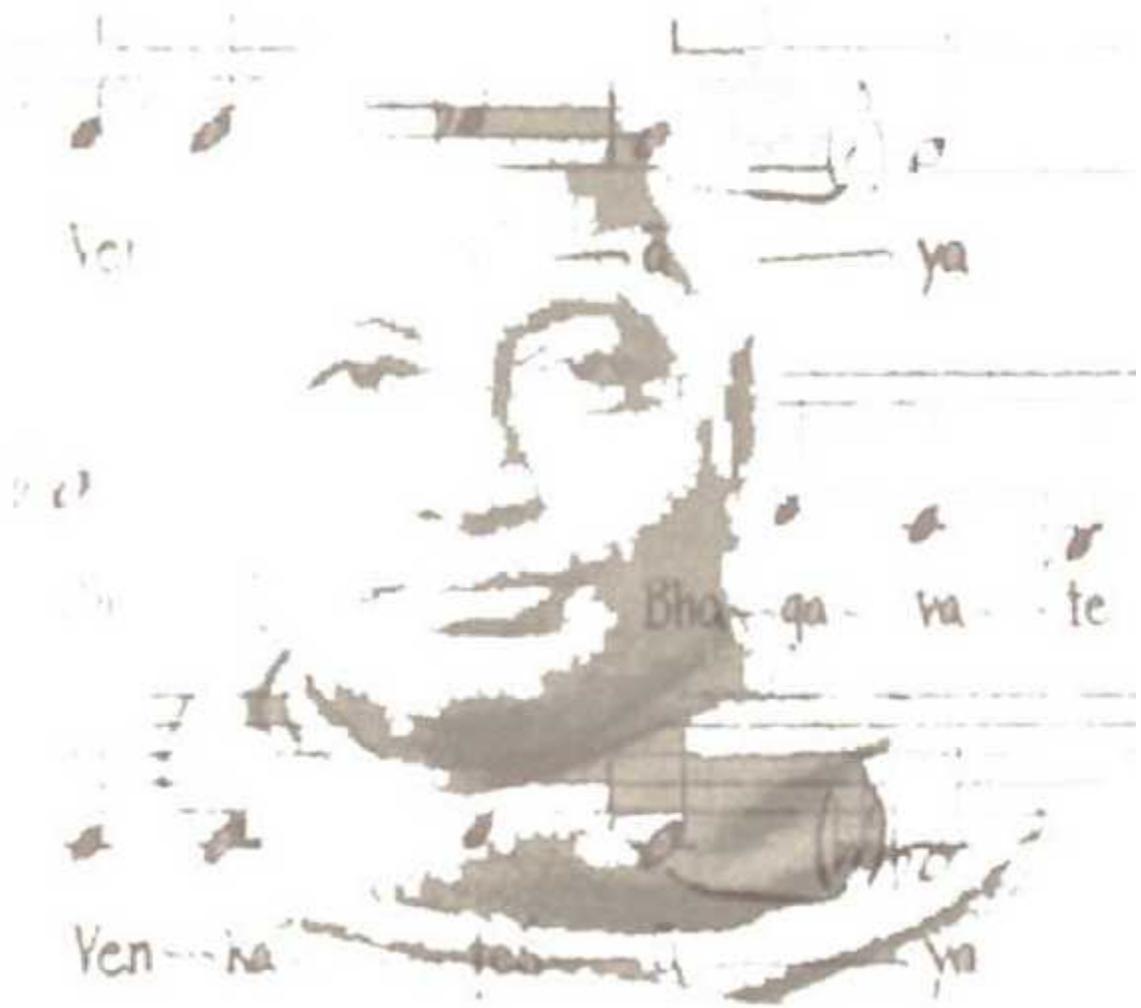


Talks at Kingswood College



Swami Venkatesananda



Om Namah Venkatesaya
Om Namah Shivaya

Kingswood College

Swami Venkatesananda

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Kingswood College

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My guru Swami Sivananda used to make fun of talking of lecturing in particular. He was a medical man, and so He used a medical idiom. He had His own description of lecturing. He used to call it lingual diarrhoe. In the same way He used to say that there are people who have itchy ears, and they like their ears scratched by listening. After all, if one wants to talk, there must be an audience to listen somebody has to be there. When we thought of this seminar, even though it was planned to be held in a college under the auspices of the University and Teachers' Training College Yoga Clubs, the idea was not to indulge in more talking that is why the holidays were chosen. Enough talking goes on in these buildings when the university is functioning. The holidays were chosen because these few days were to be holy days. Here there is no teacher-taught relationship, there is no superiority nor inferiority. We are all together here to celebrate this seminar as five holy days.

What is holiness? We are here to find out, to discover this holiness for ourselves. Holiness is not something which can be conferred from one person to another. Holiness, like healing, or health, comes from the same root as the word whole. We are here to discover that whole-iness. To observe this as a holy day, a five-day holyday, where we might be able to turn within ourselves and to see if we can discover the one person who is a total stranger to ourselves. We know one another. I know your name, you know my name. You think I am a good man, a hypocrite, an imposter, or a holy man, and I think you are x y z. We all think we know one another. We all think that we know all about humanity. We pretend that we know the racial characteristics of Indians and Chinese and Europeans, we pretend that we know the characteristics of a young person, an old person. We know everything - everything is familiar to us.

But there is one utter stranger to each one of us - oneself. I am a stranger to myself, because I am so busy trying to know and to understand everyone else in this world. How is that possible? How is it possible that I can know you, I can know somebody else, I can know even God when I do not know myself? Because I do not know myself and there is this terrible anxiety - expressed or implied - to convince myself that I know what I am, I resort to identification. When you do not know your identity, you wish to identify yourself with something. I do not know who or what I am, and so I want to believe I am a holy man, I want to pretend that I am an Indian. I do not know who or what I am, and therefore I print a visiting card 'Swami. A holy man. A Yogi.'

If I stood in front of the mirror, and asked the man in the mirror, 'Hey, who are you?', what would be the answer? I do not know, and therefore I believe I am an Indian, I believe I am a Swami, I believe I am a student of yoga, and so on. A whole lot of beliefs spring up because of ignorance. With the help of these beliefs, I build a lovely image of myself, and I compare that image with the image that I have of you. I see that this fellow in the mirror has brown skin and your skin is different; therefore you and I are different.

I look at that fellow in the mirror again; the shape of his body is different from yours, therefore I am different from you. I have an image of myself, I have another image of you, and all our life is a conflict of these two images. I know nothing, neither about you nor about me. I have come to identify myself with this Indian or this Swami, or a Hindu; and since I have only an image of what a Hindu is not, I do not know what you are. But I know this much - the image that I have of is different from the image that I have of myself; I do not know what I am, and therefore I do not know at you are. But pretending to know what I am and at you are, I build up all this conflict; my opinions of you, my opinions of myself, my estimation of you, my estimation of myself - I am always right, you are always wrong.

That is the next step, isn't it? If I have an estimation of you and I have an estimation of myself, my estimation of myself is always wonderful. Even if I am a beast, I know why I am a beast. I know why my image is cracked - that is just an accident! But, I am quick to criticize, I am quick to condemn and thus invite the same condemnation, the same hatred, the same ill-will upon myself. This is what we see going on everywhere in the world.

For our own edification, so we think, we assume that in my religion, in my country, among the swamis, we are all very holy, we are full of ahimsa, non-violence, we are full of love. There is no conflict in our mind at all, we are holy, holy holy - it is only the other fellows who are foolish; therein lies the seed of conflict. The moment I say 'I am holy,' the other man is not. Then there is already violence. The man who even thinks like this is violent; he is also responsible for the war that is going on in India or the Middle East, or in Vietnam or in Ireland. Everyone who thinks that he is superior to another, that he is righteous and the other man is unrighteous, that he is holy and the other man is unholy, is guilty of this violence.

One often comes across people who are very quick to point out other people's defects. When you go to some countries, European countries, someone comes and tells you, 'We only have a racial problem - in other words, you are all Asians and we are all Europeans'. If that is the entire problem, it is simple to overcome. But no! I will give you what I know more intimately, and probably the same argument can be followed by each one of you in your own spheres. As far as you are concerned, an Indian and a Chinese are both Asians. But when I go to India, an Indian is different from a Chinaman. I go to North India, and suddenly someone says, 'I am a Hindu. What are you?' There is another problem here. I am not longer an Indian, but a Hindu - you are a Muslim. Well, avoid this. Let us go to a place where there are no Muslims. I go to a place where there are no Muslims at all, South India. Suddenly someone says, 'I am a Brahmin. What are you?' I thought we were all Hindus! Oh, no! That was only in relation to Muslims. But when it comes closer and closer to home, I am no longer a Hindu, I am a Brahmin. So, I go to a village where there are only Brahmins and see what happens. Then they say, I am a worshipper of Shiva. Who are you?' I thought the

problem was over! But no, it dogs my footsteps wherever I go.

You understand me? You can probably think of the same thing happening amongst Christians, among Europeans - I am an Italian, I am a Greek, etc. Only superficially there seem to be these mighty groups - they do not exist, so that the problem is not easy for solution. Eventually you even find two Yoga teachers fighting one another, two swamis antagonistic to each other, two religious groups hostile to one another, both of them devoted to the same God.

This problem is fundamentally a human problem which concerns every human being. When we are trying to find a common feature for this problem, we are trying to oversimplify things. It is not racial, not communal, not religious, not economic: it is spiritual, it is a deeply spiritual problem. When you think you hate another person because he does not share your racial or political views, it is just a camouflage - the hatred was there before the reason was found. You hate me, and then that hatred goes round trying to find an excuse, a cause, a reason. The hatred is not there 'because'. The hatred is there, and it goes in search of a cause. It will always find it. Therefore, it is vital that man should find, discover himself - not as he thinks he is, because that is the image - thought creates the image.

I am not here to discuss any religious problem, but personally I think that this was the image that was prohibited in the ten commandments - the image one has of oneself and the image one has of others - these are the most dangerous images. The others that you might have on the altars, the pictures you might hang from the walls, they are quite innocent. Have you seen these? You can stand and look at them for a century, they will never quarrel with each other. They do not create any conflict in society, or with one another. The images that create conflict are the images that you have of yourself, the images that you have of others.

These images are created by your own thinking - your own mind creates these images, because you do not know what you are. The master of yoga, therefore, went to the root of the problem, and commanded, 'Discover what you are'. Discover in the very literal sense 'uncover'. It is very important to remember: it is a better.' What have I discovered? Nothing. Somebody said something: 'You are a selfish person'. I tried to analyze myself, chopping myself into quite a number of bits - a number of bits were quite dark but that's all right, the other six are quite bright: I give a lot in charity, I did all sorts of wonderful things. A couple of times I lost my temper, 'Oh, never mind.' I go into my prayer room, 'Oh, God, forgive me.' Why must he forgive me? Why not slap me? Why not go to God and say, 'Oh, I was a silly fool. Please screw my ears, so that I may not become a fool again'.

Again and again, the basic hypocrisy. I do not want to discover myself. We go into the church or temple and confess, 'Oh, Lord, I am a terribly vicious person. But it's all right Lord, you know what I mean. Please forgive me'. Can I, without any hypocrisy whatsoever, face my self, and discover it? Discover myself - not the supreme all-pervading immortal Self. What is 'myself'? There is this hate in me, this egoism in me, this vanity in me, this hypocrisy in me. Can I discover that? If I

am a vicious person, can I come face to face with that viciousness without hypocrisy, without self-justification, without rationalization, without even condemnation? Can I come face to face with that? I am what I am - let me see what I am. This it seems to me is the only way in which we can improve ourselves.

Some of our friends know that I often play with words. Even this word 'improve' seems to be very significant. Prove, within myself. It does not mean that I was a bandit last year, and now I am only a pickpocket. 'I have improved myself!' No, no. To 'improve' is to prove within. What am I? I am a good man. Can I prove it to myself? Within myself? Not pulling the wool over your eyes, that is not necessary at all - your good will or ill will is of no consequence to me; whether I think well or ill of you is of no consequence to you.

To prove to myself what am I, I must discover the self as it is, from moment to moment. It may change. Well let us see. Therefore, we are not creating another image here that 'this is the immortal self'. There may be an immortal self, we are not discussing that. God is an image to us, the immortal self is an image to us, the atman means something. It must be something like this globe lamp, suspended in the centre of the heart - so, if I sit here and look steadily at the tip of my nose and expectantly wait for a light to appear there, then again I am creating an image. And every time I create an image and project an image, I am deliberately turning away from truth, I want only turning away from truth, so that the human problem with all the conflicts and the miseries will continue.

So, during these five days, we shall conduct this experiment, all of us together. We are living together in the same building as one family - - people who know each other, people who do not know each other, people who belong to a different strata of society, people holding different opinions. We do not want to change one another; we cannot change one another. Probably we can change ourselves, even within this short time.

One can change oneself immediately. If I can see the danger of a certain mentality within myself, I will drop it, immediately. It is only a matter of observing oneself, and discovering for oneself the self that to us has been a complete stranger. Therefore, whether I am sitting talking and listening, or whether I am indulging in discussion, whether I am meditating or doing the yoga postures and breathing, or whether I am just lying down on the lawn, dreaming whatever it is, can I be constantly aware of what goes on within me? That is the question. Can I watch myself? Can I see myself as I am, without building an image of myself? That, incidentally, is meditation.

Everything connected with self-knowledge - I wanted to say to the attainment of self-knowledge, but self-knowledge is not an attainment as we shall see later, everything connected with self-knowledge is yoga, and therefore yoga is the science of the discovery of the self. That is better because discovery does not give us the wrong impression, that some thing was not there, and we brought it into being.

Discovery describes it correctly. It is there, veiled, hidden, hidden from our view - not because somebody locked it up, but because we are not looking. It is not as though this self-knowledge is forbidden ground, it is not as though somebody has hidden it away from us, but because we have not cared to look. Therefore, it is claimed to be a secret, a mystery. In fact and in truth it is just veiled. The veil is the evil - the spelling is the same. Whether you spell it evil or veil, it is the same thing, there is no evil apart from the veil. It is a beautiful word, again, 'veil' is not like a curtain. I suppose those of you who are married church-style will appreciate this. To an extent, I think the bridal veil enhances the beauty of the girl veiled, by adding to the mystery and hiding any blemishes.

So, in a way God enhances the value and the glory of self-knowledge by this veiling process. But unfortunately again, because of the veil, evil comes into being. Evil is nothing more than the veil. All our fears, our anxieties, our hatred and our cruelty are born of this veil of ignorance. I am ignorant of the fact that one day I will die, therefore I am afraid of every little illness. I am ignorant of the fact that the man who insults me or injures me is as much mortal as I am, and therefore I fight with him. Envy, jealousy, hatred, attachment, infatuation, silliness - all these are based on ignorance, on the veil. And this veil is evil.

That which enables us while yet living here, to see through this veil, or, as they say, pierce through the veil and come face to face with the reality, is yoga. Yoga is not merely a set of gymnastics. It is a pity that the most vital elements of yoga are forgotten, neglected, and the people get away with the impression that by merely standing on one's head, or sitting in the lotus posture, one can attain self-knowledge I do not think so.

Do you know it is more difficult to stand on your feet than to stand on your head? I am not joking, it is even physiologically true. It is just a matter of habit. If you stand and draw a circle around your two feet, that is the space on earth that your two feet occupy. Then ask somebody else to draw a circle around the area you take up with your arms and head when you are standing on your head. It is a much larger area than that covered by your feet, so it should be much easier to stand on your head than on your feet! Which is true metaphorically, it is very easy to stand on your head, but to live in this world, to stand on your feet and to do so sensibly is more difficult.

So, the yogi looks at his own life and sees in it, reads in it, an open secret; that is,

his life is full of troubles, sorrow, misery, full of unhappiness and conflict throughout the day, except when he is asleep. Throughout his waking period, especially when he is in contact with somebody, there is trouble, and the more intimate we are with one another, the greater the possibility of conflict. So, the yogi discovered these simple facts, that throughout man's waking hours, when he is in contact with other people, he is miserable, unhappy, and he is the abode of all the evils on earth - hatred, envy, jealousy and hostility, and that, when his whole being is asleep, man is absolutely peaceful, and holy. Isn't that fantastic? The fellow struggled all day to get into that state of wholeness. When he was awake he could not achieve it, but now that he is asleep and snoring, he is totally at one, completely harmonized, at peace with himself and with the world. He does not utter one lie, he does not get jealous, he is not hateful, not revengeful, nothing. Beautiful, but asleep.

Merely looking at this phenomenon of sleep, and relating it to our waking life full of sorrow and conflict, the yogi discovered two vital secrets:

Number 1: Whatever sorrow or conflict there is in our life, it is all because of our relationship with the world, with one another. In other words, I do not know how to live with you and therefore I am miserable.

Number 2: The key to the mystery of peace, of happiness, of right attitude, of right adjustment to this world, is hidden in this thing called sleep. These two great truths he discovered, just using his eyes, his brain and a lot of common sense.

Conflict, therefore, is not inherent in life - the sleeping fellow is also alive, but he is not fighting with somebody, and not inevitable to life. There is a way out of this conflict, a way out of this sorrow, and that way is indicated by deep sleep - not dreaming. If you meditate upon this, I think you might discover more than any book or teacher can tell you. I must adjust my life, I must re-align my relationship with other people in such a way as to enjoy, as to have in my daily dealings with people, in my daily life on this earth, the same peace, the same joy and happiness, the same harmony, the same wholeness that I have in sleep.

Coming back to this sleeping man, the yogi looks again. What has happened to this fellow? He may be suffering from a physical or mental illness, his wife may have left him just then as he is sleeping. His house may be burning or his bank may have just gone insolvent, but nothing happens to him. He is sleeping, blissfully and peacefully, and what is more important, whole, holy.

Two things are happening within that man now:

Number 1: the world does not exist for him; and

Number 2: his own individuality does not exist in his consciousness. There is a total blanket, and under that total blanket both these, the consciousness of the world and the consciousness of self, have been eliminated.

Can I in my daily life, eliminate these two? That is the question. Is it possible for me to live in such a way that the world is obliterated from my eyes? Can I live in

such a way that there is no consciousness of the self, or the ego? If such a thing were possible, then it is possible for me to live in this world as a holy person, as a whole being, a harmonized being, a yogi. 'Nonsense,' you say! 'How is it possible for him to sit and listen? How is it possible for him to operate a tape recorder or function at work, or drive a motor car if he is behaving as if he is asleep?' The yogi says, 'Perhaps it is possible, perhaps we just haven't tried it yet.' You know, hardly one hundred years ago when someone claimed that we could fly, everyone said he was mad! We have not so far tried this, what in some religions is called non-volitional activity. We have not tried it, because we have assumed that it is not possible.

