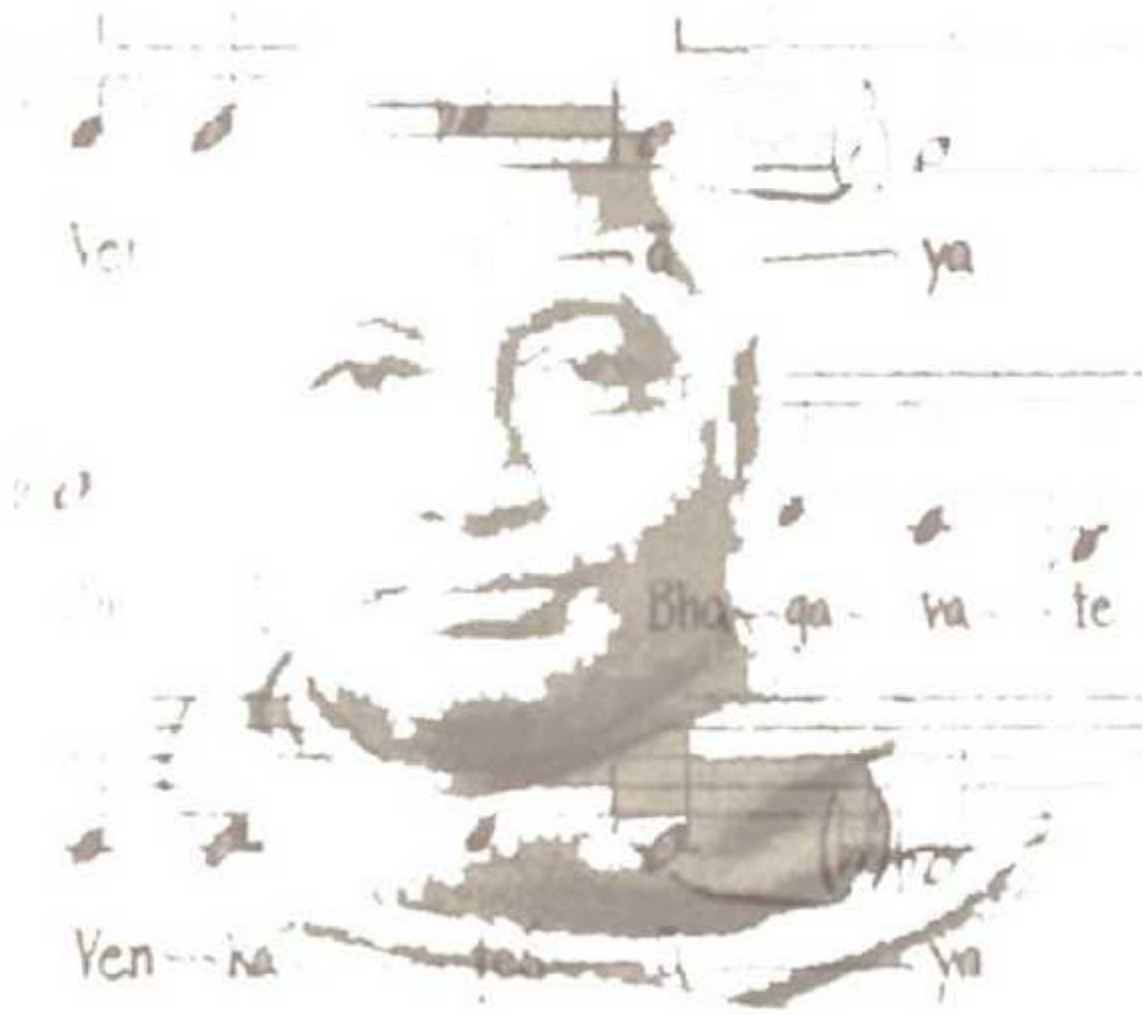


Talks in Canada



Swami Venkatesananda



Om Namah Venkatesaya
Om Namah Shivaya

Canada

Swami Venkatesananda

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Agression

I think it would be good to look into the Bhagavad Gita. Most of you have studied this scripture more or less superficially, but, I am sure, always with some kind of nostalgia. I wonder if not many of you - most of you are quite young - do not at some time or other share the despair and pessimism that people of my generation seem to suffer from chronically. They say that we are living in the Kali Yuga. There is a tendency to think that the period we are living in is the worst of all. Never was a time so bad. Do you not feel like that every winter?

I have been translating some texts from the Indian Scriptures written in Sanskrit which are pre-historic. Usually we think that 200 comes after 100. But this is not so. 2.000 years ago - something like, let's say, 13 bc. and from there on - the earlier it was, the greater the number, not after but before. 200 bc. is before 100 bc., not after. As I said, I have been translating a few of these pre-historic texts, and I am told in them that right from the dawn of creation there has been what those who lived in those periods regarded as evil. Look into your Bible, God created Adam and then Eve. They had only two children and one killed the other. Four people in the world could not live together in harmony. The first and second chapter describe the creation of the world. There is already disaster. I do not know if you have read the Bible. In Genesis, chapter 6, God looks at the world and says, 'What a vicious world is this.'

In Indian legend, there is something even more interesting. It is said that God was resting. He was asleep. Just before He woke up, He rolled around in His bed, and a couple of balls of wax fell from His ears and they became demons. That was even before creation.

What do these things indicate? They indicate that what is called evil existed already, and perhaps will exist for all time to come.

What is evil? Ask a little child, a school girl, 'Whom do you dislike?' She will answer, 'That bad man over there, he is my enemy, he is so wicked and I do not like him.' Who is a bad man, a wicked man? He whom I do not like. The argument ends there. The person whom I hate or fear is my enemy. Why do I hate or fear him? Because he is my enemy. In two steps you go around and come back to the starting point, and there is absolutely no sense, no reason, no wisdom, nothing at all. As long as this lasts, as long as the mind functions, classifying other beings - whether human, sub-human or super-human - into 'this I like and that I do not like', there will be conflict. This conflict has existed from the dawn of creation, and if you do not want to be a foolish optimist, it will exist as long as there is creation. It is the mind that creates all that. It is the mind that creates this division. We apply all manner of tricks.

We have even tried to 'see God in all'. How can I see God? I do not even know

what He looks like; so, how can I see God in all? We have tried political tricks, we have tried economical tricks. Only 40 or 50 years ago, some people thought that if the whole world became communist, all the problems would be solved. My brand of Yoga, your brand of Yoga, Yoga teachers, Yoga associations, Yoga dissociations, etc. I am sure you know about these things. In a world where conflict seems inevitable, how do I live? This is the question. It is a serious question, it is something which has to be faced realistically.

People have tried to reform society. You know what that means, do not you? It is the same dough. The dough has not changed. The dough has not been made sweet, it has not been made sour. It is still the same dough. He made it into some form - you do not like it. So, you make it into another form - and this is called 'reforming society'. The stuff is still the same - rotten. If you have some dough, you can mold it into any shape you like. You can form, you can re-form, you can transform, you can smash it, it still retains some form - and we become hardened. We have become so hard, that even re-formation is difficult. So, we have to soften it with some kind of bloodletting technique, called wars and riots. We have tried all this, for when it comes to re-forming society - society being so large and the people in this society so numerous - for a single person to bring about a reformation of this society is more than a full-time job. At least 25 hours of the day I have to be busy re-forming everybody else. What about me? I have no time for myself.

I have heard a story, but I do not know if it is true. It seems in England there was a prominent social worker, a lady. She was married and had one or two children. She was involved in social welfare activities, dealing with juvenile delinquents, taking children away from smoke and drink and drugs, etc. She was so busy that she left home at around 7 o'clock in the morning and returned home at around 10 o'clock at night. Of course, in those days there were domestic servants, cooks, gardeners, nannies who looked after the children. Years later, when she became busier and busier and more and more decorated by the King and the Queen, she happened one evening to return home a bit earlier than usually. That particular evening she returned home around 8 pm. When she drove her car into her driveway, to her horror she saw a young man there, sitting on the steps and smoking. What a disgrace. She approached him and asked him if he was not ashamed of himself. He said, 'Lady, you have not been introduced to me.' She answered, 'You cannot talk to me like that, who is your father, I am going to talk to him.' The young man answered, 'You really want to know - you sleep with him.' This was the end of the world for this most respectable lady. The young man continued, 'Do you not even know your own son?' She did not. She had had no time for her own son. While she was taking all the other children away from smoke and drink and drugs, her own son had been getting involved.

Whenever there appears on the world scene a social reformer, someone who tries to clean society of the social evils, however great, however divine, however mighty - and whatever might have been the result he had achieved during his lifetime, which is short - the world reverts to its own glory almost immediately.

We have seen this in religious organizations, the very same organizations that these people seem to inspire, become prey to the same evil. It is common knowledge that religious groups are fighting against one another. Here comes a Buddha and says, 'Om Shanti, Om Shanti, Om Shanti, all of you get together.' However, he cannot live forever. As soon as he dies, there are factions within the same group - these people against those people. 'We are all one, all religions are one, but all of us must follow this man.' What have you achieved? Nothing. Why do we not, for once, forget all this and face the music? Not accept conflict as inevitable, neither accept nor reject conflict as a way of life.

When the sun rises in the morning, what do you do? Do you accept it or reject it? The question whether I must accept all this, suggests that I must have an alternative that I can reject. Is it not possible for me to see that this 'is', conflict 'is'? I do not have to accept conflict as a way of life, I need not battle with it knowing that battling with it is what promotes this conflict, perpetuates it, keeps it going. Can we become aware of this, just exactly as you and I become aware of the fact that the sun rises. I do not accept, I do not reject, I merely see.

Seeing that we live in a society in a world in which there is conflict, where am I? I am surrounded by conflict. Where am I? What am I supposed to do? That is the question. It is not easy. You can see it in your own mind and heart. When two people are fighting, your immediate - what you call 'spontaneous' action - is to jump in and ... Or, you are very holy, you are 'way up there', you are God Almighty and you immediately know who is right and who is wrong. It is so simple. You throw your weight in favour of the one whom you regard as right, and then you are part of the conflict, part of the trouble, and they keep you going. I used to be very touchy and sensitive to this, especially when two Yoga teachers - Yoga leaders - started fighting. Till one day, by an accident of history, living in a far-off island called Mauritius, I was introduced to a Madison Square boxing bout on T.V. When the two boxers were in their respective corners for a while, the camera was turned on to the audience and to my horror, most of them were old women. He hits him, they clap; he hits him, they clap. The commentator said something to the effect that those ringside seats cost a lot of money, \$200.00, something like that. The next time the camera scanned the audience again I could only think, 'to pay \$200.00 to see two people fight, goodness gracious'. That cured me. Now, these two Yoga teachers fight and I get it for free. I do not have to pay \$200.00.

It is there, whether you like it or not. As long as there will be 'I like this and I do not like that' in my heart, this conflict will continue to exist. As long as there is one being on this earth, in whose heart exists 'I like this and I do not like that', or 'he is my friend and he is my enemy', 'I love this and I do not love that', so long conflict cannot be avoided. When I see this around me, what is my position? That is the question. The 'Bhagavad Gita', endeavours to answer that question. But before we go into that, perhaps we might look into the Epic of which the Bhagavad Gita itself is part. I presume that most or all of you know the story

vaguely.. It is said that there were two families who were constantly at one another's throat. Somehow the location has been identified as some part of India. The story says, that there were five brothers on one side and a hundred brothers on the other side. I am sure that this did not take place on what is known as Indian soil, it took place somewhere else. The 5 were very pious people and the 100 were vicious.

One thing immediately emerges from this: it is that this is about the most optimistic ratio of good and evil that we might expect in this world: 5 to 100. The wicked people constantly persecuted the good ones. It is an extraordinary lesson which is often ignored even by scholars and students of this Epic. When these vicious hundred were to hold or held a conference in order to decide on the next move, there is total harmony. The hundred wicked people act as one man. When it comes to this other gang, the five good ones, and they discuss strategy, all of them have different ideas. One says this, and the other one says that. They argue that this should be done and not that, and that this is right and that wrong, etc. Do you see the point? We often wonder why evil thrives in this world. We, who call ourselves 'good people', we cannot agree at all. A bunch of Mafia people, they agree immediately, they do not want to quarrel among themselves, there are too many other things to be done. But put a few swamis or high priests together, they never agree and I do not know why this is so.

