must I live consciously? Because, it demands greater energy to live consciously. The genius of the mind in evolving a habit pattern is that, when you are doing it mechanically, no energy is lost. When you bring it to a conscious level, then you have to pump some energy into it, but you are learning something very beautiful. As you perform these things, even the habitual actions consciously, immediately you discover that every action has got a past and every action has got a future. No action is independent, no action is inaction. Nothing that we do is really total in itself. What you are doing is only a small fragment. It is based on some sort of a past and it is directed to some sort of a future.

More than the past, which is dead in any case, the future is a danger! Why? It does not exist! - and it may not exist. Nostradamus had said that in 1999 the

whole world will come to an end! Well, I do not care, I do not care at all - I will not be there. The world can come to an end 15 times in 1999. What am I worried about?

Once in Nairobi, I saw the body of a cyclist who had been knocked down and killed. I was looking at that body, just for a couple of few seconds. What were his thoughts when he picked up the bike and jumped on it and started riding? Probably he wanted to go and meet his girlfriend. He was dreaming all sorts of dreams, perhaps, and he did not know that he would not get to his girlfriend. Gone half way ... could that happen to us?

Sure, but does it mean that I would not get my bike out of the garage and ride? I would, certainly! Can that action be isolated, freed from a stupid future which does not exist? If the future is here already - for instance, you are driving along and you see a big truck coming right in front of you, that future is there. It is not so much a future as the present, so naturally you take all the precautions necessary. But our lives are not directed towards that sort of thing.

If you observe your thoughts, which are also mental 'actions', and your behaviour, you see that all the time, the present action is, watch carefully, guided by a future result - which is an obvious absurdity! The present action can only be guided by the present energy that is put into it, the present intelligence that makes it possible, and you may say that your personality, which is the past, also comes into it. We will come to that later on. But in any case, this future is a nuisance! It is not there. Can this present action be instantly freed from this future? There is no need for it. But if you observe your thoughts and your behaviour, there is all the time a future motivation. That is, you are bringing the future, you are bending the future into almost the past, just behind you, to push this present action which is absurd - impossible.

I was talking to somebody the other day about prayer. We always pray, 'Lord, may this happen ... may I get this ... may I not get this ... may I be saved from this thing.' Once again, I am very intimately aware of this phenomenon. There may be a little exaggeration in what I am going to say; but please, understand the spirit. Of the prayers that I might have offered, asking God to do this and not do this, approximately 5% were heard and responded. God granted those 5% prayers - 95% of prayers were rejected, unfulfilled. Right, quite right. Now comes the punch line. At this hour, I draw up this balance sheet and I see that first, only 5% of my prayers were answered by God - oh my God! And I see that of that 5%, 4.95 caused a lot of heartache. I now wish that God had rejected those prayers also. And of the 95 that were rejected, 94.9 have proved to be a blessing. All that you ask for leads you into trouble, greater trouble, when they are granted. And the rejected prayers prove to be the supreme blessing after some time and you wonder, 'My God, what a fool that I asked for this thing to be done!' This is, I am sure, the experience of at least the older members of the audience here, the younger ones are still in the asking mode.

The supreme question here is, 'Who or what governs our lives?' Or, even much simpler, 'Who or what governs life?' - not our lives. And, what is action? How is it to be related to life, if it has a relation at all? That is the question. And here, the master says, 'Just be, just do'. Not only just be, just do. Because your doing is the inevitable expression of your being. Krsna had said earlier on in the Bhagavad Gita:

na hi kascit ksanam api jatu tisthaty akarmakrt (III.5)

Not even for a single moment can you remain completely and totally idle! Even when you think you are doing nothing, you are doing something: sitting and doing nothing, lying down and doing nothing, telling yourself, 'I will do nothing!' That is also doing. That is another form of doing and it is a tremendous inner resistance. Somebody told me recently, 'Oh, you must have absolute bed rest.' I thought, 'My God, that will drive me completely crazy!' Absolute bed rest? That will make me so nervous, and so disturbed that I am certain to become worse. I have got some commitments, I have told them I will do this, I will do that, I will do this - and, I see I am capable of doing that and perhaps they also feel that I am capable of doing that, and now this man says, 'Go to bed and do not get up at all!' And, my mind is alert, I go to bed, ... lie down there, I can do that quite easily. 'At this time, I should be sitting there and talking to them. Hmmm ... alright, I must have bed rest.' It is not possible!

So, this thing called 'inaction' is not only impossible, but it is dangerous. You cannot do that! - it is impossible. And it is dangerous because it sets up an inner conflict. Action is inevitable. There is no cessation of action. Even in death there is no cessation of action, because in death, unbeknown to what is called me - the ego or the mind - some action goes on: the decomposition of the body. Coming to think of that, the body is being composed now, unbeknown to you. Action is inevitable. And much of sensible action, meaningful action, happens - independent of me. It is something extraordinarily beautiful and simple! Between the time we came here, sat down, and now, a few billion cells have been created and destroyed in you, in the body - you are not aware of them at all! It is because of that creation and that destruction, that you are alive and kicking. That is life! That is life!

Then you observe the mind, wondering, if life could be so simple, 'Why am I thinking at all?' Here, we are on very slippery ground. If all this creation and all this destruction, and - which are part of life, the living - can go on, independent of me and my thinking, why do I think at all? I do not have to think! Haha ... but thinking goes on. This is the crux of meditation, whose practice is described later in the chapter.

Can you distinguish between a thought which you voluntarily think, and a thought that arises and ceases? Can you distinguish between a thought that you think, and a thought that merely arises, prevails and ceases? The joke here is, the cessation of that thought. When does a thought cease to be, as simply, as sweetly,

as it came into being? When you do not hold it! When you do not hold it, it just comes up and dies down - that is the point! In this same way, your body also has got to be active. There is an energy moving the body - let it move. It will work as long as it has to work and it will come to an end - if you are not holding on to it, if you are not pushing it, if you are not restraining it, if you are not in contact with it, if you are not attached to it - that is the point.

Both in body and mind, can we distinguish what is natural action, action that is natural, which does not depend on a thing called me - and action, either physical or mental, which is governed by the 'will' - big word? 'I will do this, I will not do this.'

'I will do this, I will not do this,' - those are dangerous, because they seem to challenge nature. 'I will do this, I will not do this.' I do not know if this is the experience of at least some of you, I have seen this in my case, as also in the case of very sincere and good people, yogis, when they vehemently assert, 'I will do this!' or 'I will not do this!' - there seems to be somebody listening to it over their shoulders and from then onwards, nature - if you believe in a thing called nature, an intelligent thing called nature, nature seems to conspire against it. I have seen this even in my case. I tell myself 'I will do this', the entire nature seems to rebel, 'Who on earth are you to say this? Come on, let's see!' Everything goes wrong! Obviously, it does not happen all the time because then you give up and become wise! Sometimes you say, 'I will do this' or 'I will not do this', you succeed. That is when you are taken for a ride. But when you say, 'I will do this' or 'I will not do this', the entire nature, intelligent nature, seems to burst into activity. I can almost hear the horse-laugh of nature around me, 'Hahahaha - you are going to do this!

I will see, I will see how you can do that!' Everything, everything - there is a conspiracy!

So, 'I will think, I will not think,' - that is the wrong approach. Can I distinguish the thought that arises, stays on the stage, and ceases. If I do not hold it, it goes away. In the same way, can I live, can this body live, function in this world, doing what has to be done, without holding on to this action, expecting this action to take me, or take this body and me as the personality, to a certain destination and not to a certain other destination? Is such a life possible? That life is yoga.

anasritah karmaphalam karyam karma karoti yah (VI.1)

Without being hooked on to - here, the word is most appropriate - to a preconceived result, he who lives doing what has to be done - is a yogi. I have really not been able to understand the word 'preconceived'. I do not know if some of you can explain it later. Conceive is conceive - what do you mean preconceived? So, the result is the result - you cannot conceive it now! That is where the expression preconceived applies 100%. These two things do not exist. The result does not exist now, as a preconception does not exist. Hm? ... quite

simple isn't it? So, leave that alone, what exists is: karyam karma - what has to be done now! Action that is appropriate to the moment, which therefore is in strict accordance with nature and life.

