

Cape Town Talks By
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Ananda Kutir - Sep 16 1972

We have been discussing something the whole evening and probably it might be a good thing to share a private discussion. We have been talking about the problems of our life and what to do.

How do we deal with life? How do we cope with life? Life brings all sorts of situations from day to day. Some of them are the same old thing - hunger, fear, thirst, sleep, which we have had from time immemorial, repeated day after day. Some of them are new, some of them are a mixture of both old and new. How do we deal with them? How do we live here? In a manner of speaking, nothing has ever happened - the same life is carrying on, sometimes stumbling, sometimes falling and then getting up. This falling and getting up is regarded as death - life does not come to an end - if it comes to an end. It will not be called a life - it is quite simple, isn't it? There is no life after death - there is no death. Once you die, you die - nothing more to do, life goes on continuously without interruption. What we call death is falling down, what we call illness is stumbling, tripping on a piece of stone, that is called illness - when you are tottering, you are not quite steady, then suddenly you fall flat on the ground, lie down for a few minutes, get up and that is called death and what is known as rebirth etc. From one point of view, this thing is continuous - it goes on and on without beginning, without end.

Krishna says in the Gita, 'It is neither born, nor does it ever die' - it goes on and on and on and on. They have discovered a new word in America for this - recycling. Potatoes and bananas grow, and from the tree, it is transferred to this something else that is growing. The tree is growing too, from there it is transferred to something else - this is also growing and the same bananas and the same potatoes make this grow a little faster, and as it grows in a different form, the potatoes and the bananas are given back to the earth and then it grows up again. So, next time you eat a banana, think of the Swami recycled. So it goes on and on, and on life goes on, nothing is ever destroyed. From another point of view, there is constant change, but this change is change of form - the spirit is unchanging and the form is ever changing. Because of this we have some recurring old problems and some new problems - non-recurring new problems. That is the problem - how to distinguish the one from the other. In the case of one, the recurring old problem, we have perfect guidance, perfect guidance. If someone gives me an apple - how will I eat it? Exactly in the same way as Adam ate his first apple, 50,000 years ago - there is no change here at all - right? Therefore I can look up the dictionary or the Bible or some kind of Holy Book.

You know why I mention dictionary? It is one book which contains all the books in the world, therefore it is the source of scripture and, even so, the word Bible means a book - the book - isn't it? I hope you know this. Dictionary is another bible. I can look up the dictionary, I can look up the Bible. I can look up some cook book if I don't know how to make bread, because this is a recurring thing, continuing recurring problem. How to bake bread, how to cook rice and curry, how to peel a banana and how to eat - put it in your mouth and chew it twenty

times and that sort of thing - these things can be preserved in text books, scriptures, studied, applied to our own life and there - the problem is solved. But there are other things which are new - electricity for instance - so, if I do with this electric light - let's say - what I do with a candle, I get into trouble. I have seen people do this, when they want to put out a candle, they just press the top of the wick and the candle is put out. I only pray to God that they may not do the same thing with an electric light; if they do that with an electric light, they will be put out.

The rules and regulations that we have learnt in our Sunday schools, the scriptures and the books that we have read so far, they have no use here, because the problem is something that was not visualised by the people who formulated the old rules and these problems are not perpetually recurring problems - these are something new - so I have to look at them and not go by old standards.

I will tell you, just for your entertainment, a couple of stories. One, which my school master was fond of saying, not that he was anti-British, but, you know ... In India, during the British regime, we were all told repeatedly that the British gentleman was so fond of his manners that he would not drop them for anything - etiquette, nice manners, decent, supreme, paramount importance - and my school master used to tell this story. A young man was swimming and he got beyond his depth, and he was drowning. It seems he was yelling for help. A wonderful British gentleman was standing there, smoking his pipe. He was going round and a friend of his came running up and said, 'What are you doing standing there, that fellow is drowning!' 'Well, you know, we have not been introduced so far.' Such formal introduction may have its value. I do not say no, but not when a man is drowning! This is where one can apply a very healthy principle to a wrong situation.

Here is another lovely story bold in an Indian legend. A man had heard, 'Thou shalt not utter falsehood', and he was so tremendously impressed - you know by what? - by the rewards promised! So, he was not going to be a truthful man because he wanted to be a truthful man, but because the tags attached to it - it promised heaven, it promised lovely food, great luxury, wonderful celestial nymphs, great beauty. So he wanted them, and therefore this truthfulness is a sort of escape, an emergency exit, through which you ascend there, get there - you do not have to go through the proper door. Speak the truth for twelve years, you go straight up! Probably he was in Cape Town, and he found that that was a bit of a tall order, difficult to do that. Not for twelve years, maybe twelve days! Somebody comes and asks inconvenient questions - what do you do? Sometimes you tell white lies, grey lies, brown lies and so on - this is not possible - you know, it is not that I want to bluff, but people make it impossible for me to stick to the truth - so he said, 'Okay, go to Rishikesh, go to an ashram somewhere in the Himalayas where there is nobody, only monkeys and donkeys whose language you do not understand, and your language they do not understand - that is good companions. So, he took up his abode in a forest. He did not see anybody at all, so he did not tell lies. He told no lies at all. He did not talk, and he was getting older

and older; he was quite certain that in a few months, in a year or so, he would pass away, and pass away straight to heaven. One day he saw a ruffian looking person run within sight. A dagger was drawn and dripping with blood. In front of that ruffian, again within sight of that very truthful man, another innocent man was running. This man was a Brahmin or something - that's not important - an innocent pedestrian was also running. The truthful man was looking at the drama. There was a fork in the road and the innocent pedestrian, the Brahmin, took one road. This man following the other chap with a dagger stood there bewildered, which road did the other man take? He could not figure out, so he turned round. This extremely truthful man was sitting there. He went to him and asked, 'Did you see someone running this side?' What does a truthful man say? 'Yes' - that is the truth. 'Which one of the two roads did he take?' What did the truthful man say - he was sworn to speaking the truth - what do you do? He said, 'This way', 'Oh thank you,' said the man, ran and caught up with the other man, murdered him, took away whatever money he had, and that was the end of that part of the story. 'But in any case, I have told the truth - the absolute truth!' Then the time came for this truthful man to die, and he was taken straight to hell. He protested, 'I have been waiting for the dinner, and the cocktail party, and the nymphs, and the dancing, and so on, and you are taking me to hell what for?' You know, the police and that sort of thing, how they behave. They said, 'We do not know anything. This is the order. We obey orders, we do not argue with you. Is this your name?' 'Yes' Then come along to court, if you have any complaints and protests, you had better make them there, not here its a waste of time.

He went. There was the big magistrate seated in the Divine court and this very good man, this exceedingly good man, the most truthful man said, 'Sir, why have I been brought here - have I not adhered to the vow of truth for over twelve years?' 'He said 'No! You ruined the whole thing by telling a great lie.' 'Lie? For years I did not even talk and only once did I talk. 'And that is when you tripped, that is when you slipped.' 'But I told him the truth'. 'Maybe, but your truth led to the murder of an innocent person and therefore it is worse than a lie. Of course, you did not understand the definition of truth - ignorance of law is no excuse - it is double punishments, first for breaking the law, and secondly for not knowing the law - so that is no use'.

What is the moral of this story? Are we given a license to tell the truth when it suits us and to bluff when it suits us that way? I do not think it is that - there is a lot more in the story. The story refuses to lay down the law. When we demand - what must we do? If I look within as I make the statement, what is happening within me? I am uncertain, I am not quite sure what I should do. Even that is not terribly important, but there is a third, mischievous element in this question. 'Tell me what I must do?' That is, if something goes wrong, I will hold you responsible, isn't it? If I make the decision myself, and if something goes wrong, I have nobody to blame. If I make a cup of coffee, and I make a mess of it, I have nobody to blame.

I once lived by myself in Sydney. For three months I cooked my own soup - I was

the only one in it - I cooked my own soup. I did not know what to do - I did not even know what to cook - my hostess brought all sorts of funny vegetables and put them in a fridge, and I was too proud to ask her how to cook them. What do you cook - the leaves, the stem, or the roots? So, one day I put this, and one day I put that, and one day I put the whole lot. I did not know you had to add salt to soup. I did not know that. And it tasted delightful - you know why? I had nobody to blame. If somebody else had prepared it, I would have said, 'Get out .. this is rubbish!' I was the only one who cooked it. I was the only one who was hungry. I was the only one who swallowed it. That is the end of the story.

When we ask someone else to make up our mind, we are literally looking for a scapegoat - in case the thing went wrong. I could say, 'He told me to do this, he misled me.' If the thing came back, 'What a wonderful person I am'. Of course he gave me the suggestion, but it was all my doing. He gave me the suggestion, no doubt, but that is not important. 'I' did it - if it went wrong, 'he' misled me, 'he' did something wrong. It is here that we have to be alert, vigilant - and this nobody wants. Tell me what I must do, and in return, if he is a wise person, he will follow the example of God, Christ, Krishna, I have told you what I think is right. You make up your own mind, because even in our day to day affairs, certain things are continuous, recurring, the same problems recurring, and certain situations are not like eating, sleeping - recurrent problems. But they are fresh ones, and they appear in your life afresh and you have to face it afresh. You have to face it, not somebody else's teaching, a scripture - and what is that? - that is neither virtue nor vice - you find these expressions occurring again and again in the Gita and also one of the Upanishads, called the Katha Upanishads. There is a state of being - liberation, moksha, nirvana - whatever you wish to call it, which is beyond virtue and vice, which is beyond right and wrong, which is beyond all these pigeon holes and all these descriptions, you cannot really capture it and say, 'This is right and this is wrong.' It may be right, it may not be right, it may be wrong, or it may not be wrong. It is something beyond - beyond not in the spatial sense, that it sits there and you know, or, it may be right underneath - something which covers both these, and therefore is beyond both these.