We have assumed that, in order to live in this world, we must be ambitious, we must be aggressive and pushing, we must have the competitive spirit. And, therefore, because we have glorified all these we have forgotten to look in the right direction.

The yogi again looked at the sleeping man, and said, 'Good heavens, he is doing lots and lots of things - besides snoring. He is digesting his food, he is breathing - a most important activity, his blood is being circulated, all the vital activities of the physical organism are being carried on while this fellow is asleep. If this is possible, why should it not be possible for us to sit and talk to one another, work in this world, without ego interference? Why do I assume that, if the ego does not prompt, I would not be able to speak? If digestion, circulation, breathing and repair work can go on in the body without my volition, it should be possible for me to live in this world without my volition. We came into this world without our volition, we will have our exit from this world, possibly, without our volition. Most of the vital events that take place in our life are beyond our volition, and from there the yogi draws the next lesson. It is possible to live a non-volitional life, it is possible to be extremely active without ego-interference.

And hence, Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita, defines yoga as: yoga karmasu kausalam - yoga is skill in action.

The skill that is lying hidden in you, that is latent in you, is not being expressed fully, manifested fully, because of ego-interference. Far from what we have been taught to believe, that it is the ambition in man that makes him succeed, the yogi says, On the contrary, that it is the ambition that dampens his enthusiasm. If only the fellow did not have ambition, he would probably have leaped into the sky! Ambition very often limits the heights to which we can reach. Ambition also produces anxiety; whereas if one is free from ambition, the entire energy which is in one's being is made available. Non-volitional activity is worth trying.

The Yogi does not drop a bombshell 'non-volitional activity' and leave you to wonder how it is done. He gives a philosophy to guide, and at the same time, he carves some steps which may lead you there. The philosophy is very simple. We do not know what God is, but we do know that there is life, that there is consciousness throughout the universe. That which 'is', is God. We are not

worried or anxious to prove that God exists, we take it the other way round. That which exists is God. Then you ask, 'Does the Swami exist?' The Swami may not exist, but whatever you see in front of you has some kind of an existence, and that existence is God. That which exists ultimately, the irreducible substratum of everything, that is, energy and consciousness, that exists, Good.

Ask every religious and holy man in the world, 'What is God?' They will say, 'God is omnipresent'. We all use this word 'omnipresent' without ever realizing what it means. What does omnipresent mean? When you say that God is omnipresent, you are really saying that nothing else exists, there cannot be any other answer to it. That is all the yogi needed. If God is everywhere, if God is everything, then he says, 'Who are you?' 'Who am I in relation to this God?' For the sake of our understanding, because our mind is limited, finite, I prefer to think of each individual as a cell in the body of God. Perhaps that is what we call soul. A soul is just a cell in the cosmic body of God. We are not worried at all whether God has a form or not; but all of us form together one cosmic unity, and in that cosmic unity there is this individuality. Playing with words again, this word individuality seems to hide a truth. To me it seems as if it is composed of two words: indivisible and duality. With a few intervening letters knocked down it becomes individuality. That is, from one point of view, it is indivisible and one, and from another point of view, there is duality.

As for instance, one might say, 'My body is covered with skin'. But is the skin not my body? Of course it is it is a figure of speech! In the same way, if I say I am a cell in the body of God, it is not as though I am different from God, and it is not as though I am God, but there is this intimate relationship. If you hold that idea for a few moments in your mind, you will suddenly realize that in our own body each individual cell has its own function, each individual cell performs its function completely independent of your will. Just as you are sitting here, the cells in your stomach and intestines are digesting the food that you ate. They seem to have an intelligence of their own. Each cell is endowed with a certain intelligence to carry on its own function, as if completely independent of the central intelligence and yet, are the cells independent of me? No.

If the central organism fails now, all the cells in the body fail. At once! Therefore there is a certain dependence, and a certain independence. Dependence from one point of view, and independence from another point of view. Possibly this is our relationship with this cosmic being. This is the philosophy behind what we call karma yoga.

How do we practise it? First, there is this concept of duty. That is the first step, where yoga is concerned. The yogi does not look with favour upon desire-prompted activity. That is not life at all: 'I want to achieve something, and therefore I am doing this.' That is not life at all. Activity backed by profit motive is the key to tension, the key to disaster, the key to disappointment. Therefore the yogi does not look at it at all, that is finished. I should not entertain profit motive, nor should my actions be based on a desire to achieve something. If not, how do I

start? From where do I start?

First: duty. 'This is my duty, I am discharging my duty.' If you watch very carefully, there is a little bit of sourness in it. The duty seems to bind us, not free us and liberate us. It seems to constrict us, hold us in check. Yet, it may be necessary for the baby soul. That is where we start. I am sitting here, talking to you. Why am I doing it? With no ulterior motive, no profit motive, but just duty. This rod of duty knocks down all your desires of profit motive, and so on.

Then you wonder 'What duty?' If a mosquito bites the back of my neck, is it a sort of duty to chase the mosquito away? Oh, no. The hand does not even argue, it does not say, 'It is my duty to go and help my broth neck'. Because the two belong to the same organism, there is spontaneous activity, and there one discovers love. It is not duty; but it is out of love. We serve one another, because we are all linked by a central essence - Truth, Reality, God. We all form part of the one God, and therefore we serve one another.

There is still a feeling of 'I' and 'another'. First, I do it as a duty, and then I do it because I love all of you. Then the third and the last stage, there is no question at all, there is no why. 'Why you do this?' What do you mean, 'Why?' The question does not arise. The action is done, only actions exist. Neither the actor nor the person to whom the action directed - only actions exist. If we are all cells in that cosmic body of God, then there is no 'I' here, there is no 'you' there. It is only one body of God. That is the reality, the rest is only the veil. When the 'I' and the 'you' have both been absorbed in the truth of God, what remains is pure action - which has also been described and interpreted and misinterpreted.

There is a beautiful saying in the Gita again: *mayavaite nihataah purvameva nimittamaatram bhava savyasaachin* - 'be an instrument in my hands', Krishna tells Arjuna, his disciple. But, as you meditate on this concept of an instrument, you realize something marvellous. You take a pen in your hand and write - the pen is an instrument in your hand. You think, 'Ah, I have understood. I am an instrument in the hand of God, and I do His will.' Look at that pen again. Does it know it is an instrument in my hand? No. Even that idea of being an instrument is not there; even that instrument feeling is an egoism, a manifestation of your own separate ego. So, even that is dropped.

When you lift the pen again, you see that all that happens, is that the pen writes. The pen does its job, without thinking that is its duty - the pen has no sense of duty, it has no sense of love and affection for you - no love in the ordinary sense, 'I love you and therefore I am doing this'. No, there is no such volition. There is neither the actor nor the object to which the action is directed, but there is pure action. When we can reach this state of pure action - non-volitional action, non-volitional living, instantly all problems disappear. Because the creator of the problem, the ego, has been discovered to be non-existent.

3

Yesterday we saw how the yogi sought to solve the intensely personal and at the same time social problem of one's spiritual attitude. It is something which cuts through our entire life. If there is no harmony within, if I am torn into one hundred bits, I tend to tear everything that I touch. I tend to transfer this conflict on to all relationships. If I am not harmonized within myself, I create disharmony all around me.

This conflict which arises in my inevitable daily dealings with people, can only be solved if, on the one hand, the self is seen to be non-existent - usually we use the expression 'selfishness is removed'. Selfishness can only be removed when we see what you and I call 'the Self is non-existent', and on the other hand, if the world of diversity as such disappears from my vision. I should see as the reality, that this and that are one; that, metaphorically speaking, we are all cells in the single body of God - if you do not want to call it God, call it anything else you like, that we are all cells in a single organism. That is more easily said than done. Can this be a greater fact to me than what is called 'my existence'? That is what 'to realize' means. How do I realize something? When my whole being sees it.

It is not only not enough, but it is no good at all if I have an intellectual acquaintance with this fact. I have read in a million books that God is omnipresent. I have uttered this sentence, 'God is omnipresent', ten million times. It is not even intellectual assent, it is what they call lip sympathy, isn't it? Think of how the actual realization of this single expression, 'Thou art omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient' will transform our lives! Since we can see that no such transformation has taken place in our life, we can equally see that the expression is confined to our lips. Our whole being must see - not accept, must see this as the truth. It must be more real to us than the existence of this chair. Therefore, the bible commands us to 'Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, and with all thy being'.

We are sitting here in front of the holy cross; lot of Christians cross themselves, and if you ask what it means they say, 'Father, Son, Holy Ghost'. It does not somehow seem right to me. Touch the head, 'Father', touch the heart, 'Son', all right; but Holy Ghost on one shoulder, and something else on the other shoulder? Then I looked at it again and again. I was taken to the Greek Orthodox Church in Munich by the Archbishop of the Greek Orthodox church; a remarkable saintly man. He was an old man, but when he bowed down, actually he did Padahasthasana. I have never before a Christian priest bent double, as if God was standing in front of him. He also used to gesticulate. I thought that if millions of people are doing this, there must be a reason. I do not know if my interpretation is acceptable to you, but I feel probably, it is this : Love thy God with all thy mind (touching the head), with all thy heart (touching the heart), with all thy might (touching one shoulder) and with all thy being (touching the other shoulder). Probably it is a mere interpretation of the commandment 'With all thy mind, with all thy heart, with all thy might, and with all thy being'.

So, God has to be loved, because, if whatever philosophy we may be trying to absorb into us, remains intellectual, it is nearly of no use. On the contrary, it may be dangerous, dangerous in the sense that, if intellectually I know that God is omnipresent, then I am prevented from discovering this truth for myself. I have an illusion of knowledge, so that I do not want to realize this truth. Therefore, in order to realize this truth, my whole being must participate in this discovery - and the participation of my heart in this discovery is called love. Without this love entering into it, anything that you and I do will be slightly worse than useless. If only the mind and the intellect grasp what we were discussing yesterday - that we are all cells in the body of God - then either the service, the work, or the life itself becomes mechanical and totally lifeless, or it becomes hypocritical, which is worse. Even in human relationship, between husband wife, the man might look at his wife intellectually, and knows that she is his wife, and physically he may be living with her, but till there is unity at heart, there is love at heart, the whole thing is mechanical, hypocritical. And it is here that we are caught.

Though people often deride emotionalism in religion, as a matter of fact it is the emotional discovery of the omnipresence of God that is most difficult. Intellectually, it is easy to understand. Perhaps it is easy to pretend to be interested in world peace, and to pretend that we are all serving humanity, and so on, but, to bring the heart into the picture, emotionally to discover the omnipresence of being, the omnipresence of the Self, that is another matter. Till the emotional discovery is also made, simultaneously with the intellectual discovery, there is no reality within us. We shall continue to remain mechanical beings, or hypocritical beings.

Now comes the big problem. 'I' is a cell in the cosmic being. It is not at all difficult to see, intellectually, that all of us are made of the same substance. Our bodies are made of food, and the food invariably comes from the earth. Even if we eat meat, the meat that the animal had comes from the vegetables. Meat eaters are only eating vegetables second hand, the food comes from the earth. When food is being cooked in the kitchen tomorrow, just go and watch.

One big pot of soup, vegetables or what you have - you stand there and look so that you absorb the spirit - just one big pot. And in that pot everything is in harmony. There is no fighting, no quarrelling, no misunderstanding, no hatred, no greed, nothing at all. An hour later, he eats a couple of potatoes, I eat a couple of potatoes, the same soup that was in that single pot enters into him and enters into me. That soup, one of these days, becomes his tongue and becomes my tongue. A few days later, he and I start quarrelling with each other. Good heavens! That soup did not do that in the pot; why does it do it now? So long as it was in that pot, it was in perfect harmony, peace reigned. It is easy to see that we are all made of the same substance, that, if there is a mind, that mind is not your mind or my mind, it is one mind. We are all probably swimming in that ocean called 'mind'.

There is a rather naive explanation here, in regard to individuality. Each one refers to himself as 'I'. Everybody says 'I'. That means that 'I' is also common. It may be a very naive argument, but it seems to make some sense. Therefore, the 'I' is also universal. The body is universal, made of the same substance, the life breath is universal, made of the same substance; mind is probably the same, too, and the 'I' also is the same.

Intellectually, all this is very easy to understand, very easy to make others understand, also. But, yet, emotionally, there is tremendous resistance - a reason why this branch of yoga, called bhakti yoga, or the yoga of devotion, is avoided by the majority of people. Intellectual snobs think 'Oh, it is not for us. We are more sophisticated. Singing hare rama, and rolling beads is not for us. We know we are full of knowledge'. Why do you not say, 'There is a block here, I cannot do it. I am ready to sit down and discuss with you all sorts of transcendental questions, but when it comes to doing anything emotionally, there is a block.'

The emotional discovery of this Omnipresence - we will call it just Omnipresence, not God, not this, not that - presents a few problems. Emotional discovery is, in simple words: love, devotion. How can I love someone or something I do not know, even if it is the Omnipresence? Hence, even though it is fashionable to say that karma yoga and bhakti yoga are elementary stages, and that jnana yoga, or Self-realization is the highest - almost hinting that it is Self knowledge, an intellectual affair, which it is not, a great saint of India turned the whole thing upside down and said, 'Nonsense. Knowledge of God is one of the best means of developing love of God.' Without knowing the nature of someone, you cannot love.

What is this God? How can I love God? How do I know I love God? What is love? Have I experienced love at all in my life? We are not talking of the higher transcendental form of love, which is true love - we will come to that later. We are talking of love in the ordinarily accepted sense of the word - a love which has its shadow of 'not love'. I will not call it hate, but it is not love.

There is the love of the son or the daughter to the parent. Or the reverse, the parents' love for the children. Then there is the love for a good friend, no necessarily a sexual relationship, but a comrade. And then there used to be, once upon a time, love between master and servant - it is nearly gone now, I do not think it exists any more. The master loved the servant, and the servant also was devoted to the master. Then there is the lover-beloved relationship. And lastly, the type of love which a holy man has for all humanity - it is quite calm, there is no emotionalism there, but still, the heart is involved in it. So they said, of course, you know what love is. Why do you say that you cannot love God?

Now, what must I do with that? At this point I might tell you a lovely story. There was a great saint in South India, a remarkable devotee of God. He was like other great devotees, who love to talk about God and make everyone love God. He was trying to inspire people to love Narayana. One day, he was standing on one of the

banks of a wide river. It was summer, and the river was dry. The whole bed of the river was sandy, the sun was scorchingly hot, so the sand was like a frying pan. A young couple was coming from the other bank. The young man obviously loved his wife tremendously, she was a beautiful woman. The young man had a long shawl, and he went ahead of her and spread it on the burning sand, so that the beloved's feet would not be scorched. As she walked on it to the other end, he quickly picked it up, ran forward, and spread it out for her walk on again, totally unmindful of the fact that his own feet were getting blistered. That did not matter to him, but his beloved's feet had to be carefully tended. The holy man was watching this from the other bank. He waited for the couple to come; then he went over to this young man and said he wanted to talk to him. The young man deposited the girl under a tree, and went to talk to the holy man. 'Who is this girl?', the holy man asked. 'I see that you love her so much. Oh, look at her, how beautiful she is. Is that why you love her?' 'Of course it is, she is beautiful. I love her. What a silly question.' Coming closer, this holy man whispered, 'If I show you someone more beautiful.' 'Oh, I will drop her and come there.' 'Then he said, 'Come to the temple tomorrow at 10 o'clock in the morning. Come alone.' So, the young man thought he was going to get a more beautiful girl than that one - in those days bigamy was allowed. So, at 10 o'clock next morning he went to the temple, and this holy man had so organized it that this boy was picked up at the entrance and led inside the temple to where they had the beautifully decorated idol which they used to worship. The young man stood there, right close to the deity which was curtained off and at a signal from the holy man, the curtain was then drawn and the young man looked at the statue of God. Heaven knows what happened, we don't know. But it is said that at that moment there was tremendous transformation in the heart of that man, and he became a devotee.

This is what the yogi suggests. You love your husband good. You love your father, your mother. You love your child. Good, excellent. You love your friends, very good. Can you not see that, in and through that person, you are really and truly loving God, the Omnipresence? Forget this word - God. In and through that person, you are loving the Omnipresence. It is that Omnipresence that stands in front of you - as the wife, as the son, as the daughter, as the friend - so you have learned to love this one person, and if you enter into the spirit of this experience of love, hold it in your heart, absorb it. 'Ah, this is love.' I love this person - my father, my mother, my husband, my wife, my girl friend, my boy friend, etc. This is the experience of love which delights my heart.' Actually, even in this person - persona means a mask, behind this person, this mask, there is this Omnipresence. In and through that person, I am actually loving God. Loving the Omnipresence in and through the persona, or the mask.

If this truth is directly seen, and at the same time the disastrous consequences of the opposite can also be seen - which is easy, then there is emotional discovery of this Omnipresence. I love our friend, and I look within. There is great joy. It is a beautiful wonderful feeling, even if this love is not supreme love. It is purely love between two friends - love because he reciprocates the affection. He does something good to me - I do something good to him. A love born of gratification

it is not unselfish love at all. Even selfish love between husband and wife, if you watch it very carefully, has the quality of making us happy. The disastrous consequences I referred to are these - if I am able to watch my mind when I am jealous, vindictive, hateful, when the heart is full of ill-will, it is not hard to see that there is bitterness and biliousness, real physical biliousness. So, from this I may learn a lesson, if I am careful and observant: even selfish love, a limited love based on gratification, is preferable to hate. Very often, I feel that love, even on a human level, the sense gratification level, whether it is moral or amoral, ethical or unethical, seems to be much better than hating one another, even in the name of God.

This hatred to me is diabolical, even though I may have a million reasons to support my disgust and contempt of another person: and love, even if it is totally unacceptable to society, seems to me to be all right. It has some God somewhere hidden in it. So, it is possible for us, not intellectually, but emotionally to see this, that here in this love relationship, there is joy, there is peace, there is happiness; and in this opposite relationship, there is pain, there is sorrow, there is suffering. If I am able in this manner to observe and see for myself the beauty of love, even in its limited selfish aspect, and since I know what it is to love one person, I will be able to that mask, the persona, and see that I am loving the Omnipresence. It is not the person but the Omnipresence that I love. So they said, 'You know what it is to love, extend that love, expand that love, let it cover more and more of the society in which you live, of the world in which you live'.