Life lives - life has to live. That is what is called life. And life is able to do what has to be done - at the moment. One who lives in this way is a yogi. He is also called a samnyasi, but that does not concern you now - but maybe it does, we will discuss it later. Samnyasi - not the orange people or the shaven-headed people - that sort of thing. It means, one who lives an extremely simple, simplified life, neither allowing the past to determine his present action, nor looking only at the distant horizon and falling into a ditch immediately. This is yoga, anybody can do this. And one who lives such a life is a yogi.

25 May

While freeing action from the past and more especially, the future, we might run into another difficulty: if all motivation is taken away - what would you do? You do not want to achieve success, you are not looking for pleasure, you are not even concerned with whether you are going to live next month or not - then what would you do? Normally, we tend to go to sleep. Haaah ... there is nothing to work for, nothing to live for, nothing to work for and so - why should I do anything? In that, there is greater loss of energy. In that thing called 'refraining from action' - saying, 'I will not do anything, I have nothing to gain and therefore, I will not do anything,' - there is a tremendous loss of energy.

It is a funny thing. In the world, nobody is interested in what you are doing or what you are not doing. If you are doing something, there may be some clever people who will take advantage of it - utilise it, make use of you, in other words. If you do nothing, there will again be some other people who are looking for just that - and they will take advantage of that. It is not their fault. The mind should not start blaming them - we will come back to that. If you leave some valuables here and nobody looks at it, everybody else is a fool. What do you expect them to do? You have no use for it, they have use for it. So, regardless of what other people might do or say, you yourself must realise that 'By doing nothing, I am wasting my energy. I have no motive, and since I have no motive, since I have nothing to gain from doing all this, I do not want to do anything because I see that when I do something, other people are naturally benefited - naturally! So, I will not do anything.' That will also profit some other people, some other crowd. You cannot determine that.

To put it rather crudely, if you work hard and struggle and become wealthier - right - you are left with a struggle and your children inherit all that. If one - a very humorous vein, a learned man - says that, 'You fool, you are struggling to promote the welfare of thieves. Who are the thieves? Your own children. They do nothing, they just keep quiet knowing that the whole thing will drop into their laps as soon as you go - you have got to go.' So you struggle - somebody else takes advantage of that and you say, 'No, I am not going to struggle at all. Why should I? Let them do what they have to do and make their own lives. So, I am not going to do anything.'

That which you would have acquired, the vacant plot where you might have built a house if you had struggled hard, is available for him - so he is going to take advantage of that. In other words, whether you do anything or not do anything, you are not going to do anything at all for your sake! Right! Whether you do anything, or not do anything, on the purely material and physical level, you are going to do nothing for your sake! Is that very clear? You can eat and you can sleep in a nice bed and you can have air-conditioning and all that; you can ride a nice car, you can live in a nice house - that you can always do, with or without all this struggle.

But, none of these things is really for you - that is abundantly clear. Is it? Not clear? All that you are doing, with tremendous deft - struggle is the word - is enjoyed by somebody else till about the age of 50. You are struggling to make ends meet and the ends do not meet at all because you are also expanding. When you are single, you are struggling to make ends meet. When the ends are about to meet, you become double - they have gone out! And then, both of you struggle to make ends meet and as it comes closer, you are troubled again and troubled again. So the ends never meet. At age 50 or 55, you have some property somewhere and something somewhere. Haah ... now the doctor's bills! So that, throughout your life you have never been able to put your feet up and enjoy what you earned - what you have been struggling for.

Your children grow up in that atmosphere. Remember, they have not struggled to make all this, they have not struggled to build this up, to put this building up - they have done nothing. They have been born of you, and this girl says, 'He is my father, and my father is very rich. My father, and all that he has made, is mine'. Boom! Just like that! 'I do not have to do anything.' Strangely enough, it was not enjoyed by you, obviously not, because it is too late. At 55 you are sick, you are paying only doctors bills - how are you going to enjoy what you have made? It is useless for you, and it is useless for them because they have no sense of value for it - it is nothing at all, 'My father ... it is mine already, I do not have to work for it, it is mine' - and therefore, they do not value it.

When you travelled in India, probably you noticed: things that are nothing for you, are valuable to them - to the poorer people. If they walked into some of your houses and sat on your chair, 'Haah... these people must be very happy.' But they are not! Because you are born into this, into this furniture and this carpet and so on. You take these things for granted and the children that come after you, to inherit your property, take those things for granted! Who benefits from all this? None, nobody! They are not yours. They belong to them but they are not even conscious of it - and so it goes.

Things are merely produced, put together, torn apart - nobody knows - why? There does not seem to be the least rhyme or reason in all this, sense in all this. Seeing that, I abandon this motive, 'I am going to become wealthy, I am going to become famous, I am going to become a great.' It is nothing - nobody is interested in that. Alright, 'I do not want to do anything because all this is useless, waste' - okay, can you do that?

First of all you are suppressing yourself, and that suppression demands a tremendous lot of energy, and you are achieving nothing! Because the house, the plot where you might have built the house has been taken over by somebody else ... somebody else is going to do it. The boy you did not marry is married now. The girl I did not marry is married now and she has got a couple of children. So, it did not matter at all whether it was me or somebody else. Hm? ... So, one comes face to face with this utter meaninglessness of striving, struggling - one way or the other.

Things happen in this world, regardless of your ambition or your lack of ambition, your struggle or your laziness. Things happen in this world. Both struggle and refraining from that struggle, involve loss of energy - clear, isn't it? When the inner intelligence sees this, it abandons struggle - one way or the other - struggle to do, struggle not to do. Hm? ... Struggle to do and struggle not to do. Then what do you do?

Are we to live an instinctual life? That is the next question. Are we to live an instinctual life? Unfortunately, that door also seems to be closed for us - human beings. Whereas, the animals, and when I say this, I do not refer to ... I am not speaking of your pets - your pets are not animals, they are one-fourth human beings, they have been robbed of their animal nature, they have been robbed of their freedom and they have been trained - which means, 'undogged'; a dog is no longer a dog, it has undergone very rigorous toilet training at your hands and so it is not going to be a dog anymore. The animal has got a certain freedom to express itself ... Hm? ... and therefore it lives a natural life. You and I have been deprived of it - I do not know by whom - and it is unnecessary to investigate this.

You and I are not leading a natural life and when we begin to lead a natural life, there is struggle! It is a strange thing, funny thing. I will give you only one example, its crude: sleep. Sleep is so natural, and yet, we have moved away from it, so far, that if not sleeping tablets, we need all sorts of furniture - a nice soft mattress and an electric blanket and a pillow here and there. One may completely avoid taking tablets, sleeping tablets - that is the other extreme. But even if you do not want any of these, sleep has ceased to be something natural.

I do not know whether this has happened to you, probably it will happen in about half an hour's time ... if I go on. It has happened to me once, and I have a few friends who promptly go off to sleep as soon as I start talking - second or third sentence, they are off. And it happened to me once, during Swami Sivananda's 'All-India Tour'. We were in Madras. The program was very, very heavy. From morning five o'clock till evening - ten, we were being taken round and round like kitten. And I still remember this. It was eight o'clock, there was a music concert, I was very interested in that. But, I suppose, because Swami Sivananda was not talking, I did not have to be alert; I was enjoying - let myself go. It was October 2nd, 1950, I remember the date, because it was Gandhi's birthday and this meeting was held in honour of Gandhi's birthday and Swamiji also was sitting there. Later He talked and I was awake for that. Somebody started singing; I closed my eyes and I thought I was enjoying. I do not know what happened. Once there is this forward whiplash, you wake up - I do not know if this has happened to you, and that one whiplash fills you with so much energy for the next 24 hours. That shows that somewhere in the backbone or spinal cord, some energy is hidden and, immediately I looked around to see if somebody else was Because, you feel at that time, that nothing at all - you just nodded. You did not nod, you were nodding for a long time! About five to ten thousand people in front of me, and a stage full of vips. When you want to sleep, you sleep; it is

quite natural, sleep. It does not matter where you are seated, what is happening around you. I have seen people who fall asleep when they are talking, half way through. I have seen people who fall asleep when they are singing, chanting! One man in the ashram, he was tipped off by the Master for dosing off while he was sitting and chanting, and in order to stop himself from doing it, he was made to stand up and walk around the altar singing - and walking around, he was sleeping. Walking around chanting, he was still sleeping! Such a natural thing, such a beautiful thing; even that has become so unnatural in our case.