We were talking about the Ecclesiastes. Chapter three starts with - there is a time for this and a time for that. There is a time for loving and a time for hating. There is a time for peace and a time for war. There is a time for sleeping and a time for waking up. I wonder if you can see in this description something that is running through and through, which is beyond time. There is a time for loving and a time for hating? So, is life chopped up - this time for loving and this time for hating. If that is true, then how does one know which is the time for loving and which is the time for hating? When you enquire into this, you realize that there is something which is constant in this changing pattern of life. Loving, hating, war, peace - and that constant thing is knowledge, is the understanding: this is the time for loving, this is the time for hating, this is the time for war, and this is the time for peace - the knowledge is constant. It is a constant undercurrent which runs through your whole life and that knowledge is vigilance, alertness, viveka.

Viveka is not as we often make it sound - discrimination between right and wrong. Oh no. It is not discrimination between right and wrong - discrimination according to some other scripture I read. If I am going to bring my grandmother's discrimination here, I am finished. It is impossible. So, discrimination is not right and wrong according to tradition, according to what you call heritage, or a thing called culture. I cannot decide what is right, what is wrong according to my tradition, my culture and my this or that. In South India, I will not wear a shirt - even in Rishikesh in summer we do not wear a shirt - we do about bare-bodied. But here I may not want to go bare-bodied - even in the Himalayas we do not go bare-bodied, we put on a shawl and a coat and so on. I cannot therefore judge an action on the basis of some tradition, some code which may not apply to this place, and the question is 'how do I know what is right and what is wrong or, if there is no right or no wrong, because what appears to be right in one place, does not appear to be right in another?' You know, Swamis and Roman Catholic priests are not supposed to marry. If they marry, they go straight to hell. I was introduced to the Anglican Bishop in Mauritius. 'Swami, this is Bishop Rogers and Mrs ... eh? ... Bishop? Phew. I was told that in the Anglican Church it was optional; they may want to remain celibates, or they may marry, it is their business. Okay? That's alright. Then I went to see this gentleman in Israel and I happened to meet his wife; she is a sort of sharp-witted, forthright person. She asked, 'Where do you live?' I said, 'Madam, I have no home.' She asked, 'Are you not married?' 'No, madam, I am not married.' 'Oh, sin!' She explained, 'God made you a man and you must exercise all the faculties that He has bestowed upon you, otherwise you are throwing it back at Him, and calling him a fool. You must be terribly confused.'

When I die, I do not take the body with me, nor the dress and the costume and that sort of thing, nor even the identity cards - and so on, the passport. How does He know? Does He ask, 'You were a Swami - were you? So, you were not married - Okay, go on' ... or, 'You were a Rabbi? Ah, so you were not married ... Go to hell'.

I hope I am not worrying your conscience too much. But if you look a little closer into this, you will realize that for some reason or other, valued and not valued, we have invented a few codes, we call them morals, we call them ethics, we call them principles, we call them etiquettes and manners and all sorts of things. First of all, we invent what is called a sin. We were drilled in to it from childhood - this is right, this is not right, this is sin and this is virtue, this is vice, and this is so and so. You can take as much alcohol as you like, but not dagga - the difference between the two, because I have a bottle store. I have no dagga store. Hm? So, first I invent this right and this wrong and then I jump into it and feel quite secure, because I have made this myself and I am quite convinced that this is right. If I go through this door, I will go straight to heaven, even if I suffer there ... it is alright. I call it heaven. Like high heels and tight shoes, you suffer wearing them, but it is the right thing to do, it is fashion, and in course of time, it becomes so comfortable - when you take them off, you know what a relief it is when you wear these tight shoes ... you know at a relief it is when you take them off. I do not enjoy that pleasure, do I? I never had this pain of tight shoes.

So, I have invented this heaven, and I have also invented the right door through which to go to heaven. I am clinging to this right door and wherever I go I call that heaven - this is the problem of the right and wrong. It is so secure, so beautiful ... having created this discrimination and having created this right and this heaven, later, when I am unable to keep on this path, and slip to the other side, I suffer, not because that is wrong. Marriage for a religious person is not wrong. If it is wrong, then the Jewish people also must suffer. No. How is it right for them? I have conditioned myself in this manner - then I struggle, struggle with this condition - phew! - it is not possible, then what do I do? ... aah adultery is terrible. 'Thou shalt not commit adultery' is deadly - the ten commandments - but to live with this man also is terrible - so, what do I do? ... Divorce! So, long as I go on divorcing every month, I am not committing sin any more. I am alright in the eyes of God - I am alright because I go to the church. You see? I modify this image that I have made of what is right.

I looked at a recent translation of the Holy Bible - more intelligible to all of us - not like the King James version, and all those previous versions which are archaic. Thus in modern language the commandment 'Thou shalt not kill' is no longer there - it is 'Thou shalt not murder? You cannot kill, a bad word. If you find a man who is vicious, shoot him. It is alright ... it is not murder. You are protecting the society, you are protecting the good people in the world, and you are doing all sorts of wonderful things. You must give the dog a bad name and then hang it. It is perfectly alright - there is no murder, that is no murder. I have a friend in New Zealand who is reading the original Greek and Latin 'versions of the Bible, Greek particularly, and he says that there is no such word in the Greek language which measures up to the English word 'sin'. He says that the original Greek word only meant - you have missed the mark - that is all, or - you have gone to sleep. There is nothing more to it. And then, the famous repentance. What do I do if I have sinned? Huh? I take a bath - that I will do in any case - every morning and then I will do some extra prayers. I will tell God, 'Oh God, you know, I have sinned'. Of course he knew before that you sinned, you do not have to tell Him. Any way, you know, 'God I have sinned - what must I do?' 'Oh, please ... forgive.'

The word 'forgive', somehow I do not like - sometimes I can shock people when they say, 'excuse', I may not. When someone says, 'excuse me', I will not. Who are you to tell me to excuse you? It is a command - even that is a command - why must I? Who are you to tell me to 'excuse me'? The word 'excuse' or 'forgive', you know what it implies? I did something, you know, I stepped on your toes ... I have hurt you, I have offended you, therefore you are offended and therefore, in your own mind, you are accusing me of that offence - you judge me - you are offended and you are accusing me, forgive me. When you step on my toes, I realize that you probably did not do it intentionally. I do not accuse you at all - why must I excuse you? The excuse comes only after accuse, doesn't it? Forgiveness comes only after accusation, judgement. So, why should I excuse you? There is no excuse and therefore there is no forgiveness. Why must I forgive?

Somewhere in a church, everybody was saying, 'For the sake of the poor people in this world, let us pray. Hear our prayer O Lord. For the sake of the oppressed people in the world, let us pray to the Lord. Hear our prayer O Lord' At one stage, I wanted to jump up and say, 'That the Lord may save himself from all of us let us pray.' We are praying and praying. What do we think? This God has some kind of supermarket? Also I often wonder, 'Why must I ask this God to forgive me? Why must I not ask him to punish me?' I wonder if you have asked yourself this, 'Why must He forgive me, why must He not punish me?' If there is a tumor, I go to a surgeon. What do I ask him to do? I ask him to take it away, not to give me one more to balance it. Why must I ask God to forgive me? I would rather say, 'Look, You know I have been naughty, screw my ears so that I will remember next time. Why not?'

I believe the word repentance in the original Greek did not mean what we are doing week after week. I made a lot of profit in the Black Market and as a repentance I give 10,000 in charity. I believe the word repentance actually meant reweighing - why did I commit that sin? Why did I miss the mark in the first place? Because my judgement was clouded. I did not weigh the circumstances properly, my calculations were wrong, and so repentance means to take aim again, to weigh all the situations once again, all the factors once again, and shoot again, not to miss the mark - that is not called right action nor wrong action, but appropriate action - right? - not in the sense of opposite of wrong, but appropriate action. That is what is called balance. Balance is to match our effort with the challenge in front of me. I meet a thousand challenges every day. Am I exerting myself in the correct proportion just to the extent of balancing the challenge? neither too much, nor too little? How much is too much, how much is too little? How little is too little? How do you know?

In order to answer this question, 'how do I know?' and in order to solve this problem, I have to be awake all the time - all the time, not adopting a certain pattern of life - but being alert and vigilant all the time. If I am alert and vigilant, I might discover ... I 'might' discover. This is not an automatic process, I might discover that most of my foolish actions were performed either by my brain, which is all the time calculating, 'If I do this, I will get that, if I do that, I will get this.' Profit and loss all the time. I am not interested in anything else. Rational - very rational, so that there is a reason behind all my actions and all my reasons are calculated towards some gain or other - the fulfilment of some expectation or another. Either the actions spring from the reasoning, the mind, the brain, or the actions are emotional, instinctual. I love someone - all that he does is alright, and I will do anything for him. I hate someone - therefore I do not mind his being killed - emotional. And I see that these two lead me constantly into some kind of a mess or other. I am watching - these are not appropriate actions. A man is drowning, whether he is my friend or foe, the fact is that he is drowning. If I think, reason out the consequences etc., I am not going to save him. If I am emotionally for or against him, I am still involved, in not appropriate action, but emotional action or rational action. When these are dropped, I see the

circumstances as they are, not as 'I hoped they might have been', nor as 'I fear they are', but the circumstances, the world around me, just as it is, the circumstances as they are, without the calculating intellect, and without the emotional heart clouding the whole thing.