We have referred to the Bhagavad Gita quite often. In it there is a beautiful ladder which Krishna gives us there, for our use. He says to first love all the good things in life as a special manifestation of this Omnipresence. I may not want to bow down before everybody, but when I see a holy man, I bow down to him. When I see an intelligent and clever man, I bow down to him. When I see a very good man, I bow down to him. In the same way, I may not bow down to all religious symbols, but when I see a cross, I bow down. That is, those objects which the mind normally associates with the divine. Then, I begin to wonder, 'What is the sun and what is the moon?' Apart from anything else, the sun gives us energy to keep us going. There seems to be some manifestation of divinity there, so bow down. These are all given in the 10th chapter of the Bhagavad Gita, as special manifestations of this Omnipresence, special manifestations of glory which the mind and the heart have learned through tradition to associate with divinity. People all over the world have associated the sun and moon with some divinity; so, whenever I look at them, I am reminded of this Omnipresence, and I learn to bow down to them. Then, as days go on, as I become more and more saturated with this understanding of the power of love, understanding of the benefit of love, understanding the advantage of love, and the disadvantage of the other thing, then the emotion begins to participate in this discovery. Then, slowly I begin to realize that I love this man, selfishly I know, but that love is good. 'I do not like that man, it is painful.' Why should I dislike the other person? So, drop that, for the present. Whether I love him or I cannot love him, let me drop this dislike first. Then love becomes infectious, it begins to expand.

Sooner or later we realize that if there is a man I regarded as undesirable, it may not be true; he may not be undesirable. One of these days, you will get into a tight corner. I do not know if you have ever experienced this. You hate a certain person, a Swami, let us say me, and then you fall in love with somebody; or you discover that your best friend loves me. Can you sit and wonder, 'Aye, what is this now. I thought this fellow was a crook. But then my best friend or my wife, or my husband has great respect for him. Probably this fellow is not a crook.' You have still not reached any definite point of departure; you are still maintaining your stance, you are saying, 'Probably he is not such a crook'. You are yielding - there is a concession, 'probably'. Soon you may discover that the other person was right. This happens, doesn't it? Because your husband or your wife, or your son, or your daughter takes to yoga, 'Well it may not be so bad after all, so let me also participate'.

So, even this hostility that you may have for some person slowly breaks down when the heart realizes that love is more satisfying than non-love. Thus when the emotion gets integrated with the intellect, emotion also participates in the discovery of the Omnipresence. This is known as bhakti yoga. Bhakti is love of God. Love of the Omnipresence.

As I mentioned yesterday, the Indian or the yogi is not terribly worried about a definition of God. He starts by saying that God cannot be defined. Only that can be defined which is limited. A thing which we regard as omnipresent can never be defined. So, he is not worried at all about a definition. The 'Does God exist?', is absurd from his point. That which exists is God.

Therefore, in our daily action, we must seek enter into non-volitional activity, and that is possible only when you and I discover that there is only one Omnipresence, that we are cells in that Omnipresence, and therefore only action is the reality, neither the actor nor the goal to which the action is directed. In order that this action may spring spontaneously, there should be not only an intellectual acquiescence into this truth, but a total emotional participation. That is what the devotee tries to achieve through love. And once the devotee loves the Omnipresence, he does not mind using any symbol. Again, remind yourself that the Omnipresence is worshipped; and therefore, I can worship the cross not as an exclusive symbol of 'x y z', but as an easily accessible point in the Omnipresence. God is omnipresent, so why should I not worship the Omnipresence here, in this cross, in this idol, in this book, in this guru, or anything you like, provided that the understanding that I am worshipping the Omnipresence is not lost. If that is lost, then you get caught into idolatry. The devotee uses a thousand methods of loving this Omnipresence. He may use an idol and start jumping and dancing, he may sing 'Hare Rama' and go into a state of ecstasy or trance, keep an idol there and throw flowers - there are as many ways of loving this Omnipresence as there are lovers using the path, all them equally valid.

We saw the other day the place for what is commonly known as bhakti, or love of God. The system, if we may call it so, was evolved by very well-meaning devotees. They drew upon psychology, metaphysics, legends, anything they could lay their hands on, in order to help us in this vital task of discovering ourselves of finding the correct attitude to life, the sanest possible relationship in this world which would involve the least selfishness, and the least conflict. It was their philosophy that man could be peaceful, happy and integrated, only if he knew that the self is non-existent which is truth, and secondly, that in all our relationships there could be sense and sanity only if we learn to love.

Loving one another is not possible. If I regard you as another, and I say 'I love you', the sentence seems to be incomplete, and the brain, if not the mind, asks why. And so I say I love you - 'because' you are so charming, so wonderful, so kind, or 'because' you reciprocate my love. If the qualification which qualifies this love is lost, the love is also lost. They knew that we cannot love one another. Luckily for them, they saw that we are not 'one another' in the sense of two entirely separate beings, but we are autonomous but interdependent cells of a single organism. This vision suits the whole structure of yoga. We are autonomous, and therefore we can love.

If we were not autonomous, if we had no independence at all, then there is no choice; if I hate you I have no choice, if I love you I have no choice. But as cells of one cosmic organism, we each one of us are autonomous but interdependent beings. And therefore they brought in this 'Love one another', not for the sake of one another, but for the sake of the self - that is the all. They tried to point out the inevitability of this love. Very interesting, if we can grasp that. They said we cannot help loving one another because you are not loving another. If a mosquito bites my cheek, the hand goes there, not 'because', which is something wonderful. If somebody tells us, 'Oh, I love you because.', you can say, 'See you later.' The moment this 'because' is removed, the love also will go.

Krishna tells us something very interesting in Bhagavad Gita: chaturvidha bhajante maam janaah sukrtinorjuna aarto jijnasurartharthi jnani cha bharatarsahha - four types of people worship me: the man who is sick and has seen all the doctors and they cannot do anything for him, so he says, 'God, please take my headache away'. Secondly, the man who wants to get more money, but since he is unable in the normal course of events and is not willing to rob others, he says, 'God, can you do something about that?' Thirdly, people like us, who are curious to know what this mind is, what this God is, what this soul is and if I have a soul. Just curiosity. And fourthly, the jnani, the enlightened sees the inevitability of this love.

So, it is good to know that there are as many paths to God, to this Self-knowledge, to this Self-discovery, as many ways of loving this Omnipresence as there lovers. That seems to be perfect in itself. But not. For the simple reason, how do I know

that I may have a feeling, but I myself may not be aware of at that feeling is. I feel attracted to somebody; is that attraction love? Have I been careful enough, vigilant enough to look within and see for myself whether this which I call love is merely a craving, a passion, a lust, a passing feature, or is there a deeper meaning in it. I may be terribly hungry, and I stand in front of somebody's house and ask for food. And he says, 'Yes, if you will nicely brush my shoes', I will say, 'All right. I am a perfect shoe shiner'. I am not, but I am saying so, just to get a piece of bread. And I would certainly brush his shoes carefully and nicely; not because I am so devoted to him, but because there is a motive there. As the bread is in the stomach, I will walk away.

Most of the time our love, not only of other human beings, but even of God, is tainted. Something terrible. I don't know if you have come across some instances like this, but I have, quite a number. I will tell you a real incident. There was a middle aged couple in India. The lady was exceptionally devoted to Swami Sivananda, and whenever there was a chance, she would go to the ashram, sit and meditate, and send big baskets of mangoes every summer. Once she told the master that there was a problem in the family that she had no children, and the husband's family was keen that they would have a grandchild. She had seen all sorts of astrologers and fortunetellers, and all of them had said that it was impossible. At last she came to Swami Sivananda, half thinking that if she was not to have a child, then she would rather become a Swami, and half hoping that He could do some miracle. Swami Sivananda gave her a mantra and told her that everything would be all right. 'Everything will be all right' could mean anything - it could mean that you will become reconciled to this, or you will come here and become a Swami, or you will have a son. It is a very beautiful way of blessing! 'Repeat the mantra, everything will be all right.' Strange to say, she had a baby the very next year. She was fairly advanced in age, and I suppose there were complications; she did not keep very good health from the day of birth for a couple of years, with the result that she had less peace after the baby arrived than she had before. And what is even worse, after the birth of the baby, she even forgot to write to Swami Sivananda. A complete blackout. This is what we do.

I love God, I pray to God, 'Oh, God, you are sole refuge, please give me this'. But as soon as 'this' is got, the God is ditched. That shows that this was not devotion or love, this was a bargain. This is what has poisoned our relationships here, an instead of importing the sweetness of unselfish relationship with God into our human relationships, turn the other way round, we carry this bargain relationship that governs our life here, into our devotion even to God. I love you 'because'; and so, I love God 'because'.

How do I know if my love of God is pure or not? There is another problem here. I go to church, I go to a temple, I have an idol of God; and here I am supposed to love that idol, treating it as a symbol of God. In the same way, I love you as a symbol of God, as a manifestation of God; I love my Guru, I love my teacher, I love every man and woman in the world, feeling that am loving the Omnipresence. So now I must know if this love is genuine, and if the love is

directed to the Omnipresence, or Mr. So-and-so, or Mrs So-and-so.

Therefore this leads us on to what is raja yoga. It becomes an integral part of the whole - one without the other cannot be sustained. Whether am terribly busy bringing about salvation, or I am busy day and night loving God in all manner of ways , I must still be a yogi, and ever watchful. I must watch that there is only love in my heart, and I must watch that that love is not constricted, not restricted to someone who scratches my back, but that it flows towards all, it flows towards the All.

Raja yoga is a yoga of intense Self-awareness; intense, immediate. Immediate in the sense that there is no mediator, there is no distance. Intimate, without time interval; neither a spatial interval, nor a time interval. Immediate, and intimate Self awareness.

In order to be extremely precise and scientific here, and in order to prevent us, if possible, from deceiving ourselves - I do not believe in deceiving others; it is a waste of time, these wonderful yogis said that if your love of God, of this Omnipresence, is genuine, then these wonderful qualities will be found in you: ahimsa, satyam, asteyam, brahmacharya, aparigraha, saucha, santosh, tapas, swadhyaya, isvarapranidhana - non-injury, truthfulness, non-hoarding, celibacy, non-covetousness, purity, contentment, austerity, study of scriptures, surrender to God.

It is not as though I am asked to cultivate these qualities. I do not think that is possible. But that is up to you. I am not suggesting anything here. Is it possible to cultivate love? Is it possible to eradicate aggressiveness and things like that? I do not know. You may try. To me it looks as though if I strive to love this Omnipresence, then these qualities manifest themselves. I cannot struggle to cultivate these qualities. If I become more and more aware of what goes on within me, and if I am constantly looking for love, for more and more love, making sure that I do not slip, then these qualities are naturally found in me. Ahimsa - I do not want to hate anybody, to hurt anyone; not because that is going to gain me a passport to heaven - that is useless, but because in that I see a contradiction: I want to love the Omnipresence, hating or hurting anyone seems to be contradictory. We have already seen that love is the most vital thing in our life - love is what can bring us happiness, peace, all that we need. So, now I am constantly and vigilantly watchful of myself, so that there is nothing but love in my being. When that love is there, and when it is constant, and when it is directed to the Omnipresence, then all these qualities are naturally found in me; and they are described as yama and niyama.

Then asana is prescribed. Asana is not the asana found in hatha yoga. The only asana which is prescribed in raja yoga is sthira sukham asanam - to be firmly and comfortably seated, so that, in that posture you are able to watch yourself perfectly, you are able to observe yourself most intensely. At some time at least during the day we should know what it is to observe ourself intensely, without the

least distraction. Once I have got the feel of it, then it is possible for me to extend this watchfulness to cover the whole day. But at least I must know once a day what it is to come face to face with myself. If I know that by what you call the 'practice of meditation' in the morning, it becomes not so difficult to stretch this meditative mood to cover the whole day. In order to be able to watch myself intensely, to become intensely self-aware, the yogis discovered that if your body is in the wrong shape and the wrong posture, then it is more difficult. So, they said, keep your body still and erect. I have said this quite often: if you gently rock your body to and fro, at one stage you will find your body almost weightless - it has found its centre of gravity. That is the posture which is ideal for the practice of meditation - when your body is almost weightless. Then you can forget the body and go deeper into yourself. The other yoga postures are meant to enable this yoga posture to be done properly. Here again we are caught like in our tea and coffee drinking. You want to do something, and therefore you have to do something else. In order to get the tape-recorder working, he needs the microphone. In order to get the microphone working, he needs the tripod. In order to get the tripod working, there are some screws, and so on. The whole world is interdependent, and our whole life is interdependent, one on the other.

So, if I have to forget the body easily, the body has to be in a state of good health. If the body is not state of good health, then you cannot forget it, and you cannot find God. If there is a toothache, you close your eyes, you only see a dentist, not God! In order to get this posture correctly, in order to be able to watch yourself, to discover yourself, you should have a state of physical well-being. Therefore, they evolved all the other yoga asanas. Those yoga asanas also have got their own place in the total system of self-discovery. Even during yoga asana practice, you enter into a delightful meditative mood. I am sure you enjoyed it on the day you observed mouna - silence. You do it completely absorbed within yourself, looking into your own body, watching every movement, wondering, how is this possible? I can bend backwards and forwards, I can twist and do all sorts of things. Fantastic! You begin to admire the mechanism of the body, you begin to discover your body itself, first.

And then, if you believe in God, and if you want to thank Him for giving you such a nice body, with every movement, you offer a prayer to God. My friend's son brought a Visible Man, a model, and when he came to assemble it, he could n'ot do it. All the spare parts were there, ready, but he could not put them together; the instruction sheet also was there, but even with that we made a couple of mistakes. But God does not make many mistakes! So, He must be very clever, very wise. Delightful! So, with every one of these movements, we give thanks to Him. And then this hatha yoga itself becomes worship of God and becomes very effective.

Then we discussed the problem of pranayama. Having transcended body consciousness - that is what asana means: the fruit of perfect asana is that you are able to transcend body consciousness, you are observing the life principle, Good heavens! How am I alive here? Is the air stuck somewhere in my body? No, it

comes in and it goes out, freely. How is it that I am stuck in this body? Is there glue or a staple or some kind of sticking plaster? It is marvellous if you come to think of it! We have never asked ourselves these fundamental questions. There is life in this body, there is a mind, a consciousness in this body, and possibly also a soul. How are all these things kept together? Life enters the body without any trouble, any problem, and life leaves this body without any problem. There are people who have passed away in sleep, and I asked a doctor, 'Did you see anything going out?' And he said, 'No, the man only sighed and that's all'. It is so simple and yet ... Therefore, we are trying to discover the life-force and what it is. How does it function? What makes me live and what leads me on to this event called death? The discovery of this will to live, and the death wish, together, is the next step, pranayama.

Then comes the next stage - pratyahara. Very beautiful it is, lovely! That is what we are doing this afternoon. I look at him, her, it. I look at what? I see that my eyes are focused on him. But then I am confused. Does my sight go there like a flashlight? Does my sense of sight flow in his direction, enveloping him, or does light travel from there to here, and enter into my brain. Which is the direction? How does it function? Both ways probably. We are not interested in any physiological or physiological explanations, nor in ready made answers, verbal answers, here. We are interested only in truth, in coming face to face with the truth - and truth is wordless, incomprehensible and inexpressible.

So, just looking at this, what is happening within? Where do the words 'white jacket' get formed? What tells me that that is the sound produced by a motor car? And if you watch yourself doing that, you see that the flow is reversed. Instead of the mind going out to grasp these sounds and the forms and so on, the senses have their direction reversed - and that is called pratyahara. Pratyahara is where you are looking within yourself, and not outside. When all the senses are turned inward - it is as if a million flash-lights are focused into yourself. The light is brilliant. You are no longer interested in what goes on outside, but you are tremendously interested in what goes on inside. Then you come face to face with the consciousness within.

That is called dharana: where there is one stream flowing in a single direction - the whole consciousness is flowing inward. I see now that when I look at this and say he is a man, it is my memory responding to an external stimulus. The light is refracted into my retina, etc., and this thing comes and tickles one of the brain cells, and the memory comes to us, 'Oh, it is a man. I saw it.'

But what is 'I'? You must try to distinguish these three stages here. I see Lionel; that is stage nr 1. I am able to sense that subtle mechanism in me that sparks 'Lionel', the moment I see him. Probably this is not quite so clear; but if you have this experience at some time in your life, you will understand this very clearly. If you have met someone after a long, long time, and he comes along and says, 'Hello', you panic. You have forgotten his name; he is a very dear friend, his face is very familiar to you, but you have forgotten his name. You can remember that

name only if the mind is completely introverted and alert. You do not panic, you do not start tugging your hair. If you let the stimulus go through you, without any obstruction, taking its own natural course like the dog, it will go and lick the right memory cell, 'Ah, Lionel.'

So, first I see Lionel. Second, I see the sparking taking place in my brain. Third, 'What is 'I'?' When you ask this question, then the whole stream of consciousness flows directly within you in one beam. That is called dharana - dharana, or concentration is the single channelised flow of this stream of light. From there on, it is dhyana. Dhyana, or meditation is when this light as it were, sweeps into you looking for this thing called 'I'.

Depending on God's Grace - beyond that we do not know how anything happens. That is all: up to this point, a man can strive; beyond that, things have to happen. Whether it is instantaneous samadhi, or whether it is a long drawn-out process, we do not know - the rest is opinion only. How the enlightenment takes place, no one knows. At one moment, this light begins to shine everywhere in your consciousness, and suddenly the 'I' has gone - disappeared. It was not there in the first place. Neither I nor Lionel, but only 'seeing' remains, neither I nor you, but only the consciousness remains. Not 'I know you', but knowledge alone remains, action alone remains, seeing alone remains - without an ego creating a division, a space between us. That is the end of raja yoga. When this light shines constantly within oneself, enabling one to be constantly aware within oneself, only then is one able to realize that what goes on inside is love, that that love is genuine, and that that love is directed towards the Omnipresence.

5

We discussed the importance of meditation last night. It is in this practice of meditation that we acquire the faculty of looking through a thing, of standing aside as a witness; of deciding that the appearance is only an appearance and not the reality. In what is called Self-realization or God-realization, it is not as though we are making God or the self real, but we are really and truly seeing that the appearance is an appearance. It does not involve any jugglery, any presumption or any assumption. I am only seeing that as the shadow and this as the substance.

In our ignorant state of existence which we have accepted as normal, we have come to regard the shadow as the substance; and therefore we are frightened. Once I realize that the shadow is a shadow and the substance is substance, I am free from that fear, I am free from that anxiety. If, for instance, I understand clearly that I am living with you here as your guest, as your friend, but the reality is that we are two autonomously interdependent, independent beings, then I will not cling to you, I will not depend on you, I will not sponge on you, and I will not allow you to take undue advantage. The relationship is ideal - one not trying to take advantage of the other. Living together with other people with great friendliness, without animosity, without violence, without any offence whatsoever, that is love. Love can only be described, if it ever can be, in a negative way. If I see that this body meeting body, this person meeting person, dress meeting dress, is like a shadow - fleeting, passing, then our relationship assumes a much saner quality. We do not hang on to each other, we do not smother each other.