So, now that we are not natural, we have lost that - what do we do? We cannot live an instinctual life because we have moved away from that, we have moved away or we have been moved away - all that is philosophy - we are not interested in that. But, having lost it, what do we do? Karyam karma karoti yah.

Karyam karma - what has to be done, has to be done. In our case, there is something called 'what has to be done'. In the case of a dog, there does not exist a thing called 'has to be done' - it does! What it does is what has to be done. In our case, this 'what has to be done' is so completely veiled, hidden away, by this brilliant thing called 'intellect' - with the result, you and I are always confused. 'Shall I do this? Shall I not do this? Shall I do that? Shall I not do that?' This is the second problem. The first problem being: freeing action from the future, primarily, and the second problem is: to determine what has to be done regardless of the consequences, the result and the reward or the absence of it. He who does that is a yogi.

He who is able to do what has to be done, not caught up in where it will lead to, in calculations concerning the future. That is, if you have to plan, you have to plan. If you have to make a decision, you have to make a decision. See how difficult it is becoming now - because we are human beings - stupid, isn't it! If you have to make a plan, you have to make a plan; if you have to make a decision, you have to make a decision. It has to be done, this is to be done: karyam karma - something which has to be done, and yet, it should, at the same time, not tie you down.

Your present action should not be motivated or determined or decided by a future result. When I am putting it that way, it looks absurd, obviously! But if you observe your own mind, you are doing it all the time. Hm? When it is put this way; your actions should not depend upon the future, should not be motivated by an expected future result. It looks absurd - how can I do it? And, yet, we are doing it all the time. When that is freed, the intellect, not used to any other method of functioning asks, 'What are the guidelines? How must I do? What must I do?'

And now, the Master comes along and says, 'Determine what must be done now: karyam karma - this must be done. That is, to determine the action for its own sake, on its own merits. An action on its own merits! We have completely moved away from this, so that I am sure, if you are serious, it is puzzling. Is there a thing called something like that? Is there an action which is good in itself, unrelated to

what is going to happen to it? Why do you sit for an exam? In order to pass! What happened to all those children who failed? Why did they sit for an exam? Were they fools? Can you determine while sitting for the exam, while writing the exam, 'I am doing the right thing now. And, I do not even have the faintest idea, thought, whether I am going to pass or fail.' Can you do that?

Karyam karma - what has to be done, has to be done on its own merits - without in the least relating it to the future. We are almost total strangers to this. So that, it really does not make sense. You hear these words, and the words have their dictionary meanings, but they do not make sense. Does an action have intrinsic merit or demerit? So that, I will do what has to be done ... Hm? ... and I will not do what need not be done, or has not to be done, or should not be done - period! I wanted to say 'regardless of consequences; even that is absurd. Is it possible? If that is possible - you are yogis!

Now, I am introducing a complication in it - watch very carefully - this is how the human mind works and that is the danger. 'Hah ... if only I can live like this, I will always be happy.' The whole thing is gone, ruined - already ruined! See how the human mind works? If that carrot was not dangled, we are not interested in even this gospel. That carrot has to be there: live like this, then you will have peace, supreme peace, eternal life. My God, back again to square one! I need that eternal life motivation in order to make me sit and meditate for half an hour - what a stupid thing to do! Can you not sit and meditate for half an hour without being told that by doing this you are going to gain eternal life? Immortality? Eternal bliss? Sitting and sleeping for half an hour leads to eternal bliss. See the workings of the mind.

So, first of all, free the action from the future, which is purely imaginary, and secondly, to become aware of the intrinsic nature of the action itself: karyam karma - therefore this has to be done; and therefore this should not be done. Not because something happened in the past and therefore I am doing it now; not because I want to gain something and therefore I am doing it now; but, I am doing this because this has to be done.

Here and there, in the Bhagavad Gita, again Krsna does mention:

sariram kevalam karma kurvan na 'pnoti kilbisam (IV.21)

Merely by going through the movements of action, that is, without even involving the intellect or the mind in it - one is freed. But, that is not instinctual action or mechanical action, but enlightened action - spontaneous action. What is that?

Another definition of yogi is given in the sixth chapter.

na hy asa?nyastasa?kalpo yogi bhavati kascana (VI.2)

In order to determine what has to be done and what should not be done, I see

that I must move the intellect away as a motivating factor. The past has been pushed out, the future has been pushed out, and now, the intellect, which functions on the basis of this past and future, has also to be pushed out.

This word samnyasa - which has unfortunately come to mean a man or a woman wearing these orange robes - has got a very beautiful meaning or quite a number of meanings, as usual, with Sanskrit language. One meaning is 'renunciation', which meaning is hardly ever rightly understood. I will convey a joke before continuing. About 30 or 40 years ago, there was a wonderful, saintly man in North India. He did not believe in these orange people at all. He did not believe that men and women, living in the present day world, can ever live a proper life of a samnyasi or swami. He was a religious leader who composed and sang his own songs. He had a very powerful voice and he had a big group who formed a chorus behind him and they could rouse people. Oh, fantastic power they had. He was invited by Swami Sivananda to the ashram and he gave a performance there. You must now forget this place and visualise what I am saying. There was Swami Sivananda seated, and there was a nice platform for this holy man and his group and they were all yelling from the top of their voice with their cymbals and drums and all that. The whole hall was full of orange people - hundreds of swamis around, just a few visitors. And this man was singing a song composed by him, hitting the swamis and the samnyasis. 'Look at the samnyasis', says one song. 'You ask him to do something ... give a piece of work ... he says, 'Oh no, we do not undertake to do anything at all because to do anything is bondage - we are dead.' There is a ceremony, when you become a samnyasi, during which you symbolically burn your own body and perform your own funeral. So when you go to the samnyasi, swami, and ask him to do something, he says 'I am a dead body - I cannot do anything, I cannot do any social service.'

jab yeh murde ko bhuk laga, sara duniya khaya re bhai ...

I remember this sentence! But ... 'When this dead body becomes hungry, my God, he eats the whole world!' When he is asked to do something, 'No, I have renounced the world, I have nothing to do with it.' But, when he wants to enjoy, haha ... the whole world is his. There is a certain truth in it. So, renunciation is a very difficult thing, even to understand.

The word samnyasa also means, what is beautifully expressed in an English proverb or saying: 'Everything has its place and everything in its place'. Everything has its place and everything in its place. But, the problem again is - the ball bounces back into our court. Who determines what is its place, and how it should be restored to its own place? Everything in its place, this is called samnyasa.

Therefore, you must know what your place in this world is, and play that role efficiently. It is again a troublesome thing! In other words, you see that it is impossible, if you are a yogi, to sleepwalk through this life. To do what your father did or mother did or grandfather did or what somebody else said or did - one has

to keep awake all the time. What is my place here? What is my role here - and I must do it! It must be done! Regardless of whether it is respectable or disrespectable, whether it is pleasant or unpleasant, whether it leads to what is called 'success' or 'failure'. To let everything be, in its own place: that is samnyasa - one of the meanings of samnyasa.