When I see the fact of my life, the fact of my existence, and the fact of the world around me, then there is appropriate action. Appropriate action is something which is extremely natural. You may do it when you go home. This is something beautiful to watch. You can do anything with your body. For instance, my arm is resting on my knee. As I lift this arm to this level, if you are able to watch from within, you will realize what appropriate action actually means. It is so simple, so natural to life. Therefore, if we can understand this message of appropriate action, we will all be absolutely natural. In Nature, there is no worry. Right? In Nature there is no worry at all. Go and look at the trees and plant. Some of your trees have no leaves, there is no worry at all. But if there is no hair on my head, there is a lot of worry. Even men! You understand me? There is no worry at all. You look at the completely bald tree; it does not go to the hairstylist and get some hair stuck there! Appropriate action is totally natural and if you do this, you'll realize it. Moving the arm, here are the muscles and the tendons and so on. They are all in one state of relaxation or tension, and as you lift up, you can see that here there is extension, here there is contraction, and the extension and contraction are so beautifully balanced. It is a marvel. I do not know if I am being too childish for you - when I do this, it is marvellous - some muscles extend, and some contract - phew, fantastic! It is just in the exact proportion, exact ratio. If you lift the arm, this does not extend too far and this does not contract too much, otherwise you would have cramps, all sorts of silly things. It is beautiful beyond words.

That is appropriate action. The only thing that this demands and that we are unwilling to do is constant vigilance, to find what is appropriate action from moment to moment, from hour to hour in our life - constant vigilance, constant awakened understanding or intelligence - the intelligence, that is buddhi. Buddhi means awakened intelligence, enlightened intelligence, the intelligence that is constantly awake. Such an intelligence alone is alive in this world. All the others are asleep.

Om Tat Sat.

Mitra Hall - Sep 18 1972

In many respects, our Guru Swami Sivananda was almost prophetic. I remember that just about a year before the Hindu-Muslim riots broke out in India, He wanted to establish an 'All World Religions Federation'. We did not pay much attention to it, therefore we suffered the consequences. In the same way I can go on entertaining you with stories of how He seemed to have visualized, seen into the future. It is not some kind of psychic jugglery, but I think one could easily see the trend of events and where it is bound to lead into. Perhaps even in calling His movement the 'Divine Life Movement', He foresaw the fountain source of all our problems.

In His own teachings, He made it very plain, very clear. In His own day to day life, He made this even clearer, that nobody can, and if people can, they should not run away from the world. Wherever you go, there is the world. Possibly we are on the threshold of the possibility of running away from the world, and colonizing the moon. You know, going on to one of those space platforms which, luckily for us, will not hold many people. We cannot run away from the world, and it is absurd to do so. A person who runs away from one problem carries the problem with him. I saw this even before I started touring.

We were on a pilgrimage in the Himalayas, five or six of us. Two were Swamis and the rest non-swamis. The other Swami was famous for his short-temper; a very good man, a kind man. Most of the short tempered people are usually very kind, gentle and loving. I live on an island called Mauritius, which is volcanic - you know, like those short tempered people - but on account of the fact that it is volcanic, the soul is very rich. So, these short tempered people are usually very rich in love and affection. We were going on a pilgrimage to see God, to live, to be in the presence of God in one of those Holy Shrines, right in the heart of the Himalayas. All of us were filled with spiritual, religious excitement. You know, the famous story of Moses on Mount Sinai when he heard the Voice. 'You are standing on sacred ground - take off your shoes.' So, when we go on these pilgrimages to Holy Shrines, we are told, 'You shall not entertain a bad evil thought. You shall not abuse anybody or scold anybody - you know, holy holy, pure pure. That is how we approach the Holy Shrine. Highly restrained and dignified, great solemnity, long face, drooping moustache, that sort of things. When we got there one afternoon it was raining miserably, and we had to carry our own baggage which was just a change of clothing and a blankets. All that was dirty, filthy. Anyhow, we reached our destination, and there was a warm bath in hot springs. I looked at that temple and that God and said, 'But for these warm springs you would not have too many devotees here.' It is usual for the devotees who go there to have a dip in the warm springs and then go into the temples. This swami who was with us was our guide so to say, had frequented the temple a number of times. He was rather fussy about his clothes. They must be very neat, very clean etc.,. As we were delightfully and sanctimoniously taking our bath in the warm springs, he was more worried about his clothes. There was another little warm stream, and he was washing his clothes there. One of the caretakers of

that place very politely walked up to him and said, 'Swamiji, you should not wash your clothes in here because this water runs into the pool where people are bathing.' As soon as he said this to the swami, he flared up. 'Who are you to tell me what I should not do?' All the nice words in the dictionary poured out from him. In fright that fellow ran away. I was bathing in the river and I looked at him and I thought, 'Oh, that's great, tremendous. We are in the presence of God, we left that place and we came here.' What came here? Everything came here, not only your body and your dress, but everything. Your problems, your likes and dislikes, your anger and your hate, your love and your passion - all these things travel with you, wherever you go. I learnt a lesson. Wherever we go, we carry this problem. That 'is' the problem. So, it is better for such people not to go to these holy places. Leave them holy at least. Possibly there may be nobody there. We cannot run away from the problem. I am the problem. 'I' is the problem. We cannot run away from the problem, because we are the problem.

There was another man who later became a swami. His wife ran away with somebody else. This is quite natural. I suppose I would be disappointed if my wife ran away with someone else. But if somebody else wanted my wife, I would be proud and happy ... He was broken hearted, poor fellow; so he decided that he would commit suicide. In India we do not have guns in every house. I do not think that even the ordinary police force have guns. Guns are only in the military or special police force. Other forms of suicide are a bit difficult and also, he was probably a very pious man. So, instead of hanging etc., - they say that if you hang yourself, you roam as a ghost - he thought, 'Why not make a good deal even of this suicide - go and jump in the Ganges because the Ganges is considered a Holy River; so, one who bathes in it goes to heaven; if I jump in it and stay there forever, fantastic. So he thought, 'Let me go to Rishikesh. There is a bridge there which is high above water level. I will go straight to heaven if I jump from there, and that's the end of it.' As he was going towards the bridge, probably he was thirsty, he went into the river. 'Euh, it's cold.' So he decided it was too cold to jump into the water and commit suicide. Later he became hungry. He wandered round and saw our Master's Ashram. He came to the Master and and probably explained the story in a few words, and the Master said, 'Stay with me here in the Ashram.', and later he became a swami. A brilliant man, please do not think I am saying anything disparaging about Him. Later, a lady came along to look after him. We are not capable of looking after ourselves - we do not know how to wash our clothes, and we do not know how to cook and so on. So, somebody came along to look after him. She was very fond of him. He reciprocated and they left the Ashram and went away. I may leave the house, yet take the house with me in the mind. The memory of pleasure and luxury, the memory of things I enjoyed. They are within me. What I have enjoyed, what I have suffered - these are the problems. I cannot run away from them. Wherever I go, they come, they 'are' me. So, it is not possible to run away from oneself. What is needed therefore is the light in which to see life as it is - divine. What is divine? Divine is not something with Godly wings.

As a very young boy of six or seven years, I once saw a brilliant light. In those

days we used to play gooligundre, a game played with two sticks. Nowadays, children watch television while others play. I was standing to the left of the boy who was hitting it. He missed and that stick struck my right eyes. I do not know if it has happened to you - something milder at least? I saw a brilliant flash, exactly answering to the description of God given in the Bhagavad Gita - 'as if a thousand suns rose at the same time' - such a brilliant flash. Quite simple, if you press your eyeballs, you will see some kind of light - you do not even have to bore a hole - the third eye - merely press your eyeball a little hard and you will see some light.

This thing called Divine Light or eye of intuition, is described by one of the greatest Indian sages of this century, Ramana Maharishi, as Jnana Shakehu - Jnana is wisdom, Chakshu is eye - Jnana Chakshu is not the eye of wisdom, not a special eye that is opened inside or outside. He used to say Jnana Chakshu is the eye that is wisdom. Wisdom that is your eye. It is not a physical organ, nor even a psychological factor. It is wisdom that is awake within you that acts as an eye, like an eye. Through these eyes I am able to see you, through that eye I am able to see myself. It is not the sort of organ which focuses itself upon something funny within me, but it is enlightenment of the whole being. Krishna says in the Bhagavad Gita, 'When light shines through every pore of your being'. Light of understanding - a clear vision which is called clairvoyance. In French it means clear sight - that's all - nothing more, not the ability to find where I lost my keys. Clairvoyance only means - I am able to see clearly not only you who are sitting in front of me who is seeing you. This wisdom which shines within you sees life as it is. Only this wisdom shines within, and if there is distortion, on account of prejudice, or on account of desires, within you the light of wisdom sees the distortion as it is. The problem is resolved - that is what Gurudev called Divine Life. Divine Life is not something for which I join a particular society or association, going to a particular place or doing some kind of thing or another.