Meditation enables us to do that, even in regard to what we have unfortunately come to see as 'me', and 'mine'. Where is it said that this body is mine? 'This is mine' is an idea, and only this 'idea' is mine. This body is not mine, but yet, indisputably there is the idea that it is mine. I examine the mine-ness and I discover that it is an idea; that idea alone is mine, not this body. So, I see that what I call 'I' is not I; what I call mine, the mineness, itself does not exist, except as an idea. The moment I see that the body as 'myself' is a misnomer, that a thing that is 'mine' is nothing more than an idea - convenient idea, yes, of course, that very moment the distortions in our relationship disappear. That is all that will go. We are not going to run away from each other, we are not going to ignore each other, to not love each other, to snub each other - all that is absolute nonsense. The man who looks down his nose at everybody is probably so much in love with himself that he does not want to look at anybody else.

If you have seen really truly great men, those who have reached enlightenment, you would realize that they are human beings. We are not human beings compared to them. Since we do not want to degrade ourselves to sub-human, we call them super-human. If I say they are perfect human beings, then I must be something below. So, I lift the whole thing up. I am a human being, and he is God. They are full of the most wonderful human qualities. I have seen my master, Swami Sivananda, and I do not think I have seen another human being like Him;

even now I have not seen someone who could laugh as joyously as He! He had a big paunch, and when He laughed, it was a sight for the gods to see. Something wonderful. Neither have I seen a person who was more intensely concerned in the lives of other people, than He; taking such a genuine and deep interest in other people's welfare. If you had lost our wife, and you went to Him weeping inconsolably, He might even ask the doctor to give you a stimulant mixture, or a hot cup of coffee. Extremely human, totally human. He would never in those circumstances preach all sorts of sublime philosophy, 'You are not the body, you are the immortal atman.' No, no. He could laugh, he could cry, he could shout, he could get angry, everything. A total and beautiful human being - that is what yoga should make us into.

I see this as shadow, and I see the substance. One who is able to maintain this balance and this enlightened outlook - this is the shadow, and this is the substance - is a yogi. This may or may not necessarily show in his external conduct. His external conduct may be exactly the same as the external conduct of any other man in the world, or 'man' of the world.

Says Krishna in the Gita: saktaah karmanyavidvaarnso yathaakurvanti bhaarata kuryaadvidvaam stathaasaktashchikirsur lokasamgraham. Here there is a word in sanscrit - kuryat, that is 'he must do' - the enlightened man must live externally the same way as the non-enlightened fool. Where is difference? Inside, the unenlightened man is caught somewhere, but the enlightened man is not caught. The unenlightened fool regards the shadow as the substance; the enlightened man regards shadow as shadow, substance as substance.

It has not been said anywhere in yoga scriptures that you must know that the shadow is non-existent. Nonsense! Shadow is shadow. This is the misinterpretation of our famous maya theory that Hindus think that the world does not exist. Nobody ever said so. This maya theory, this theory of illusion, only means this: recognize the shadow as shadow, and the substance as substance. Do not confuse the two,

In this acquisition of the correct perspective, the nearest point at which I can touch this reality and I can see the shadow as shadow, is myself. It is not as though I am interested only in myself, or my salvation. There is nothing called 'my salvation'. I am forever free, what is called my salvation? The shadow never gets bound. Why should the shadow be worried at all? But, the nearest point at which I can get this self-knowledge, is here. Though the self is all-pervading, omnipresent, and though we are devoted to this Omnipresence, the Omnipresence is most easily accessible here, in one's self. So, when we practise meditation, we dive deep within, and try to come face to face with this inner light, with this inner reality. That does not mean that that reality is only in my heart, and everything else is shadow. Oh, no. The same reality is all pervading, omnipresent, and the shadow is also omnipresent. Just as there is reality here, enshrouded by darkness or the shadow, in the same way there is the reality everywhere, enshrouded by the shadow. Now I must see, when I see this, that

there is this reality, and there is the shadow. This is something passing, that is something external; this is something changing, that is something unchanging. There is this eternal substance in that which is changing. What is that?

In meditation, we come face to face with these two elements within. And then, as I come out of the meditation room into the open, I look at the people here, I look at the bookcase. What is true here, is true there. If here there is shadow and substance, there also there is shadow and substance. If here the shadow is composed of x y z, then there the shadow is composed of x y z. It does involve super-human vigilance, according to our human standards. We have lowered the standards, and so it becomes so difficult. It can be compared almost to a nearly impossible feat.

The next time you go to the cinema, try this: go a few minutes earlier, before the show starts, look at the screen, take a good look - see how pearly white and beautiful it is. When the lights go off, keep looking. Suddenly there is a girl there, with an almost queen-sized face. Is she there? No. Is she not there? What are you seeing? You cannot answer any question concerning that which you are seeing there. You are seeing the face . . . Are you seeing the face? No, You are only seeing the screen. What is the relation between the face and the screen? The face is on the screen. Can you take it off? For instance, if there is a book on the table, you can take it away. If the face is on the screen, can you peel it off? No. Then, where is the face? While the face is there, is the screen still there? Yes. What is the colour of the screen? White, What is the colour you are seeing now? Red, blue, black, green all sorts of things. Can you strain yourself to see the figure and the screen at the same time? Because they are both there, obviously. Please try it the next time you go to the cinema. Remind yourself that the screen is still there, it is not covered - it is open and the face is there, because I see it. Can I see both the screen and the face at the same time?

That is what enlightened living involves. That is why it is so difficult for us: we have forgotten the art. In enlightened living, you live as if you are joyously participating in this shadow play, and yet, realizing it is only a shadow, substance is something else. You recognize the face on the screen, and yet you know it is only screen.

Though you call it a motion picture, nothing moves. Take it frame by frame, nothing moves. Each frame is a still. And the machinery does not move - it is securely fixed, and yet you see all sorts of things taking place there. That is precisely what is happening in this world. Where is the movement now? In your brain, isn't it? That is the only place where all these activities exist, where all this movement exists. The shadow is the shadow, the substance is the substance, and whatever is taking place, takes place here, in your head. To the extent that I am looking at the shadow, aware of the shadow, and part of the shadow, I am also participating in the shadow play, but without ever making the mistake that the shadow is the substance.

It is as simple as that. I see there is fire there, but I don't ring the fire station, because I know that the fire only seems to be there on the screen, it is only an appearance. The screen has not caught fire. So, although I see the fire, I may even shout at my friend, 'Look at that fire', I know it is not fire, I know it is not burning the screen, I know nothing is happening. And yet, I see something is happening. This is a very peculiar double-consciousness, where you are aware all the time that shadow is shadow, that substance is substance. Shadow is not non-existence, but, shadow is shadow, it is not the substance. And all the movement and activity that goes on here is nothing but a shadow play. As a shadow play, it is still real, but it is real as the shadow play, not as the reality should be.

Finally you realize - which is the grandest, and what I feel is the most sublime teaching - that, whatever happens, the screen is still screen, pure, white, untainted, untaintable. Somebody threw a bomb; the house got burnt, charred black, but the screen is still white. Somebody threw muddy water; the people on the screen held their noses and went away, but the screen is still pure and white. Whatever happens apparently does not in the least touch or taint that lovely white screen. However black and dirty and filthy the shadow may be, the substance is ever pure. The moment we come face to face with this, all your anxiety drops away, all your fear drops away, and therefore all your violence drops away, all your aggressiveness drops away, all your fear drops away and therefore all your violence drops away, all your aggressiveness drops away, all your attachments drop away, all your dependence one on the other drops away, all foolishness drops away, and only enlightened existence remains. You still participate in the shadow play; you do not withdraw from anything. Why run away? From where to where? To where can you run away? And from what? If you are a fool, if you are ignorant, you are carrying that foolishness, that ignorance with you, wherever you go. If you are enlightened, you are enlightened here.

Where are you going from enlightenment? You can take part in any activity, it is only shadow play. It is only when the shadow is regarded as substance and is taken for the reality, that trouble starts. You get attached, worried, anxious, aggressive, you become a burden and a nuisance.

This vigilance is perhaps the most essential factor in the whole practice of yoga. If this enlightened vigilance is not there, then nothing that you do has any meaning, any value. You may do the greatest service to humanity, you can sacrifice your life, anything you like they will build a statue for you, especially after your death. We first of all kill a man by making him work so hard, and then sacrifice everything for us. Then we put up a statue for him. So, even if you give up your life to a noble cause, you have done nothing, absolutely nothing - if this enlightenment and this constant vigilance is not there.

Without this constant vigilance, if you go to a church and pray, roll your beads and sing, it will improve your voice and probably expand your lungs, but it will not lead you to God-consciousness, to enlightenment. No. It has to be accompanied by enlightened vigilance, only then it has some value. If I am

vigilant, knowing that thereby I am reaffirming that this is shadow and this is substance, then everything has value. I can go to church, I can go to a temple, I can worship, I can practice breathing, stand on my head, I can do everything. All these things will help me in reaching this goal of enlightenment - if I am constantly vigilant, watchful, alert, so that the confusion between substance and shadow does not take place within me. Then meditation becomes meaningful. Otherwise, I am bluffing myself - I am sitting dreaming and calling it meditation, or I am wishful thinking. I am able to sit for three hours, and at the end of it, I come and tell you that I had wonderful meditation - means, deep sleep.

I do not think any of you have seen this phenomena. I have seen a man sitting and sleeping, standing and sleeping, walking and sleeping. Have you seen this? In the ashram in Rishikesh, there is a small altar in what is known as the Bhajan hall. Someone sits there and sings 'Hare Rama' 24 hours of the day, in one or two-hour shifts. I used to sleep in an adjacent room. Sometimes the person who was doing it in the early hours of the morning would fall asleep. Swami Sivananda was very particular that it should go on unbroken. We tried to replace one man with another, to find someone who could stay awake at that hour. Finally we found one man who was very zealous; he wanted self-realization in 13 days, and so he was full of fiery zeal. He said he did not want to sleep at night, so he took on the job. If he felt drowsy, he would stand. And then if he was still drowsy, he would start to go round the altar. Lying down in the next room, I would hear his voice trail off to a mumble. I would go to see, and there he would be walking and sleeping.

So, anything can become mechanical and drowsy. You can sit there and think you are seeing God, you can dream of anything. But yet, that is not meditation. It is meditation only if that vigilance is there, only if that light is illumining - this is shadow, this is substance. If this is not there, it is not meditation, it is not enlightenment, it leads you nowhere.

This final segment or the heart of the whole of yoga is known as jnana yoga. It is not as though it is distinct from, superior to, or inferior to the other practices we have been discussing. This jnana seems to underlie all these practices. Though it has been given its own autonomous or independent status, it is a thing which underlies all yogas. Whether you are engaged in karma yoga or unselfish service, or love of God in various ways, bhakti yoga, or the yoga of meditation, raja yoga, this jnana yoga underlies all these practices. If it is absent, it is not yoga.

We are told that we should be equipped with viveka, vairagya, all kinds of virtues, and a burning aspiration for liberation. Viveka is discrimination between shadow and substance. Vairagya is a non-craving, born of an understanding of the difference between substance and shadow. I am now craving for the shadow, because I think it is the substance, and vairagya or non-craving is the natural result of my understanding that this is all shadow, so I should give this only the dignity due to the shadow. I cannot ignore it, I cannot deny its existence; but I should not clothe it with a value or dignity more than it intrinsically possesses.

That is vairagya. If you are married, it is perfectly all right. This is your wife , this is your husband, wonderful. Treat the other person with whatever love, affection and care is needed to maintain that relationship, but that is all. No more.

This again I saw in my master. A very dear Swami in the ashram was bitten by a rabid dog, and he developed rabies. All of us in the ashram thought that, without that man, the ashram would not run. He was like a pillar, such an efficient, wonderful worker. He was taken by taxi to the hospital two or three hundred miles away and Swami Sivananda personally ensured that he was accompanied by a doctor and a couple of attendants. Swami Sivananda told the doctor that no expense was to be spared to ensure that he had the best of treatment. There was no doubt that Swami Sivananda had very great regard and love for him. So, when next day there was word that the swami was improving, He was visibly happy, you could see from His face. The second day the cable came, 'Dead'. I could see the shock for one second on His noble face. The shock is the human quality; and then the discrimination comes in - it is just the shadow passing, the substance is still there. He made arrangements for the body to be brought and consigned to the Ganges, but He did not even notice it taking place. So long as this man is alive, do everything possible to help him. When he is dead, it is only shadow, throw it away. It needs razor-sharp wisdom to keep it going in all our relationships. This is not a something which a Swami only should do, this is wisdom that must form an integral part of our life.

Then, in what is called jnana yoga, we are told that we should go to a Guru, humbly bow down to him, sit and listen to him. Why so? Is a Guru necessary? A Guru is necessary, just as in order to see one another in this hall, a light is necessary. And Guru is nothing more than light. He has no function other than being the light. Guru in Sanskrit means light. In that light, you can sleep, you can read, you can murder each other, you can meditate, that's up to you. The Guru can only shed light. One who does not believe in a personal living human Guru, naturally has to believe the light itself as the Guru. The Guru is the light.

This light may come in the form of an experience or an instruction; so that here 'sravana', to listen, does not only mean through the ears, but through the eyes. You are listening through your eyes as much as through your ears, and receiving these messages from million sources - the light that shines in and through all of them is the Guru. But then you must chew, reflect on it - this is what we do not do. We get thousands of messages every day, a million experiences - what we see, what we hear, what happens to us, around us and in the world, but we are deaf to this instruction. Even if we hear these things, we forget them the next moment; whereas, if only we take a few of these daily occurrences, and receive the message from them, reflect on them and eventually make the truth our own, then enlightenment is within the reach of all of us. Whether you have the physical presence of a human Guru or not, if you are vigilant, you will be able to listen to the message of your Guru, who is everywhere, omnipresent.

If you have a human Guru, a Guru you can watch, again you have to watch. We all

lived in Rishikesh. Many of us were undoubtedly benefited by the human Guru, Swami Sivananda, while others treated Him as just another Swami: there were even others who found fault with Him and went away. That shows that, even though you are standing next to God Almighty, unless you open your eyes and look at Him, He will still not exist for you, He is useless so far as you are concerned. Therefore, this inner light is the most essential part of all these yoga practices. Once it is there, it enables us - to repeat again - to see the shadow as shadow, and the substance as substance; to see the appearance as appearance, and the reality as reality; to see the unchanging as unchanging, and the changing as ever changing. When this becomes quite clear, our life becomes blessed.

1

The world consists only of these two factors, Self-knowledge and human relationships - me and my relationship with you. This simple problem has had to be tackled in a million ways. You know why? The moment someone suggests a solution to this basic problem, the solution generates a dozen other problems - on account of misunderstanding. We probably do not deliberately misunderstand, but we understand according to our lights. When I begin to understand according to my lights, it is like the story of the elephant and the five blind men. It is not as though they were trying to bluff one another - but, 'I am blind and I am ignorant, and I am trying to grasp this fundamental problem. But the instrument with which I am trying to grasp this problem is limited. Therefore my grasp of the problem is limited'.

When I grasp the infinite truth with finite senses or hands, I can only apprehend a portion of it, and my portion may be different from yours. In any case, a portion of truth is not truth and so the whole problem goes on. Then suddenly some sage or yogi comes along and has a first class panacea. Take a mala and sit and say, 'Sri Ram Sri Ram Sri Ram', and your problems are solved. Perhaps your problems are solved. For him they were definitely solved. Then you say, 'My guru taught me to say Sri Ram', so I am saying 'Sri Ram'. Shut up. Now the Guru did not say, 'When you are repeating 'Sri Ram', do not shout at others!' You know, even when for instance you are teaching a class on how to sit, you realize the problem - you will find the most fantastic reactions. Each one understands in his own way, according to his own lights. 'Sit erect.' Yes. You look at each one. 'Good heavens! I never thought that what I said could be interpreted in this manner.'

So, every teaching, therefore, is subject to interpretation, which amounts to mis-interpretation. They said, 'All right. What is this silly thing - wear a mala and saying Sri Ram? Nonsense, throw away, serve humanity.' Ah, I understand, 'Break all these temples'. The negative is very easy to grasp, and the mind clings to it. I can break all these temples, I can throw all these images out.

So, they have been struggling over 1.000 of years to invent an answer to this problem. There are conservatives and progressives, and these two together create a few more problems. Some people saying that the old teaching is better than the new one; others say that the new teaching is better than the old one.

We shall see during the coming nights a few of the major trends which have flowed on from what we were discussing yesterday, of how these great yogis have sought to solve this basic problem. But this morning I thought you might like to have a discussion.

One friend asked yesterday, 'Why must I sit there and mechanically count my breathing?' Those of you who did it this morning, if you did it earnestly, would probably have noticed that you must avoid dullness and drowsiness, otherwise you get nothing out of it. The counting with numbers seems to keep one awake. It

is not meditation or going into a trance, but there is almost an anxiety not to lose the counting - as if you are a teller in a bank. It does produce a certain amount of tension. We are not talking about relaxation here. We are trying to see if we can hold on to this counting. If you do that properly, you actually see something happening within you. The mind is not prepared to submit so easily, and it wants to wander away, there are other thoughts waiting to be thought, lovely daydreams waiting to capture your attention. As you are clinging to this counting, you can actually see thoughts like so many fish nibbling at you from all sides, trying to take you away from there. And you think, 'Oh no, 763, 764, 765, oh, no, 766', it is remarkable.

If you do not want to call it yoga, call it something else, what's in a name? The whole joke is to be able to observe a thought before you think it. It seems to be of tremendous help to us in our daily life. It may or may not be yoga, but the Zen people use it a lot. As we go on, we will add something more and more to it, making it more and more complicated. It is remarkable in its use. Our friend objected to it because it appears to be a restraint, which is unnatural. Possibly. But we do not do it as a sort of restraint. If you want to lie and dream, go ahead.

One must have arrived at this stage before - of wanting to observe the thought, wanting to see from where the thoughts come, how they arise, and how is it that, innocent as I am, I am tempted to think those thoughts? That is the question. How is it that I am sitting here, saying my mantra, and suddenly I am thinking those thoughts? How did that happen? If I solve this problem, I have solved all the problems in the world, because all problems in my life spring from thought. What you call temptation is a thought in the first place, and what you call hate is a thought in the first place. If I do not think, there is no temptation, there is no hate, there is nothing.