Sarvasam kalpa samnyasi, means ... one samkalpa means thought, notion, idea, the activities of the mind and the intellect; they have their own place. Watch very carefully here. The samnyasi or swami or yogi is not one who goes through life like a zombie, calling it spontaneous action. I hope you do not mind if I give you some funny examples. I think you have at least heard of it; you have not seen some. There are some monks or holy men in India who do not wear clothes; they are naked, completely naked. One such holy man happened to visit our ashram, to stay there. Because he had come to live in the ashram, he condescended to put on one gown - that is all. He did not wear any other article of clothing. Just to be decent amongst us, he put on one long, ankle length gown. He was a very noble man, very holy man, wonderful man; please do not think I am saying anything against him. He was also fairly aged, 65. One day, we were preparing a sort of veranda that we had, which was also used as a dining hall, down below, near the post office. That is where we used to eat, but, we also used to assemble there for satsang, we did work there - everything was done there. So that, before lunch, we poured a few buckets of water and cleaned it up; ready for lunch. In those days it was difficult; there was no running water, we had to get water from the Ganges. We had carried some water from the Ganges, poured it on the verandah and cleaned it, and this man was standing there, supervising the whole operation. He probably had some loose bowels or heaven knows what; something happened. He was standing there and ... right ... there is no problem. It could happen to any of us, it could happen to the baby, it could happen to anyone, it is not a crime. But he was a bit embarrassed. Instead of merely saying, 'Sorry ... what to do ... let us get some more water and clean it up', he said, 'You know, I have gone beyond body consciousness and when you go beyond body consciousness, these things happen.' That is not spontaneous action! Spontaneous action is something different. Something happens to the body, 'I was unconscious of it, alright ... I did not realise that this is what was going to happen ... right, good...', but that is not spontaneous action.

Spontaneity, again, though it is extremely natural, has to be made to happen because of the unnaturalness of our functioning. What is it that obstructs this spontaneity, even in the case of this holy man? The intellect, which comes in to rationalise! If that baby did something here, it would not say, 'Oh, you know, I am unconscious of my body', it does not even care - does not explain, it does not justify, it does not rationalise, it does not find a meaning - nothing. You are breathing day and night and you are not going about providing an explanation for it. The very fact that the mind wants to find a reason for it shows that the action was not spontaneous.

I have a rather sweeping generalisation - which is not very healthy: that any

action which you feel like justifying, or rationalising, is already wrong. When the urge is there to rationalise it, that urge covers up a guilty conscience. Or, a thought or a feeling or an idea that, 'If I do not explain it, it may lead to consequences - I am not prepared for it.' So that, either you are worried about this or you are worried about that. Either you are worried about the sanity of the action itself, or you are worried about the future. So, the moment you feel inclined to rationalise something that you do, there is something wrong, somewhere.

Here, the master asks: sarvasam kalpa samnyasi - observe your own thoughts, and, first of all, free the action from thought, and free the mental action from the ego. We have already discussed the first part: free the action from thought. That is, it is the thought that demands that the present action must be related to a future event - push that away. You have freed the action from thought.

One step further, you recognise that the activity of the mind is to think! The body has certain energy and a certain way to behave, in which it behaves, that is one part of action. The other part of action is mental action - which is thought. What makes me think? Can the 'me' be pushed out of that thinking process? Is it necessary for me to think? Or, can thinking also take place? - is the question. Is it necessary for me to think? Or, can thinking also take place? That is a very big question.

Thought has its own place - leave it there. Do not let this thought become the boss. Thought is also an action. But, who or what is it that determines what the place of thought is in the scheme of things and how action should proceed? Where does action arise and where does thought arise? To find this, we are asked to meditate. To find the answer to this question, we are asked to meditate. Sarvasam kalpa samnyasi - I am not the thinker.

Just as the body has energy on account of which it moves, even so, the mind has energy on account of which it thinks. I do not have to do any thing at all. Neither do, nor refrain from doing; neither struggle to do, nor struggle to refrain from doing. That is what constitutes a yogi. That is the main and fundamental characteristic of the yogi. How he does it, we shall discuss tomorrow.

26 May

We were indulging in some sort of spiritual gossip yesterday, talking about whether an enlightened man would still think, or sleep, or dream. All that is gossip.

There is a beautiful saying in Tamil, that, 'Only a snake knows its own teeth'. We are only guessing. You and I know only how to walk - with our legs. We do not know of any other movement, any other way of moving from one place to the other, leave alone cars and so on. Independently, if we think of moving from one place to the other, we think of walking. And so, we think that everything that moves must have legs, and move as we move. Even so, we think that a snake also moves - and as it moves, it must also have legs. We are trying to figure out where those legs are. There may be other forms of movement, we have no idea - other forms of motion, other forms of motive force. Only the enlightened people know whether they think or thoughts occur to them, whether they dream as you and I do, or their dreams are different from ours in quality and nature - characteristic.

Where are we? We are trying to discover what makes us live, what makes us do, what life is, how we behave, how we act, and we are trying to discover if it possible for us - not for the enlightened man, for you and me - to free this action which is inherent in life, from being linked to a future result - result in the future that is not here. And, is it also possible to free it from volition? sarvasam kalpa samnyasi - samkalpa can also be translated into volition; it is thought, it is notion, it is idea, and it is also volition.

It is possible for us to live free from 'I will do this, I will not do this?' 'I will do this, in order to achieve that. I will do this, in order to avoid that' - because, it is not difficult at all to see that all these other things lead to some complication. When you say, 'I am going to do this, so that I will get that', a future-oriented action, then, whether or not you achieve what you set out to achieve, you are in trouble. If you do not achieve what you set out to achieve, you are frustrated, immediately. If you achieve what you intend to achieve, then you are distracted.

Like the gambler - whether he goes to the horse race or indulges in a communication with the one-armed bandit - the slot machine - success is more dangerous there than failure. When you get success once or twice, you want to carry on, and afterwards if you suffer a few reverses, you still think that, 'Oh, never mind, success is again around the corner.' So you go chasing after success, and as you go chasing after success, you have left far behind, your own centre.

Way out there, caught-up in this whirlpool of action - blind action, motivated action, selfish action - it becomes very difficult to regain one's foothold. There is too much involved in that - you cannot stop there. It is easy for you as a single person to sit down and think, 'Alright, I do not like this sort of lifestyle, I am going to change it drastically tomorrow morning.' But if you have a family, hah ... that is not so easy. Then suddenly something else comes up, 'Is it not my duty to

talk to my husband or wife or children?' And, if you are head of a big business - whether it is painting or printing or yoga or wool gathering - again, the mind suggests at that time that the lives of all these people depend upon me, 'I am responsible for all of them, and if I walk out on this responsibility, it is sin and I will go to hell with it.' Once you have moved away from the centre, then the whole picture is so completely and thoroughly confused that it becomes nearly impossible to regain one's foothold; to stop and to consider, 'Am I on the right track or not?' You cannot stop! Except, unless, you are tremendous hero.

So, how not to leave this centre? And, regardless of success or failure, to be aware of the innate, inherent quality of the action itself. 'Is this right or not? Is this what should be done or not?' Karyam karma - is this what should be done or not, regardless of the future? Is this correct or not? Is this right action, correct action, appropriate action or not? Is this something which should be done? Then one can do it.

In order to decide whether this should be done or not, one has to decide, determine, observe, see - directly - without linking it to the past or the future: who determines this? who wants to do this? Because, unless you can come face to face with that within you which wants to do this, you cannot determine what the motive is. Unless you look at the cart, you cannot look at the horse - that is the idea. Whether the cart is before the horse or the horse is before the cart does not matter. But, unless you look at the cart, you cannot look at the horse.

So first look at the action itself, from where it arises; there you see the motivation. Is there a motivation there, or does this action just happen? If it just happens, it happens - and that is what is popularly called, 'God's Will', not something which the mind creates and rationalises as God's Will, but, the action that happens, through others to you and through you - that is God's Will. You are not keen on doing or not doing, you are not desire-motivated to do this or not to do this. In order to discover that, you have to observe yourself. In spite of it, the action flows, life flows. That is God's Will.

The manner in which your breakfast is being digested is God's Will. It is happening, not because you want it to happen, not because it pleases you, or displeases you, not because you want to grow strong or grow weak, put on weight or lose weight - totally regardless of your own private ambition and volition, this breakfast is being digested - that is God's Will. Can our whole life be like that? Then, you will know what God's Will is. In other words, if your will is completely taken out of this game of life, then you will know what God's Will is.