We all complain that evil thrives in this world. It is as much due to the impotence of the good ones as the doing of the wicked ones. The good ones are effeminate and quarrelsome, unable to come to a decision and unable to come to an understanding, unable to agree among themselves, unable to act. Their goodness is usually hidden far away, it is never active. This is what keeps all these things going.

It is said that the 5 good ones were devoted to God - an Incarnation of God - in those days Krishna. I have a feeling that it was Christ - the name and the story are very similar. Finally, they went to Krishna and asked Him, 'What must we do? We are continually persecuted, thrown out of our own house, what must we do?' Krishna said, 'Fight. I shall make one last attempt at peace, if that fails, then fight.' Often, this injunction on the part of Krishna to fight has been misconstrued by scholars and politicians alike. 'To fight or not to fight' is not the question.

I shall give you an example. I was in Israel in 1965. A young man had heard that a Swami from India was staying in a village and he came to see me. 'Ah, you are from India - you know Gandhi?' 'Yes, what about him?' 'Well, you know, I am a great follower of his principles.' 'Well, to see a follower of Gandhi's principles in India is great. What do you do Sir?' 'Well, I refused to join the army because I do not believe in war.' 'I see, were you afraid to fight?' 'You know what Gandhi said on violence.' 'Yes, I do, and Gandhi said a lot more, if you are really a follower of Gandhi, you know what you would do, do not you? You would join the Israeli army, go between those two armies, the Arabs and the Israelis, you would hold up your rifle, break it into two and shout 'Shalom Salam', and sit down and meditate.

I am sure you know what would happen, one bullet from this side and one from that side, and that would be it.'

What is the difference between cowardice and non-violence? Krishna, commanding Arjuna to fight, merely says, 'Do not bring all your funny excuses here - he is hitting you, why do you want to keep quiet? He is persecuting you and you have that feeling in you, do not you? If you had no such feeling at all, if the thought did not even arise in you that he is persecuting you, then there would be no problem.'

It is like the story of a great Zen master. Someone went to him and asked him, 'If you are continuously tortured by someone, if you are in constant pain and suffering, what does one do, how does one go about this?' The Zen master said, 'Why do you ask me this question? I have absolutely no idea what this is like.'

Is there a way? If there is, then I must find out that way, neither by expressing violence, nor by suppressing it. If I hit you, I am violent, and if, while you hit me, I grind my teeth and try to suppress my feelings, then I am doing violence to myself. That is the problem. First of all, I must determine whether my not wanting to fight is cowardice. Secondly, I must determine whether it is the mind which is cooking up some kind of justification in order to cover up its own cowardice, its own weakness, its own foolishness and ignorance. It is then, when I neither suppress nor express this violence, that I see something else, something completely different arises. Hence, right in the beginning of the Gita, you have a rather shattering approach to the whole problem. One of the warriors refuses to fight on the battle field.

Krishna asks him what he is afraid of. The warrior answers that he does not want this war, because people get killed in it, etc. Krishna asks, 'Are you really and sincerely in love with life? Do you truly respect life? Do you realize that everyone is destined to die? What are you worried about? If not this person, then a mosquito or some other bug might come and kill you. Are we all physically immortal? Do you really think that if only I did not kill that person or that person did not kill me, you would be forever alive here? Get rid of that excuse.'

This is the first and foremost lesson of the Bhagavad Gita. In any puzzling situation, not only outside but within ourselves, this happens innumerable times nearly every day. I want to do something - I do not want to do something. For both these I bring in lots and lots of excuses, why I must do that and why I must not do this. Is it possible for me to clear all that rubbish, all my reasons, all my rationalizations? It is then that I see the truth for what it is, for as long as I am subject to the trips of the mind, it creates its own logic.

Take for instance: we are all against war. Why? Because we respect life. Really? What about motor-cars, what about pollution, what about the poisons which are taken in with fruits and vegetables, insecticides. Do you know what 'insecticide' means? It kills insects. The size of the insects is not mentioned here. There are

small bugs and you and I are big bugs. It is the same thing. One grain of something kills a bug here, 20,000 grains of the same stuff is bound to kill me. Do I really respect life as such - or do I draw my own lines wherever I like?

Some years ago, in Los Angeles, I picked up the morning newspaper. That was when Janice Joplin had died. One full page with her photograph and in big letters said 'Janice Joplin Dead'. One girl died. On the 76th page, two columns: 2000 people killed in Vietnam. Somewhere towards the end of that paper in one corner the number of people killed on the road during the past year, something like 3.000.

Where is your love and respect for life? Why do we bring in all these excuses for or against violence? Because there is violence within. I must be able to eliminate all these rationalizations, justifications, and I must see life for what it is. When I examine the truth concerning life, I see that life cannot be killed, life does not come to an end. Someone in Europe asked me a couple of years ago whether I would like to say a few words at their conference on world peace. I said I did not know what kind of peas they wanted me to talk about, but one thing was certain, the world was going to pieces. They asked me what I thought about wars and violence and the killing that was going on. I told them that if someone pointed a gun to my head, I might be able to tell him, 'Do not be a fool, what you are trying to do now will happen without your having to do it. Why waste a bullet? Wait for a few months or a couple of years more, and this here will be gone.' We must see the absurdity of it all. Should I smoke or should I not smoke? What is so important about that? What does it matter if you smoke, and what does it matter if you do not smoke? Maybe you live for a few years longer. What does it matter if you and I live for five years more or two years less? Why get into these silly arguments, giving objects a far greater importance than they intrinsically possess? The body is a piece of flesh, it is bound to go. It can last for a few more or less years. If you eat a little less, you may last for a few more years. If you eat more, you may not last that long. The Indians call this 'Karma'. Twenty-five bags of rice and fifteen bags of potatoes have been allotted to you; you can consume this all in three years or in thirty years. As soon as your ration is finished, that's it.

There is a lovely Indian saying, 'On every grain of rice or wheat is written the name of the one who is fated to eat it'.

There was a Swami in the Ashram in India, quite an aged man. He was ill, but I did not know that he was dying. The Ashram doctor visited him and told him not to eat rice any more. This poor man, for 73 years he had been eating rice and curry and suddenly the doctor tells him that he should no longer eat rice. He adhered to the doctor's commandments. It is funny, people do not adhere to God's Ten Commandments, but they adhere to the doctor's commandments. One day I had to go up to the printing press and I passed this Swami's room. He had a small oven on which he was cooking some rice. When he saw me, he wanted to explain. I told him to go ahead and eat his rice and not to worry about the doctor. He cut up some tomatoes and some chillies while the rice was boiling. I went up

to the press and when I returned within half an hour, I passed by his door and there was some fresh blood on his door-step. I looked inside - he was gone. I looked at the rice which was still boiling - 'your name was not written on that rice'. The rice was still boiling and this man's boiling had come to an end.

So, all this is irrelevant to the basic and fundamental issue of life. I must come face to face with life, I must see life, I must realize life. The body is but a recycled product. It is born, it grows and it dies, decomposes or disintegrates. Destruction. What lovely words. Destruction only means the opposite of construction. You put brick upon brick and call it 'construction'. Destruction is brick down upon brick down, that's all. Nothing to be seriously worried about. All these molecules are put together, composed into this and one of these days they begin to decompose. They are decomposing even now. That is perfectly alright.

What is it that lives? Can life come to an end? No. Take for instance a child. Even the famous 'immortality', 'perpetuation', 'life beyond death' is not so intriguing. Here is a young man who grows up. As he grows up, he gets married and a cell from his body is transmitted to the mother, and of that cell a child is born. The immortality is attained already. He does not die. That is being perpetuated for all time to come. Even the physical body does not completely perish. It merely decomposes and is formed into some other thing.

What is life? If life is energy, energy is indestructible. It can change its operation. If we can understand that, then life takes on a completely different meaning. It is not that Krishna asks these people to fight or not to fight, because to fight gives something a certain value which it does not have, and then, fighting to 'defend' what? My religion? My culture? My nation?

'Nation' is spelled incorrectly, it should read 'Notion'. 'Nation' is only a 'Notion in somebody's mind. There is no such thing as a 'Nation'. 'United Notions'. The word 'united' is also spelled incorrectly. It is 'untied'. Hence it should read, 'Untied Notions'.

What do we defend? What do we fight for? What do we fight against? We defend our culture. How do you know your culture is good? How do you know that your religion is worth preserving? To fight or not to fight is not the problem. What you are destroying may be good. What you are fighting for, what you are defending may also come to an end. In two verses Krishna brings home this beautiful truth: 'All this has been done by Nature already - all these people have been destroyed at their birth'. Even while someone is writing out my birth-certificate, my death-warrant has been signed. It is natural for people to be born, it is natural for people to die.

There is a Persian story. Death told someone, 'In reality it is I who kills, but I do not want to take responsibility for it, therefore I usually find some other excuse.'

You all know this. Someone asks, 'Why did he die?' 'Oh, he had a heart-failure.'

Can anyone die without heart-failure? We never say that he died of death. Death is natural, what are we worried about? Krishna continues, 'Action is inevitable in this life, motion is inevitable in this life, change is inevitable in this life.' If you think, egotistically, 'I will not do this, this is beneath my dignity', then you will be forced to. What you resolve not to do you will be forced to do by the Power that sustains this universe.

Having set the stage on the battle field, someone asks this terrifying question, 'Do I have to fight or not?' The Teacher Krishna completely ignores all that, and asks the warrior this simple question, 'Who are you and what are you?' It is only when one knows this that one will be able to find the answer to this vital question, 'what must I do?' We are busy trying to find out what we should do, whereas we should be busy finding the answer to the question 'what am I?'

If you go through a garden, have you ever thought about the flowers growing there? Has a flower ever asked itself, 'I am supposed to be a rose, what should be my fragrance?' This question does not arise. Hence, it is not the 'doing' that is such a problem, it is the 'being'. If a person is good, the question of 'doing good' does not arise at all. Whatever that person does must be good. So, instead of being so busy finding answers to the question 'what must I do', can I pose the question 'what am I'. It is not 'you should fight' or 'you should not fight' that is irrelevant.

It can happen that you are engaged in a fight, and it may happen that you run away from the fight. It may happen that you get killed, and it may happen that you kill. All these things may happen, totally regardless of your philosophy of life, totally regardless of what you wish to do or wish not to do. Nature, the world, takes absolutely no notice of your private wishes and desires. This is our daily experience.

This world has not been made for the pleasure and enjoyment of man. I live in a place where there are many mosquitoes. I look at them, 'No, you were not created for my pleasure.' Whoever says so has never been bitten by a mosquito. These are all irrelevant discussions and we waste most of our time in such irrelevant conversations. Do what you like. The vitally important aspect of life is to discover what is life, what is its meaning, what am I. When I know what I am, then, what I must do, becomes abundantly clear. There is no doubt at all.

Can we, by looking deep within, realize, come face to face with this truth - so beautifully put in the second chapter of the Bhagavad Gita, 'Never born and undying, therefore unceasingly existing, immortal, that is the Self.' It is not yourself nor myself, but the Self, which is constant, which is life. Can we look at That? Can we realize That? Can we realize That as the sole existing reality? When That is realized, then all these questions drop away. None of all those problems can ever be resolved except in that ocean of understanding. The problems dissolve. They do not exist and they do not arise.

Just as a spark of fire reduces a ton of cotton-wool, in the twinkling of an eye, one little spark of wisdom, self-knowledge, is able to dissolve all our problems.

That is the teaching of the Bhagavad Gita. Not whether I should do this or not do that, whether I should sit in the lotus posture or some other posture for my meditation, whether I should look at the tip of my nose or at the top of my head. All that is irrelevant.

The most vital thing is to discover this Truth, which is there. Not to create it, but to discover it. The moment it is discovered, confusion is gone and action takes place. Action happens. Life goes on.

When that Truth is discovered, whatever you may be doing, you are one with the stream. If it flows in this direction, you also flow in this direction. If it flows in the other direction, you also flow like that. Therefore, there is no conflict within you.

That is Yoga, the Teaching of Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita.

Nelson, British Colombia - May 15th, 1975

On the mind and meditation

Last night we talked about meditation. Everyone agrees that the vital essence of meditation is to make the mind supportless.

How do you make the mind supportless? Any technique that you may adopt of the many that are suggested must do this. You see some houses over there, they stand on some kind of foundation. The space which is about that support is called a house. When you knock these supports out, the space which was called a house, falls.

The very thing that was called mind before becomes non-existent as mind. But why does the mind reject a supportless existence? The supports are concepts, ideas, thoughts, feelings, emotions, beliefs. When you practice meditation, you find that you cannot even steady the mind, let alone make it supportless.