But now comes the difficulty: not having this wisdom. This wisdom cannot be possessed, cannot be kindled, cannot be acquired. When this light comes into being within oneself, then you are able to see life as it is. Life is not outside, but inside too, without any distinction or difference between an internal life and an external life, life in the world and life privately. This wisdom enables you to see this - then there is Divine Life, otherwise there is no Divine Life. Divine Life in effect means this - that is what the Master sang, 'Within you is hidden God, within you is the immortal soul.' Words are always defective, not because Gurudev wanted to suggest that within you or within me, meant that the 'me' is a solid reality, and within me there is a silly little thing sitting there - a small little God, a tiny little thing like one of those little electrodes you can switch off and on. I do not know how familiar you are with modern scientific inventions. In America they have started sticking a few electrodes on the forehead. You switch it on and you enter into deep meditation ... We find marriage is becoming a problem in America, divorce becomes expensive etc.. Why should there be this mixing of sexes at all. 'Why not invent something', - and then they experimented - opened someone's brain and skull and discovered what happened when a man and a woman come together. What part of the brain ticked and what it did and that is

ok. Quite simple, it's easy, no problem at all. So, if you want to have some kind of pleasure, stick in an electrode and switch it on. And it is then when Gurudev said, 'Within you is hidden God, within me is hidden God.' Is God then an electrode within your personality which you manipulate? God give me ... God give me what? Give me sweetmeats, and the electrode gives you sweetmeats - gives you actually the pleasure and feeling of eating it. God give me a good wife, and the electrode gives you the sensation of having a nice wife. God take this girl away from me, switch off and the electrode functions ... It is not that.

When Gurudev said, 'Within you is hidden God,' it was in a completely different light - it is just like me saying, 'This skin covers my body' - in other words, the body within the skin - the skin also is my body - within you is hidden God, etc. You, the whole thing. Divine. 'I am not seeing it!' - what was his intention of saying this? Because normally I am not interested in this thing at all - my eyes are focused on you, focused on the external world, and I am constantly trying to experience the external world without even bothering to find out who the experiencer is - if there is an experiencer. So, in order to merely turn my gaze upon myself, Gurudev sang, 'Turn the gaze, draw the Indriyas, sharpen the intellect.' I must turn the gaze upon myself, and in order to do this I still need a focal point - otherwise I go to sleep. I do not know what it is to look within. I have seen people doing cross-eyed, not inside. How do I look inside? If I turn the eyeballs inside once over, then that's all over ... That is the problem. 'Within you is hidden God, within you is the immortal soul.'

Those of you who have been with us earlier will probably remember the description of the universe as a body of God and all of us as cells in that body. Probably it is true. But if it is true for me, it may not be true for you. It is not automatically true for everybody. Each one has to reach this understanding for himself. Maybe it is this cell in the body of God, the Cosmic Being that is referred to as the soul or the Self - to me all three sound alike. Cell in the body of God is the soul - is the self. Within you is immortal soul then. 'Kill this little I, die to live, live the Divine Life.' Kill this little I? Then this little I is true. It is a real entity like a mosquito or a parasite - it may not be the I, the ego. Is it a real entity? I must see - with what? With that wisdom, with the Divine - the Divine must see - I cannot see. Can I see myself? What does it mean ?

It was in Cape Town that I was first introduced to this monstrous perversion. Somebody came along and said, "You know Swami, I am a follower of Ramana Maharishi." I said, 'Very beautiful, Madam, What do you do?' She said, 'You know his philosophy.' I said, 'I have heard about it.' 'He asks us to enquire who I am. He does not want these bajans, and he does not want these talks, and he does not want any kind of meditation, he does not want asanas and he does not want yoga practices, no rules, no regulations - nothing at all - no idols, no images, nothing. So, 'What do you do?' 'He wants us to enquire who I am, and so I sit down after my cup of coffee in the early morning and I ask myself who I am, and the answer comes: I am not the body. I ask myself then who then am I? The answer comes: I am not the mind. I ask myself then who am I, I am not even the ignorance, I am

the Immortal Self.' 'Ah, beautiful!'

Is it true that I have discovered the Immortal Self? or do I think I have discovered 'I am the Immortal Self' - big difference here. I can go on repeating, 'I am the Immortal Self. Om. I am the Immortal Self. Om. etc.' If you are the Immortal Self, why do you want to go on saying so? Hm? For instance, I am a man. It is not your business, it is mine. I do not go on saying, 'Om, I am a man' repeatedly, but I have seen people who merely do that. You know who? They who are suspicious in their own mind - who are not quite sure, who are not quite sure. When you are not quite sure in your own mind, then you want to assert, to prove yourself, to demonstrate. Demonstrate? Spell the first five letters of the word - only a demon demonstrates.

I am what I am. I do not have to demonstrate. Can I know myself or do I think I know myself? Krishna says in the Gita - when you want to meditate, sit erect etc., and then do not think. He does not even say, 'Think of God' - fantastic man. He gives elaborates detailed instruction on how to meditate and then drops a bomb-shell - he does not even say, 'Think of God, think of me, repeat a mantra - nothing - that is all our invention. Sit down and do not think. 'What did you do? I was not thinking at all. I was thinking that I was not thinking.' How to kill this little I, with what? Kill this little I, die to live, live the divine life. That is Divine Life - when in the light of your own inner understanding or wisdom, the I is seen for what it is. What is this I? I cannot attempt to get rid of it. I give it value it may not possess - like a passing shadow - not with the intention of getting rid of it, nor with the intention of cloaking it with a mantle of Divinity. I am God, but turning the eye of wisdom, the light of wisdom, the Divine all to this little self and seeing it for what it is. What is the ego? What am I? Because we have neglected this correct and clear understanding of the self, whatever the self may be, we are still in exactly the same state that man was 20.000.000 years ago. We have not progressed one inch. We are still the same, running round in circles.

I have got to live - I have got to do something - it is of paramount importance. I have got to live and in order to live I have got to earn my bread, In order to earn my bread, I have got to exploit somebody, and because I have to exploit somebody, I have to go to heaven afterwards. So, I must go to the temple, go to the church, do some pujas - get the sins washed - you know, so that I can sin more. This thing goes on and on. We do not seem to have the understanding nor the wisdom to break this vicious circle somewhere. You have seen the Indian fire ceremony? It was also invented to suggest a way out of this vicious circle. It was meant as a symbol - it's own symbolism is most beautiful - but we love the symbols. Jesus Christ said, 'Take up the cross and follow me ..etc.' We take the cross, a golden one with a diamond inset and follow - where? The procession? Not Jesus Christ - nobody wants to follow. We convert all these symbols into some dead substance.

As we pour ghee into the fire, we say, 'Swaha.' Swa means mineness or I-ness, egoism. Just as I pour ghee into this fire, even so I destroy all that is selfish. Then

I look at this precious ghee, lovely ghee - if only I had poured it here it will all come out. When all the ghee is poured into the fire, it is gone - gone for good, beyond recall. Whatever is poured into that fire is turned into pure ash. You will see that even on Swami Sivananda's forehead the sacred ash is worn. People wear the sacred ash so that the discriminating intellect, the intelligence in us, may remember. Even so, everything will eventually be turned to ashes. When I remember this, I become unselfish, and this unselfishness is the purest ash that is left when the whole life is offered as a sacrifice unto the Divine. That is the symbol of the Indian fire ceremony. But we are not interested in this. We go on turning all this into rituals. Rituals are not bad, rituals are not necessary. But if rituals were not there, you would have lost the symbolism. Is it possible for us to be free of the selfishness, to become directly aware of what this self means.

What is this self? Is there a real entity in me which goes from this body to another body and to another and so on? What is this I? We have completely neglected this quest. Instead we have been busy building up relationships, building up family, building up property, building up 'this is I', this is mine, endlessly multiplying these problems and then getting worried about how to get out of this struggling - to get out of this, we create more problems. This is quite simple. I am alone, not married. It is boring, life is boring. Nobody to look after me. I have to wash my own clothes, I have to shave my own head, and if you are a young woman, you have to cook and eat your own food and there is nobody to look after. As a woman, there is a need to look after somebody. Therefore, it is too much of a problem to wash, dress, cook, cook my own breakfast and then go to work. If only I had someone to assist me in all this, my problem would be solved. Solved? You get married and one problem becomes two problems, and then three after a child is born - distraction and boredom are not solved. No! Problems four and five - grand-children. Then I want to get out of the whole thing. Now I go to a Divorce Court? That is another problem, and I come back to square one after having married and produced a family of three or four children etc.. I become alone again and seek someone else and the problem is endless - till I begin to turn the gaze within and see me, the ego, the personality as it is. There is a vacuum, there is an emptiness inside and it is this emptiness that draws all these problems to itself. After having married and given birth to three or four children, I made a mistake. It is too late, you cannot get out of it. So, from there at least it is good to realise there is an emptiness inside that has invited all these problems, and when I become aware of the emptiness - it is not the I that becomes aware of this emptiness. The I or the ego or the personality 'is' the emptiness that invites all these troubles. My personality is complete emptiness, but that which becomes aware of this emptiness is not empty. If this emptiness looks at that light, the awareness, then it is no longer awareness - it is an image or what you call the Divine Light.