That will, the private will, arises for or against a certain action. You cannot say, 'Well, this is selfish action, so I will not do it'. That is also selfish. 'I will do this' is selfish, 'I will not do this' is selfish. Is there some way of completely defusing that self? Now, what does one do? Can I say, 'No, I am not going to be selfish hereafter?' You will be demonically selfish! Because, that which struggles in you is also selfish and leads to selfishness. So, this yoga cannot be practiced by

struggling.

aruruksor muner yogam karma karanam ucyate
yogarudhasya tasyai 'va samah karanam ucyate (VI.3)

One has to climb this, gently, sweetly go up, with great inner awareness. Struggle destroys inner awareness, whether it is called yoga asanas, pranayama, meditation or life. When there is struggle, there is no awareness. Pain for a moment or two may seem to promote awareness. Someone pricks you with a pin, you develop awareness. Your awareness is drawn, your attention is drawn there for a moment. But, from there on, it is destroyed, because you are more worried about this pain than about becoming aware of the pain. Especially in the case of yoga asanas, pranayama, or anything, even human relationships. Once you are hurt, the whole mind and your attention wants to avoid it and does not want to do it again. If, in your relation with somebody, you are hurt deeply, then the mind does not want to think of that, 'Oh no, avoid it! Why get into this nuisance?'

So, without getting hurt, which means without violence, yoga must be practiced without violence - whatever be the name you give to that yoga. There are violent practices which are also carried out under the name of yoga. Why they do it, only they know, not we. Yoga is non-violence, not only in the sense that I do not hurt you, but I am not hurt - either by myself or by you. If what I do hurts me, then it is more than likely the mind will shy away from it, and there is no awareness. So, without struggling, while I continue to be active in life - action being natural to life - can I become aware of what life is, what action is?

Why am I doing what I am doing? Now, this question has a different connotation to the student of yoga: aruruksor - the student of yoga, the student who wants to climb the ladder of yoga - why am I doing what I am doing? Immediately, the normal human mind, uneducated, untrained, un-yogic human mind, says, 'I am doing this because I was told to do this. I was doing this because I want to please him. I am doing this because he insulted me, or he praised me.' The normal tendency is immediately to blame your action upon someone else. Make someone else responsible for what you are doing. 'Why are you doing this?' Immediately the mind thinks of somebody else who is responsible for it - whether it is good or bad. And so, the master warns us:

uddhared atmana 'tmanam na 'tmanam avasadayet
atmai 'va hy atmano bandhur atmai 'va ripur atmanah (VI.5)

Do not blame others or glorify them for what happens to you or what you do - look within yourself. Do not say that, 'Just because he insulted me, I hit him.' Someone else uses the same words and you do not hit. I call him a fool, and he gets angry. His girlfriend slaps him and aha ... he is delighted! So it is not me or her or the word, it is how he feels about it. It is exactly how he feels about it.

Your actions are not really determined by others, however much you would like to think that they are. They are determined by your reaction, something within

you which reacts to a situation. That is what the yogi is interested in ... the student of yoga is interested in. And when he says, 'Why am I doing what I am doing?', he really and truly wants to find out, 'What is it in me that responds to the world in this fashion?' And, in the case of a serious student of yoga, this goes on for 25 hours of the day; throughout the day, there is absolutely no let-up.

It is when one engages oneself in such observation - unceasing observation - that the virtues that are regarded as qualifications for the student of yoga, arise spontaneously, without any effort. You are angry with someone, 'Why am I doing this?' - the anger is gone. You are greedy, you want to grab something ... hm? ... 'What is happening now?' - gone. A bedbug is about the best example for this. It starts running - when you look at it, it freezes. The moment you look at it, it is still, absolutely still. I do not know how it knows that you are looking at it!

All the - for want of a better word - evil intentions and qualities freeze the moment you look at them. Our defects and weaknesses and evil, wickedness - they have a free play only as long as you are not aware of them. Look at them - they freeze! And for at least half an hour or one hour afterwards, you are a saint, you are holy! I am sure all of us have used this expression some time or the other, 'Oh, I do not know why I did this.' If you knew 'why', you would not have done that - that is the idea. 'I was taken unawares, I do not know why I did this.'

The solution is simple - but, it is not very easy. It is not very easy to remain aware, when there is a provocation or a temptation. Just leave it here - let us see why we are asked to meditate. For instance, if we have an argument and I insult him, naturally, because of the argument and the heat generated by it, his attention has been diverted by me. He is looking at me with great, great big eyes, and the moment I say something insulting, he springs up. Which means there is a tremendous lot of emotional heat generated in our relationship, and his attention is totally distracted. That is when he blows up! Right?

The master says, 'Okay, create another situation, where this thing does not happen. Where you are not plucked away from your awareness and thrown to the winds. Create another situation. In that situation, ensure that you are the master, all the time. And what is it? Japa - repeat a mantra. You do not feel insulted, you do not feel provoked, you do not feel tempted, you do not feel threatened, nothing at all - it is a completely neutral job. You sit down and repeat your mantra. Now, remain aware of this mantra. Do not let it go, do not let it slip from your awareness - or, do not let your awareness slip from the mantra. That's it? Right! We will sit down - we will discuss that probably tomorrow or the day after - very easy instructions, clear instructions on how to keep the neck and the back and everything erect and all that, and you repeat the mantra - all this seems to be perfectly clear, easy.

You keep repeating the mantra. It seems to be quite simple. It is obvious - you want to repeat the mantra for the next half hour. Why should I not do it? You can, can you? You remain aware of the mantra for about 20-25 seconds - then it is

gone! Is the awareness itself gone away? No, you are aware. You are not aware of the mantra anymore, you are aware of something else. If you fall asleep, that's alright, one need not be disappointed at all if one falls asleep during the practice of meditation - it -s alright ... go on. But, sitting there with full awareness and, with all good intentions, serious, absolutely sincere, totally serious, 'I want to sit down and repeat my mantra.'

If you practice this with a little more curiosity instead of seriousness, you will observe something remarkable! Almost for 1/300th of a second, there is loss of awareness. Whereas, the concentration of attention on the mantra was steady for 20 seconds, the distraction goes on for 20 minutes with nothing! It is nothing! So, this practice called meditation is not an end in itself, but it is a training necessary for the yogi, in order to become, in order to know what this 'awareness' means. How to remain aware? How not to allow this awareness to slip away. Is that possible? In the heat of activity, it may be difficult to remain aware of what goes on within oneself. So he says, sit down, practice this in the morning - let's see if you succeed in that.

If you can, really, get hold of yourself and remain aware of the mantra, and, what is most important in the practice of meditation, remain aware of the moment of distraction. How is that possible? I go on repeating the mantra, I become aware I have been distracted only ten minutes later! How do you want me to recognise the moment of distraction? Alright, I will give you the technique, the method. These methods are meant for the discovery; the methods are of absolutely no intrinsic value in themselves. If you do not like my method, you can choose some other method.

To make that possible - that is, to enable us to get hold of ourselves at the moment of distraction, to become aware of the moment of distraction, there is a very beautiful exercise, technique. And, it is there in one of the tantras, actually, but it has also been adopted by the Zen folk. That is, concentrate on the breath itself and see if you can become aware of the exact moment of change - when the inhalation becomes exhalation and the exhalation becomes inhalation. This is also mentioned in the Yoga Vasistha. There, we are told that that moment is your self. That is the sandhi or the junction between the inhalation and the exhalation and the exhalation and the inhalation. There is a moment of change, there is a junction, but can you recognise the exact moment, not approximately half an hour ago? The exact moment, as it happens. When you train yourself in this fashion, you have found the key, so to say. Aha! So, even as the action is happening, I keep pursuing it, the awareness keeps accompanying. How can you find that moment? By following it all the time. Following the inhalation all the time, till the change happens, and following the exhalation all the time, till the change happens. You are on the merry-go-round ... haha! ... and you realise you cannot slip away from that. You are on the merry-go-round; as it goes there, you are still there, as it comes back, you are still there.

By training in this fashion, you have more or less trained yourself to do the same

thing when you repeat your mantra. Go on following the mantra - riding on the mantra - never letting it go. Then, you see on the periphery of your inner vision, a thought arising - it is provoking you, it is tempting you. The next moment you are going to be distracted - there you are aware! The provocation collapses. Because, you can only be taken unawares, not when you are aware. And the provocation drops. Come back to the centre - carry on. As you come back to the centre you are aware - carry on, until the next provocation arises. You are aware of it in the periphery of your vision, but you are definitely following the sound of the mantra. The distraction comes closer and closer and closer - you are aware, because you want to see, to observe and become aware of the moment of distraction. So that, right till the moment when you could have been distracted, you are aware. And that awareness itself, prevents the distraction from happening. Okay, that distraction disappears.