What is the difficulty? Why does the mind not want to remain steady? First of all, it is the nature of mind as mind to be restless. It is the nature of wind to move. Can you make the wind absolutely motionless? That would be like dehydrated water. Dehydrated milk is powdered milk. But what is dehydrated water? It becomes something else, something completely different. It is no longer water. So, if you make the mind absolutely still, it becomes 'no mind', it becomes something else. As long as you have to deal with the mind, you are dealing with something which, by its very nature, is restless. This is one aspect of it. The wind, as it moves, picks up something or other, some fragrance, some aroma. In the same way, the mind as it moves about restlessly, must pick up something or other. Ideas float in the air, thoughts float in the air - just like aroma floats in the air - and then floating thoughts are mind.

One vital and important question we have not asked ourselves: if there is lovely music being played here and I am completely and utterly deaf, would it distract me at all? If I went to a nudist colony and I were blind, I would not know if all of them are clothed or not clothed, I would not have any idea, and it would not matter to me in the least. If you have a heavy cold and there is a light scent in the air, you will not smell it. Thus the question is: there are a billion thoughts, concepts, ideas, floating around in this consciousness, in this mind. Why do you pick them up? Why do I pick them up? Have you ever looked at a carnival crowd, thousands of people all milling around. You do not really see anybody, you do not look at anybody, you are just scanning the whole place and they could just as well be mosquitoes, as far as you are concerned, bed bugs. But then, 'Ah, who is that?' It is somebody related to you, your son or daughter, your girlfriend or your boyfriend, whom you would not miss from a mile away. Why is that?

So, the first principle for the meditator is to see if he can distinguish between what I call a 'pedestrian' thought - a thought with which I am not related. It

comes and it goes. You are watching yourself, observing your mind; a thought comes and a thought goes, a thought comes in and a thought goes out. The mind is not built on them, they are not its supports. The mind is not built with them. You read a book or a newspaper and you forget all about it by the middle of the afternoon. That is why you buy another newspaper the next day. I do not know if you have seen, I think in the New York Times, that sometimes the same news is printed on three or four pages. The same news is printed three or four days later once again. Exactly the same thing happens, it is forgotten. Sometimes they do it to fill up space, sometimes by oversight. Your mind does not register it. It is dust floating in space. In the same way, unfortunately, we read our books. Not only school children, but even we, the children who are studying in the school called life. We also pass through life in exactly the same way. Nothing registers, except something in which you and I may be interested, in the sense that 'I am in it - you are in it'. The thought is not in you, you are in the thought.

As you are sitting in meditation, you are trying to watch your thoughts, you are trying to watch your mind. You have your own Mantra, the object on which you wish to meditate, and as you do that, there is a procession of thoughts. They come and they go and they come and they go. Why do they come at all? If they do not come, they cannot go. In order to go, they have to come. Why do they go? In order to make room for something else. This is a silly procession with which you have nothing to do. Also, it does not really disturb you. But then one thought comes along and suddenly you discover that that thought is not in you but that you are in that thought, and it carries you away, here is a procession of thoughts, coming and going, coming and going. You can be only vaguely aware of them and it is not very clear. For instance, you are asked to sit down for half an hour and note down all the thoughts that occurred to you during your meditation. You will not be able to note them all down. It is like with dreams, they are irrelevant, silly, stupid and they are not to be bothered with at all. But then there happens another thought, and yet another comes along, and you think it is all coming into you, but you are in it. Without your awareness you are carried away.

I think that it is very important for those who practice meditation to become aware of the distinction: what is a thought which I need not bother about at all, and what is a thought which I should be cautious about. How does one do that?

In order to distinguish between these two, we use a Mantra or we use a form or figure, whatever you like. Why not 'potato chips'? If you go on repeating 'potatoe chips', it may tempt you. Your mouth may be full of saliva and you will get into trouble. Instead of salvation, you get 'salivation'. Otherwise you can repeat any word you like.

As a matter of fact, there was a Yogi called Sri Ramana Maharshi. Quite often he would say, 'What Mantra do you want? Why do you not go on saying 'Aham', 'I am'?' I am is a Mantra. What is a Mantra? A Mantra is a sound which is mentally repeated. How do I know I am mentally repeating a Mantra? How do I make sure that I am mentally repeating a Mantra? How do I know you are sitting there? I

see it. When I have my eyes open and I can see you sitting there, I know that you are sitting there. I cannot safely say that you are there when I have my eyes closed. So, how do I know that I am repeating the Mantra? Because I can hear it within me. That is a point of reference. Everything else is referred back to this. Am I truly repeating the Mantra? How do I know? Am I sure? Yes. Are you sure you will not forget it? No. So, this is what I want to do, I want to repeat my Mantra. When you are serious about it, that Mantra which you are repeating within yourself becomes as clear as the sound you are hearing now, and as distinct.

At the same time it is advisable to introduce also a form, maybe the form of Krishna or Jesus, whatever you like. Or the sun, or a flower, or a mountain. Preferably anything that your mind associates with divinity. That, again, I must be able to see as clearly as this boy sitting in front of me. This is the point of reference: the Mantra and this figure, this symbol. They are absolutely clear to me. My attention is concentrated totally upon them, which means, they are absolutely clear, as clear as the sight of this boy, as clear as the sound of these words. Let all these pedestrian thoughts come and go. If I do not take any notice of them, then my attention is not disturbed and, therefore, the vision is not disturbed, the sound is still clear, the form is still clear. But when I pay attention to those pedestrian thoughts - as when you pay attention to your dreams - you are able to remember them. Not quite in tremendous detail, but vaguely.

All of you dream, lots and lots of dreams every night. But you wake up and say, 'Oh, I slept and I had no dreams'. Of course you did dream. But they were all pedestrian dreams, like wind ruffling over the leaves. They did not leave any impression on your mind. They came and they went.

We can try a little trick now. Look at me just straight - my face is clear, isn't it? While you are looking at me without turning your face, please try also to look at someone else through the corner of your eye. It becomes very hazy. When the attention is thus distributed, dissipated, it becomes dull. An other trick; I am sure some of you have experienced it at some time or other in your life. You are sitting and looking at something, the sky or a tree, and suddenly you drift away. You think of your boyfriend or your girlfriend and the whole thing goes out of focus. But the face of that person appears in front of you. Your whole mind is directed totally upon that person. The one sitting in front of you has completely disappeared - vanished. That is what happens when that thought in which you find yourself, arises. Then the Mantra is gone, all your concentration is gone, meditation is gone, the whole thing has vanished. You suddenly find yourself in Vancouver or Spokane. It takes a few minutes to come back to the realization that I am still in Nelson, especially when you sit with your eyes closed. When you sit with your eyes open, you can come back to Nelson in three or four minutes. If you have your eyes firmly close, it will take about half an hour to come back. You are merely doing this: 'Ah, beautiful, the mind is absolutely concentrated. The Swami made it look as though it is terribly difficult, why, it's easy.' You are congratulating yourself. When you said, 'The Swami said it was so difficult, but it

is easy, I have made it', you have jumped on the Swami's shoulders and he takes you to the Yasodhara Ashram. 'This lady over there and I used to sit next to each other in the meditation room, you know she comes from Spokane. I have gone to Spokane already and it is such a lovely ride - free. Free ride.' And so you continue. If your eyes are not closed you suddenly realize, 'My God, I am still in Nelson.'

Now I do not ask how this thought entered my consciousness, I ask why on earth did I jump onto that bandwagon. I am supposed to repeat a Mantra here. While you do that, you suddenly discover why the mind is distracted by a particular type of thought all the time. That is what the mind has constructed, built as its permanent support - your husband, your wife, your children, your house, your property, whatever it is. The mind has created all of them. All these relationships are pillars on which the mind rests. If you knock one of them down, you are frightened. The mind is frightened to realize that I am alone. Unless, in the non-meditation hours - now we are talking in terms of the practice of meditation as a regular technique - I knock down those props, those supports, ensuring that the mind does not long for them, I am caught by this so that, every time I sit for my meditation, the attention of the mind is diverted to this - my family. Knocking down those props, those supports, this is called 'vairagya' - dispassion, non-attachment, freedom. If I allow these relationship-pillars to support my mind 23 1/2 hours of the day and then suddenly expect the mind to drop them for 1/2 hour during my meditation, it will fail, it simply is not possible.

The disturbing thoughts, the distracting thoughts are the product of a distracted life. The question is: can I sit then in real life and not in merely what is called 'meditation', can I be as watchful of what goes on in the mind now, when I am not meditating as when I am meditating? This is where they who prescribe meditation as a technique, fail.

When you treat meditation as a kind of technique: 'I sit in the morning and evening and practice', ok., that is good and I am not saying that it is not good. But that is where meditation does not yield either satisfaction or permanent results. Because for 23 1/2 hours I am propping all these things up more and more, and in 1/2 hour I want all of them to disappear. That is difficult, to say the very least and to put it very mildly.

What disturbs me during my meditation really and truly, that is something I have to pay attention to during the rest of the day. As you begin to take notice of these things during the rest of the day, you are extending your meditation. That is the beauty of it. Now, from there on, meditation is not sitting straight upright and looking at your nose, that is very easy. From there on you are watching and watching, all the time, 24 hours of the day. For instance, you meet someone and your heart jumps into your throat. It must have happened to you. You get out of the car and your child calls 'Mommy' - or, you meet someone suddenly and - you swallow it. You wonder, 'What happened now? Why am I excited?' Somebody misbehaves and is rude, you bristle up and get hot under the collar. Then and

there you begin to look, 'What is happening now?' You begin to wonder, 'What exactly is all this?'

As the psychologists or the Victorian-age grandmothers used to say, 'Are there many beings in me or am I one personality?' I have a feeling we are one personality, I do not know. We are not like trees. Trees are highly evolved beings, you know why? You can cut them into one hundred thousand pieces and plant them, they will all grow. If you cut me into two halves and plant them, nothing grows. Am I like some of those trees with hundreds of beings within me? When I awake in the morning, a Swami comes up, I am in a meditative mood. When the coffee is not ready, anger comes up, another chap. I am mad at my wife and a little later my child gets up and another Swami comes up. There are so many beings which take possession of you, one by one. Now you are loving, in another few moments you get down and find the car does not start, and suddenly you become mad. You wonder what happened. Am I one person or several persons put together? Sometimes this fellow works and at other times that fellow works. Great-grandmothers used to say that you are temporarily possessed by some strange spirits. Is this true? Maybe. Then you begin to watch, 'This is what happens to me in meditation, I want to be left alone for a little while, 1/2 hour only', and I tell my mind, 'My friend, look, just for this half hour leave me alone, afterwards I will let you play fully.' But it says, 'No, I am the boss.' Then enters a little bit of anxiety. When I push that away, a little bit of love, I push that one away, a little bit of anger. Push that one away, jealousy enters. 'Am I one or am I many?'

Exactly the same thing happens throughout the day if you care to watch yourself - every few minutes there is a change in your mood, in your mentality. You watch - look at it more closely. What exactly is this? Am I an accumulation, a trash-can into which all these things have been dumped, or what am I? When you begin to watch, then a completely different picture emerges. You suddenly realize that what you have been calling 'me' is plain, simple intelligence, some kind of an intelligent being. There is some intelligence, some consciousness which is functioning, this functioning meaning 'energy', movement, and consciousness is consciousness, intelligence. There is constant commotion in this consciousness. There is constant movement of energy in this consciousness. Is, what you call 'jealousy' anything other than this consciousness plus movement of energy? Is, what you call hate, anger - whatever you wish to call it - anything other than a certain movement of energy in this intelligence?

Your emotions, your thoughts, do they have an existence apart from this intelligence which you are? Movement of energy in this intelligence or consciousness is what happens all the time, whether you call it love or whether you call it hate, whether you call it affection, satisfaction, anxiety, hope or despair - all these are mere modifications of the same stuff. Understanding this or thinking about this - these are two different things. When you understand it, you understand it in your heart. When you are thinking about it: 'Ah, I am not quite sure. How can it be?' When I think of something nice and pleasant, when I am in

love, my face blushes. When I am angry, I get hot under the collar. When I am anxious, my stomach may be affected, it does not matter what you call it. It may be that the energy moves in certain regions of this consciousness.