So, I must know what the connection is between me and this thought. I am sitting here, repeating my mantra, when suddenly my mind wanders to different things. It is the thought that links me with these things. How does this thought arise? Is the thought separate from me, or is it part of me? I am not providing any answers, you will have to find out for yourself. Am I thinking the thought or is the thought thinking me? Does the thought make me think? A serious problem. And this simple exercise which some people have invented seems to be a great help in discovering this. You sit there and insist, 'I am to count'. Why should you count? In the initial stages you merely sit and listen to your breathing, mentally repeating 'Om' with the inhalation and exhalation. Your mind is repeating the 'Om' and also listening to the 'Om' which is very beautiful. Unfortunately you are the accused, the prosecutor and the judge. You are sitting there for half an hour. 'Ah, I enjoyed wonderful meditation this morning.' You are the accused, you are the defence counsel and you are the judge and you acquitted yourself, and so you pat yourself on the back. But if, instead of your self, somebody else had been introduced into you as a judge, that judge would tell you that your mind was really and truly concentrated for 15 seconds. Then you are a mighty yogi already! Try! When I say try, it means this: you are sitting here repeating 'Om' - are you

aware that your arm is resting on the chair? If so, you are not concentrating.

The word concentration has also been misunderstood and misinterpreted. If you hold a magnifying glass on one of those pieces of paper, you will notice that, as the rays of the sun are concentrated on to the paper and it begins to burn, something very interesting happens - that if this concentration is achieved, even though the sun is shining brightly, and this is only transparent glass that you are holding, the rays of the sun are concentrated on to a point, and around that point it is all dark. For how long did that happen to you? That is why this counting helps - so that you know definitely that whether your mind was absolutely concentrated in that fashion or not, you did not lose contact with this counting. In the case of sitting there and repeating 'Om', your mind loses contact with that 'Om', but you have no means of knowing that you have lost contact. Your mind gets so terribly involved with that other thought that it does not realize that it has slipped away from the 'Om'. How or when it went, you do not know. By merely listening to the mantra, one can bluff oneself, one can be deluded. But if you are counting, you will lose the count and you will know.

This concentration and meditation is extremely difficult. We are not sitting here trying to restrain or compel ourselves - that will not work! But we should have realized the need for this mental discipline, the need to know thought its origin and its place and its function, so that we can think of what we like and reject what we do not want to think about.

You can at first count the inhalation and the exhalation, and if you have some success with this, you can count only the inhalation. It is more difficult, because during the exhalation the mind merely dangles, there is a sort of vacuum; you are deliberately giving the mind a chance to stray away. I do not know if you have noticed, but if you ask a little boy of four or five to count up to ten, he will count during the inhalation and exhalation because he is afraid he is going to lose count. So the two-way counting is easier, because you are not giving the mind a chance to do what it is waiting to do. One should not treat this as some imposed discipline - then you feel fed up. One must take a lively interest in it.

Carrying on from there, is it also possible for us to snap the thread of thought? Just as she is twisting her hair, she can just drop her hand away, without completing that one twist. In the same way, can I, as I am talking to you, completely snap the attention away and turn it on to something else? You will not be able to, unless you have some control over the thought - a reason why often we are unable to interrupt an unhealthy dialogue. If there is an argument, we are carried away, we cannot put an end to it, e.g. we are talking as friends, and suddenly I realize he has misunderstood something I have said, his face is getting red. It must be quite easy for me to change the topic; but no, it is difficult, because I am caught in it, being swept away.

Thoughts coming and going must be at our bidding, not independent of us. Since you are the boss and the thought, you can order any thought into your

consciousness that you like. Where will you pick nasty thought? That is the whole trick - I am the boss, I pick up the thought which is meaningful. Thoughts must not possess me: my behaviour must not be dictated by thought.

Question: What happens with fear then? When the thought carries you away?

Answer: Fear in relation to thought can become a nightmare if you do not have control over the thought you are thinking - control in this sense that you understand its mechanism. You are afraid of something, an examination, and that fear manifests in your consciousness as a thought. You are able to know this emotion called fear within you through thought, and if you do not possess the ability to drop a thought, as we were discussing just now, then you are sailing in that thought and you will never be able to get out of it. Even if somebody tells you it is unhealthy fear - that is another fear now. First I was afraid of the examination, now I am afraid of being unhealthy. Anything that you do to unwind it, winds it further.

There is a difference between a craving for coffee or chocolate and a good health appetite. Both will drive you to the kitchen, but there is a difference in quality. In the same way there is a difference between a natural fear - such as fear of getting too close to a fire in case of being burnt - and a morbid fear, such as we have been discussing. Possibly we can say that fear as an emotion which spurs me on is healthy; fear as an emotion which cripples me is morbid. Which is very beautiful - usually everyone regards fear as a product of the devil - it is evil, negative, wrong, etc. In the Gita, Krishna even says that fear is born of Him, 'I am the origin of fear and fearlessness', so what you and I call fear is part of nature.

We are not wanting to keep away unbidden thoughts. It is not as though we are wanting to lead a dull, straight-jacket type of life, but we must have the ability to do so. My Guru Swami Sivananda did not lead an ascetic type of life, so that He would think only these thoughts and not other thoughts. There were no injunctions and prohibitions. But this I have seen; even during His normal working day, He always kept a pocket watch. He would be sitting working, terribly absorbed, then suddenly He would open the watch case and say, 'Hari Om Tat Sat'. You could see from his face all the office work dropping away. 'Oh, I must go.' He used to say that He set aside a certain part of His day for reading and writing, etc. Immediately that period was passed, it was switched off and something else was switched on - a reason why He was able to achieve such a lot. He wrote books, dealt with people, saw to the running of the ashram, etc., because that master key was there. He could even lie down and snore in two minutes when it was time for His rest. That was routine. In conflict, I saw even more clearly. It may sound strange to you - though some of you may not be unaware of this - that even Swamis are capable of quarreling and fighting. If two Swamis come fighting into Swami Sivananda's office, He will listen to them, but somewhere He will say, 'Have you had your breakfast?' 'What about that letter I gave you yesterday?' And it is introduced so dramatically - or undramatically, perhaps - that neither of them realizes that the thread has been snapped. One

answers about the breakfast, and the other answers about the letter. That is a bit difficult. It is not as though we are going to put ourselves in a straight jacket, not allowing unbidden thoughts to enter our consciousness, but we acquire the faculty to drop them when we do not want them.

We were practising pranayama this morning, but what we were doing is, strictly speaking, not pranayama. We were doing breathing exercises. Just as we exercise the body, we also exercise the lungs with breathing exercises.

In the Katha Upanishad there is an intriguing mantra, the translation of which means: 'Not by prana and not by its counterpart, apana, does a mortal live here. A mortal lives by something else, on which even these are dependent.' The usual explanation of prana and apana is that the inhaled breath is prana, and the exhaled breath is apana. Some others say that whatever is above the diaphragm is prana, and below the diaphragm is apana; that is, the eyes, ears, etc., are controlled by the prana, and the excretory functions by the apana. And therefore with the help of these two, we are alive. Yet, this scripture says that it is not by these two that we live, but something else, on which these two are dependent. There is the positive statement that man lives by something else, but the negative statement is given even more emphasis. You can give a parody of what Jesus said, 'Man does not live by breath alone'.

Then there is a related passage in the Bhagavad Gita, where Krishna defines pranayama as 'prana apaanau samau krtvaa' - that is, you equalize prana and apana. If I assume that prana is inhalation, and apana is exhalation, to equalize these two is quite simple - just breathing, that's all. Inhale to the count of six, exhale to the count of six it doesn't seem to fit the total picture. If I remove this interpretation from the whole thing and understand that prana is not the inhaled breath and apana is not the exhaled breath, and I do not live by these two, then how do I equalize the two? What am I supposed to equalize?

There is one more. Prana is considered force, and in another scripture again, one of the other Upanishads, apana is somehow related to death. If prana is life breath, apana is somehow related to death. I do not know if this makes any sense, but probably both these are entirely psychological, or spiritual - nothing to do with your breathing. Possibly, again, we may say that prana is the will to live, and apana, in terms of psychology, is the death wish. What is supposed to be done in pranayama is an equalization of these two. That is, I am as happy to live as I am to die. I am as unafraid of life as I am of death. Would this fit in anywhere, and how does one achieve this?

Eric Atkinson: I do not think that psychology as a science has much to say about that. Jung, Newman, and to a lesser degree Fromm, relate it to the forces of nature, the creative forces and the decaying forces. And Freud talked about it as the libido, the life wish and the death wish. So, it is there in nature; but psychologically, I just do not know. I imagine it is what you say, a preparedness to accept the life and the death, so that you do not live one-sidedly. You do not cling to life, nor wish this life gone and hope for death. You take things as they come. There is new life and also death in everything. It is like the Chinese yin and yang. We recognize that the opposites are there, but we do not fall into one or the

other.

Swami: And therefore the recognition stands outside the two.

Atkinson: Yes, the consciousness of the two. You see them both, but not to fall into them. That is the balance of the two. In Jung's terms it would be awareness of the opposites.

Swami: How does one achieve that?

Atkinson: I think, just by seeing them and remaining balanced and not swinging one way or the other way.

Swami: And, also related to the same again, is another very interesting doctrine in yoga, called abhinevesha. Abhinevesha is 'instinctively clinging to this life'. It is not even the will to live; it is a stupid turning away from the death wish, a blind clinging to this life, as if it is going to last. Even the author of the Yoga Sutras, Patanjali, does not help us very much in understanding this. He says, 'Oh, this is universal. Even the wisest man has this.' In other words, even if you are the wisest of men and I come to cut your throat, you will instinctively react. What would psychology say to this? Why is it there - this instinctive clinging to this life, life in this body? Knowing, as we all know, I do not think there is anyone so foolish today as to think that they will last in this body forever, that death is inevitable. And yet, in spite of seeing it, this clinging to life goes on. You said that, by seeing it, one is able to transcend. Even if I am able to see absolutely clearly that I have to be rid of this body, that I have to face death one of these days, even if it comes after much suffering - I may myself say, 'Oh, God, please take me away', even then, if a man comes with a gun, I will protect myself.

Eric Atkinson: I think that is an instinct.

Swami: Means what, Sir?

Eric Atkinson: A pattern that is born in you which presumably has the purpose of protecting you from harm in this way. But I do not think that everyone universally want to hold on to this life.

Swami: Yes, sir. One has to strive to get rid of it. One has to struggle hard to overcome that. It is true that people can commit suicide, yes. But I have heard that when people want to commit suicide by falling off a moving train, they walk backwards so that they do not see. If they try to jump off the train, they sometimes do not. It needs a special effort.

Eric Atkinson: There are some people who hold on every stage in life. They remain childish and dependent.

Swami: That is immaturity. We are not discussing that. We are discussing the

terminal problem.

Eric Atkinson: I do not think that everyone wants to hold on.

Clive: Is it not a case of body consciousness? People do not doubt that they are going to die, that this body is going to leave, but because they are so involved with their body, they identify with their body and they do not want to lose that.

Swami: Right, sir, but then this is where Patanjali is a bit enigmatic. You are talking about ignorant people, people who ignorantly identify themselves with the body, or identify the self with the body. Quite right. But Patanjali says even in the case of a wise man.

Wendy: But they still do not know what is after death, though.

Swami: Are you afraid? To lose what?

Wendy: More being afraid of what they are coming to.

Swami : That is not relevant. Why is man instinctively afraid of death? Whereas, for instance, life is the most uncertain thing. I am sitting talking here. Half an hour later I might have a stroke, collapse and be paralyzed. Knowing all these uncertainties - we know this, it is not as though we do not know it - I am not afraid to live. But somehow, even if I am physically sick, and sick of life, I am still not prepared to die. Why is that?

Vera: Would it not go back into antiquity, and have developed as we go along? It becomes apparent with more developed organisms until it gets to man, and then he rationalizes.

Swami: If, as you say, the word instinct is meant to be implied - instinct to me is frozen knowledge - and if all the experiences of evolution, of past lives, is in me, then I should be quite happy to die. I get a little bit of promotion. This instinctive knowledge, or frozen knowledge of all this evolution from amoeba to the human stage, must naturally convince me that I have been evolving and evolving, and the moment I drop this body, I develop wings and fly like angels. Lovely! But still it does not answer our problem.

Eric Atkinson: I think it is one of those 'just so' stories. It seems that the only way to live life is to go on as if life is continuing.

Swami: But life is continuing; with the body, without the body, in another body - it does not matter.

Kim: While you are alive, you still have your options open. You can only commit suicide once; but while you are alive, you still have the option of being able to commit suicide, at least.

Swami: But then again, you are faced with this option to live or to die. You are choosing to live and therefore you have really no option, of being able to commit suicide, at least.

Kim: Well, you might have the choice at a later date.

Swami: This is probably the idea. But which is born of which? Is the fact of the individuality born of a revulsion towards death, way round?

The individuality is probably the answer to it. But even the individuality does not seem to answer the essence of the problem. I am an individual, but probably even after death I will continue to be an individual. If I do not believe in reincarnation, then that is the end of it. Well, what is wrong with that? I am not afraid of losing what I have because I myself will not be there. It is like saying, 'I will lose my shawl if my throat is cut'. What am I worried about? If my throat is cut, I have nowhere to wear the shawl.

Pam: Perhaps you are worried about just not being there.

Swami: If I am not there, I am not there. Therefore, there is no happiness or unhappiness. There is no one to own a body and there is no body; there is no one to live in the house and there is no house. Why do we pull away from it? Why are we afraid of this thing called death. Kim's answer is the closest to the root of the problem individuality. The fact that you are attached to so many things comes much later. I am an individual, I see that she is my wife, these are my children, etc. The extension comes after the individuality, doesn't it?

Tony: Is is a sort of irrational thing where you say that there will b something there to experience that terrible darkness when it comes. And yet you know that there might not be anything to experience it. Irrational, really.

Swami: By saying irrational, you have escaped all further argument.

Lakshmi: I do not think that people even think about what's coming after, they just cling to life without any thought.

Swami: That's it. That is the point.

Joy: Is it that you cannot imagine the world going on without you?

Swami: Oh, you are exempted from this laughter, but so far as I am concerned, oh no. The whole thing seems to go on without anybody.

Joy: It seems hard to imagine it.

Swami: Oh, no, it is not hard to imagine. I have myself very closely examined this

whether I am in an ashram in Rishikesh, or Mauritius. I look at all the work going on, and of course you always have these people coming and telling you that, without you, nothing will go on here. What they say might leave an impression on you also, and so you sit down and examine this very carefully, and you see that you are afraid to lose your place in the setup, your position, your privilege. I do not think many of us could say that they feel the world would not go on without them. But there is this fear of losing one's job, one's importance.

Question: Why are animals frightened of death?

Swami: Are animals frightened of death, or only of pain? Death also, I think. I do not know if you realize, but you have brought this discussion down one stage by suggesting that we are also nearly on the same level. In this business, at least, we are no better than animals. So, in other words, although we are supposed to have intelligence far superior to animals, we are not using it. Would that sort of approach give us an opening, Sir? That, though we have an intelligence with which we may be able to overcome this animal instinct, to transcend it, we are not using it.

To discover that intelligence, is pranayama. It is remarkable, wonderful. When you do pranayama, you keep on inhaling and inhaling. I think that if inhalation makes me healthy, full of prana, why must I stop? Go on inhaling. But, there is something in you which says 'no more'. So you start exhaling. Keep exhaling, I want to die. Something switches off and says, 'Oh, no, start inhaling'. There is always the physiological explanation of how the brain acts on messages received from the autonomous nervous system, etc. It is all theory and sets of words. In pranayama, one is supposed to come face to face with this. You inhale and inhale - watch for the moment when the inhalation turns into exhalation. You exhale and exhale, empty your lungs, and watch for the moment when exhalation turns into inhalation.

There is a breathing exercise - bhandhaatraya pranayama - which is even more powerful in bringing this out. Usually we only inhale, retain, exhale. There is a fourth step, which is inhale, retain, exhale, retain. Retain there means that you hold the lungs empty. It is rather interesting if you inhale and retain the breath for three minutes, then you see some kind of an electrical commotion happening inside you. At the other end, you empty your lungs and then hold. Within about half a minute, you will have all kinds of electrical commotions taking place in your body. If I am not morbidly afraid, if I am merely watching the body's reaction, then suddenly I realize what prana means.

Doing this pranayama mechanically is not going to help us very much, unless we come face to face with this mysterious power that demands that life should continue. And at the same time, somehow we discover the other mysterious force which inexorably leads us on to the grave, whatever we do.

According to medical science, it is there: sympathetic and parasympathetic

nerves, one giving the command for the lungs to expand, and one giving the command for the lungs to contract. Probably there is the prana and apana activity, and probably it is a lot more, much deeper.

Pranayama is the discovery of this mysterious power within.

3

What is reincarnation? We will start from the other end. If the personality - or the self as we understand it to be - does not exist, then there is no reincarnation. One or two of these are arguments from the Buddha. He said what you call the self is non-existent. He used the famous example of a cart. Looking at the cart, he said 'What is that? It is a hood: take it and throw it away. What are these? These are the wheels: throw them out. What is this? The axle: throw it out. What is this? Planks: throw them out. What is this? This is the yoke: throw it out.' Now, what did you throw away? You threw away the hood, the wheels, the axle, the planks and the yoke. Where is the cart now? You cannot say it is in pieces; each one is each one. This is a wheel, it is not a piece of a cart. Oh, no, it has got a personality of its own. The wheel is complete as a wheel. So, you have thrown all these away. Where is the cart? The cart is only an idea in your mind. And because you have an idea of a whole cart in your mind, you think that a wheel is a part of that cart. If you did not have that idea in your mind, you would take that wheel as a wheel, not as part of a cart.

'S,' he said, 'In the same way, what you call 'I' or the Self, or the personality, is nothing but a putting together of a number of things,' which is a very beautiful idea. Use it in meditation too. For instance, we sit and listen to our breathing, and repeat our mantra: an extraordinary phenomenon again - if you do not bring your intellect into the picture, it is wonderful to watch, to realize what is going on. I am sitting here repeating my mantra, and I am hearing it. And I begin to wonder, 'Which is I? Am I the fellow sitting and repeating the mantra in me, or am I the one which is listening to the mantra? I am sitting here, I can hear the mantra. Who is it that is saying the mantra?' It is myself. How is it possible for me to say the mantra and listen to it at the same time? And then when I deeply reflect over this problem, I can hear the mantra, I can see the sound vibrations coming up and the sound vibrations being heard. There is the repeater of the mantra, and the listener to the mantra, and I am there as a witness of both of these. Now, which one am I?