When you have trained yourself in that fashion, then, it becomes easy for you not to react in a situation in which you would have blindly reacted before. Because, the vital factor in all these, is exactly the same - how to prevent loss of awareness - that is all! And, this is done in activity, and therefore in relationships, not alone. You are trying out the technique when you are alone, calling it meditation, simply because you are otherwise weak to bring about this awareness in relationship, in the daily battle of life.

But that is not the whole thing, for, no problem arises in meditation. You are all sitting very quietly in the morning; nobody was insulting another, nobody was fighting with another, there was no jealousy, there was no envy, there was no hate - nothing at all; all quiet, fast asleep! But it is when we come into contact with others in our daily life, it is then that these problems tend to arise. And, we are seeking methods or means, whereby we may be able to avoid these problems from plaguing us.

aruruksor muner yogam karma karanam ucyate (VI.3)

So, in activity, in relationship, I am trying to remain aware of the source of action.

yogarudhasya tasyai 'va samah karanam ucyate (VI.3)

What we have been discussing so far is what is known as control of mind. It is not suppression of anything at all - we are merely observing. When the mind is well under control, that is intelligent control. When the mind is under control: yogarudhasya tasyai 'va samah karanam ucyate - then, you can enjoy inner peace and allow action to flow. From then on there is no need for you to engage yourself deliberately in some sort of activity. Since you have dealt with the problem of unawareness, which gives rise to selfishness - selfishness will not exist in you - that is the idea. And, from there on, all that you need do, is to rest content within yourself. Life will flow through you also. You will not remain idle, but, there will not even be that little effort that was necessary when you were still battling with this awareness. Battling is a bad word, but you know what I mean: when you are

still trying to remain established in that awareness. What happens thereon? Does the yogi go to sleep? No.

Samah karanam ucyate - that control of mind and senses, self-control, becomes habitual. It is not trying to control oneself, it is not struggling to control oneself, as earlier on we may have had need to do - for instance, with practice in meditation, practice in pranayama and all this struggling. I mean these are all not struggle the more destructive sense, but some sort of effort. Even that is not necessary now, because you are in a state of perpetual meditation.

That light of awareness which has been kindled, shines brightly, without any more effort, without any more fuel being supplied by way of sitting for your meditation and doing this and doing that. The mind is constantly aware, there is constant awareness. The awareness is never lost. So that, even as one little motivation, wrong motivation, arises ... hey ... down! In other words, you are never taken unawares. That is samah. Samah karanam ucyate - at that point, you are a yogi, in the real sense of the term. Now you can figure out whether you will dream or whether you will think or whether you will not think or ... you may do - anything may happen. Anything may happen, nothing may happen.

It is no longer your egoistic choice. It is no longer a selfish life. Whatever you are doing, what you are doing may appear to others to be selfish, that is not your concern. What you are doing may appear to others to be, oh, extremely altruistic, and that is not your concern, because the self is not there. And what happens, happens. Not because you want it to happen that way, but because it happens that way. This hall can be lit up in two ways: 1) the sun shines through and there is blazing light here, 2) you switch on the electric lights. Before one became a full-fledged yogi, there was need to switch on this light. Once you have become fully-fledged yogi, then the whole thing is flooded by sunlight - there is no need to switch on or switch off.

yogarudhasya tasyai 'va samah karanam ucyate (VI.3)

And this light, the whole of your inside, is so radiantly lit - brilliant, brilliantly lit, that it is never lost! At that moment, at that point, it is no longer your life - it is the divine life. It is no longer your will, it is the Divine Will. Whatever happens from thereon is God's Will. You are naturally established in virtue, of which you may not even be aware. Virtue not as defined by xyz, because virtue as defined by people is always very confusing. When you are established in yoga, there is virtue in you - virtue flows in you, which is natural, effortless and it has its own innate nature; it does not depend upon human definition. As a matter of fact, only that is virtue!

What you and I are practicing now in the name of virtue is a practice, an act, a good thing. It is an experiment. It is a sort of play-acting. Then, when you are established in yoga, virtue becomes natural and it is so beautiful - effortless, natural and beautiful! All that is dependent on yourself - nobody else can do it for

you, nobody else can prevent you from doing it.

uddhared atmana 'tmanam na 'tmanam avasadayet
atmai 'va hy atmano bandhur atmai 'va ripur atmanah (VI.5)

'Uplift yourself by yourself', says Krsna, because you are your own friend and you are your own enemy. We do not say that we are our own saviours, but, we do say that nobody else can save you. I think people who are hooked to this logic of either/or find this a bit confusing.

Yoga is not a philosophy which says: you can save yourself. It does not say so. Uddhared atmana 'tmanam - you can lift yourself up, not save! But yoga does say that you cannot be saved by somebody else, whoever it is. What does it mean? That is again one of the paradoxes. No one else can save me, nor can I save myself - Oh, my God! Give up, and then, God takes over.

27 May

There are three distinct and recognisable forms of action. One is involuntary action, with which we are all familiar. And one is voluntary action, action based on will. Will is naturally based on desire. You do not will anything unless there is a desire behind it - even if that desire be to be desireless. Will is the use of force, however mild or wild it may be. It is still violent and it is always backed by ambition - desire. So, voluntary action is always motivated. Involuntary action is blind.

There is a third thing which is non-volitional action, where I do not do anything at all but I am not asleep; I am not stupid, I am not inert, I am not dumb ... deaf and dumb; I am fully alert, but I am not initiating an action, nor am I merely slavishly obeying somebody or something else; but - actions happen. They are not actions anymore, they are events, which - now comes the problem - one is aware of - it is not 'I', it is not 'he', it is not 'you', it is not ... one is aware of. In other words, there is full awareness - this is happening! And there is full awareness even if it be that this happened, this event involves this body and this personality and that body and that personality.

In that, there is no desire-motivation - well come to that. So now, the yogi's practice leads him, first, from involuntary action, mechanical action to voluntary action. That is when he says, 'Become aware of whatever you are doing, do not do anything mechanically.' That is: do not react mechanically. That is when one is supposed to control one's mind and senses - with a real jolly good restraint! Hmmm?

Jolly good restraint: that is when the flow of awareness, which is constantly externalising itself, is reversed. You have tried it, several times. You look at me now, and then suddenly you begin to wonder, 'How do I know that it is a swami?' That is, in other words, 'What is happening in my own mind, that suggests that this is a swami?' The moment that question arises in you, you can sense the flow of awareness backing up. It goes that way to look at you, it goes this way, it goes that way, to observe why I am calling you so-and-so. Then, this attention begins to focus itself upon itself. Then, there is a reverse flow.

Recently, those of you who have been to India might have heard somewhere or the other that they greatly value a bath in the river that flows in the direction opposite to which it normally flows. For instance, all the rivers that take their origin in the Himalayas, flow north-south. Yet somewhere the river bends back and flows north - that is supposed to be extremely sacred. And, where the river flows east-west, or west-east, if there is an east-west flow, that place is said to be extremely auspicious. There is a little bit of a large whirlpool near the ashram in Rishikesh. People used to go and take bath there because the water turns there. It is considered sacred only because the mind that has this tendency of turning back upon itself is a sacred thing.