Is there a thought or an emotion which is independent of your intelligence? Please, do not think too hard about this. What happens to you in sleep? Sleep meaning no dreams. While you are fast asleep, do you have these thoughts, do you have these ideas and these emotions, these anxieties, is there love, hate, like or dislike? Where did they all go? That intelligence which functioned when you were awake was not functioning when you were asleep, that's all. When this intelligence does not function, as in sleep, then all these things are absent. Therefore, all these emotions, all these thoughts, all these anxieties and fears and the rest of it are nothing but this one intelligence. You look at it without even thinking about it. It is quite simple.

The next step is a bit tricky. Some of you may like me, some of you may not like me, I do not know. But keep all those things to yourself. If you think I am funny, keep that to yourself. If you think I am serious, please keep that also to yourself. For the next ten minutes, whether you like me or whether you dislike me, keep it all there, and never mind. You look at me now. 'Ah, what a funny fellow.' As this thought arises, you look at it, 'it is nothing but a modification of my intelligence.' Let the realization of this also come up at the same time. As the thought arises, 'I like him, I do not like him', have the consciousness or the awareness that this is but a modification of the same intelligence. Love, hate, like, dislike, whatever happens now in your mind, it is the same thing, the same intelligence. You are still looking at me, but that 'something' which modified your vision has gone. That something, which modified and perverted your vision - perverted even when you say: 'I love you Swami', has disappeared. Even that love is a modification of your intelligence, that hate is an equally pernicious modification of your intelligence.

If you are able to confront each one of these emotions, each one of these thought, with this realization, that this thought, this emotion is nothing but intelligence - the yogis use the word 'consciousness', then what happens to all the excitement? The excitement is gone. You are still looking at me, you are still listening, you are still seeing, you are still trying to understand what is going on here, but that excitement is gone.

If I may say so, even your love and your hate may remain, but the excitement is gone. 'I do not like this', that's alright. There is no harm in saying, 'This is something I do not like.' You may still want to go to sleep, you may still want to raise your children, you may still want to lead a wonderful family life, you may still love your dog and leave the backdoor open, all these things you can still do. It does not interfere with your life, except that it takes the stress and strain away. This cannot be done by sitting for half an hour or so and looking at your nose. No. When in this manner you are able to look at the contents of your mind and recognize all of them as nothing but the modifications of this mind-stuff, of this

intelligence, of the energy moving in intelligence, that life itself is meditation.

When and if you are able to do that, then you can obviously see that you have no obstacles at all during meditation, you have no obstacles at all in the practice of Yoga. You do not need any special place for it, you do not need any special setting for it, you do not need anything. There is not even a technique for it. You started out with a technique, it was the technique that introduced you to this perpetual problem. It is the technique that unlocks the door for you and enables you to enter into yourself and meet the only real stranger you have in this world: yourself. All the others are not strangers, you yourself are the greatest stranger to yourself, you have not met yourself before. The technique merely opens the door and lets you through, but once you are there - it is up to you to face yourself from moment to moment, to live with yourself from moment to moment, to come to terms with yourself.

This is not selfishness because that again, you will discover, is a useless pursuit. You will feel it, you will see it, not because someone else says selfishness is bad, but because you will see that it is stupid and silly. You have self-knowledge. Self-knowledge not as a sort of blazing lights which you see when you sit in meditation - however, you can have all those things, there is no reason why you should not have them - but self-knowledge in that you see the emotions arising, you see these disturbing thoughts arising, you see these distracting thoughts arising, and you see them not as disturbing thoughts, not as upsetting emotions, but as pure consciousness. This is nothing but a modification of the same consciousness.

For instance, you have a family and you want to bake cookies. You make a dough to begin with. You may turn your back for a little while and your little daughter comes and plays with some dough. She may like certain movie stars and so she fashions them with her little hands and leaves them there. The father may come and say: 'No, that is not good, we must make a Yoga-Swami, my Guru.' He puts the dough back and kneads and makes a lovely Swami. The mother comes back and says: 'No, I want to make a Krishna, a Buddha and a Jesus.' Apparently, there were film stars, apparently there were Yoga Swamis, apparently there was Krishna, Buddha and Jesus, but in truth, they were all dough. With this dough you can make, any figures you like. That day, when I realize that whatever be my thoughts that occur to me and whatever be the feelings that arise in me, they are all this silly dough, called intelligence in which there is energy which enables this intelligence to function, that very day I am free.

Therefore it is said, that if you know the Self, that self-knowledge instantly frees you. There are no more anxieties, no more hopes and no more fears. Life goes on. You still continue to think, you still continue to feel, but they do not rule you.

There is one other problem which arises in the minds of most people who hear this, 'Ah, if I become a Yogi and attain to self-knowledge, I may become like a dummy, without any thoughts, without any feeling' or, 'My husband will not even look at me when he becomes enlightened.' This is a problem, isn't it? There exists

a Upanishad where an enlightened sage talks to his wife and gives her instructions. The way he addresses her makes it sound as though he is deeply in love with her. He must have been past eighty. He was about to leave the home and wander away. Merely because she shows interest in acquiring self-knowledge and asks him the right question, he says to her: 'Ah, come on my dear and I will tell you.' He is extremely affectionate. It does not mean at all that you become a dummy. It does not mean at all that you become a robot and wooden-hearted. You continue to think and to feel, but all this does not rule you any longer. You know all the time that all these are modifications of one thing, intelligence in which there is this energy inherent which enables the intelligence to function. From there on there are no obstacles. You can sit down and meditate whenever you want. Every difficulty, every obstacle that arises, you are going to make use of it. Whatever be the thoughts, emotions or what have you, you are going to say: 'This is all the same dough.' You do not hold, you do not push. When you are sitting down for your meditation, you are merely going to tell yourself: 'I am here, and for the next 50 minutes I am going to meditate. I am going to repeat my Mantra, and I am going to focus my attention upon the Divine Presence.' If there are some thoughts, they can come, they can go. That's all. There is free cross-ventilation.

If you are going to stone-wall the whole thing, 'I will not allow any extraneous thoughts to enter', you are inviting them. Right? If you are going to say, 'I will not allow any thoughts from the outside in', you know what you are going to do? For the next 50 minutes you are going to repeat this as a mantra. Standing at the window and preventing thoughts from entering is a waste of time. Once a thought has entered and then trying to push it out is another waste of time, because all the time we are sweeping the floor. So, I tell myself: 'I am going to repeat my mantra and visualize the Divine Presence, keeping both windows open, who comes in can also go out, I am not interested'. You know now that all these things are the same stuff. All these thoughts, all these emotions are the same stuff, the same play of the mind-stuff, the same play of energy moving in the mind, you are not interested.

Then there are no distractions, no disturbances, nothing. You enjoy your meditation, get up and go about your work - even then you are meditating. You are never, never stopping. This meditation is ceaseless. Your whole life becomes meditation. Om.

Question: What is your definition of 'Divine Presence?'

Swamiji: 'Divine Presence' means what you like, what your mind or what your heart likes to contemplate. As a matter of fact, even if you do not like it, try it. For instance, merely listening to your breathing itself may become quite sufficient for some people. But most people may not find it sufficient, the mind still wanders away. The mind brings pictures to you. So, instead of bringing in a picture, I give you a picture. It is not that this is God.

Question: If one is sitting in a room, and something that the mind likes, comes floating in, automatically the mind will turn towards that quite effortlessly, nothing whatsoever could turn the mind away from that.

Swamiji: That is correct, that's it.

Question: Then that should be the mantra, that thing that attracts so much.

Swamiji : That's it. That is the mantra you are planting. But it may not be found to be so easy. Is it possible for me to get hold of the mantra and let the mantra absorb the whole of me, then the yogi is free. But if the mantra is not strong enough to hold the attention completely, then something else comes floating in and that is more attractive than the mantra, what do I do then?

Questioner: Then that will be the mantra, the mind will follow that.

Swamiji: The mind will follow that for a little while.

Questioner: But isn't that alright?

Swamiji : The mind will follow that for a little while, and then follow something else. That is the whole problem. The mind as at present constituted is unable to get hold of any one of these and reach the source. All these tricks have been tried. If the intellect approves of the Mantra and says that this is going to lead me to absolute bliss, the attention is focussed on this Mantra with all that temptation for a maximum period of twenty seconds.

All the tricks that people suggest these days, they have all been tried. Music has been tried. Music has been tried to the extent of making me sick. Pop music, there is so much noise that you do not even hear your own breathing. You do not even hear your own thoughts, your thoughts are being wrenched away from you. When that noise stops, you are still where you were before, at the same place. All this has been tried. Some of these things seem to work. They seem to work because of their novelty. If you are being used to sit during Satsang as we are doing here and chant 'Om Namah Sivaya', it becomes dull after a while. You go to some of these lovely Bhajan concerts, in Ceylon they have plenty of them, you should hear them. You go there, you stop breathing, your eyes pop out, you swoon. 'That's it.' It works for a little while. But then even that becomes boring; and you shift again.

Kootenay Bay, British Colombia - May 18th, 1975

Bhagavad Gita

We were studying the message of Sri Krishna in the 'Bhagavad Gita'. It is believed that the whole episode took place on the battle field. A battle field is the scene of intense conflict and the teaching is said to be related to this conflict since we see that we live in this world where as far as our understanding goes, conflict has been with us from the beginning. Therefore we think that the message may have some relevance to us.

When we look into this text, we discover a rather strange approach to the whole problem. Two parties are fighting and one of the warriors collapses. The teacher, instead of trying to figure out who is right and who is wrong, instead of deciding whether to fight or not to fight or who is fighting right under certain circumstances and who is fighting wrong under certain circumstances, ignores this completely. Instead, he flies off at a tangent and discusses what we usually pigeon-hole as 'philosophy'. What is the reason behind all this? When you become aware of conflict, aggression, violence, it is usually when you see it somewhere else, in the other person, 'outside' yourself, in the 'outside' world.

When someone uses an expression like: 'I recognize this conflict', I wonder if he realizes what the meaning of the word 'recognize' may be. 'Recognize' means - I see it once again. Where did you see it the first time? In order to recognize conflict or violence outside, you must be aware of this violence, this conflict somewhere else before. In passing, incidentally, it is my argument with people who say, 'Do not do this or you will go to hell', that they seem to know the way. Did they come from there? So, in order to 'recognize' something, you must have cognized it before. Where? In yourself.

It is in that sense that we often refer to the world as a mirror in which really and truly that is reflected, which is in you.

Thus Sri Krishna says to do away with all that business, the 'rights' and 'wrongs' of war, the participation or non-participation in wars. Whether you participate in the war or whether you get away from it, you are still in it. I cannot remember which cult or sect it was, but the leader of that cult said: 'We shall have no disharmony in our group, all of us must be totally one.' What happens if he says he dislikes one Swami and tells him to get out and away from his organization? Did he not say that they all must be one? And so it happens that there are more people outside than inside. Therefore, even if you say that you will not participate in this world, you are creating another conflict. By saying that he is 'evil' and that you will not mix with him, you are contributing to the evil, you are participating in a different way. You will find - if you are a student of comparative philosophy or religion - that every time somebody jumps up and says that he will bring about world unity - bring all the people together points out to them that fundamentally truth is one - yet another group has been created.

Before there were five groups. Now, with this 'universal religion', it became six, because they do not agree with anybody else. You are a Christian? You are wrong. You are a Hindu? You are wrong. You are a Jew? You are wrong. You are a Moslem? You are wrong. You are a Buddhist? You are wrong.

They are all 'partial', but I am going to give you the 'whole'. This is impossible. You cannot possibly hand out a thing called a 'whole', it is broken already. By merely avoiding a conflict - getting away from it - you have not solved the problem. You have probably created some more troubles.

If two of us are quarreling and fighting, you, perhaps as a religious leader, can jump into the fray, deciding that he is right and that I am wrong and join him. By joining him you have made me weaker, thereby prolonging the conflict. Or, belonging to the other category you say: 'Ah, they are both fools - I am wise', and you keep away from them. Or, you take for granted that I am strong, so when I have 'finished' him I turn to you: 'What did you say? Did you say that I am a fool, too?'