If you go on in this fashion, you cultivate the habit of being able to watch your mind, how a thought arises, how it turns into emotion, etc. Now, who is the one that is watching the whole fun? Who is this 'I'? I am watching my mind, my eyes are seeing the pillar, my mind is seeing the pillar, I am watching the mind which says that this is a pillar. Who is 'I'? Is there an 'I' which is independent of your mind? Or not? Is what you call your self - not in the cosmic sense, but in the sense that I am Swami Venkatesananda, independent of what you call the mind? You think so.

Now, if we can introduce an analogy here - there is this ocean, one, indivisible; and suddenly a thought arises, 'I think so'. The moment the thought wave has come up, this one surface is divided into 'this' and 'that'. On this side of the wave, and on the other side of the wave, 'this' and 'that', 'I' and 'you' - the 'I' and 'you' being the simplest and the first creations of the think. I think so. 'I' is here, the

'think' has come up, the 'so' is there. So that, as soon as this 'think' wave subsides, the 'I' and 'so' become one; thought alone exists, or, the mind alone exists. You can call it the mind, you can call it the self, what you like. So, in this manner, the Buddha demolished the whole idea of a personal self. He said that there is nothing called a personal self. The 'I' itself is nothing but a thought; what you call 'I' or the individual personality or the ego, is nothing but a thought. That is our problem too. To you, a certain thing seems to be right; to another person, the same thing seems to be wrong. My conscience accepts this, but his conscience may not accept this. That is because the 'I' or the conscience is not an independent judge. The conscience itself is nothing but another thought, the first thought. 'I' is the first thought, and this first thought has gathered to itself a number of ideas: this is decent behaviour, that is indecent behaviour; this is decent dress, that is indecent dress; this is right and this is wrong - all these are picked up on the way. You put them together because you think they are pieces. They are not pieces, they are whole. Each one is a whole in itself. You think you are all pieces and you put them all together and make conscience. And this conscience from thence forward gets offended when it meets something which it does not approve of.

There is a funny story told of Swami Vivekananda. He went to America and gave them for the first time 'The message of the East'. Utter selflessness. He thought he had won big victories over there, and given them the Light of Truth. The first or second time he went back to India, he was terribly tired, so he went to the Himalayas on the Tibetan border to have a period of quiet and rest. He was staying as the guest of one of the chieftains of a tribe. This chief and his five or six brothers were all living together, and there was one woman in the house. He thought it was probably the eldest brother's wife, nothing extraordinary about it. But then, what was disconcerting to this great Swami, was that all the brothers were behaving immodestly towards this woman. For a long time he suppressed himself, and then one day he could not bear it any longer; so he asked this man, 'Who is this lady?', because the suspicion began to grow in him that something undesirable was going on. The man said, 'She is our wife'. 'What do you mean 'our wife'?' 'Oh, we are five brothers, we have married her. "Terrible!" When he said terrible, the chief asked, 'What do you do in India?' 'One woman has only one husband.' 'Selfish fellows.' Vivekananda said, 'I hung my head in shame. I preached the gospel of unselfishness to America and Europe, and this man tells me we are selfish too.'

So, even these things, what you call conscience, moral standards, codes of ethics, and so on, are nothing but a certain kind of conditioning. The 'I' is the first thought, and it acts like a crystal, picking up all the other thoughts - what Buddha called the skanda - mere collection, a small sentient library. This goes round, acting like a personality, judging and functioning in the world. That is what you call the self. If you accept this, there is no reincarnation, because nothing is born, nothing dies. As Tony said, the flesh is being made every day, so either there is a perpetual reincarnation, or no reincarnation.

Someone asked, 'In that case, you went to bed last night, and there was complete oblivion, everything was wiped out. You woke up this morning.' If someone asked you this morning, 'Who are you?', you would still say, 'I am Lionel'. How did you carry that over? And on the same principle, how is it that a man enjoys and suffers in what you call this birth, the fruits of the past incarnation? One philosopher says, 'It is very simple. You have a candle - take a fresh one, and kindle it from the previous one. Is the fire the same or different?' The question is tricky. The flame of the second one is a reincarnation of the flame of the first one. So, he says that new wax and new wick touching the other candle become the new flame; so, in the same manner, new flesh and new mind touch the previous one; and so it goes on. Very clever those philosophers were! But barring that, we can still say that this personality - the thought and ideas and so on put together, and that which assumes a personality to itself, seems to be capable of assuming an individuality to itself and transmigrating, reincarnating. There is no doubt about that.

This reincarnation lasts so long as some cohesive force, called ignorance, keeps this lot together. The moment that the thought wave that separated 'I' from 'so' subsides, then there is no more reincarnation. Till then, all this reincarnation, this karma and so on, seem to be real. The thought of separateness continues from one birth to another.

I suppose again, we are or we pretend to rational beings, and rationality assumes that a reason for everything. First I assume that a reason for everything that happens here, and try to find the reason. There may not be a reason at all! This is what I call unscientific approach. I cannot assume a result and then try to look for result. I cannot assume that there is a reason for everything that is happening here, and then try to find the reason. There may not be one. I look at rain falling on the ocean; it looks ludicrous to me and then I ask, 'Why does that funny God pull all that water up and then put it back in the ocean again?' I would not do it. Now, I am asking why; but when I ask why I assume that there must be a reason, there may not be a reason at all. I assume that there is a cause every effect, and therefore, for instance, when a child suffers, I ask, 'Why does that child suffer?' There may not be any reason at all. You see, assuming that there must be a cause for this effect of suffering, I ask why, and then I discover a great theory that this child must have been here before in a past incarnation, have committed some great crime or sin or whatever is, and because of the effect of that, the child is suffering now. That is our brainwork. I am only giving a terribly one-sided argument.

On the other side, in parapsychological research throughout the world, they are discovering evidence what we call reincarnation, children coming back with memories of their past birth. I saw at least one of them, a girl. The story is this. This girl came to the ashram in Rishikesh and the mother said that when this girl was about five or six years old, the family was resident in Perth, Australia, and had never been outside. The girl was born in Perth, grew up in Perth. She was young; so she would not have been to school very much. One day she went up to the

mother and said, 'Let's go to Geraldton'. The mother probably thought that she must have heard it from somewhere. So they went to Geraldton for a holiday. As soon as the mother and daughter got down at Geraldton, the child took over - hired a taxi, and gave the taxi driver all the directions. 'Turn to your right, turn to your left', etc. And then, when the taxi had reached a certain spot, she said to stop. So it stopped in front of a house, and the child jumped out and knocked at the door. An elderly woman in her forties or fifties opened the door, and this child jumped up in her arms and said 'Mummy'. The old woman was flabbergasted; but when she gave a bewildered look, the child said, 'Don't you recognize me? I am your daughter So-and-so'. When the child said the name, the old woman burst into tears. Then the child ran inside and pointed out where she had studied, where she had kept her clothes, etc., and everything was right. This woman had lost one of her daughters in an accident some years before. The girl said, 'I am your daughter. I died here, and I was reborn in Perth.' So, this kind of evidence also is growing. And also under hypnosis some people have come up with all sorts of revelations.

So, if we have to accept the validity of a personality, the existence of a personality as such, the self, then to that self, there is reincarnation. So, this self, or personality - which is nothing but a putting together of ideas, thoughts and so on, transmigrates, reincarnates. And it will continue to reincarnate till the idea of an individuality, of a separate self, persists.

There are people who have theories that certain lower grade animals have a group soul. It is possible. I do not deny it. They say that all sub-human species have a group soul, but I do not think it is very valid. I am prepared to think that things like bees and ants may have a group soul, because they appear to function as one unit. If you accept that, then I am going to argue that a rose plant has a million souls because you can clip a million cuttings and keep planting and they will all become roses. However powerful and strong you are, if you cut pieces of you and put the in the ground, they will not grow, only rot.

The people who accept the theory of reincarnation do not say that only human beings can reincarnate. Donkeys, monkeys, cats, all of them also reincarnate; so, at no time have we taken a complete census of all the souls on earth. So that, although the population of the earth is growing so rapidly, it does not mean that we will run out of souls. They could also come from some other planet too.

From day to day we are trying to decide where we shall grow into; what we want to become this next year. This is going on all the time; so changing from one body to another is not such a tremendous thing. Every moment I am dying and being reborn, and the hour of death is another moment; something else takes place. Since we have assembled here now, quite a number of cells have died in the body, quite a number have been born; and every night we go to bed, and go into oblivion, and wake up the next morning. One of these days, we will go into a deeper sleep and wake up later, and during that period all the old cells will have dropped and some new cells will have come. It does not seem to mean anything

at all. The basic consciousness of a separate self continues throughout. That is reincarnation.

4

If I do not express myself in words, there are other ways of communicating. There are quite a number of people in Rishikesh and Benares who will not talk to you, but at the same time they are bursting to communicate. They must convey what they want to in one way or the other, so they gesticulate. My Guru Swami Sivananda used to discourage this because it wastes energy. Not talking conserves energy, but gesticulating is a greater waste.

So, mouna or silence is not a discipline of speech, it is more a mental discipline. There was one wonderful Swami who had an unusual way of observing this silence. He did not actually speak, but he used a mantra to convey everything he wanted, and he somehow had the genius to make himself understood. But there was no silence of the mind.

The vow of silence as a discipline is good for us, for some purposes. Some great mystics and Swamis in India have a remarkable theory about it. Firstly, that all communication is waste of time, talking is waste of time - nobody has been enlightened by talking; and secondly, that it is possible to communicate on other levels. And the communication at the other level is possible only when the verbal communication stops.

Only when I am able to restrain the impulse to talk will I acquire the power to communicate at another level. So they said, 'Keep quiet.' In keeping quiet, or observing mouna, a measure of self discipline is necessary; one thing is not to say anything, and the other is to watch your own mind and see what happens there. When we do not talk to each other, there is greater scope for watching the mind. Only scope.

Merely refusing to talk does not make you watch mind, but there is greater scope. Therefore as a discipline, it is a wonderful thing. I suppose all people will regard it as rude. At the table you look at a bowl of sugar, somebody passes to you; you want to say thank you, but you cannot. So that all these wonderful etiquettes and manners that we have created ourselves also get a rude shock. And you learn to drop them; and while dropping them, you wonder, 'Can I not say 'thank you' to you other than using those two words?' That is it - merely just by looking, you can convey thanks. So, here again there is an opportunity to communicate at another level, perhaps a deeper and more meaningful level, instead of merely saying, 'Thank you.' Try to feel 'thank you', to feel 'grateful'.

Tomorrow, let us see if we can refrain even gesticulating and grunting. There is another extreme type of this vow of silence which is supposed to be the state of a fallen tree - some people take it to the extreme of saying that you should just lie down, completely unresponsive. This again may be interesting for each one to watch and see. Can you distinguish between these two: now, I look around, and see who is here - then I practise mouna, I look around the room, not necessarily avoiding seeing eye to eye, but without any recognition there, with a glassy look.

The basis there again is that there is no need to communicate.

We did this in the yoga camp in Germany for a full day. We assembled in the morning without anybody looking at anyone else, no 'Gutentag', nothing. We did not want to break the routine; so the whole program was followed throughout the day, the ssana class, the breathing class, we even assembled for discussion; groups everyone just sat, and then walked away at the appointed time for the discussion to end. It is an extraordinary feeling, especially during the lecture period, since we had agreed not to let the eyes communicate, we did not even look at each other. We sat for that period with half-open eyes in the sense that you looked at a point two feet in front of you. And then at lunch we filed in and ate our lunch in silence. Also we noticed how our own individual nature was expressed there. There was an opportunity for us to see our inner temperature. In the afternoon, instead of the discussion period, we took a walk around the bush. It was beautiful. We kept up the silence throughout the whole day. Everyone said that what happened during those twenty-four hours did not happen the rest of the time. But, again, it will not happen automatically - then one goes to sleep. One has to make it happen, by looking within and trying to see. If someone spills some soup on your clothes, what is your reaction? It is a good time to watch, because, you see, if she spills something on my clothes, by exchanging a couple of words we are escaping the situation. She says, 'Oh, I am sorry', and I say, 'Oh, it does not matter'. But it does matter! I go to my room and ... When she said she was sorry, I said 'Never mind', but there is plenty of mind there. So, by this superficiality we have shelved away a number of our problems. And these we will have a better opportunity to see when we observe silence.

So, tomorrow all items of the program will continue just as if everything is there, but no talking.

These things are interesting in the sense that we can watch our own reactions in unusual situations, watch what goes on in the mind. How do I react? Why do I react at all? We have read a lot. Somebody says, 'I react because of my own previous birth-samskaras, impressions or tendencies carried over from past birth'; somebody says, 'My reactions are brought about by environmental influence. Maybe, may not. But my question is this: at the moment of the reaction, what is it that happens in me? That is more important. It is not the autopsy that is important, but at that moment when he calls me a fool, and there is this anger, can I catch myself there? I do not want any explanations and analysis of why I lost my temper. Can I catch myself just there when he calls me a fool, and not react? There I am face to face with the reality of my nature: anger. This to me seems to be more important than all theories and philosophies.

Do you understand the problem? When I look at something, immediately there is a reaction - either pleasant or unpleasant; or a value judgement - he is handsome, ugly, good or bad. It is not even what produces reaction that we want to discover, but what is the reaction. I am not even enquiring into the cause of the reaction, but what is the reaction itself? That is more important to us than reading books

during the period of silence.

When we assemble for meditation tomorrow, keep the eyes open and focused about two feet in front you, so that we are not distracted by anything we see, and we do not close our eyes; because that way can go off to sleep, to dreamland.

Whatever be the emotions or thoughts you have, we learn to catch them as they arise, especially the emotions - thoughts are a bit difficult. Not analyzing, not trying to find the cause, but to find the nature.

I tried this once long ago - I do not know whether this can be communicated because the answer is not verbal answer. I was sitting working in my room in Rishikesh about twenty years ago, and one of the senior Swamis burst into my room and said something very nasty and went away. When someone for whom you have very great respect and regard behaves in a beastly way, it hurts you. Suddenly I felt a pain like a dagger in heart as though a hot needle had been pushed into the chest. The Swami had gone, and I was filled with curiosity. That man did not touch me, he only said something. How did this physical pain come about? What is this physical pain? I am not enquiring into the cause. If I enquire into the cause, immediately the whole brain will start working. He insulted me, and therefore my vanity was hurt. I do not know what my vanity is, and therefore I do not know what it is to hurt my vanity; but I was not interested in all that, I was interested merely in trying to see what this pain was. I closed the room, lit a lamp, and sat facing it. There was no mental activity, there was no analysis - it was a purely physical search, no metaphysics, purely physical. Can I look at that pain and try to figure out what it is? Is there a needle stuck in here?

I must have sat like that for at least an hour or two, and since then nobody has been able to insult me, that is the only thing I know now. You know what it is, and therefore you also know how it builds up. When the next man calls you an idiot, you feel the emotion starting to arise, 'Oh, enough. Keep quiet.' You know this is going to lead to this pain. So, why not stop it there? And it stops because you have found what an emotion is.

What is an emotion? That is our program for tomorrow. We do not want a verbal answer - that kind of an answer anybody can give: 'Emotion is a response of my ego to an external stimulus'. But to come face to face with it!

5

When a chattering person suddenly stops talking, it is not only a calm, because the commotion goes on inside. What happens to that? Because you are free, nobody is going to put you in jail if you talk - so, you are experimenting on yourself. When this commotion goes on within, and you have decided no to talk, what happens to that inner commotion?

Student: At first, it started to speak more loudly. Then it subsided and you became calm. At first, the thoughts came loud, and you were talking yourself. And then afterwards you could not hold on to things because they were so irrelevant.

Swami: In a very minor way, that is called nirvana - not feeding the flame is called nirvana.

Student: You start to watch yourself.

Swami: Did this happen to anybody else?

Answer: I am sure that the yoga class was more enjoyable without talking.

Student: This morning some girls were coming to take me to the school and I remember feeling rather excited as I waited for them to appear;

I started to analyze the emotion, I got excited. Yes, and then it subsided and a peace settled, and there was an outpouring of love from the heart, and when I started to analyze the emotion, I got very excited. Yes, and then it subsided and great peace settled, and there was outpouring of love from the heart.

Swami: That is very important, too. Because now you realize that love is not an emotion. It is very difficult in our normal day-to-day life to come to the understanding that love is not an emotion. True love, not 'I'-love-'you', 'you'-love-'me'; this has the other side to the coin. But the love that you are now referring to is completely non-emotional. That is when you can detach yourself, when you can stand aside as a witness; then you feel this love. This is what happens also - you suddenly begin to step aside and you realize that you are a witness, not involved in these things; and so you probably experience, for a few moments, now and then, what is known as true non-attachment - not detachment; detachment means pulling away. You stand there and watch your body moving, your mind moving, people going about their business, everything goes on beautifully, and you know that you are not going to react.

This happens only when you do not indulge in gesticulations. If you allow gesticulations it seems to destroy the whole process of it, because instead of talking with your tongue, you talk with your whole body. If you do not allow gesticulation, then you know that you are not going to react, no matter what happens. So, making up your mind that you are not going to react, the only thing

possible for you to do is to act: and therefore you are watching yourself, you are the see-er - what Patanjali calls drishta. The see-er does not jump out of his throne, he sits there and watches your body moving, your mind moving, things moving around you; he is watching everything happening. You are here and you are there - the food is on the table, the hand is picking up the food and putting it in the mouth; and you are sitting there and watching. Though this is described vaguely as double-consciousness, it is not split personality. By some strange logic or illogic, the personality is that one, not this one. The actor, the worker, is the personality, and this one is majestically sitting there and watching. I am sure that even those who are subject to this chattering are liable to be irritated, annoyed with little things here and there. I guess nobody felt it.

Answer: In the hatha yoga class, I felt a little irritated. I am a beginner, and I got mixed up, as it was not right for me. But the rest of the time I felt it was all right.

Swami: It starts because of old habits; it starts up and then it levels out. Of course the experiment was only for half a day. If you continue for a day or two or three, then you feel a completely changed person. But again, I insist upon this, because I have seen the travesty of this silence in certain parts of India. The moment you allow yourself freedom to gesticulate or write on a piece of paper and this sort of thing, it is gone, completely gone. It is better, if absolutely necessary, to say a word or two.

Student: This double-consciousness sounds to me like what I have experienced occasionally during relaxation.