So, first I must completely rid myself of all these images that I have built for myself. The image of God, the image of this, the image of security, the image called my wife, the image called my children, and focus my attention solely on this inner emptiness. Then let the question arise. I cannot ask myself this question

- let the question arise: who is it that is aware of this emptiness, who is aware of me - the me which is basically empty, and therefore which has filled itself with all sorts of concepts - concepts of religion, concepts of ethics and concepts of morality, concepts of I am the father and they are my children, this is my property - all these are concepts which have been poured into this emptiness. And so long as the emptiness lasts, you cannot prevent attracting all these things to it. That is the mistake which we always commit. We keep the emptiness in a glorious state and want to get rid of it. Oh no, I do not want to get married. You do not have to get married, but the emptiness is still there - you will attract something else. You do not have to have children, but if the emptiness is still there, you will do something else - you will take on disciples. I do not want to possess any property of course, but if the emptiness is there, you will be building ashrams, you will change names. Of course we do not eat fish - we eat seafood.' You can change the name - that is easy - simple. In some countries, even here I think, they do not call cows and things like that cattle any more, they call them live stock. I have a stock of furniture in my house and all kinds of funny things and this livestock - only, this stock-walks. 'Thou shalt not kill' has become 'Thou shalt not murder', and we can decide what is murder and what is not murder and still go on killing each other. Before you can kill me you must call me a criminal or a traitor. In spite of breaking the commandment, you will still go to heaven.

Changing the label will not do. I must see the emptiness for what it is - it is the ego, the personality. This emptiness temporally has been filled with all sorts of junk. I must be prepared to stop establishing myself in that emptiness, identifying myself with that emptiness. I am an Indian, I am a Hindu, I am a good man. I am a Swami. All this is in that emptiness and all it contains. I feel totally empty and therefore I need an identification tag and that tag is 'I am a Swami'. The fact is that it is empty, but unable to tolerate this emptiness, I have dropped this label in there. I am a Swami - and now I am judging you from that emptiness. You are something else - I am a Swami. When I see this, then I am not that. I am something else. All words are defective. There is an awareness that looks at this emptiness, looks at this personality, looks at this I, ego, whatever it is and sees that so long as my life is based upon what this emptiness is and its content dictates, my life is bound to be running round in circles. That is all, that is the limit that you and I can reach. Beyond that, the question must arise one of these days who is it that is aware of this emptiness and its contents. Then there is what is called enlightenment - such an enlightened life is Divine Life.

Om Tat Sat.

Ananda Kutir - Sep 19 1972

The other day we were discussing appropriate action. There is a snag in it and that is that it probably makes us wonder all the time - 'What must I do?' Because, the moment the word action is used, I am interested in doing something - what must I do. The arm does not seem to ask any questions, does it? In the same way, when I go to a garden and go near a rose bush, the rose does not seem to ask, 'What kind of perfume should I wear?' We are committed to the belief that to live is to act, to function, to work, to do something all the time. 'To be a yogi, what must I do.' If someone says, 'Ah, forget it, you do not have to do anything - just be', you know the next question? 'What must I do in order to be? How do I find my being, what must I do in order to find the state of my being?' Even then it is 'something I must do'. This doing seems to be the supreme necessity in our life. Possibly yes. The rose is doing something isn't it? It is there and wafts its perfume - it certainly shows off its beauty doesn't it? It wears bright colours, beautiful colours. Does it do all this? It does do something to you - it excites your nerves, or it soothes your nerves, it brings joy to your heart. How does it do it? I am not saying anything new - Jesus Christ said so, didn't He? 'Look at the lilies of the field, how beautiful they are, even Solomon was not so charming as these flowers.

Can I, by struggling hard, find my being? No, as long as I am struggling, I am getting away from my being. How can I find something? When I have lost it. Only then I do not want to find my nose - it's here. I do not want to find my hair - it's here. But if I wanted to find some hair which covered my head, what am I looking for? A wig. I was wearing that wig and it blew off. This thing actually happened and that is why I am conscious of this. It happened in New York - John Kennedy Airport. Something happened and we all had to jump out of the emergency exit, and in so doing, a few ladies lost their wigs. They were looking for the hair, they were all looking for the hair, and some of them got so terribly excited when they found their hair - their wigs - that's it.

How can I find my being? So, when I use the expression 'I must find my own being', I am literally throwing it away, and then looking for it, searching for it. Can I ever search for or look for or try to find the hair that grows on my head? It is there - I am the hair, I am the head. Alright, now all that you are saying is let us all go to bed and sleep - that's the best thing - just be - Om Tat Sat. Is that my being? No! I am forcing myself into a laziness, into a lethargy. The other man is driving himself to death trying to find some more money, more comfort, or some more property, whatever it is - and I am doing it in reverse - I am forcing myself into sleep. What the other man seeks, I reject.

Nature functions in this universe and it is the foolish egoistic man who says, 'I am doing all this!' On the other end of the scale comes another slap. If foolishly you think, 'I will not do this', you are silly, because your nature will compel you to do it. Somehow we have got caught again in the philosophy of either-or. Either I must be busy working and hunting for my food, or I must go to sleep. There may be something else in between, and that in between, or the middle of the road

path, cannot be discovered by either-or, but can be discovered by neither-nor. This is an other problem - neither-nor. Must I try to find my own being? No! Must I then give up the whole thing and not look for anything all? What must I do? No, neither that - neither the doing nor the not-doing. Must I be terribly concerned with the affairs of the world, with the miseries of the world? No, then you are jumping out of yourself, you may have no time to look at yourself.

'I am trying to help you know?' - there are plenty of these people in the world. Sometimes the Indian gods have four hands. Sometimes I joke - please do not take it seriously. The social workers usually have four hands too. Social workers are terribly involved in doing good to the world. 'Oh, I am uplifting everybody.' With two hands they serve the people and with two hands they are helping themselves. In one way or the other, it does not matter. I am not saying that they accept graft or that they are misappropriating public funds - which happens often. If you go to some of these charitable organisations - why are they called charitable organizations? They are organizations which consist of chairs and tables - chairtables - it got misspelt and it became charitable. If you really go into the budget of many of these organizations - not all, please do not get upset - with a few exceptions, you will find that about 70% of the budget would be administrative expenses. Administrative expenses ... meaning? ... the other two hands, and only 30% filters into these two other hands which give. Therefore, very often I say, that if you want to help anybody, go and do it yourself - you may not be helping the right person, but the other way also, you may not be helping the right person. So, here again I am terribly interested, keenly interested in helping the suffering people and so on and so forth. What do I do? Am I helping anybody?

Someone asked me for prayers when I visited Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia. They had a festival with a number of stalls and one had been erected by an orphanage. The minister's wife was in charge of it and as I stepped into the stall, they greeted and welcomed me. As I was about to leave, she said, 'Swami, you must pray for us.' I said, 'What do you mean I must pray for you?' 'That our work will prosper.' I said, 'Sorry, if you ask my honest, sincere, heart's feeling ...' 'Yes?' 'Rather pray to God that this institution may close down tomorrow morning' - she did not say it, but I could read in her eyes. 'How rude.' I do not know if my prayers are heard by God, but I must be confident that they are heard in order to be able to pray and when I pray to God, 'God, let this institution prosper', in effect, I am saying, 'May there be more and more orphans in the world.' Again do not jump to conclusions. You know who jumps to conclusion? Is there any place here, where people resort to committing suicide? They go up there about nine or ten storeys and jump. They jump to conclusion. I am joking.

You see, that is how our mind works. Yes? When someone says, 'Oh no, do not be terribly anxious about these social services and therefore ... no, there is no 'and therefore', let us close all these social welfare organizations ... that is not the idea. The idea is not and therefore. We must be totally oblivious of human suffering? No, that is not it. While I am doing this, I must be conscious of what is being

done. Do I subconsciously or unconsciously wish that there should be more suffering in the world, so that I may engage myself in my pastime, my lobby of going from door to door, doling out bread and butter? Am I merely finding some kind of a psychological satisfaction for me - which is nothing but total selfishness, utter callous selfishness? On the other hand, if I may say, 'Alright, let them die, it is their karma - well in a way, it may be a better solution. I maybe cynical, but you know me, so I do not have to explain myself - kick them against the wall and they will fight better - they may kill me first and that is what I deserve. Push them against the wall - that is what happened in India. These under-privileged people like our non-Brahmins and untouchables and so on - we push them against the wall, telling them that this is your karma - suffer. 'We, all of us Brahmins, we had done a wonderful karma in our previous birth and therefore we are born wealthy and prosperous. You fellows, you were murderers, crooks, in your past birth, and therefore you were born as non-Brahmins and untouchables.' Go push them against the wall and when they hit the wall, they had nowhere else to go and they hit back and now they are ruling. Lovely. A Brahmin in India is scared to declare himself a Brahmin. Hm.

I am not supporting this, I am not supporting that I am not for or against - nothing - it is good to have a jolt to our convictions. I am convinced this is good, give it a blow, break it, look at it from a different angle without jumping to conclusions, therefore this is not the ideal state of affairs. We have disposed of the either-or? I go to the cave, I seclude myself, or I establish myself in a nice little niche in this world - I am a wealthy man or I seem a prosperous person. I am healthy, I am quite happy within myself, I do my puja, I meditate in the morning, I stand on my head for half an hour - who is interested in your standing on your head. Who is interested in this? What am I trying to do? I am trying to promote my health, silly, garbage, recycled potatoes, what must I do with it? The body is nothing but recycled potatoes, isn't it? - what must I do with it? Whatever you have eaten, you are - that is all. Why must I be so terribly concerned about this thing, about this flesh, which is bound to decay, perish. Why must I restrain these energies that are bubbling in this body, prevent them from functioning? When someone has fallen down, the natural function of this organism is to go to the help of that other organisms Why must I say, 'I do not want to do any of these things' - let them all work out their own salvation. What one is seeking - I am shunning. Why?