Therefore, Krishna does not indulge himself in this troublesome problem. Where is conflict? In you. It is that conflict, it is that violence, it is that aggression in you that sees aggression outside. When a cat is playing with a mouse - the famous 'cat and mouse' game - who is the inventor of this game? You. Neither the cat nor the mouse invented a game called 'cat and mouse' game. The cat behaves normally and the mouse behaves normally. It is the psychologist or you educated people, highly educated, you degree-holders, you researchers, who invented this. You know what 'research' means? To search again. First of all, you lost something, you searched and found it, dropped it deliberately and then go and 're-search' it. Search will do. I had something, I dropped it, I went around looking for it, searching for it I found it. That's all. But then, deliberately I throw it away and go 're-searching'. It is the research-scholar who invented a thing called 'cat and mouse' game. The cat behaves as a cat should and the mouse behaves as a mouse does.

Only the man does not behave as a man should. He super-imposes, projects, his own violence, his own aggression, on to this poor innocent cat and mouse and 'reads' a cat and mouse game there. Why am I doing this? I want to find a rationalization, a justification. You may or may not agree with what is said here, whenever you feel within yourself the need to explain your conduct, rationalize - justify your conflict - then there is something you already know is wrong, something deep within you knows that it is wrong. We have all been breathing for many years. You have never felt the need to say: 'You know, I have to breathe'. It is only when I do something which, even if I do not know it is wrong or evil or sinful, is not acceptable to you, I come and explain to you, rationalizing, justifying. When I look for justification for what I am doing concerning the plants and the animals, I am already accusing myself. I know I am guilty and that is why I am looking for some justification.

When, studying the behaviour of cats and rats and monkeys we come up with fantastic discoveries such as: 'This behaviour is also found in monkeys'. I have a hunch that they realize that we are much lower than the monkeys.

You know if for instance - insignificant disciples that we are - we are found smoking and someone asks us: 'Why do you smoke?' We say, 'Oh, my Guru and also my grandfather used to smoke', which means: 'When even those great people smoked, what about little 'me'?' So, when you say, 'Even the monkeys have these behaviour traits.', it means: 'If such great things as monkeys behave in such a manner, what about us poor little human beings?' That is what it sounds to my ears. Or, 'Even the birds protect their nests, so I will shoot you if you dare come on my property'. Birds may appear to be aggressive during a certain nesting season but not always. We do not study all that, we only study to prove that which we want to prove. It is absurd. Is the aggression outside? No: It is the aggression inside, it is the violence within that projects the violence outside and reads it there.

Once upon a time before I had seen lions and tigers in their natural environment, I used to think they are ferocious animals. When I was in Africa - Nairobi, we went to the National Park and were told where we could see lions as close as we are sitting here. I tell you, I have never seen a more beautiful and peaceful face. Even when they yawn they are so beautiful. They had finished their siesta and they were getting up for their breakfast or lunch. It so happened that nature had provided a zebra as food for them. It is not their fault, it is not because they want to kill that they go and kill. Again, it is only man who behaves in a stupid way; he is sitting in the car and watches them. The lions had a drink of water and then they turned and looked at us. In that beautiful look I almost read the message: 'I do not come and bother you, why do you come here and bother us?' Believe me, the National Park where the lions live is just some miles from downtown Nairobi - they do not come and bother the people there at all. Eventually the lion was walking off to look for his food. He gave one more look - quiet, beautiful, peaceful, serene. I wonder how we would have looked - obviously I could not look at my co-passengers in the car, nor figure out how we looked to the lions, but I have seen it. Stand outside some of your big cities, New York, Los Angeles, Paris, London, etc. Look at all these drivers, long cigars, driving the most expensive cars, you have never seen more miserable faces on earth. The more expensive the car, the longer the cigar, the longer the face. We are the ones who project all these things on to what we see - it is not there. There is no violence outside. Perhaps we have made this mistake of looking constantly for this violence outside, whereas it is inside.

In order to deal with this problem of conflict and violence, Krishna says to forget all this outside world and look within and see: where is this violence and who is violent? In other words, where does this violence, this aggression, spring from? Where does conflict exist? Who are you? When you begin to look within you suddenly discover that all conflict can be reduced - not resolved - to two simple

words: 'like' and 'dislike'. If these two words 'like' and 'dislike' - 'love' and 'hate' are not there, that very moment conflict ceases.

But perhaps you are still looking outside, looking at the cat-and-mouse game. Whether the game is played by cat and mouse or by man and woman, what is the difference? That cat and that mouse are on all fours, this cat and this mouse are on two legs. The thing is the same. When you have dropped this 'like' and 'dislike' from your heart and when you look at it you probably see quite a different picture. You see something very interesting even in regard to the functioning of our several different faculties - no 'likes' and 'dislikes' exist in that world. Does Krishna suggest that I must, therefore, abandon all these likes and dislikes? This is not possible. Tomorrow morning someone will bring me a glass of hot nitric acid, 'Swamiji, to you it is all the same, coffee, nitric acid, have a glass of nitric acid.'

Your body, your senses, your faculties naturally react in a certain manner to certain things. You have no control over them and you do not need to have any control over them. When there is light you open your eyes and see, the eyes see. When somebody coughs, the ears hear. The skin touches. They all have their own inherent limitations. The eyes are limited in their faculty, they see only a certain range of spectrum; the ears can hear only certain decibels of sound, neither below nor above. In exactly the same way the skin can take only a certain temperature, a certain range, neither below nor above. If the hand, even by mistake, comes down on a block of ice, it springs off - the same hand, if it touches a hot stove, springs off.

Shall I then introduce the concept of hate here? There is a certain correlation between the senses and the objects, because they are part of the same whole. I have a couple of magnets, but I did not bring them with me this time. Probably you have all seen this: if you have two little magnets and you put them on this table here, turning one of them upside down and bring the same pole towards it, it will jump and turns back. As soon as it turns its back - they come together - when the unlike poles face each other. That is a natural thing.

This seems to be very pleasant to apply to human behaviour - that a man and a woman must be attracted to each other. This does not necessarily mean that a man should kill a man and a woman should chew up another woman. Jealousy is rationalized on this and killing - murder - is rationalized on this. There is this natural manifestation of attraction and repulsion which is limited to physical phenomena. This physical universe is filled with these two forces from end to end. That is why it is able to remain stable. Do not assume that what is happening to the eyes is happening to you, what is happening to the ears is happening to you. Look - see what you are. It is natural for the hand to spring away from the hot plate. Do not say 'I do not like this', because the hand has already said it does not like it. Also, do not say something which is very bad, but which is quite common among our friends: 'You know, I am a great Yogi - I can put my hand on a hot-plate and withdraw - withdraw the energy and keep it on top of my head.'

Unnecessary showmanship. Wait at least for another 10 or 15 years, when the body is about to be cremated, then that body can get up and say: 'I do not care, you can burn this.' Silly, very silly. Let the body do its own functions. Do not worry about that. What seems - on the surface - to be contrary impulses are complimentary in the structure of the body. There is a built-in mechanism which promotes the growth of the child and then arrests it. Some of you must be parents, so you know what I am talking about. If you observe the growth of an infant, the first 6 weeks or 2 - 3 months, you will be amazed. It is doubling its size every day. It grows fast, terribly fast. If that growth rate were maintained you could build a new house every two years. There is a mysterious power which makes a child grow and then says: 'Ah, enough now.' These two forces work constantly. One set of nerves gives the command to the chest to expand so that the lungs can breathe. If you say 'no, no, I do not like contradictions, I like harmony, let's leave just that one set of nerves, let the chest expand, let it go on', you know what? In 5 minutes it will burst into pieces. At exactly the right moment the other thing says, 'contract', and the lungs contract. This is not contradictory but complimentary.

So, it is possible to see that what you and I have called 'conflict' may merely be a restraining force. We do not know. I must be cautious and I must vigilantly watch to see - where does this conflict arise? The conflict arises when what is natural is extended unnaturally.

This is when and where your super-natural phenomena become deadly.

This person here says: 'You know, I do this certain thing and I levitate'. This person is a danger, a menace. Why must you levitate? I am levitating on this chair, is that not enough? Why do you want to distinguish yourself as something extraordinary? I have known an extraordinary man. All that I could see in him during the sixteen years that I lived with him was a man, a pure - absolutely pure and beautiful human being. He did not demonstrate any miracles, jump in the air, appear or disappear, nothing of that sort. Do you know who demonstrates? Can you mentally write that word? The state of a demon is called 'demon-strate'. Why do not you want to be pure, natural human beings? Because that is very difficult. It is most difficult because we have made it so. Why? Because we love the unnatural, calling it 'super natural'.

Way back, in 1946 or 47, a man appeared in my Master's Ashram in Rishikesh who introduced himself as a Yogi who could remain buried underground for 9 days in an air-tight and sealed container. He had a disciple with him. Both of them came to the Ashram asking for permission to demonstrate this in the area. We told him that this would be alright and we would inform the Master, Swami Sivananda. If Swami Sivananda, approves we will take the necessary steps and inform the authorities; the police, the magistrate, etc. At 2 o'clock in the afternoon some of us went to Swami Sivananda to ask his permission. He said: 'Ah, buried for 9 days? Very good. But not here - let him go somewhere else. You know, all these snakes and frogs etc., they are buried for at least six months a year

- they hibernate.' To finish the story - this yogi could not get permission anywhere around there and so both of them went to Delhi.

Why do you want these supernatural things? They are unnatural. The only important thing is to find out what my relationship is with the sight? What is my relationship with hearing? What is my relationship with all that is going on in this world? Why must a normal person strive to behave in an abnormal way? That is only entertainment. It has no value whatsoever.

I am going to give you another story. A wise man, a Guru, a Swami, was telling just this to his disciple - that supernatural things are unnecessary. He warned that in this world only the supernatural, unnatural phenomena are applauded and that natural human beings are not recognized, not wanted. The disciple protested and said: 'Oh no. There are intelligent people everywhere in this world, and if you are a noble man, they will recognize you. Truth is always recognized and exalted over falsehood.' The Guru did not argue but kept quiet. Wandering along, one day they entered a small village. In the marketplace they saw a small tent and on a billboard outside it said: 'Come and see a man grunt like a pig.' The admission was 20 cents. The tent could only accommodate between 30-40 people. As soon as all the people were in, they closed the doors and gave the performance. At the conclusion of the performance they would go away and the tent would fill up again. The Guru and the disciple also paid the 20 cents and went inside. In a few minutes the tent was full and the performer, the 'demonstrator', came in and grunted like a pig. Everybody laughed, 'marvelous, marvelous', and they clapped their hands. Then they walked out. They continued to talk about this all the way home. The Guru made a note of this, talked to someone in the village and returned to the same place ten days later.

The Guru had asked for the tent as well as the billboard to remain on the same spot, even though the demonstrator - the man who grunts like a pig - had left. The Guru made one little change on the billboard: 'Hear the Grunting of the Pig - see the Truth.' - Admission was 20 cents. He asked his disciple to stand outside the tent. People came, looked at the billboard. 'Sounds funny - well, let's go in and see'. About 20 people walked into the tent. The Guru was ready. As soon as the doors were closed, he brought a pig in from the outside. He twisted its tail and it grunted. All the people in the audience shouted: 'Ah, it is only a pig'. They stormed outside, a few wanted their money back and others picketed the place, telling everybody: 'It is only a pig.' The Swami told them outside: 'I promised you the Truth' This is the Truth. The other one was a fake - a man grunting like a pig is a fake. A grunting pig is the reality, is the truth.' Then he turned to his disciple and said: 'You see, nobody likes the Truth in this world.'

If the light hurts your eyes, close your eyes - they close themselves. Even this wonderful word 'clairvoyance' only means that the sight is clear, that I have no eye disease, no sore eyes. That's all. 'Clairvoyance' does not mean I know where you lost your teeth. It does not say so. It is a simple French word, mauled, distorted, perverted. In the same way 'clairaudience' means I can hear well, I am

not deaf. 'Can you hear the music of the spheres?' What spheres? None of these things are mentioned here, none. Here is a very clear and straight-forward statement of truth which is that there is limitation in your faculties and these faculties respond in a certain way to external phenomena, because they are related. The eyes are related to sight, the ears are related to sound, the skin is related to temperature, touch, texture, the tastebuds are related to different tastes. Let them perform their functions without any interference. Do not try to push them, do not try to pull them, let them be free. If you leave them free, you are free. If you give them their freedom, you will immediately realize your own freedom. Do not try to get into their grip, do not try to fall into their net. Be what you are and let them do what they have to do. When that is done, then there arises a state of mind which is called 'samam' in the Bhagavad Gita. 'Samam' is the same as the English word 'same'. You can translate it with 'equanimity'.