Swami: Correct. You know what is going on, you can participate in every department of life, you can do what you like - you can be a good wife, a very good mother, a good driver, everything goes on except confusion. It is a wonderful thing and it is worth experiencing it in activity. Apart from this discipline of silence, what we call japa - repetition of a mantra, also brings about the same result, especially if you can do it associating mantra with the breath; but it takes longer. It is probably more difficult than just being silent. Sooner or later you develop the same double-consciousness. Deep within you, the mantra goes on. Do it for a little while during the morning and evening, and renew the practice during the day by doing it every hour or two; then it becomes natural, not automatic, but natural, and the mantra digs itself into your subconscious, and acquires a rhythm which pleases the mind. 'Then I was talking to you and I ...', immediately the mantra starts. That is, there are two departments - the active department and the watching department; and as soon as this active department becomes silent, then the watching department becomes audible, which sort of tells you that something has been going on even before; just as for instance as you are listening, you are also breathing; as you are listening, your circulation also is going on. They may be involuntary functions, this also becomes almost involuntary function. The mantra goes on, and even this rhythmic sound of the telephone floats into your ear in the form of mantra.

Question: How do you compare this with hypnosis? Do you have any comparison?

Eric Atkinson: I do not think it has anything to do with hypnosis. Hypnosis is the lowering of consciousness - someone else makes the suggestion.

Swami: Thank you sir. No one has explained it to me in so few words so precisely.

Question: I am curious because I have seen certain concepts of yoga in books, the concept that it is the stilling of the conscious and subconscious mind.

Swami: But if what Mr Atkinson says is right, then yoga is just the opposite. If hypnosis is lowering consciousness, then yoga is heightening consciousness - it is intensely heightened in the early stages of the practice of silence or meditation, or repetition of a mantra - japa, or especially pranayama. One can become physically and mentally so hyper-sensitive, that if somebody drops as a pin, you jump up. Even in relaxation. That is why, in cold weather especially, I prefer when people have had asana practice for them to cover themselves, and then relax. As you relax, you find that you become terribly sensitive to cold, heat, a stuffy room - because the whole body and mind have become hyper-sensitive. But in what we have been calling double-consciousness, it is the active one that becomes hyper-sensitive; the back one, the witness consciousness, is watching. I become more sensitive - nothing at all, it is only supplying the other fellow with the sensitivity that he needs. Then it happens very often that the person practising yoga, japa, etc., becomes irritable and jittery. But then, with a persistent intelligent practice the witness-consciousness provides the strength to withstand the result of this hyper-sensitivity. Somebody doing something irritates you, or you 'feel' the atmosphere - the atmosphere is bad, the vibrations of the place are bad. But then the witness consciousness inside says, 'None of your business', and gives you the strength to withstand all that. It is very interesting.

Swami: Can the idiosyncrasy of a personality be overcome by analysis? As long as I am a human being, there is the possibility of yielding to anger, lust, etc. That I understand. If I have been excessively brutal or that sort of thing, and if I can see the origins of this idiosyncrasy, can that not be corrected by analysis? Got rid of, leaving the residue of what I would call the natural human tendency?

Eric: It can be got rid of to the extent that people are thoroughly aware of it - they know it, they know how it works. The guilt and anxiety about it can be removed. So, I suppose it is more or less what you are saying, the natural tendency still remains. But there are always idiosyncrasies in the personality.

Swami: Even the shadow of those things will remain?

Eric: Yes.

Swami: We are now talking from two different sides. You are presenting the

Jungian point of view, and I am presenting the yoga point of view. There is this doctrine that the yogi who has reached the culmination of his search, Self-knowledge, has come face to face with the fact that the self does not exist, the self as an independent individual entity does not exist. That is the Buddhist view, and the other view is also almost the same. One says there is the soul or the self, but this self is part of the whole self. The other says that the self does not exist. And now, according to this doctrine, if you attain this self-knowledge now, in other words, you have direct knowledge and experience and perception of the non-existence of the self to such an extent that, if somebody wanted to chop off your head, you would say, 'All right, take it away'. You have reached that stage, but still, they say, the falseness of a certain belief in the self continues to be there. That is a very thin veil. In ordinary people like us, self-knowledge is completely veiled by a thick wall.

In this stage of self-knowledge, what is known as a jivanmukta, this veil has become so thin that it is almost transparent, but it is there. They give a couple of examples. Most of us have seen a pressure lamp here? One with a mantle. Once you have set fire to it and lighted the lamp, it is burnt. There is only ash there. But so long as nobody disturbs that mantle, it continues to have the bulbous appearance, and if you pump it, it will glow, but it is no longer the silken stuff that put there first. It is burnt; so that, the moment someone touches it, it disintegrates. They say that even in the case of perfected saints the personality continues like that burnt stuff, but having the appearance of the previous personality. And it completely vanishes on the dissolution of the body. Would this be what you were saying?

Eric: That is the same as Jung's approach to the Self. He is calling the personal self the ego, and at very high levels of development or individualisation, the ego is almost not there. Like this mantle, as you were saying. But very few people get that far. Ultimately I suppose you only attain it at death. But it is interesting that in christian churches, they never make a saint a saint in life time, because there is always the possibility that he will fall back a little.

1

Everything that we do, including all that we do in our daily activities, has some advantage and some disadvantage. There is nothing which is all advantage and no disadvantage. Some have more advantages and some have more disadvantages. This is true of even what we call spiritual practices. An advantage is immediately offset by some disadvantage - somewhere there is something good, something bad.

Keeping your eyes open has one advantage: that you do not fall asleep. It is not impossible to fall asleep with the eyes open, but it is slightly more difficult. So, if you keep your eyes gently open, you are sure that you will not fall asleep, and you are also sure that you will not glide away into a dreamland. It is remarkable what this wonderful mind can do. You are sitting here, deeply concentrating and meditating, listening to your mantra with your breathing; then a telephone rings. You are still very vigilant, but somewhere, either consciously or unconsciously, there is a suggestion - that bell, it is like the bell in the temple I heard once. 'India is full of temples. I must go there one day. India must be beautiful. Indian sari is lovely, silk, ...', etc. So, when I am sitting here in Perth and trying to meditate, I have landed myself in India with a sari flying around.

So, once the focus or the attention has slipped away from you, then you have no control. You are enjoying all these thoughts that you are thinking. It is not as though a thought is like the telephone bell, coming from outside and entering my ears. These thoughts are coming from inside me, I am thinking these thoughts. If you keep your eyes open, this does not happen. But then, when you keep your eyes open, there are one or two disadvantages too: there may be many things lying around, or people sitting around you, and any little movement that they make may also disturb you. That is why I said that one way of doing it is to face the wall. Even then it probably does not give the feeling that you are meditating again, conditioning. We have conditioned ourselves that in prayer you put your head down, and in meditation you close your eyes, and unless these conditions are fulfilled, the mood does not develop. That is another problem; you see with how many problems we have hedged ourselves.

I have seen this myself. In a completely dark room in Rishikesh ashram, where even in daytime it is absolutely dark, I want to meditate and immediately my eyes close. Often when the eyes close, I burst into laughter, and say, 'Silly ass, what are you closing your the eyes against? Even with open eyes you still cannot see anything, there can be no distraction.' That shows the conditioning - with the eyes open the feeling does not arise, the mood does not build. So, apart from the external disturbances that open eyes may invite, there is also this inner problem that, till I close my eyes, I am not meditating. If you can see each problem as it arises, you are also able to see a solution to it. So, if external objects disturb you, face the wall; and, while I face the wall, I make sure there are no distractions on the wall itself. Or, this I found very beneficial and pleasant, focus the eye just in front of your knee.

Choose a point just a few inches ahead of you, the head slightly tilted forwards; and as you look at the spot in front of your knee, listen to your breathing, and see if you can visualize in the region of your heart a figure, the flame of a candle, or a flower, whatever you feel like. In this there is no strain, the eyes can be kept open for centuries, and they do not blink. The only problem is drowsiness, and the eyelids close - they do not ask you for permission. I prefer this when it is possible. The eyes should not be focused on something outside, otherwise you are staring; the eyes are open, but looking within. There is no strain, nothing at all - but one must have a complete picture of all the problems in one, not just one-sided.

Kim: How is weakness of will possible? Means, I want to do something, I can do it, but I do not. No, not that you want to do something, but you think you ought to do something.

Swami: Ah, now you have answered your own question. You think you ought to do it, you can do it, but you do not want to do it. That is perfect will power. When I think I ought to do this, and when I know I can do it, but I do not want to do it, and so I do not do it, then I have perfect will power. Then you can resist the whole world which says you ought to do it.

Question: Over-eating is my big problem, and I hate myself if I do put on extra weight, I feel terrible, and yet ...

Swami: I do not want to over-eat. So, therefore I do not over-eat.

Questioner: Yes, one part of me thinks like that, but the other part wants to over-eat.

Swami: Why does it want to over-eat? When I am not hungry, why do I eat? The fact again is that I eat. Obviously I like to eat. I do not want to, but I like to. Part of me says, I do not want to over-eat, and part of me says, I like it.

I think sometimes digging into all these things, we confuse the issue, and we get lost. It is like smokers. First of all, when they say, 'I do not want to smoke', it is not because they do not want to smoke, but because somebody told them that if you smoke you will have lung cancer. Now, if you go and ask that person who says he wishes he could give up smoking, why he wants to give it up, he says, 'You know, the doctor says it is bad, etc.' It is always 'somebody else says'. I would definitely not give up something just because somebody else says I should. But if I hate the smell of tobacco, or it makes me sick, then I would immediately give it up. When a person says, 'I ought to do this', it is not he who is saying it, but a ghost saying through him. That does not work. So that, the day that you are totally convinced over-eating is bad for you, then that day the eating will drop. Convinced in the sense of wholeness.

Again the same biblical commandment, 'Whatever we do, we do with our heart

and soul and with our might, etc.' That is yoga. A reason why, if you read some of the Indian scriptures, you come across a paradoxical situation, in which Krishna is hated by someone, and yet that person attains salvation. Some girls think Krishna is a lovely boy, and they also get salvation. Good Heavens, is there no moral standard? I must be devoted to God, and this fellow hates him and he also goes to Heaven! Probably he goes first. It is said in the scripture called Bhagavatam, that most of the people who hated Krishna went to Heaven first, because they were killed by him. The friends came behind, so they go there later. It is when your whole heart, your whole being loves, hates, or whatever it is, then that is already yoga. Yoga is whole, complete integration. If you over-eat and enjoy with every cell of your being, you are the greatest yogi on earth - an eating yogi, maybe, but that is still a yogi. We do not do this at all, that is why we have this sort of conflict. My whole being does not do it, my whole being does not see this, my whole being does not accept this.

Questioner: Well, I realize that it is something that I have to work out by myself, but what I want to know is, can there be any help, any guidance?

Swami: Yes, there can be some vague guidance, a guidance which may enable you to see that 'I only think I ought to do this'. The brain says, 'You ought to do this'. But the heart says, 'Oh, no, this is lovely'. And this is strange again, to come back to this smoking - which you will be able to understand because you are not involved in it - if you are involved with it, it creates a problem. I am smoking. The doctor comes and tells me that if I do not stop now, I will have lung cancer next year: Probably two years to live. I see his point: but how do I see his point? Only with my brain, no other part of my being cooperates in it. 'Oh, well, that doctor has all sorts of degrees, so I think he must be right.' In other words, I think he may be right. If you chase your own thoughts, you will find how slippery they are. First I think he must be right, but even that is doubtful. He may be right. Perhaps.

That means resistance is building up. Even the brain is not really convinced, because there is a great desire to go on with the smoking. I have faced this problem on other counts, in other spheres of activity. Then, in this battle between the head and the heart, the heart comes up. And as it comes up, it does not sort of silence the brain and take over, but along with the blood, which is being circulated to the brain, I suppose it also pumps some ideas. I say, 'You know, I am not smoking very heavily, two packets a day is nothing. Other people smoke much more. And then I have discovered on previous occasions that if I do not smoke, I put on weight and become bad-tempered. And the cigarette burns up all the extra flesh. And, most important of all, I cannot go to the toilet without a couple of cigarettes. Considering all this, I still think that the doctor may be right, so I will cut down. I am smoking four packets a day; I will cut down by four cigarettes.' A little bit of cough comes and still I do not want to give up. Suddenly my philosophy helps me there. 'After all, a man is going to die in any case.' With the blood that the heart pumps into the brain it mixes all these ingredients; a few pragmatic reasons why it should be continued, a few philosophical reasons why it

is nothing terribly serious - everybody dies, people who do not smoke also die.

So, that this is the problem - a terrible conflict between one's ideas and one's emotional acceptance. And because we have not first of all distinguished between an emotional craving and a natural appetite, we do not know where we are going; we swing like a pendulum. We say that we do not have the strength of will - strength of will will not be there till your whole being acts. When your whole being acts, nothing in the world can stand in front of you. Nothing.

Swami: That famous question. Does this inner revolution come in an instant or does it take a period of time? Samadhi or super-consciousness - is it instantaneous or does it happen over a long period of time? Let me ask another question. Death - does it come in an instant or does it creep up over a long period of time? There are two points of view; one which says that everything adds up to that moment and another which says all this does not matter, it is the moment of enlightenment that matters, it is that moment of death that matters. Each one uses a different logic. One can say that, minus the preparation, enlightenment would not have taken place; and one can say that, in spite of all that preparation, you are still not there. For instance, you can imagine a deep well which is ten feet in diameter. Someone says, 'Can you jump across that well?', and I say, 'I can jump four feet'. But my friend says, 'I can jump seven'. But that is still not good! So, unless you are there, you are not there.

Question: How can you know you are conquering your bad habits?

Swami: You cannot. If you know, you are not conquering. If you think you are conquering, you are not conquering, you are only substituting one for the other. A Swami in India used to smoke a lot, and even during lectures he used to light a cigarette. Someone advised him that he was becoming a very good speaker and people were looking up to him, but they would object to the smoking. So he dropped the cigarette. But still he wanted tobacco, so he started snuffing. That may satisfy others, but it is of no value to you. We can go to the other extreme. You can have six terrible bad habits - you have conquered the first, the second, the third, the fourth, you know you have conquered these; but now you will become such a vicious demon, going about knocking everybody, 'Hey drop this. You know, I gave away this and I dropped this, etc. What a silly man you are!' He has not dropped anything. He has merely substituted terrifically bloated ego for all the other bad habits. He might just as well have kept those. At least he would not come and knock me.

Question: But if, as long as you can remember, you have had that habit, surely you can recognize whether you have not got that habit any more?

Swami: That is a very ticklish problem. If you remember that you once had it, and that you have got over it, it shows that it is still somewhere as a shadow, and the shadow can assume ghostly proportions. Take for instance, I give up smoking because all these wonderful men say that it is going to ruin my health or it is

unspiritual, it is dirty, or whatever it is, and then, after about fifteen or twenty years all these doctors get together again and say that tobacco is the greatest tonic for cholesterol or something like that. I would become a chimney the next morning. But she still would not smoke because her whole being rebels against it, does not accept it. But, because I still have that as a shadow somewhere in the subconscious, it will come out. So, the only revolution that is real is the revolution in which you have completely forgotten the other thing. It does not exist for you, exactly the same way as your childhood habits are completely gone.

It is a conscious process which sinks into the subconscious; because, if it is conscious, you have no conscious approach to it. I am only feeling that if you are able to meditate really and deeply, you are becoming conscious of the conscious layer of the mind. And as you look at it closely - it was muddy to begin with, veiled, the intensity of your own observation clarifies it; and as this layer becomes clear and therefore transparent, the next layer becomes clear to you, comes into your observation. That is what you call subconscious, but it is no longer subconscious to me. I can see it, because the top layer became transparent; and then therefore, I am observing that. As I observe that, the muddiness of that goes away, and it becomes transparent too. And, therefore, I can go deep down. But at no time can I tell myself that I have influenced the subconscious or unconscious. No. To me it is conscious. Therefore, when the yogi says, 'I am even conscious of the unconscious levels', it is not as though they are unconscious to him. No. Once the whole being is changed, there is not even a memory of what happened. When you come back to the old habit and look at it, it does not have any meaning for you.

Swami: If I am either a primitive man or a child and pick this book up, probably I will lick it, and smell it, and shake it; stimulating the sense of taste, touch, smell, and sound, and creating a nerve impulse. According to science, all these impulses are being conveyed by different channels to different centres of the brain, and possibly there is a coordinating centre - but they are still mere vibrations. Where and how does the word 'book' get found? Is the question clear to everybody? It is a serious problem.

Eric Atkinson: We must have in us a type of pattern which enables us to put different sensations together, and form a whole. That potential must be there. Just what we choose to call the whole, I suppose, must be learned from experience. I do not think a child or primitive person would know that was a book, or it might not even experience it as a whole.

Tony: It is the conglomeration of the squareness of the book and a few other characteristics like the feel of the paper, which make us say 'That is a book'. But it requires that we associate all things under one label.

Swami: I am not going that far. Mine is an immediate problem. I am not looking to the past, to memory, where I learned that this is a book, who taught me, etc. The present immediate problem is that the moment I look at it and say, 'Ah, it is a book', do I know where exactly the word 'book' was shaped or formed? To put it more crudely, I see it is a book, but if I close my eyes and rattle it, I do not see it is a book, because the ears can only convey the sound and not the form - I hear the sound, and not the book. Now, I do not hear, but I touch, I feel it. It is not a question of association. I do not want to think about how I learned and from whom I learned. I look at it and immediately the word is formed - 'book'. Whereas these are merely vibrations, I do not see them as vibrations - I see, or I become aware of the word 'book'.

Using this television analogy, what is received by the television condenser are light and sound vibrations, but the condenser is able to transform the whole thing into a picture that is projected on the screen. You do not see the vibrations there, you see the picture. In exactly the same way there is somewhere where all these are transformed. The same thing with the telephone - a certain vibration makes a sound, and that sound you hear as a word. I see this, I hear this, I smell this, I taste this, they are all coordinated in me; and somewhere I have something like a condenser that produces the word 'book'. Is it possible for any of us to become conscious of this? If we can, then we can actually know the source of thought.

Yesterday during the silence, we nearly got to the source of emotion - that is what everybody said. All of us said, 'We got to know emotion'. 'I was not annoyed, I could see annoyance.' 'I was not worried, I could see worry.' 'I was not upset, I could see the upset coming along.' In the same way, is it possible for me to see a

word being formed, a thought being formed? It is an immediate problem, Sir, I am not referring to the memory or the association. Can I see the consciousness as it is now, and see this word popping up - 'book'?

This is a remarkable and wonderful exercise in meditation, when you get bored with the conventional methods. Look at anything, and try to look within and see where the word or the concept or the idea arises in me. Can I see the arising of the idea, that this is a man, this is woman? It is obviously an idea, isn't it? Whether it is a new idea or a revival of a memory, it is an idea. Where is it born? In other words, it might be a sort of a bridge between psychology and physiology. Physiology takes us up to the point when it says that all these sense organs receive the stimuli and transmit to the brain, where a certain chemical change is effected. There it leaves you. Psychology starts from a little bit of distance away, starts with thinking. It assumes the subtle process by which the chemical change or the electrical change becomes thought, a word. What is this? This is what I cannot understand.