What is so important that I must attain God-realization - what is the tearing hurry that I must see God now? God can wait. No? They say that He is eternal, He is not going to disappear - if He is eternal, probably He will not even grow old. I can see Him a little later. She will get old after 50 years - it is better to see her now, but God is there for all time to come. He can also wait. They say I am eternal, immortal - look after that later on - what is the tearing hurry to attain spiritual enlightenment or whatever it is? For the sake of which I am tearing myself away from society, from my place in society, and therefore the 'or' is not. The whole thing seems to be meaningless. Ha! To engage oneself in social service is absolutely rotten, useless. Everyone is going to die, everything is going to

perish, why must I polish my shoes when tomorrow morning they are going to be dirty again, filthy, and the same argument applies to this - what must I do with this? This also is the same, the same recycled potatoes and sandwich. Let it rot.

How is it so dreadfully important that I should live, live a healthy life, live a few more years. But for me, how would the grocery be emptied, how would the baker live but for me. I am promoting his business. Is that my luck, my fate? Have I been created just for polishing off two bags of rice a month, and cutting a few vegetables, or the throats of a few chickens? Is that all I have been created here for, and is my living by itself so important? This is the meaning of the great teachings in the Bhagavad Gita, where Krishna seems to ridicule the idea of killing somebody and being killed by someone else. Silly, forget it. It is not advocacy of vileness, but deflation of the value of physical life. It has no value at all. Neither social service nor self service - both these things have no value, and when you have psychologically, mentally, spiritually, with all your being, deflated the value of both these, then your being emerges.

I have a simple formula which we invented one day in Mauritius. When I am there, I usually go to a girl college almost next door, on Tuesdays. One day it was raining cats and dogs; it was windy, stormy, and I picked up my raincoat. It is an honorary job, I am not paid but I love it. It is delightful to be with the young people. I picked up my coat and walked out and someone asked me, 'Why do you want to go out in this rain and wind and cyclone?' 'What do you want me to do - stay here?' Is not that silly too, stay here? Have you ever asked yourself, 'Why must I sit here?' You ask yourself, 'Why must I go to the college', have you asked yourself, 'Why must I stay here?' In this wind and cold, rain? What is your motive? It is quite simple. To do anything in this world is stupid and so I am doing this. We are foolishly trying to preserve this body, knowing that it is going to perish, accumulating all sorts of things, calling them mine, knowing that either I leave them, and go, or they will leave me and go. Is this not stupid? So, everything in this world is stupid. I am doing this walking to the college. Ah, here is neither-nor. I am not interested in going to the college, nor am I interested in staying here. There is no motive that takes me to the college, there is no motive that restrains me from going to the college. When both these are knocked out, your being comes out. This is a beautiful thing.

Unfortunately, as a friend remarked this evening, we are again committed to this dogma. With us - may not be a religious dogma but it is equally pernicious that it is possible without motivation. We have committed this grave blunder that our life must be motivated by something good or something bad. Somebody says that a child must be motivated, and when I recognize this, as an educationist, I provide the motivation by an examination. The passing of an examination or the getting of a diploma is the motivation. Look at this, look at how many hundreds of bits of mischief spring out of this motivation. She must pass this examination, get that diploma, very good. Then, poor child, she stands upside down, takes some drugs, pills, coffee or something like that to stimulate herself, works self to death to get the diploma and if that is not possible, she cheats, bribes her school

master or the examiner or somebody or another. So much of corruption is involved, so much of swotting is involved - blind, absolutely blind. When we get the diploma, it is not worth the paper it is printed on. So all of us get together and go to the Minister of Education and say, 'Of what value is this diploma?' and make him pass an act, some legislation, saying that those who do not possess this diploma shall not have this job, even though they are qualified for it. They can do it better than you. Thus, society is divided into many camps. This goes on and on and on.

Somebody said, 'When did you introduce this idea of game?' The whole life is a game and the Indian philosopher said that even God created the whole universe in sport, as a lila. Then they said, 'You know, children must have games, and that they will find a spirit de corps, they will develop a spirit, working together, functioning together, which is beautiful. In any game, even a political game, one party must win, the other must lose. There is only one chair, and if two of us are running towards it, one will occupy it, the other will not occupy it. In a game, in a play, you learn to accept defeat with a smiling face, it does not mean life or death to you. Then somebody sets up a couple of goal-posts that is the death of the games. Now the goal-post is important, and if you are standing in front of the goal-post, I push you down, hit the goal-post, because the goal-post is important, not the games. You know what success means? Success is what comes after, not what is, but what comes after. So, the success is important, not the game it self, but what comes after is important. We started playing games. There were a few important people who could never play a game. So they formed gambling units. We are fighting the game - trying to get to the goal-post. So are some very clever men with the help of a few very important people who never played a game in their lives - who is going to win? Come on, you tell me. If you are right, you get R10, if your prediction is wrong, you lose R10. Then came other people's predictions - Transvaal against Natal, Mr Koopan against so and so. You know, this is actually happening. Then comes England versus Australia, and huge big headlines - Australia defeated. Somebody throws a cursory glance and says, 'You know, Australia has been defeated, we own Australia now.'

A game which is played for the joy of the game, that is the spirit of yoga - no motivation, not even the motivation of going to heaven afterwards. It may be boring. Hell may at least keep us awake. I see the same thing between pleasure and pain too - you know, pleasure is boring, that is why these film stars get divorced every three month. How ever beautiful, charming, attractive, and also sex symbols they may be - they are boring to their husbands after three months. That is all. You see this again and again. You want something else afterwards. But have you ever been bored with a headache? Every time it hits you, it is new ... Am I right? It is beautiful, never old, never boring, you never take it for granted. Your wife you take for granted, your husband you take for granted, your children you take for granted, your nice carpets etc. you do not enjoy them anymore. But a headache you never take for granted Oh delightful! That is why it is terribly important to have both these. So, when we leave this life there is no motivation at all, not even the motivation of some kind of a heaven after I leave this place. Even

that may be a trap, invented by well-meaning holy men to keep us all quiet. You rebel and you make their lives miserable for them and they say, 'If you do this you will go to hell, but be obedient to me, be nice and gentle, be calm, do not protest at all, come to my church every Sunday and bring some money when you come along. Do all these things and you will go straight to heaven, which you will enjoy for ever and ever.' It is boring. I am not suggesting it 'is' a trap. People say you suffer in this world so that later you may enjoy. I do not know if I am convinced.

Let us say this is winter and miserable and cold and a friend says, 'There is a fire-place but it is hidden and you cannot see it. You will see.' But as I approach closer and closer, it gets colder and colder. I ask him, 'What is it?' He says, 'Never mind, suffer this bit and later you will enjoy it.' I am not convinced. If there really was a fire-place there, the temperature should rise as I approach it. This is my feeling towards what you call God. God-realization - Self-realization. If this God-realization or Self-realization is all bliss, absolute bliss, uncontaminated with sorrow, then every step towards it must make me more happy. 'I am going to look for happiness.' Who looks for happiness? Who is totally unhappy within - otherwise I will not look for happiness. This is my standard argument for those who say, 'You do not know how to enjoy life, Swami, take a glass of beer.' Aagh! I am tempted to turn round and say, 'You must be terribly unhappy. Why do you want to drink otherwise?' I am happy as it is - I do not want it. If my happiness depends upon that, if I am seeking happiness there, I am unhappy. Instead of seeking that happiness outside there, let me become aware of the unhappiness that is in me. Possibly I may be able to dispose of this, therefore there is no motivation either-or - either of enjoying an immediate happiness or suffering now, so that I may enjoy having some happiness afterwards - no motivation at all. Again I look at that rose and it says, 'You know? You do not.' It tells me, 'You know' and then it changes its mind and says, 'You do not.'

That is it, neither-nor - neither am I seeking happiness, nor am I running away from happiness. Neither am I seeking success in life, nor am I running away from success in life. If it comes, alright. If it does not come, also alright, because I am what I am. The yogi does not run away from what seeks him. It does not say pleasure or pain, happiness or unhappiness, success or failure. 'Whatever comes.' Comes? How do you complete that sentence? Phew. 'What ever comes, accept it.' No. There is no expression, because we have never reflected on this - whatever comes, not accept it, not enjoy it, not suffer it. If you walk outside at noon, the sun shines upon you. What do you do? Ha? Enjoy it? No. Let it shine? For instance, a child picks up a saucer and drops and breaks it, 'Oh, let it break' means that I could or you could, you have a choice to restrain from doing so and you say, 'Okay, let it break'. Do you have a choice? You are standing outside, the sun shines, let it shine. Aha, you see the struggle here? We have no expression to express what you want to express now, because we have never thought about this, and therefore these things have to be expressed in a negative way, not because we love negation and that is not a positive expression, but because we just have no expression. We have never lived a life of this and therefore we have never coined a word and expression for this. There is no equal for 'Good morning'. In French,

'Bonjour, bonsoir and bonne nuit,' never 'Bon matin.' You know why? They do not know what morning means ... If you do not get up in the morning, what need is there to coin an expression for it? So we do not have a positive expression for this.