The mind that is able to reverse the flow of awareness, and focus it is attention upon itself - is a sacred mind: kutastho vijitendriya.

jnanavijnanatrptatma kutastho vijitendriya (VI.8)

There, there is conquest of the senses. Not because you are pulling them, restraining them, stopping them from doing what they want to do, but you are the master - you want to look at it. Hmm? Supposing you are looking at something and suddenly you are attracted or tempted or annoyed, then: 'Ah, I am looking at you, why should I get annoyed?' Suddenly, the whole thing changes, reverses, and when the attention thus reverses, the annoyance or the temptation or whatever it is, the craving is, drops away. This is something very different from using the will and saying, 'I will continue to look at you, but I will not get annoyed. I will not be tempted.' There is a struggle inside - energy is lost. Whereas in this, energy is not only not lost, but conserved and gained.

yukta ity ucyate yogi samalostasmakañcanah (VI.8)

Well come back to that later.

yada viniyatam cittam atmany eva vatisthate
nihsprhah sarvakamebhyo yukta ity ucyate tada (VI.18)

One is said to be a yogi or yukta, when, even this 'trip' is avoided. That is, when your attention is diverted by the objects, and they send out their messages, and these messages are picked-up and reported to the mind or the brain, or whatever it is, by the sensory input - then, somehow you decide, 'No, I do not want to get involved in this', or, you wonder, 'Why am I attracted or repelled? Why am I tempted or annoyed?' - and thus, reverse the flow of the energy ... instead of all this, stay where you are - yada viniyatah cittam atmany eva vatisthate. That is when even this little effort that was necessary in the beginning is going to be unnecessary.

Will the yogi experience any desire or not? Of course! Why not? If there is hunger, will the yogi not experience hunger? If there is thirst, will the yogi not experience thirst? If there is fatigue, will the yogi not experience fatigue? Of course! Why not? Because that body and that mind and that prana and whatever it is - that personality - is also just like yours. Except that, deep within, there is a difference. In his own awareness, there is a difference. The awareness is aware that 'this' is happening, not 'that', and 'I want to do this.'

Can a spectator know this? No. To a spectator, that yogi seems to be doing what he is doing because he wants to do it. Hmm? It is not the spectators business at all; it is entirely the yogis job. It is his concern whether he is enlightened or not enlightened. As far as the spectator is concerned, he is just the other fellow ... is just an ordinary man. Why not? If he wants to be an extraordinary man, probably he is not a yogi. But - and this is possible of understanding only to the yogi himself - nihsprhah sarvakamebhyo - as these urges arise, as these desires arise,

and if they lead to events consequent on this arising, the yogi treats them as just events that happen - 'I want to do something', 'I do not want to do something.' They are just happening - and that is called non-volitional action.

He seems to be acting in the eyes of a spectator, but he is not doing anything in the sense of 'the desire does not arise in him'. He is like space, and yet, since there still exists the thing called body, and therefore a personality, that space seems to be enclosed in walls and room. So that, even though space is immeasurable, you can measure the space enclosed within these walls - you do it. When you mention the dimensions of a room, that is precisely what you are doing: you are measuring space. Even so, as long as that atman - that endlessness, that infinity, seems to be enclosed in a body and in a personality, there seems to be the possibility of measuring it. That measure is what's called maya. The measuring or the measure is valid only in relation to a stupid spectator. You keep measuring this room, only till you realise that it is a stupid action! 'I cannot measure this space here, because space cannot be enclosed.' And yet, like zero and minus ten, there is a conventional usage; you say that the space here is enclosed by these walls. It works? Yes, it works, all sorts of stupid things work. That is true only in the eyes of a spectator.

The space here - if one may still use the expression 'in this room' - the space knows that, 'I am immeasurable because I have not been cut up by the walls'. If you can visualise the space or akasa as an entity who is able to think and who is even able to speak, that entity would tell you, 'Do not be stupid, you cannot measure me! Only you think I am confined by the four walls, I am not, I am immeasurable' - that is it!

From the eyes of a spectator, it looks like as though the walls cut up space, limit space - but, the space itself knows that, 'I am illimitable.' From the eyes of a spectator, in the eyes of a spectator, the yogi seems to also be limited by the body-mind complex or the personality, but in himself there is no such limitation. And therefore: nihsprhah sarvakamebhyo - even if desires arise in such a heart ... person, he does not hold them. Hmmm - it is beautiful. You can burn an incense here and the incense wafts, seems to fill this space; you wait for a little while, it is gone. Why did it go away? Because the space did not want to hold on to it. Whether it is an incense or a foul smell, even when it seems to fill this room - it goes away, leaving this space totally unaffected - because, space did not hold on to it.

If you are able to look at this space and communicate with this space right now, 'Do you feel nostalgic that you are no longer filled with this incense?', and you come back here ten days later when some other group is there, and you look at this space and say, 'Do you feel nostalgic that you are no longer having the satsang?' And the space says, 'That was an event; it came along, and it happened in me; it is gone and now another event is taking place.' Nihsprhah sarvakamebhyo - which suggests that what are commonly called desires might arise or manifest in the yogis mind or heart, but they would never be held. Just

like the incense filling this room for a little while - then it is gone.

Whereas, in the un-yogic heart, a longing is left - that is the danger! An impression is created by the experience, pleasant or unpleasant; even after the event has passed, the mind holds on to it, does not want to give up. And there is also another beautiful expression in the same chapter, sixth chapter:

samkalpaprabhavan kamams tyaktva sarvan asesatah (VI.24)

Though desires may arise and exist in that mind, the yogi does not generate them. That is the reason why, throughout our yoga practice, it is terribly important to understand the difference between a thought that arises and a thought which I think - these are very different! And it is very easy to see them, become aware of them. A thought that arises is of absolutely no importance at all - it is like the faces that you see in the market on Saturday. They are of absolutely no importance to you; you can see hundreds of them, thousands of them! When you go home, they do not exist - gone; except one or two that hit you and which you have grabbed. And those thoughts are projected again and again in your own mind. You do it then! When they are not there - you raise them! You crave for a repetition of that experience. 'This is a thought which I think, this is a thought which came I do not know from where... went away. I do not even remember that it came in, I do not even remember it went away.'

So, similarly, desires may arise in the yogis heart, and it is even possible that events happen in relation to those desires, but he does not generate a desire. It is then that the awareness remains steady, without being deflected, because it is not even concerned with relating itself to the desire that might arise, 'Oh, I do not want this! Oh, I'm going to have this.' This stupid thing arises ... it is gone, gone. Exactly like what the space in this hall does. Some nice, lovely scent comes floating along - let it come. It does not hold it, and it goes away. Some filthy smell of frying fish might also fill this room, it does not rebel against it, kick it, knowing that this also would go - that is called choiceless awareness.

Choiceless awareness often looks like permissiveness. It is not permissiveness. In permissiveness, you permit. Here, there is no permit. Haha... In permissive contact, you permit. 'Yes, this is alright.' Like space, you are steady; the awareness is steady, absolutely steady - undisturbed. As this thing happens, or that thing happens, everything is settled.

yukta ity ucyate yogi samalostasmakancanah (VI.8)

That is yukta, that is the spirit of yoga. He is a yogi who is full of this spirit. In his eyes, says Krsna in the Bhagavad Gita, 'A stone and a nugget of gold are exactly the same'. This idea of same, seems to be so important to Krishna that the same expressions occur again and again in several chapters of the Bhagavad Gita, so that if you are not very careful in chanting the verses, you might slip from sixth chapter to twelfth chapter. The same thing occurs there. Because, it is a very important principle to understand, truth to understand. Samalostasmakancanah

- which is a very good example. A stone and a nugget of gold. Does one not see a difference at all in this? If one does see any difference between the two, then either he is what is known as a videhamukta - I will come back to that in a moment, or an idiot, or drunk - totally drunk, stoned, completely stoned! He looks at it and he looks at it. A madman might behave like that, a drunkard might behave like that, or one who is called a videhamukta might behave like that.

A videhamukta is one who has completely lost the body consciousness. It is said that often he behaves exactly like a two-week old baby. Supposing you do not put the diapers on and all that, the baby might pass stools in its own crib, turn around, mess its hands up with it, probably lick it - it has really no distinction between milk, porridge and faeces. That is a different state altogether. That's a very different state. To our toilet-trained mind, it is impossible to understand this! Let us face it very clearly. We have been trained, our minds have been trained. Who behaves in this manner? He is known as videhamukta. Videhamukta means one who has completely lost, utterly lost, the faintest notion that, 'I have anything to do with this body'. You and I are in that stage where we say that, 'I am the body.' From there, by God's Grace, and if we work sincerely and seriously, we might get up to the stage where we may say, 'I am not the body but the body is still mine.' Then you might go on to the stage where you might say, 'The body is not mine, but still I am somehow caught up in it.' Hmmm?