If you have understood what was said concerning the natural limitation of the senses and the freedom of the spirit from that natural limitation, you will understand this concept of 'samam' in a completely different light. 'Samam' does not mean that, to the yogi, heat and cold are the same - meaning that he will have a shower under fire and cook his food on water, that is not what is meant. These are perversions. 'Samam' is a completely different thing. Leave the senses alone, let the functions of your body go on - inwardly you are in a state of 'samam', sameness. This sameness is one degree higher than endurance, according to the Bhagavad Gita. Sameness is quite different from endurance. In the beginning we train ourselves to endure pleasure and pain, heat and cold - which means, that at present, in an ignorant state, I think: 'Ah, that is soft, that is nice - I feel this, I am touching this - the pleasure is mine.' That is when you are walking into the trap of the skin. 'Oh, that is terrible, that feels awful', - again you walk into the trap of the skin. If I do neither interfere nor get involved in what the eyes see, the ears hear, the tongue tastes, the skin touches - if 'I' is not involved in all that, then all function naturally. But since in a state of ignorance 'I' was involved in all this, a certain amount of restraint becomes necessary.

Do not mourn, do not lament, 'Oh, it is cold, oh, it is hot.' If it is cold, the body will know how to look after itself. If it is hot, the body knows how to look after itself. If it is cold, you start shivering and trembling, which is the most beautiful warming vibration, which you yourself could not produce even if you wanted to. If it is hot, nature knows how to produce perspiration and cool itself off. So, endure this in the sense of cutting yourself off from all that. Let the body function on its own, it knows what to do. If it is hungry, it will go and find some food; if it is thirsty, it will go and find something to drink; if it is fatigued, it will go and sleep. Do not get involved in all this, give it its freedom and regain your freedom, firstly by endurance, and secondly by this spirit of sameness.

This spirit of sameness is not indifference in the affairs of the senses, it does not say, 'I am a yogi, heat and cold are both the same'. No, not like that. Heat and cold are the same, to me, but not to the body. The body will react in its own way. Pain and pleasure are the same to me, but not to the body, it will react in its own

way. This 'samam', I do not know if it is right to call it a mental or a psychological state, it is something else, it is of the spirit. It is not a physical state either, it is something free. It is the spirit and when that spirit becomes free, there is peace. That peace is called 'samam'. One who is established in that peace has a completely different view of the world and its affairs, a completely different view of human relationships. That which is firmly established in this 'samam', in this sameness, is completely free of all sin and impurity.

That was shown by Lord Krishna, who took part in the battle without taking part in the battle. He became the charioteer, chauffeur, for one of the warriors. He did his job without aligning himself with this or the other party.

This is very difficult for people like us who are caught up in this trap of 'I' - 'You' relationship. It is very difficult to understand, to be in that conflict and yet not be a part to it at all. I have seen this in the case of my Guru, Swami Sivananda. He was constantly in it but never involved in it.

One example which is given in some scriptures: the sun shines without intending to shine. This is something most important to remember: the sun shines without intending to shine, there is no intention. It is natural for the light to shine, it is natural for the sun to shine, and in this sunlight you do all kinds of things. Some people do what is called 'good', and some people do what is called 'evil'. The sun is not involved in either 'good' or 'evil' trips and yet, the sun does not say, 'I will not participate in the affairs of this world.' The sun is there and without the sun's light we would be all non-existent.

This is the attitude of a wise person who has understood the truth concerning life on this earth. If this is so, who is 'I' and what is 'I' supposed to do? We shall deal with this some other time.

Nelson, British Colombia - May 22th, 1975

Meditation

Some signs which are indistinguishable from emotion are also described as the companions of devotion. You practice devotion when you sing, when you meditate, when you do japa. Even in the practice of what is known as hatha yoga, it is possible for the seeker, for the practitioner to experience certain signs and symptoms which are not distinguishable from emotional states, such as shedding tears or getting goose-pimples, etc. They are symptoms of devotion. However, they are also possible otherwise.

What are emotions and how do they arise? What are feelings and without suppressing them, is it possible for us to be in command, to master them? The devotional signs which are enumerated in some scriptures like shedding tears and body trembling are not within one's control, they are beyond the 'me'. They happen. If they happen, they happen and you cannot do anything about them. Since they are beyond your control, there is nothing that you can do to make them happen, and there is nothing that you can do to make them not happen. Therefore, we must know what is beyond one's control and what are the signs of inner awakening, signs of the spiritual power within which should not be tampered with. If some people have that kind of pre-disposition, they can have it, it is good for them. Others may not have this. It does not mean that it is essential and it does not mean that it is harmful. It does not mean that it is good, nor does it mean that it is undesirable. We are not talking about that.

In ordinary life we are subject to emotional upheavals. We become slaves of feelings, we are overtaken by emotions, overwhelmed by emotions, overpowered by emotions. Someone says something and you flare up. Or, there is the situation where you are tempted. Am I tempted or am I tempting the temptation? This is a difficult question to answer. If there is a cake on the table, is the cake tempting me to eat or am I tempting the cake to jump into my mouth? I do it, and then I blame the cake for it. That is a sign of immaturity. Doing something and then blaming somebody else for it: 'I would not have done this if you had not tempted me to do it', is a sign of immaturity.

Yet, these feelings, these emotions exist within me, I experience them. Can we try to understand this experience called 'emotion'? A strong feeling, whether we call it desire, anger, hate, love, fear, it is all the same. Strangely enough, your psychological theory and the Bhagavad Gita are very close to one another here. Krishna again and again emphatically declares that an enlightened person is not such a rare phenomenon. He says that there are many who have attained enlightenment. Of course, there is a catch. 'Many have attained enlightenment' may not mean that in the present world there are many. It simply means that there have been many. In the two million years of the earth's existence when every 50 years now there is a renewal of 300 billion human beings, 'many have attained' may mean that in a particular generation there may not even have been

one enlightened person. Still, 'many have attained me'. Krishna encourages. He says: 'Do not worry, do not worry, you also will get it, you also will attain enlightenment.'

I shall tell you a true story which happened in the Ashram in Rishikesh. A devotee had asked for a geometrical design, a 'yantra', to be imprinted on a gold plate and sent to her. With that she was hoping to acquire proficiency in music. This is according to some tantra. If you worship that yantra on the gold plate, and repeat a certain mantra for a certain number of days, the tantra says that you will acquire proficiency in music. I had asked a friend of mine, another Swami, to draw the yantra. He brought it back to me and asked what it was for and I explained it to him. He said: 'Ah, that is funny.' He thought that he also could do it - get a gold plate with this yantra inscribed on it, perform the puja, repeat the mantra, which is a mechanical thing, and that would be it. He was a person who had no relationship at all with music. Have you ever heard the expression 'tone-deaf'? He was absolutely tone-deaf. So, he asked me: 'If I do all that, will I also get proficiency in music?' I said, 'of course.' But the Scriptures do not say whether this proficiency will be acquired in this life-time or in some other life-time. Enlightenment is not such a difficult thing. If you do all this, you will attain enlightenment. It may take about three or four thousand years, that's all. How does one become of the same nature as the supreme being?

'Tapas' is burning, not merely austerities, but an inner burning, an inner psychic fire. By the creation of this psychic fire within themselves, many have reached a state of consciousness which is the same as the Cosmic Being, which means: one with the Cosmic Being. And this tapas, this austerity, this psychic fire, is not a mechanical, physical, or psychological affair, but it is its contents, jnana or wisdom. If one enters into this wisdom, into this consciousness, awakens this intelligence and disciplines oneself to remain there, sustaining it all the time, so that it burns up all ignorance within, then that person becomes of the same nature as this Cosmic Being. How does one get there? What are the characteristics? Those persons have extricated themselves, rescued themselves and they are free of themselves. They are free of love, hate and fear. How did they do that? They are constantly leaning on the Cosmic Being, 'they have become of My Nature.'

You look around and you see that this Cosmic Being functions without love, hate and fear. You see that in the trees, in the wind, in the water, there is no hate-fear-love relationship. All that exists in nature functions totally free from love, hate and fear. In order to be free of love, hate and fear I must understand these emotions. Do I know that if I do not love you, I hate you? Do you know of anything else than these two? If I love you, I am afraid, and if I hate you, I am afraid. If I hate you I, am afraid of you and if I love you, I am afraid I may lose you. Do I know how to overcome these, drop these, to free myself from them? In order to free myself from these, I must realize that I am being enslaved all the time by these three. I must be able to look within and see that my own life is tortured by these three: love, hate and fear. This expression occurs in the

'Bhagavad Gita' again and again: ragabhayakrodhah. Raga is not love in the sense of divine love, raga is love as opposite to hate. I love you and, therefore, I hate somebody else. I hate somebody else and, therefore, I love you. Now you must hate that person too. This gives us a common cause and you are my friend. It is that kind of 'love'. Do I know what it is to be free of this? How will I know what it is to be free of this unless I am able to see and to recognize that I am enslaved by this, oppressed by this. Can I know that I am tyrannized by love, hate and fear if I cannot stand a step aside and free myself? It is a vicious circle. I cannot know that I am tyrannized by love, hate and fear if I do not free myself from it. I cannot free myself from it unless I know that I am tyrannized by it.

A girl was suffering from a case of hysteria. They asked a doctor what they should do. The doctor said, 'Get her married and she will be alright.' They went to the parents of some young man and asked them what they thought of their daughter marrying their son. The young man's mother said: 'I hear, that your daughter is suffering from hysteria, as soon as you get this cleared up, our son will marry her. So, unless the hysteria goes, she cannot get married, and unless she gets married, the hysteria will not go. What does one do? Therefore, one practices meditation.

For the time being one learns to recognize the tyranny of emotions. One learns to recognize how the mind is constantly churned by its emotions. There is a lot in common between Sanskrit and English. Your God of Love is called 'Cupid'. You know why? He makes everybody stupid. The same meaning is derived from the sanskrit equivalent, 'stupid' is called 'manmakai' in sanskrit. What is 'manmata'? 'Matana' means 'to churn', 'ma' means 'mind', that which is able to churn your mind and make you stupid. The mind is constantly being churned by all these emotions. Can I - for a short time - experience this freedom? Can I experience also at the same time what it is to be tyrannized by all these emotions? Can I, just for a moment, by practicing what you call 'meditation' - the morning and the evening meditation is not the total answer, it is perhaps not even meditation but only an attempt at meditation, a vague, ineffective type of attempt - discover, that it can help me if I use it merely as a key? It is not the hall, it is not even the door, it is just a key. That meditation exercise is nothing more than a key. But I can learn to use it, and if I learn it, I can unlock this inner chamber to see what that freedom is, how to rescue myself, free myself from the tyranny of love, hate and fear. We take the same technique that we have been discussing for the past three weeks. I take a mantra and I take an image and approach this problem in two directions: (1) by tracing the mantra to its root, by which I discover what the mind is. I discover how the senses function, I discover how the mind functions; (2) by using the figure or imagining some kind of Divine Presence, using a symbol, I learn what it is to expand, to enter into it.

At present I have hypnotized myself into thinking that I am this body, that I live in this body, that every cell of this body is somehow related to 'me'. When you pinch your knee you say: 'I am being pinched, it hurts me.' You do not say: 'My knee is being pinched.' It is a funny relationship. Whatever happens to some part of the body is 'happening to me'. This is self-hypnosis. Right from childhood I

have hypnotized myself that it is not only my finger, but that it is 'me', so that if you stick a pin in there, I say, 'I am hurt.'

How do I de-hypnotize myself? People have said that meditation is self-hypnosis. No. This, our thinking, that is self-hypnosis. It is self-hypnosis to think that I am this body, that I am related to this body, that I am bound to this body and that whatever happens to this body happens to 'me'. That is self-hypnosis. Meditation is the method of de-hypnotization. I de-hypnotize myself by contemplating the Divine Presence and entering into It, by making the Divine Presence fill my whole being so that at one stage I think: 'No, not I, there is no 'I' here at all. It is He, it is the Divine that dwells in this. The Divine dwells everywhere. If God is omnipresent, He dwells here also.'

Where is the 'I' now? There is no 'I'. We can pull out everything one by one, there is nothing called the 'ego-sense' at all. This is your nose, these are your ears, this is your hair, neck, throat, arms, legs, heart, liver, take them one by one and throw them away. Where is it, that said 'I' in this body? You cannot dissect an organ called 'I', or a soul. What is 'soul'? We all have two soles and they may be the only ones I have. The 'soul' that the philosophers speak of may be a cell. That cell does not belong to you, it belongs to this Cosmic Being. You may be one cell in the body of this Cosmic Being and nothing more than that. I do not know where it is and what it is. Now and for all time to come I am a cell in this Cosmic Being, and so are you, each one of you. If you can hold that awareness for some time, then you know what it is to be free of love, hate and fear. There exists a relationship of identity - what 'I is', 'you is'. Then there is no problem. Immediately all this love, hate and fear take leave of you. Thus, meditation leads me to the discovery of this love, hate and fear within. What are these emotions here and how do they arise?