When you go out in the sun at 12 o'clock midday, and the sun shines, what do you do? You do not accept it, you do not reject it, you do not suffer it, you do not enjoy it, you do not shut it out, you do not do anything. Even that suggests that you have a choice not to experience it. Standing in the sun, I do not have to experience this. 'So be it. Amen.' Even that 'so be it' to me suggests a contradiction. It is the opposite. Therefore Krishna suggests that you examine your heart when these things come to you, these things or anything, anything - the object is not given, the yogi does not reject these - what are these? You have to imagine - whatever seeks him, he does not reject, and what goes away from him, he does not reject, and what goes away from him, he does not hold. Being absolutely neutral, being what he is, he leads an absolutely non-volitional, non-motivated ... al non, non, non-egotistic life, and in that itself is supreme felicity, supreme blessedness. Then, if you want to bring God into this discourse, you say, 'He is a perfect channel for God's will to flow because he is as God made him, without a private motive, without a private egotistic approach to life - he is not interested in doing anything - neither-nor, and when all these things drop away from you, right action or appropriate action manifests itself.

Om Tat Sat.

Ananda Kutir - Sep 20 1972

We have been discussing how we should live in order that we may not create headaches for ourselves - doing or not doing - both can lead to the same destination of more and more complexity in our life, more and more problems in our life, because both of them spring from the source - me. I want to do it, I don't want to do it. So long as 'I' decides, so long the problems will also continue to harass and worry us. So we noticed that there is a middle of the road path, which is neither this - nor that. You will see something interesting in human tradition - I do not want to call it religious tradition - in human tradition - that what we do not see, we deify. Is it not fantastic? We worship. So the thing that I cannot understand must be God. I do not see the middle of the road path, neither this nor that, which demands eternal vigilance in the words my Guru, Swami Sivananda - eternal vigilance, and this eternal vigilance is not disliked, but at least in liked by the mind.

Who wants to be eternally vigilant? So, unless I am eternally vigilant, the middle path is not clear and I do not want to be eternally vigilant, and therefore I bring God in here - Oh, it is neither this nor that, but God's will be done.

But how do you know what God's will is? I know what my grandfather's will was just before he died; he drew up his will. When someone says 'God's will', I am tempted to say, 'Has God also made up his mind to, you know, quit?' People draw up their wills just before they decide to quit - and when you say, 'God's will', are you sure God has decided to quit too? It is difficult to be honest with ourselves, and a lot more so with others. It seems someone asked a Swami, 'Why is it you go on bluffing people?' The Swami gave a very beautiful answer, I believe, 'People want to be bluffed and I give them what they want.' If I am a shopkeeper and you come and ask me for a pound of butter, I do not give you cheese, I give you what you asked for. You want to be bluffed - I bluff - so that's all.

We are not discussing people who bluff others - they are clever. If we are honest with ourselves, I think, it is not difficult at all for us to admit that I do not know what God's will is. I do not know if there is one, and even if there is, I do not know what it is. You can look at your nose and say, 'Oh yes, I can see something.' That is bluffing me. But I hope you do not bluff yourself. It is not difficult at all to see - I do not know what God's will is. That is the fun, that is the whole of the fun, and if you look carefully within yourself, it is because you cannot see the middle path - neither this nor that - you bring this God in as a substitute for your ignorance - and you say, 'This is God's will.'

I am not saying that there is no God's will, that is another stupid statement. I am not even saying that there is nobody in the world who knows God's will - that is another stupid statement. I have another cliché if you are interested. Never is never right and always is always wrong. Is that not right? Ha? Therefore let us stop generalizing, nobody knows God's will - all right. How do you know that nobody knows God's will? How many people do you know - 25, 30, 50, 100, 200?

What is the population of the world? Have you asked everybody? What is the sense of saying nobody knows, or everybody knows? There was a Swami in the ashram who used to come and harass others, 'You know, all are telling you are a bad man,' or something or, 'You are a fool'. If he said that to me on the roadside, immediately I would turn round and say, 'That man there, shall we ask him?' There is a labourer going along the road, 'Shall we ask him? - what do you think of me? Am I bad man?' 'All of the people' - he's not telling at all - he is carrying his load and he is walking down the road, and you say, 'All are telling you are a fool' - all are telling, means? I am telling you - isn't it? People come and tell you, 'You know, everybody says so', - so that means? I say so - simple - why don't you say so? Why do you want to bring everybody into this?

I do not say at all that nobody knows God's will, or that there is such a thing as God's will. We are not making any such statements - all that we are interested in now is 'What is this middle path?' Because I do not see it, I call it God's will and do what I like - ah, that is the danger - I do what I like, then I pretend that this is God's will.

Let us start from this - an honest confession that I do not know what God's will is - now what must I do? What can I know? I can, if I earnestly and sincerely look for it, discover the springs of my own actions - this is possible. I do not know if this is God's will or not - I do not know, but I can know who is it that prompts me to do this, or, in simpler language, the motivation.

What is the motivation? The majority of our actions are motivated either by reason, or by emotion. I am not talking about these instinctual actions. This, we must be able to recognise, if we are real and sincere and earnest students of yoga - we must be able to recognize this. My actions motivated by reason - means what? What does reason do to me? Somebody does not like me or something, has a couple of rotten tomatoes or eggs in his pocket - he takes them and throws them at me now, right now. What do I do? I reason out like this, 'Om shanti shanti.' Why do I do that? Because I know that all of you will think, 'Oh, what a marvellous man.' My mind calculates all this in a split second. I want your good will, good opinion, so this reasoning suggests to me, 'Hey, keep quiet, pretend you are not affected at all, just say, 'Om shanti shanti.' - only he does not like me, but using this, 'I can make a 100 people like me.' Pooh. Inside I am boiling, I could tear this man to pieces.

Is it difficult for us to see what a self torture it is and what a tortured personality I am bound to be? Right. I gambled or I expected that in return for suffering one man's insult, I am going to be rewarded by 100 people's admiration. This girl is very fond of me. She says, 'Aagh, you shouldn't have done that, you should have given him his due.' I say, 'Good heavens, I wanted this girl's admiration, all that I really and truly get is some more shouting.' Phew. Disappointing, frustrating, I can see that every time my own brain, my mind suggests after long calculations. You know, the mind can calculate very fast. You know, even computers can calculate very fast nowadays, and the mind is 1,000 times more efficient than a

computer, and it calculates and tells me this. The calculation is usually directed towards an end result, the goal. If I achieve that goal, then like the rest of the medical scientists do, I am tempted to repeat the performance. Somebody cuts open the abdomen and takes out one ulcer and from there starts the panacea for all ulcers - cut open the abdomen, rip open the abdomen and take out the ulcer. There may be two successes that are widely published and there are 20,000 failures which are ignored.

So, if this calculation succeeds, I go on repeating it till inevitably I am frustrated. I realize that my calculation failed, because calculation is directed towards the achievement of a result, an end-result, a reward. This reward is not always dependent on me alone, but on others. If I am working in order to win your respect and admiration, I am taking it for granted that you have no brain of your own. Forgive me for saying so - isn't it? That you cannot judge for yourself, that you can all be taken for a ride. Sooner or later, I am bound to find out that you too can think, you too can judge, you too can see. And there comes grief. So, that way - the way of calculation, the way of reasoning, is faulty - emotion, the other thing is emotion. When he gets up and smashes a couple of eggs on my head - emotion runs riot and I roll up my sleeves and I start boxing him. I box him and he turns into a dentist, he puts out a few of my teeth. It has not solved the problem - has it? If I persuade him to lick off all the dripping - that is very sensible I suppose, but when I react emotionally, there again I multiply the problem - I do not solve the problem. - That is what you are seeing in the world today. An Arab hits at an Israeli, the Israeli hits back, the Arab and the Israeli hit back, the-ping pong goes on- this is another fantastic ping pong.

Emotion is very closely related to one's own vanity - the ego-sense - so that it becomes extremely difficult even to know when to stop. I do not think I have seen a more mature person in this respect than my Guru Swami Sivananda - He might engage Himself in an argument, sometimes He hardly ever indulged in an argument. Occasionally, it is possible that you complain against somebody, and he says something, and you say something. I have seen this miraculous performance in His case - as it goes on, He can see your temperature rising, your nose and your cheek are getting reddish, and beads of perspiration on your forehead - 'Ha? Have you had your coffee? Where are you living now?' - the topic that was heating your whole system up has just dropped and suddenly He switches the conversation to something different. He could even snap a sentence before completing it - He had fantastic control because He senses how the temperature is very close to boiling point - He changes the subject and goes off completely at a tangent. That is when your emotions are completely under your control - it does not mean emotions are not there. They are indeed there, but your reaction does not spring from the emotions. The emotions are also there just as when I do this my fingers are shaking. My fingers are not shaking - I am shaking. The fingers are part of this game, the emotions are part of this game.

One must be able to observe oneself and see the motivation. Is the mind or the reasoning the motivation of my actions? Or the emotions motivation of my

actions? This I am sure any mature person must be able to know, to see - I do not see at all. 'I do not know God's will, and do not know what God's will means, - but I certainly know that this action springs from my reasoning faculty - this action springs from my emotion.

With some amount of inner discipline - it is more study - it is not discipline in the sense of controlling myself, I am twisting myself, but it is calm and peaceful observation of myself - it should be possible for me to eliminate these two - to keep these two in obedience, knowing fully well that they must, they are bound to lead me into trouble. Reasoning, calculation leads me into frustration. When I expect something to happen, when it happens I am distracted, and if it does not happen I am frustrated - is that right? When you expect something to happen, if it does happen the way you expected it, you are distracted, and if it does not happen the way you expected it, you are frustrated. Emotions so cloud and complicate life, that one does not know where one is going - it completely blinds us. These two I know, and therefore if I vigorously avoid these two, what remains? The I or the ego, or what you call the self, functions only through these two channels, isn't it? I do not think most of us know a third thing - I am omitting instinctual behaviour, I am omitting completely out of the discussion instinctual behaviour. If you look into your own life, 50% of your actions spring from your brain - your mind, brain, calculating, reasoning, and the rest of it springs from your emotions, because the ego knows only these two parts - extremes - one this and one that, if I say neither this nor that, is living possible? That's the question.