Then comes the stage of the jivanmukta - there you realise that, 'I am not the body and this body is not mine; I have no connection at all,' - but, there is a vague understanding, that 'I am living in this house, I am living in this body.' Otherwise, if you do not know the distinction between a stone and a nugget of gold - why do not you put your banana into your ears? You still know where - which hole to put into. Which means, that much of sense of diversification is still there, that much of sense of distinction is still there. You know this is mouth, this is ear. In the case of those people: videhamuktas - they have no such idea at all. I am afraid I have not seen any so far, I have only read about them in some books.

Now, to come back to this, and yet, this is an important truth and a very important factor to understand, because the teaching runs right through the Bhagavad Gita: sameness of vision. You have a piece of stone and a nugget of gold. Hm. You are tempted to value the gold more than the stone. The moment the piece of gold is held in your hand, it sets in motion a certain train of thought which the stone does not. And yet it is possible that that piece of stone is more valuable to you than the gold. It is also possible that holding on to that gold may be a danger to your life. The stone may be able to save you! Ah! Hm? Supposing you are holding that gold in your hand and somebody sees, and he rushes towards you to snatch the gold from you, maybe that stone will save you! So the stone is more valuable than the gold, but, looking at the gold, makes you think of all sorts of things. It influences the mind, disturbs its equilibrium. Can that be avoided? Then you are alright.

It is not that you are ever going to treat them exactly alike. No. It is not possible

for you to see them exactly alike also. That is not what is meant, unless, as I said, you are an idiot, drunk or a videhamukta. Even in our state, is it possible for us, looking at that stone and looking at this nugget of gold, to experience no psychological disturbance? Good? Stone may be of great use. I may be working outside this afternoon, I need a paperweight to prevent my papers being flown away, so I will use that. Here is a nugget of gold; well, it may also be some use somewhere, leave it there. Inwardly, there is no disturbance. Why is there no disturbance? Because, the awareness continues to be aware of whatever is presented to it - without choice, and without judgement.

This idea is taken up again and again and again, and Krshna hammers at this thing - that the yogi should be undisturbed by honour and dishonour, he should be the same to friend and foe - very much like the teaching of Jesus 'Love your enemy'. Slightly, if I may boast, presented in better phraseology in the Bhagavad Gita. 'Be the same to friend and foe'. There is a little vagueness in that expression: 'friend or foe'. It does not say whether you consider the other person an enemy, or he is a foe, because he considers himself your enemy. It is not possible for me to love my enemy - if I have made up my mind he is my enemy, I do not love him, even then already there is judgement. If I regard him as my enemy, first of all, in the first place, and then love him, I am probably hypocrite or diplomat. But here, 'friend or foe' - he is a friend because he thinks he is my friend; he is a foe because he thinks he is my enemy or I am his enemy. Now, watch carefully. The awareness is aware of this; the awareness is aware, that he regards me as his friend; the awareness is aware that he regards me as his enemy. Hm? That is it! In this corner of the room, there is beautiful incense; in that corner of the room, there is lovely nonsense. And, the room continues just to be the room; the space continues to be just that space ... space ... space. All that space does not move onto this side saying, 'There is lovely incense here, lets go!'

So that, when this awareness becomes aware that 'He treats me as a friend and he treats me as an enemy', there is no partiality which says, 'Alright, let me go over to him', or 'Why bother about this chap?' Nor is there a masochistic or macho complex type of thing which says, 'Ah, he ... he thinks I am his friend; it is okay. Now, he thinks he is my enemy, so let me pour sugar, more and more sugar on this chap' - no, that is not necessary. Because, both these are based on the ego, both these reactions: (1) which says 'He is my friend, I am going to shower my affection upon him.'; (2) the other: 'He thinks he is my enemy and therefore I am going to shower my affection upon him and ignore the other chap, who is already my friend.' Both these reactions are based on the ego - which is calculating all the time. Instead, there is just this pure and simple awareness that he treats me as a friend; he treats me as an enemy - right, good! Then what happens, happens.

Therefore, the culmination of the Bhagavad Gita teaching is a certain inner vision. There are two important words connected with this. One is: dhyana - contemplation, meditation, concentration ... whatever you consider dhyana to be. And the other is: pasya, drisyā: yo mam pasyati sarvatra - to see. Dhyana is used in two contexts in the Bhagavad Gita, so do not get excited when you hear the

word dhyana. Here and there in the sixth chapter and elsewhere, dhyana is regarded as a sacred activity, a yogis activity. You contemplate God, you concentrate all your attention upon God, you visualise God, you imagine God is in your heart and all the rest of it. But the word dhyana is also used in a completely different context in the second chapter:

dhyayato visayan pumsah sangas tesu pajayate (II.62)

That is, when you practice dhyana on an object of pleasure, then craving arises in you and if it is frustrated, anger arises in you, you become mad and you lose yourself - that is also dhyana. Therefore, dhyana merely means - in the context of the Bhagavad Gita, holding a concept or a truth or a thought or a notion, or anything like that, in the mind. Or, investigating whatever is going on in your mind. That is alright, if you know how to use it - it is very good. It is very helpful. It is the means to an end, and as means, it is very useful. But, what is important? What are we aiming at it when we call it ... we use certain expression:

*yo mam pasyati sarvatra sarvam ca mayi pasyati
tasya ham na pranasyami sa ca me na pranasyati (VI.30)*

‘He who sees Me in all, and all in Me - that is what yoga is about. Space is indivisible, and yet, apparently it can be divided by putting up four walls and a roof. As long as these walls and the roof remain, there is what may be an illusion of separateness. This cannot ... this need not be questioned, this need not be foolishly denied - while we are sitting in the room, we do not have to say, 'No, no, there is no room!' That is a very stupid way of looking at it. While this still exists, while your senses still tell you that 'this is a room', can the understanding prevail in the awareness that 'this does appear to be a room, but the space here is non-different from the space in the other room, outside, where there are no rooms'. It looks like double-consciousness, but this double-consciousness prevails at the same time, not like the schizophrenic who does one thing now and another thing later.

Right now, while we still recognise the existence of different bodies, can there still be the recognition that in and through all these bodies, there is one being. This is most important teaching. It is then that choiceless awareness becomes meaningful, and it is then that non-volitional action takes place - events just happen, and those events can be anything - loving one another, fighting one another, killing one another ... anything ... anything. Krishna himself says in the Bhagavad Gita, if one is established in this vision:

sarvatha vartamano pi sa yogi mayi vartate (VI.31)

‘Whatever he is doing, he is doing in Me only. Because, it is quite possible that the Cosmic Being that pervades the entire universe, wills, so to say, that you and I must be together, or you and I must kill each other! Which means, the body must go ... I do not know, I do not know what's going to happen. Not assuming something or imagining something, but arriving at this understanding - an

extremely difficult thing for the human mind at our stage to understand, and therefore, the effort should be towards arriving at this awareness; towards, arriving at this non-volitional action. We do not know what non-volitional action means, but we know what voluntary action means and what involuntary action means. Can we eliminate both these - vigorously?

During the course of this elimination, awareness becomes blossomed - awareness blossoms! While that awareness blossoms and functions as the inner light or the insight, it is then that the whole fun starts - where there is constant inner, internal dialogue or observing this heavily.

'Oho, this is motivated action. I am motivated by so and so. I want to do this and so - that is not right.' Ah? What says that is not right? This is another motivation - the motivation being that, 'I must shine as a yogi.' ... Oho ... knock this down, knock that down, knock this down, knock that down. You see, both these are motivations.

'Why am I contemplating like this?' This is also another motivation - knock that down. It is great fun! And, as this thing goes on, you know how to eliminate all these - involuntary action as well as voluntary action. The eliminator is the awareness, and this awareness itself is subject to the choice-making process. But, the awareness is capable of being aware of the fact that it is making choices.

When that is also gradually dropped, then the awareness remains choicelessly - without making any choice. Only at that point you will understand what non-volitional action means and when there is this awareness which is choiceless, continuing to illumine life in which there are events - no longer, 'I do this, I do not do this, you do this, you do not do this.' - then that one becomes aware of the ground of all being, 'I am not alone in this world, I am not even unique in this world', but, 'I am all, I am everything and everything is in the Self'.