What I am going to tell you now is not something strange. I believe one great yogi who lived at the beginning of this century practiced this. He was a brilliant man, a mathematician. He had lost his father very early in life and was brought up by his mother who was very poor. He won a scholarship and went to college. All the other students came from fairly wealthy families and would bring their lunch basket, except this boy who had not much to eat. One day he took a little money from his mother and bought himself an apple. Apples were quite expensive in those days and he never had been able to afford one; so, now he bought himself an apple. He brought it home and there was such a craving in his mind and he found out, that as long as this craving persisted, he could not concentrate on his studies. Whenever he opened a book, he did not see the figures therein, but he saw only the apple. It was haunting him. He looked at it, he played with it and at night, when he was going to study and do his homework, he placed it on the table, looked in a mirror and said: 'There is the apple, now study, do your homework, the apple is there.' Somehow he persuaded himself that since the apple was there he could now do his homework and eat the apple afterwards. He finished his homework, again looked in the mirror and said: 'You will not have this apple.' He took it and threw it far away. Now, can you, in the same way, get hold of your candy-bar or your chocolate cake, put it on the table and watch what is happening

now? There is that stuff, sitting on the table, deep-brown and the light-waves enter the eye-balls and go to the visual centre of the brain. Also, I do not have to see it, a certain fragrance, aroma, enters my nostrils and goes from there into the olfactory centre of the brain.

Now, from here on, please join with me and see how this thing works, the brown stuff enters the eyes, the smell enters the nose, where and how does it become candy or cake? In other words, even if you were to take it and put a piece into your mouth, it has a certain taste, right? It has a certain form, it has a certain smell, it has a certain taste - but where does it become candy or cake? How are these sensory impulses integrated and interpreted into a candy-bar or cake? Once they are interpreted into what is called a candy-bar or a cake, which means linked to a memory, that 'something', then say: 'Ah, it is lovely, I like it.' Remember, you are watching this. There stands this deadly, muggy, clay-like stuff - it could just as well be clay with colour and some sugar around it. The sensory stimulus reaches the brain where all the stimuli are coordinated and it picks up the appropriate response from the memory bank - 'Ah, it is cake'. Then comes in the 'I like it'. 'Now, if you are in some kind of trouble, diabetes, or whatever it is and the doctor has strictly warned you: 'One more piece of cake, one more candy-bar and you go straight to the undertaker, do not come to me.' In that case, do you look at the brown stuff and say: 'Why not, have another bite?' You get the point, do you not?

So, first there is the coordination of the sensory impulse, stimuli, and then the linking of it with memory and then it becomes 'cake'. We are only talking theory, but can you see this, can you experience this for yourself? Can you sit in front of that silly cake and watch yourself and see where this thought arise: Where does the thought 'this is cake' arise? Where does the name, the word, the interpretation that this is cake or candy-bar happen? You continue to watch yourself. This sensory stimulus and the linking with the memory demanded some amount of energy and then a colossal thing jumps up: 'I like it.' At that moment you have lost all control of yourself. When that happens you are lost.

Can you, by intelligent practice, re-arrive at that stage where you can see this, recognize it, which means that it was there before and you linked the present with the past, you recognize, therefore, that this is cake. There is no harm at all in this. If you watch very closely, all this seems to happen in the head, the seeing and the recognition. Then, something suddenly from the chest, from the heart, leaps up like a frog and you become totally blind. This is an extra movement of energy, nothing more. Can you see this happen within yourself? When it is still in the process of building up, can you examine it? There is obviously no brain in the chest. How do you understand an emotion?

Would you like to try the following as we are going on now. You are looking at me and you are listening. What is it that listens to me? Your ears and your brain. Can you now let your attention flow down from the head to the heart and give yourself the feeling that you are listening with the heart and not with the brain? Keep your eyes open. I want you to get this very clear. First, you are merely looking, without

any awareness whatsoever. Then you begin to wonder: how do I listen to this fellow, how do I look at him? Where does 'listening' happen, where does 'seeing' happen? When you realize that all this happens in your head while you are doing that, can you quietly shift your attention from the brain to the heart and continue to listen and continue to see? It is no longer your brain that sees, but your heart. It is no longer your brain that interprets, but your heart interprets. Can you learn to think with the heart, see with the heart, listen with the heart? Then you have solved the problem - immediately. The commotion stops. You have gone straight to the root of the problem. You are seeing with your heart. There is no conflict between the head and the heart. The heart does not leap like a frog and upset your balance. It remains steady. You are now functioning on two levels at the same time - on the intellectual level and on the heart level. If you are able to do that, then there is only one more step to take.

As you are going on doing that - one little swallowing - and shift the attention to the solar plexus, then the whole thing happens from there. You think with your solar plexus, you feel with your solar plexus, because there is the source of energy. All that thinking and feeling etc. happens on account of the movement of energy. If the whole attention is shifted to the solar plexus and thinking, feeling etc. all happen there, then the movement of energy is sensible and wise. There is no wild movement of energy but wisdom, feeling and movement of energy, all these together happen at the same place, your solar plexus.

From there on there is no confusion. The moment there is turmoil, whether it is mental, psychological or emotional, you merely push it down to the solar plexus and you are safe. It is the solar plexus that gives you the energy for all this, and if the attention, your wisdom, your consciousness, your intelligence is directed there, to the source of all energy - which means the centre of Ganesha - where all your wisdom, your emotion, your devotion, the movement of energy are brought together, this body, this personality, this mind will function in tune with this Cosmic Being. There is no discrepancy, there is no distance, there is no space between all these and, therefore, there is the absence of hypocrisy. Then that, which sustains the entire universe and therefore this body and this mind and this personality, knows what should happen. This body, this personality, this mind will function in tune with this Cosmic Being without one wrong note, without mental confusion, without emotional upheaval.

Then your whole life becomes meditation. The brain functions as it should function. The heart functions, the emotions function. The supply, the source of the energy, which makes all these things possible, is controlled by intelligence and wisdom. From there on there is no blind action at all. Action becomes wisdom. It is not wise action, but action itself becomes wisdom. You do not go around doing something funny and then say: 'My God, why did I do it.' Whatever has to happen, happens, and life flows on most beautifully. You still may shed a few tears, you still will love, and you may still raise your family, you do whatever you have to do - but without love, hate or fear, one with the Cosmic Being, without a division.

Love, hate or fear creates a division between you and me. It will be a beautiful relationship, without attachments and without problems. There is freedom, and in that freedom only can one experience what love is in truth, not otherwise. In that freedom, there is love. That love is totally different from the love that divides. This is love that unites. The heart is purified and becomes of the same nature as the Cosmic Being.

Nelson, British Colombia - May 29th, 1975

Mantra

Please remember, what we are talking about is only an exercise, it is not meditation. Meditation cannot be taught, meditation cannot be learned, it is the total cessation of all effort which means complete absence of will, the total and complete absence of 'self'. This is when meditation happens. It is like sleep. When I enter into sleep without falling asleep it means, that the self and the will drop away. That is meditation which cannot be learned, which cannot be described, which cannot be written about and which cannot be spoken about.

If all these things are thrown away, what remains is an exercise in meditation, conducive to meditation, an exercise which may lead to meditation. The will has to be silent or, even if it operates, it is not related to the 'me'. We will try another approach to it, how to deal with thought, emotion and sensation. This is a simple, orthodox technique and the technique itself is like chewing. You can chew a gum, some nice apple or you can chew your own mouth. Each one has its own result. Thus, a technique is like chewing. It is what you put into it that really matters. The technique itself does not matter and has no value.

In the most popular and what one might call the most orthodox technique you use a mantra. What is a mantra? Mantra literally means 'a saviour'. The meaning of the word 'mantra' is: think of me, I will save you. That is what it really means. It is a saviour. Do not ask me who is saved from whom, that again has to be found out. 'That which redeems when contemplated and reflected.'

The way the mantra is used depends entirely upon what you want to put into it and what you want to draw out of it. If you merely want deep relaxation - 'I am a very nervous person, can you help me?' Yes. Repeat merely 'Om Namah Sivaya'. If your hand is shaking, I give you a mala. If both your hands are shaking, I give you a pair of clappers - 'Om Namah Sivaya'. If your legs also shake, get up and dance. So, if you merely want a mantra for deep relaxation, go ahead. If you are unable to sleep, a mantra is usually given. When I mention the word 'mantra' you are already yawning. It has a remarkable effect of putting people to sleep, especially when you want to keep awake and repeat the mantra. Tell yourself that you are going to repeat the mantra for the next half hour, which is not long, and that you will sit up straight. Exactly within less than five minutes you are fast asleep. Instead of sitting and gossiping you should do something else, gaze at the sky, if you cannot sleep and you do not know what it is to sleep. So, if that is your idea, please go ahead. You do not have to understand anything, just pick up a mala or a rosary. If you do not use the mala while repeating the mantra, then it is possible that the mind will start to think of something pleasant and you may not sleep. If you are using a mantra in order to go to sleep, take a mala, because the mala will pin your mind on to the mantra and that will put you to sleep. It has got an enormous number of uses.

If you want to acquire more psychic powers, then do this. You will acquire more psychic powers when you repeat the mantra while you are standing on your, or standing on one leg. These are all practices which have been proved to be effective. There was a yogi who stood on one leg up for 10,000 years and he had the power to burn the whole world. You may not be able to stand for 10,000 years, only for 5 minutes or 10 and, therefore, you may not be able to burn the whole world, but you may be able to light a cigarette. If you want to acquire some psychic powers with the use of a mantra, you can see that this is also possible.

There are also other possibilities. When you repeat a mantra while you are sick - you have for example a stomach pain - will that pain go away? No, because while repeating 'Om Namah Sivaya' - 'Oh! This pain', how can the pain go away? You are literally meditating on the stomach pain, you are invoking the Lord's blessings on that pain, so it will not go. But what will go is your fear of dying of cancer, that will go away because the person whom you had asked to give you the mantra had told you that it is a healing mantra and that it will save you. Since you have that much faith in the person who gave you the mantra, you continue the mantra and the fear that you had before you picked up the mala, that you may die of cancer, that fear is gone. You have no time to think of all these thoughts now, you are too busy repeating the mantra. What remains is merely the pain and that is a tremendous progress. Before you did that you were crazy, entertaining all kind of funny notions, funny ideas, funny fears. Now all those fears are taken care of by the mantra. After repeating the mantra for half an hour, you feel better and you can, if necessary, go to the nearest doctor and he will fix it. You are no longer afraid of dying, that's all. The imaginary fear is taken care of, and the imaginary disease is taken care of. That is what a mantra will definitely do for you. It will also give you God's Grace and reduce the cholic pain, but that needs a little more devotion, a little more intensity.

If I am poor I can also use the mantra to get some money. All that is possible. It will work in various ways. If you go to India you go to the river because it is very hot and humid and you repeat your mantra at the beach. You take your mala 'Om Namah Sivaya' - 'I need some money', and it may be that some people pass by and see this holy person sitting there, eyes closed and doing japa and they may drop some money beside him. By evening he may have several dollars. That is enough. The problem is solved. All these things are possible. I repeat, just like in the case of illness, if you repeat your mantra with great devotion, it is possible that God's Healing Grace may descend upon you and take your pains away. In the same way, God's Grace may descend upon you and enable you to find a treasure. All this is possible.

If I am not interested in any of these, knowing that all these are temporary result, I will want to know if it is possible, with the help of the mantra, to overcome some thing which is not so temporary. What is not so temporary? Me. I was there before the illness, and I was there after the sickness left me. I was there before the need arose, I felt the need, after the need was fulfilled I still continue to be. It is the 'I', the 'self', which suffers again and again and again, that seeks again and again,

that craves again and again. If all this is somehow understood and resolved then it is possible that the craving will not rise again, it is possible that the suffering will not arise again, it is possible that this sorrow will not arise again.