Is living possible at all? Living means living here, acting, functioning, working. Is living possible at all, if I avoid both these - neither - nor? Krishna says one thing - again, please when I quote, I am only hinting at a possibility - when I bring in quotations, these indicate a possibility. It is not that I can make an image from this quotation - then this image is going to be another mental gymnastic, calculation, which will lead to frustration - like for instance, when someone cannot sleep, he comes to a psychiatrist and says, 'Oho I cannot sleep' - we had a case like this in Canada.

There was a lady who suffered from insomnia. The second or third day after I got to the camp, she cornered me somewhere near the meditation hall. 'I have not slept for six months'. I was frightened, really, to tell the honest truth, because it was very easy to see that she was on the edge, and one wrong move on my part she would go mad. She said that she had just paid 50,000 dollars going from one doctor and one psychiatrist to another - phew - none could do anything for her. The last one suggested yoga, because her pocket was empty ... There was no more money coming. So, 'Go to the Yoga camp.' I do not know, but I feel that all of you together must constitute God for me so I must make a confession. There I pretended I am a very holy man, 'Of course I can fix you, I can help you.' I put her in the room where there was nobody, made her sit there - gave her a mantra, 'Om Namah Shivaya', 'How long, how long?' 'One hour at least' 'Will I go to sleep after that?' Her problem is not God, it is sleep! Then I told her something, 'What does it matter if you cannot sleep? Huh? I have given you a mantra - it's a name of

God, if you cannot sleep, take the mala and go on saying Om Namah Shivaya and I guarantee that in a few minutes you will go to sleep, because the mind does not want God, so the moment you take God's name Om Namah Shivaya, sleep!' If you still cannot go to sleep, say Om Namah Shivaya, Om Namah Shivaya, probably you will go to heaven - it is also alright. Anyhow, I think that fixed her. Here is a person who cannot sleep. What is the sense in my telling her, 'Relax, you will sleep'? She does not know what relaxation means. What do you do? She has never experienced relaxation, she has no idea of what it is to relax. What do you do? Let yourself go - use other words, some other words, tell her in Zulu or some language that she cannot understand, do you understand me? I do not know what it is at all - when I do not know what something is and I do not want to admit that I do not know, I create an image.

I am tense, I am nervous, and my yoga teacher says, 'Throw your hands on both sides of the body - I throw my hands, that's easy - and relax. What is relax? I build an image and I cannot get into that image. To me relaxation means to fly like a bird. How does one fly like a bird? I am so heavy. It causes trouble - so, if you avoid that danger of building an image out of these quotations, I will give you a couple of quotations, Krishna says in the Gita,

naiva kinchit karomeeti yukto manyeta tattwavit; pasyan srunvan sprisan jighran
nasnan gacchan swapan swasan

Naiva kinchit karomeeti - I do not do anything - thus should a wise man ... 'manyeta' - that is a difficult word to translate - mentate. Let's coin a new word, thus should a wise man mentate, not think or feel - the mind should be filled with this consciousness 'I do not do anything even while performing all the actions inherent in life'. It is not merely thinking 'I do not do anything', because the moment I think 'I do not do anything', I have to fill up the vacuum, then who does it? If I think now 'I am not speaking here', then I have got to supply the answer to this question. Who is doing this? Therefore I bring in - God is speaking through me. Though, with my lips, I may say 'God is speaking through me', what is going on here? I am speaking to you. It is only bluffing myself, senseless - and therefore, here it is - your inner being knows, sees, knows - I am not doing anything at all, and therefore the very source of both these, reason and emotion, is pulled out - because of this reasoning, or because of this emotional involvement. If I am doing this itself is pulled away, then these two collapse. The reasoning, the calculation, and also the emotion, both of them collapse - naiva kinchit karomeeti - right, but the question is still not answered. Who is it that is doing?

There is a lovely aphorism sutra attributed to Patanjali, which is a fantastic thing - though, unfortunately it does not seem to have received the treatment it deserves. The sutra is this, 'The seer is vision only, seeing only, sight only - pure.' It is beautiful, beautiful, beautiful. When the eyes are opened, seeing takes place, and now, please if you can, if you can actually do what we are talking about - as the eyes remain open and as seeing happens, how is it that there is the thought, 'I

am seeing him? I am seeing you?' Seeing is the fact. But that seeing seems to develop a polarity, and the polarity divides the two sides of the seeing - the two ends of the seeing, the two poles of the seeing, into I and You.

This is a very interesting exercise which all of us can practise, those of you who are seriously interested in this. As you walk along, let's say the beach, preferably alone - or in a garden or anywhere, but preferably alone, closer to nature, so that you can see abundance of nature around you, and you are alone. As you walk, concentrate your mind first on the footfall, instead of walking automatically, make it deliberate - that you actually and literally feel the ground under your feet, each foot is meaningful - even if you are wearing shoes, each foot is meaningful. It is as if all your attention is concentrated on the soles of your feet - walk like this, and if you have a mantra, repeat the mantra along with - synchronize - along with the footfall. Om ... Om ... Om ... You are not in a hurry - do not trot like a horse, and get absorbed in this, in the footfall, in the sound of the footfall and the Om chanting - mentally. You will find that in a few minutes there is a slight sort of hypnotic state, you know, a lightheaded feeling. It is better not to force yourself into the next step - the next step must somehow happen, and if before you undertake this walking, if you have already made up your mind - that this question must pop up at some stage, it will, and the question is - suddenly stop dead - the question is 'What if I am not here?' I am walking, I am listening to the sound of my footfall, I am repeating the mantra, so the I is very prominent in all these - suddenly you stop, 'What if I am not here??

This question can obviously not be answered by the mind, because the mind is the product of the I, what you call your mind is the product of the ego, and so the mind cannot answer this question. Suddenly you stop dead and say, 'What if I do not exist?' and you will probably experience what has beautifully been described as 'The peace which passeth all understanding' - fantastic!

Then suddenly it is possible for one to wake up to this fact and this truth that the world goes on, everything goes on, regardless of me. Nothing in the world is altered, because I am here, or I am not here - that is the moment of truth. Then you come back with this - for want of a better word - experience, and you are now prepared to let life happen, let whatever happen, happen. If there is hunger, the hunger eats the food; if there is thirst, the thirst drinks the tea or coffee or whatever it is; if there is fatigue, the fatigue goes to sleep. So, all things happen in life, nothing is cut off. You are still a wonderful mother and a wonderful father and a wonderful husband and a wonderful wife, everything goes on, but just one thing is absent, the I, I am doing this - things happen and they keep happening, they keep happening, a lot more effectively than this reasoning and these emotions could ever have made happen. Life becomes so beautiful, so fruitful, so delightful, because you let things happen it is a bad expression - sorry - you do not let things happens, you cannot accept things, you do not reject things - nothing - no words can describe what that life can be, a life that is totally devoid of the ego sense, totally devoid of calculation, totally devoid of emotional motivation. Please you must be very careful here. It is not that the life of that

person will be completely free, devoid of emotions - no, no, no. In his case even the emotions happen, even the emotions happen. The child comes in front of him, there is hugging - he does not hug, there is hugging. Why not? If there is cotton and a lighted match comes near it, the cotton catches fire. It happens. Here is a wonderful young man, there is his wonderful girl, and wherever they come together, it happens - that's all. Even the husband and wife relationship, the father and son relationship, or mother and daughter relationship, all these things go on without the polarisation of I -You. There is only the acting, the experiencing, the seeing that itself is the truth and in that there is no defect - in seeing there is no defect, in seeing there is no expectation, there is no hope - seeing does not hope. Hmm? When the eyes are open, and when there is seeing, you 'see' - the seeing sees the grey hairs, and there is no expectation of seeing black hair because the seeing can only see what is true - is that right? The seeing can only see what is true. But when I see you - what happens, I see you as my friend and there is an expectation, a hope, all sorts of things, but the seeing is, not a glassy, stony affair, the seeing can go on, emotions can come up, thoughts can come up, everything can happen - the only thing that is not called up in this seeing is either like or dislike, hope or fear, these things do not exist. You enjoy, of course you enjoy - if there is pain, pain is felt - I do not feel pain, pain is felt.

If one can enter into the spirit, then one's behaviour in this world, one's actions, become spontaneous - spontaneity is not instinctual behaviour, nor spasmodic behaviour, hysterical behaviour, but it is the behaviour of the person in whom the ego sense has been dispelled and whose actions are not motivated by reason and emotion. Such a person we call a yogi, or a saint, or a holy man or a god-man etc. God works through him. We do not understand how he ticks, how he functions in this world.

It is only then that our problems could all be dissolved, not solved, dissolved, because when you and I begin to solve a problem, we usually create two more. Ha? Like I said a couple of days ago - I am getting a new brain-wave - ah - what we call solution is really the bride, the problem is the bridegroom - and as soon as they come together, they give birth to more problems, never ending. It is only when we enter into the spirit of these teachings and our behaviour and actions become spontaneous, then the problem dissolves without mating with the solution - the problem itself dissolves - then there is no worry.

Om Tat Sat.