I come back to sleep. Sleep is a marvelous thing. It teaches us that where the 'self' is absent, where the ego-sense is absent, there is no desire, no craving, no pain, and no sorrow. How do I reach that state without going off to sleep? The Holy Ones say: 'Use your mantra, the same mantra which you used in order to fall asleep, now use it in order not to fall asleep.' But in order to overcome the self, one must go beyond the self. How does one use the mantra for that purpose? How do one use the mantra in order to discover the Self? 'Discover' means just that. You know, what 'discover' means? Columbus discovered America. I do not know why you say that, it was already there, what do you mean by 'he discovered it'? 'Discover' is quite simple: take the lid off, open the cover. 'Discover' does not mean finding something which does not exist. 'Discover' means, whatever is covered, take the lid off.

When you see a box you jolly well know that there is something in it, even if that something is space, emptiness. Discover it. That there is something in it, that much faith is there. But at the same time I do not know what it is. Unless that attitude is adopted, your meditation is not meditation. I must use the mantra to 'discover' the 'Self'. The 'Self' is there because this here is the cover, I can see that. But what is in it? When I take the lid off, there is something in it, there must be something in it. How do I know? Because I see the cover. When I see this cover, it must and it does contain something in it. It may be emptiness, it may be air, I do not know, I do not know anything. I am not anticipating anything, I am not hoping to find something, I am not expecting to find something, I am not afraid to find something, nothing whatsoever. Whatever it is, I am prepared to discover and to see. I see the cover and I know that when the cover is lifted that something will be there. I have that faith. But, at the same time, a nagging doubt, a curiosity, whatever you may call it, is being felt. I may find emptiness, or I may find something dangerous. So, one must have tremendous curiosity, tremendous inquisitiveness and tremendous faith. Do not anticipate anything. If the mind anticipates that 'I am going to see God', the moment you enter into meditation you will see God.

You created that God yourself, it is your own thought and like a cannibal, worse than that, you are eating your own off-spring that you produced. There is no harm in it, it is relaxing and you can go to sleep. Once again, if you want to have a vision of God - 'Om Namah Sivaya', 'Om Nama Sivaya', 'Oh, how beautiful, long beard, lovely hair, third eye open', if you want to see, see, it is good, very good.

But, if you approach the whole problem with two things: faith, intense faith, not belief, which is something entirely different - in faith you know that there is something. I do not know what it is, but there is something. The second important thing is that you must have a keen inquisitiveness. The Holy Ones say that you can do this with the help of the mantra. The mantra will help you to

discover the Self, take the lid off. The mantra itself will not do, but it will help you.

'Mananat' means when the mantra is reflected - not you. It will work. Can you see this? You have all seen reflections. Those who shave and do their hair, they are all bound to see a reflection. Where does one see the reflection? In a mirror. In order to see your own beautiful face reflected in the mirror what are the necessary conditions? There should not be a film of dust on it. If there is, the face cannot be seen. So, you wipe the mirror. As you are wiping it, it starts dangling since it is suspended from the ceiling. So, you must make it steady otherwise you cannot see the reflection in the mirror properly. Make it steady, wipe it clean. Then one more thing, the mirror itself should neither be broken nor distorted. When these three conditions are taken care of, then that mirror will reflect perfectly. In the same way, for the mantra to be reflected, the mind should be clean, free from dust, free from cravings, free from disturbing, distracting and destructive thoughts for the time being. I do not say that you should be that forever and ever. That will happen when you have discovered what is on the other side of the 'self'. The whole life will become orderly and virtuous, it will happen.

The virtue that you make happen is vice. Strange, isn't it? 'I want to be pure, I want to be good, I want to be holy', always this 'I want'. It does not work. You have tried it, it does not work. Real virtue 'happens'. But for the time being, for the sake of this exercise, I want the mind to be free of all impure thoughts, of all distracting and destructive thoughts. I want the mind to be steady. Also, I do not want any perversion to creep in. Perversion is when I anticipate what the result is going to be.

Without any of these, there is this mirror inside, clean and steady, and such a mind is made to repeat the mantra, such a mind is made to reflect it. How does it reflect? Naturally the mind is repeating the mantra also. If I am mentally repeating 'Om Namah Sivaya', at the same time I can see the mantra reflected there. I can see the mantra, and I can hear the mantra. Mentally I am repeating the mantra, and at the same time I am hearing the mantra, that is the reflection. This is possible. Otherwise, how do you know that you are repeating the mantra? In order to be aware that I am mentally repeating the mantra, I must also inwardly hear it. Can you, for just a couple of minutes now, try the following: I ask myself 'am I really repeating the mantra'; you have an inward feeling, at that time, that 'I am repeating this mantra.' When you ask, 'Can I listen to the repetition of the mantra within myself?', you become the hearer, the listener of that mantra.

Let us now shift from one position to the other. Now I am repeating the mantra mentally, now again I am listening to it. Now I am coming back to saying the mantra, now I am the inner ear, hearing the mantra. Now I am saying it - now I am hearing it. Does it not occur to you, 'Am I one or two? Are there several people inside, one saying the mantra and the other hearing the mantra and the other overseeing the whole operation, how come there is this division?' I am watching

all this, I am aware of all this, the Self is aware of this. It is the Self that is repeating the mantra, it is the Self that is listening to the mantra, it is the Self that desires to repeat the mantra, it is the Self that desires to listen to the mantra. 'How come there is such a lot of division within myself? Am I one or two or three or four or five or a hundred?' When you ask yourself this question, slowly the gap is getting shorter and shorter and shorter - and eventually like a flash you see, 'I thought it was 'me', and the 'me' suddenly exploded and, and ...' When the 'me' has suddenly exploded, what remains afterwards is unknown, unknowable.

Can the mantra be used in this manner? Can the mantra be used purely, simply without any great intellectualism, without even understanding the dictionary meaning, the literal meaning or whatever meaning has been ascribed to it so far? Can the mantra be used in such a way that one looks into it directly? Who is repeating the mantra, or who is listening to the mantra, and who is aware of all this? That is the Self. Can I become aware of the Self? Who is the 'I' that becomes aware of the Self? Is the Self one or two? It is the same thing.

When you are doing that, you are literally, actually, factually seeing the division that thinking creates within yourself. That is not an illusion, it is there. The desire to experience, the desire to become aware, the desire to know, the desire to think, that itself is the division, that itself is the cover. It may take 15 seconds or 50,000 years, that is not very important. For, once you have seen the division within yourself - what is time?

Time is another product of the same division. The time taken by thought to travel from this to that is time, isn't it? So, why am I bothered about time? Let it take thousands of years or let it take a few minutes, I only know that this is a fact, that this is true and that we are not dealing with hallucinations. This is a direct experience and everyone is capable of doing this. There is no magic here at all. I am repeating the mantra and I am able to listen to it, am I one or two? When I ask that question, I stand on the roof, suspended upside down and I am able to look at these two phenomena within. One is the repeats of the mantra and the other is the listener and I am suspended on the roof; so, there are three. You are repeating the mantra mentally and next you ask yourself, 'Am I repeating the mantra or am I sleeping?' That moment you begin to listen to the mantra, because it is when you listen that you are sure that you are repeating the mantra.

Then you play around. Once you repeat the mantra, you are merely shifting your attention, and when you think, 'Ah, I am repeating the mantra', then you are repeating it. When you ask, 'Am I repeating the mantra?', then you are listening. Then there is the puzzle, 'am I one or two?' Then suddenly you seem to withdraw, you seem to step back from both these fellows - one says the mantra, the other listens to the mantra, but you seem to step back and watch both these happenings, which means that I am three. 'My God, I am going out of my mind, there are three in me.' When you do this, you are four, the observer, the repeater of the mantra, the listener of the mantra, and you stand behind as the fourth one.

Some people get frightened because they think they are losing their mind, something is happening. Without any such irrational and stupid fear, knowing that all this is the Self, I am not trying to do anything. In sleep there was no gap between the sleeper and sleep. Therefore, there was no awareness of even the sleep. Awareness, experience demands space. The finger can touch my face, it cannot touch itself. Space is needed, duality is needed in order to create this experience. In sleep there is no such duality and, therefore, there is no such experience in sleep.

It is possible, therefore, to abolish this gap, this division between the experiencer and the experience. I am trying to see what creates this division, this gap, when I am repeating the mantra. I can hear it, and I know I am repeating it and I am standing there. What is this gap? What is this division? What is this space within myself? Then one discovers that the space is created and maintained by thought, by thoughts flowing in this direction. I think I am repeating the mantra, I think I am listening to the mantra. I am there all the time, trying to play a game within myself, dividing myself into all these three, playing all these three roles together. When these three come together, when this distance is abolished, then the condition, which prevailed in sleep, prevails now, but you are not sleeping. While remaining awake, you have reproduced exactly the same condition which prevailed in sleep where there was no psychological distance, no psychological division within you at all. At that moment, on account of the intensity of concentration, the self which was covering whatever truth lies hidden there underneath it, is not only lifted, not only discovered, but destroyed. The cover is destroyed.

When the self is destroyed, what lies within it? When the 'I' is destroyed, what lies within it? That is permanent, that is eternal, indescribable, not knowable by mind, by thought or by intellect. You can call it God, whatever you like, that is your business. Once you have discovered it, then it is your business to call it what you will. However, you may not wish to call it anything at all, it is there, why should I call it something?

If this line of action is adopted, the mantra can be of tremendous use. It is a tremendous help. Perhaps it is not even necessary to know the dictionary meaning of the mantra. If you want to know, that is alright, too. Nothing is needed in this, nothing at all. You can pick up any mantra you like, any sound, whatever you want. Even 'I am' or 'Om', provided this technique is adopted. The technique leaves you at a crucial point, at the cross-roads. Beyond that, the technique cannot take you. Many people are anti-technique. Without a technique, I may not be able to get to these cross-roads. There have been some who were able to get to that point, or even get beyond that point without the help of any technique, without the help of a mantra. They are wonderful and if you think you belong to that group, God bless you. I am not jealous at all. But if you think that that approach is a bit too difficult for you and that you need some help, then take a mantra. It will certainly help you. It will lay before you the fact that within you there is a division which is produced by the self, the ego-sense. When that is

eliminated and abolished, then there is enlightenment.

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The ego-sense

In order to resolve the conflict which we believe is in the world, the conflict within must be dealt with. When we look at where this conflict lies within oneself and how it arises we realize, that it is the ego-sense that causes it. If we examine the nature of the ego-sense it becomes vaguely clear, vaguely because it is the ego-sense that looks at the ego-sense. It becomes vaguely clear that it is the ego-sense itself that is creating the conflict - it is part of the Cosmos. There is a feeling 'I am' in each one of us which is an unavoidable reality, the ego-sense is there, but it seems to assume powers which it does not possess, it seems to arrogate to itself a role which is not properly its own. This is the only thing which needs to be very clearly understood. No one denies your existence. No one denies the existence of the world. No one denies the waves and ripples on the lake, but there is confusion.

The eyes are meant to see and as long as they see, there is no problem at all. But the eyes that see, do they judge, do they also produce value-judgments? No, the eyes merely see and there is no harm in their seeing. But when either the eyes or the mind, the brain behind the eyes, judge something, conflict is unavoidable. The brain behind the eyes can think, let it go on thinking, there is no harm. Where and how does one of these - either the ego-sense or the mind or the senses - indulge in judging? It is said in the Bible in two words, 'Judge not.' If only people had listened to these two words, listened not with their ears but with their heart and their soul, the world would be so much better, it would be totally different. People still would die, but we would not have the privilege of killing them. People come into being and they die. I am born and I am about to die. You would not be so stupid as to kill me.

'Judge not.' Where does this judgment happen? The ego-sense, arrogating to itself the status of a judge, the ego-sense, arrogating to itself the status of a doer, 'I am doing this.' The ego-sense, arrogating to itself the status of an experiencer, 'I am the one who is experiencing this, not my skin.' When it blows cold, you do not say, 'The skin complains that it is cold.' You say instead, 'I am shivering.' 'I am not shivering at all. When someone throws something at this body, I say, 'I am hurt.' 'I am not hurt at all. Somebody is hitting this body, some piece of flesh, it is not so important.

I shall give you the absolute literal translation of a couple of verses. While seeing, while hearing, while touching, while smelling, while closing and opening the eyes, while holding and while letting go, while enjoying, while suffering, the yogi thinks, 'I do nothing.'

The translation is defective, the expression is probably defective or, we have not understood what 'thinking' means. As long as the feeling is there in me that I am sitting here and talking, can I think that I am not talking? What does this mean?