Eric: The only thing I can say is that during experimentation they have removed whole areas of the brain, and the person should not be able to form a concept any more, but they do form concepts. It is remarkable how much can be removed.

Swami: Did you hear that? So, you can think without brain.

Eric: Not entirely.

Swami: No, no, no. It is beautiful, Sir, because there is a part in the Katho Upanishad, 'He thinks without a brain, he acts without limbs, he walks without legs, he sees without eyes, he speaks without tongue, he hears without ears'. It is beautiful, sir. I have never heard that.

Eric: Any attempt to locate these things entirely in one area of the brain fails, as far as the thinking processes are concerned, or the ability to form concepts, because the brain, or whatever it is, seems to be able to overcome it, to compensate.

Swami: But even if we take the brain as a whole, even in the abstract, how does this chemical change which is supposed to be taking place in the brain get converted into a word or a thought or a concept?

Eric: I think that the two must really be one. Physiological or chemical or electrical change is only one manifestation of the same thing. Just as the subjective experience is another manifestation of the thought or word.

Swami: If you look at someone and watch ... That he is Mr Patel is memory - I am not talking about that - this is a form, a human being. Where does this thought occur? I can see, too, that it is probably like this looking at this end, it is a man, looking at that end, it is some chemical change; but I still cannot see why it

appears as a chemical change here, and as a word here. I cannot see this taking place. If I can see it taking place, then I can look at him and neutralize the chemical there, so that I do not see him as him any more.

We are not omniscient, and some of these problems probably do not have an answer - probably there is no verbalized answer. But if you follow this, something very interesting emerges, probably things are not what they appear to be. I still remember an extreme shock and surprise I had. I met a man about thirty years ago; he was far more handsome and better qualified and better than I am in every way. He had married the girl I had rejected as absolutely impossible - I thought she was too ugly for any boy to fall in love with. I looked at her. What did he see in her? So, we do not see what is; this much is clear. Beyond that, probably each one will have to find out. We do not see things as they are. I see, but can I see an object without projecting myself out? Therefore, if you accept that as inevitable, then it is also inevitable that you can never see the world as it is.

Eric: Yes, we know that the table is a lot of moving molecules. And if our eyes were sensitive to different things, X-ray for example, we would see through people. Walking skeletons.

Kim: But this does not alter anything about our normal belief, though. It does not mean that when I put my cup on the table, it will fall through, because the molecules are moving, or something. It does not alter anything.

Swami: 'That' is the point. 'That' is the reason why we have remained stupid all the time; and that is why the Indian mystics called this whole process maya - delusion. Because it works, I do not want to do anything more. This is nothing unusual. When, for instance, after all his discoveries and so on, Einstein was questioned, 'Do you mean that all the other scientists were fools?', he said, 'No, no. Up to a point Newtonian physics is valid. It works.' That is all. That is all we want. We do not want the truth, but we want to assure ourselves that it works. Even so, voodoo works for these witchcraft people. It works. Why do you want to do anything further?

Kim: When we say, 'The sun rose this morning,' we do not say that statement is false, because the sun is stationary and it is the earth that is rotating.

Swami: But so far as we are concerned, that statement is meaningful, and it works.

Kim: It does not just work, it is true, It seems to be true.

Swami: It seems to be true. And in this lovely sentence, you have cancelled one word with the other. It is not true because it seems - it does not seem because it is true. Is that right? The phenomenon of rising only seems to be; but the sun is true. So, we say, 'It seems to be true'. And it works. You can tell people that the sun rose at 5.52 this morning, so we are able to communicate on the basis of this

untruth, or what seems to be true, and we go on. Now to come back to this problem again. Is it possible for me to see the world as it is, not as it seems to be?

You know the famous saying of Jesus, 'Unless you become like little children, you cannot enter the kingdom of Heaven'. I do not think Jesus referred to children like us; he probably referred to babies in the crib. We still do not know what were the exact words of Jesus; we are only told translations and translations. The same question I asked a German couple, a doctor and his wife. I had been to Munich and I came back a year later and my hosts had a baby by that time, and they were happy to show it off. It was about three or four weeks old, I think. There was this curiosity in me: what does this baby see? When you stand in front of that baby, what does it see? I asked the mother - she was a doctor's wife and a very clever woman. What does the baby see? It is not conditioned at all. At least that is what we think. That is our conditioning. The baby does not know that I am a living thing, and, something very interesting, it does not even see three dimensions. Then I asked her, 'What do you think the baby sees?', and she replied, 'The baby sees the difference between light and shade, and, on the basis of it, a moving object.' She had every reason to say what she thought was true, because she had had a few babies. We do not know whether the baby sees light and shade or movement.

Eric: They have tested the degree of discrimination on things like drawings of faces, to see if the baby responds - how much detail is required, etc. I cannot say off-hand what age goes with what particular response. There are degrees of discrimination for different ages.

Swami: But even this after five or six months probably.

Eric: No, earlier than that.

Swami : If we can reach even to that stage, it would be marvellous. Can you see the point? Then my preferences, my admiration, my condemnation, my ideas of good and evil - all these things disappear, and probably we draw closer to the truth: to what is, rather than what it appears to me. You know, when you say it seems or it appears, it is very clever. We are terribly clever people. I do not know about wise or not, we are probably foolish, but terribly clever. We use the word appearance as if it is unrelated to me. 'This is an appearance.' It is not an appearance, except in relation to me. Is that right? I have a famous notorious example. Take the case of a young woman. When I say 'young woman', I say it because I am older than she is. Her own son is not going to call her a young woman, and the husband calls her something else. If I go into a zoo, and the woman is mauled by a lion, the lion does not think she is a young woman or a mother or a wife; to him she is lunch. Do you understand me? That is why lions kill man without involving any sin - because it is not killing, it is merely eating his lunch.

So an appearance is not independent of me - it is there only because it is related

to me. And, therefore, it is more my projection than the other way round. This is the battle in meditation. Can I stop - bad word, but there is no other to give the meaning - the arising of all these thoughts, so that, in my own life, I may not relate all these things to me, to my advantage, to suit my convenience, and again go as far as possible towards the discovery of the truth: what it is and not what it appears to me to be.

We can only touch the fringe of the problem, not go very deep into it. For instance, when you meet someone towards whom you have a built-in hostility, you say, 'Oh, no. The hostility is from me. I see you as a baby sees.' The baby has no hostility, no revulsion at all, just a neurological response. If you bring the baby's hand near a hot iron, it takes it away - purely an animal response. But beyond that, 'He is a bad man', 'He is my enemy', 'He is my friend', are all my own projections. If what we have been discussing so far is meaningful, then it is possible to overcome these mental aberrations, and live a free life.

Kim: What is left of the book after you take away all these things that we project?

Swami: Beautiful question. The truth, the reality.

Kim: Yes, but what sort of thing could that be? What should be left?

Swami: Who answers that question ? you are asking what is the logical conclusion. Conclusion of logic. A logical conclusion is not the last argument. That is what we have mistaken it to be. Whenever we use the two words 'logical conclusion', we are merely suggesting that it is the last step in this argument. That is not true; 'logical conclusion' means conclusion of logic. Drop the logic, and see what it is.

So again, we are stuck here. Are we interested in truth, what I regard as truth, or are we satisfied with words?

Tony: How could Patanjali say then that there is a difference between right knowledge and wrong knowledge?

Swami: Unfortunately these words are not translatable. This is not really 'right knowledge', but accepted statement or testimony, proof. Wrong knowledge is its opposite; everybody calls this 'book', so that is right; but if I called it 'a piece of cake', it is wrong knowledge. It may be cake. For instance, a donkey may be very fond of eating books; so far as a donkey is concerned, it is still a cake. But since it goes against the accepted meaning, it is called wrong knowledge. In yoga, even right knowledge is not valid. It is also a vritti, a mental modification; it is also a wave; and that has also got to be removed. You cannot say, 'This is a book and I am meditating on a book and so I consider the book is the truth'. No, it is not the truth. That this is book, is what one might call right knowledge. But I am not there, I am not there yet.

That little baby, as it grows up - if you will forgive my rudeness - answers the call of nature and makes a mess of itself, spreads it with its hands and might even lick it, because it has no distinction between that and food. As the baby grows up, he is socialized - toilet training, table manners, etc., a beautiful word for conditioned! He is made to realize that this is acceptable behaviour, that is unacceptable behaviour. So, as the baby begins to grow, you are introducing into it these concepts of right and wrong knowledge. And all these over the years accumulate so much that you and I are no longer free. If you go to India and stay in an ashram for six months or so, they would hound you if you lay down like this in a satsang. That socialization has not taken place in you. So, it is all right here. So, conditioning upon conditioning. It goes on and on and on, till we come to the impossible state of regarding the whole world as divided into two camps. This is right, this is wrong; this is good, this is evil; this is right knowledge, this is wrong knowledge.

What is this book? Why must I consider it a book. It is only paper. There was a little boy about four or five years old. One day we were driving in Mauritius and we were going on top of a hill - from there you could see the ocean. The mother said, 'Look son, the ocean'. He said, 'It is not the ocean, it is water'. So, we do not see the water, we only see ocean. We do not see a man, we only see a good man, a bad man, a handsome man, an ugly man, etc. It is all the time with adjectives - right knowledge, wrong knowledge. So, right knowledge or wrong knowledge, both of them are vrittis, thoughts. Each one of these thoughts - we are not going to the root that we were discussing earlier - is nothing more than a revival of memory. I see this - not him - and immediately one of those memory cell sparks, 'Oh, Mr Patel'. Because I am completely dependent upon that memory, revival of the memory cell, and because again, as you said, it works. I call him Mr Patel, he responds. You see the arguing in a circle. Somebody made him respond to the call, 'Patel', and now I call him Mr Patel, he turns round; and because he turns round, I say 'That is true'. It is not true! If his mother had not demanded that he should respond to Patel, he would not respond even now. Is that clear? So, now I am taking advantage of this conditioning; but without seeing that it is a matter of conditioning, I will say that this is true, because it works. So, even wrong knowledge works. This is wrong knowledge; but because it works, I call it right knowledge. So, whether you call it right knowledge or wrong knowledge, it is merely poking up.

Kim: The point that you are making is all true to language.

Swami: No, that is it. That is what we decided earlier. It is not a matter of language, it is a matter of what happens within you,

What is left after this wave called right knowledge and this other wave called wrong knowledge - both are waves - have subsided? The question was, 'Is right knowledge something to be clung to, because it is right?' No. First we make it right, and then we call it right.

3

Swami: During meditation and pranayama, there are two points of attention. Either you can concentrate on the heart area, or on the head. If you concentrate on the heart, there is not much tension; but when you focus your attention on the head, tension can build up. When you look into your heart, even the eyeballs tend to move down, and there is a feeling of relaxation. But, while thinking deeply, or during meditation, or in pranayama, if one's attention is fixed on the physical heart - especially if that person has what is known as a heart condition, then it is possible that the heart's action may be accelerated, causing difficulty. In order to avoid this, they said, 'This is only the physical heart. The spiritual heart is on your right side.'

I do not think we have a clear knowledge of what happens - what role the heart plays in thinking. Whether it is this heart, or the figurative use of the heart - meaning the essence, not the organ, the heart in metaphysics or in philosophy means the core, the essence. So, each cell of my being got a heart. When they say, 'ishvara sarvabhutaanam hrddeshajuna tisthati, that that means, 'God dwells in the heart of all beings'. That means only here - touching heart. What about here - touching the stomach? God dwells in the heart, so I am quite happy. At heart, I am peaceful and happy, noble, holy. But God does not dwell in the stomach. So I can push anything I like into it! And, also, if God dwells only in the heart, he is not omnipresent. So, there you have to understand it in a different sense, that is - in the heart of all beings, in the heart of the whole universe.

The yogis also have got more theories. There may be some little truth in all theories and beliefs - and a lot of muck and nonsense. We cannot throw the baby out with the bath water; only throw out what you do not want, and keep the rest. They divide the mind into four parts - they do not call it the mind, they call in the inner instrument: manas, chitta, buddhi and ahamkara. The manas according to this classification is merely a coordinating instrument; that is sense of sight, hearing, touch, smell and so on. All bring various impressions, vibrations, from outside. There must be a faculty within me which coordinates all these things, so that, if you smell some incense, you are looking for an incense stick. The eye sees that, the nose smells this, and you put all these things together. There the job of the manas ends the whole thing is coordinated, so its job is over.

Then, it is the function of the faculty of chitta to dig up the records and link it up. 'Ah, this is Mysore incense stick.' It merely links the past impressions or memory on the records. In other words, this irritates your throat, this helps your meditations factual information - there is no value judgement here. This whole lot is transferred to the third category, what they call the buddhi. Buddhi seems to be a sort of minister who says, 'Yes, this is good, this is not good', because each of these experiences has some element that is good and some element that is bad, some advantage and some disadvantage. Who is going to decide? Who is going even to recommend what is desirable to be done? Chitta presents the whole evidence to buddhi, and buddhi makes this recommendation, 'Well under these

circumstances it may be done.' Then the whole lot is presented with the minister's recommendations to the chief, the boss, ahamkara. Ahamkara is the ego principle and the ego principle says, 'Right, we will do it'. Is this clear? This is the whole picture of action. All this takes place at about 10,000 revolutions per minute. It is not as though it takes a long time.

Having given this classification, the yogis even went to the extent of locating them - some of these fellows seem to have been geniuses! They say that manas, the coordinating faculty, is in the mid-brain. After receiving all these messages, this manas pumps it down to the chitta, the memory, the store-house of memory, the chitta. All this is stored in the chitta, which is always associated with the heart, and then, after having been linked to all the previous experiences and so forth, it is pushed up to buddhi. Here the yogis and the psychologists who say the cerebral cortex is the thing that gives you the judgement value, seem to be very close together, because the yogi says that the buddhi is on top of the brain, absolutely on top. Also there is a remarkable superstitious custom. I do not know if any of you have noticed this if you have been to a Ganesha temple in India. There, especially in South India, there is a specific way in which the God of Wisdom, Ganesha, should be bowed to. You must tap the top of your head. It is a first class brain stimulant - or a cerebral cortex stimulant, a buddhi stimulant.

The ahamkara principle is back in the heart again. So, when you say, 'I', you point to the heart, not the head. So, there seems to be this constant telephonic conversation between these - the head and the heart. And also there is a type of rational feeling here, which short circuits the whole process, the chitta handing the whole thing over straight to the ego - spontaneous activity or impulsive activity, which is probably not a very wise thing to do. You know this; you have a feeling and immediately you react without the discrimination, or the buddhi coming into it. It is very good to watch after all. These are theories, yes? The yogis have some theories, the psychologists have some theories, the metaphysicians have some theories. But it is up to us to watch and see what goes on.

Michael: The process of the moment of inspiration ...

Swami: The process of the moment of inspiration is the conclusion of the expiration. No inspiration can come as long as you have got some dirty air in your lungs or your brain; so, unless you empty yourself, there is no inspiration. It generally comes to people who rearrange their mental furniture, that is all. The same junk is there. You know, people go for change. I used to go for change in my own room in Rishikesh. The one room was my living room, working room, bedroom, prayer room, meditation room, everything. I had no choice - that was the room allotted to me in the ashram. Then I used to do something interesting, and there was inspiration in that. When I got bored, dull, I would suddenly make up my mind and change the room around. You feel you can work for a few more days, you feel fresh - a big change has come into the room. That is what we are doing all the time. We merely rearrange the mental furniture, and think we have inspiration.

Michael: Do you mean a re-stimulation? by the rearrangement?

Swami: Probably you are right there. It is only re-stimulation, there is no inspiration there.

Michael: : The answer is there, it is a matter of unlocking it?

Swami: Now that you used the word 'unlocking', I think that may also be right - I have never thought about it before in this fashion, you may be right here. Probably when you have got all this locked up, it begins to stink like a closed room; so, open it and go away, and then maybe inspiration will come.

Michael: Is this when most people get it, by going right away? It is considered as a problem. A solution, or a factor has to be found and there is forceable attempt to find it. They move away from it, or rearrange.

Swami: Rearrangement is only re-stimulation. You get nothing from rearrangement. You get nothing from re-stimulation.

Michael: Change the external stimulus?

Swami: I am still the same. Instead of smoking, I snuff.

Anita: Sometimes, if something is really bothering you, and you cannot see the wood for the trees, and you go and do something else ...

Swami: You are the wood and you are the trees and you are the confusion. You cannot go away from yourself. Try, madam. You will go and do the same thing elsewhere. I can see that if I am in mud or in filth, I can come out and wash my feet; so, it is possible to get out of the situation; but then you cannot get out of yourself. You are the problem - the problem is you, you are creating the problem. And till this self is emptied, you cannot get away from yourself.

I will tell you a true story, and I am sure that if all of us have intellectual and spiritual honesty, we will see this thing happening to us. In 1948, I went on a pilgrimage to the Himalayas with four or five others. We had to walk up and down on foot for about four hundred miles; it took about twenty days, ten days to go, ten days to come. We had to carry our own gear, not very much, but it all had to be carried up and down hills. We felt finished. But then that inspiration was there, that we were going to see the Badri Narayan. This shrine is in the heart of the Himalayas, surrounded by the eternal snow line, miserably cold; but such is the beauty of nature that in that freezingly cold place there was a warm spring hot, boiling hot water springs from the earth. I am quite sure that, but for that, not many people would come to the temple. So, as soon as we got there, we said we would have a bath in that warm spring, and go into the temple. There was one Swami in our party to whom the place was quite familiar; every summer he would

go there and spend some time. So, to him it was not so much of an inspiration; it was like coming home, there was nothing unusual or exciting about it. We had only two changes of clothes, shirt and so on, and the other one was dirty; so, as soon as we reached that place he said, 'Oh, I have some soap here, and the water is hot, let us first wash our clothes too. Be clean and neat. There was a big pool which was being fed by a smaller one. The smaller one, nobody bathed in; so he tried to wash his clothes there with the help of the hot water, banging the clothes on the stone outside. The caretaker to that place - a very nice man who was probably a paid employee of the temple, but because he dealt with Swamis and devotees, was quite gentle and kind, came to him and said quite politely, 'Swamji, you are not allowed to wash your clothes here'. The Swami was sitting like this and washing, and he just looked at him and sprang, 'Who are you to tell me?' 'I am a Swami, etc. ...' I was bathing there and I looked at this scene, 'Oh ho, you can come from Perth to Rishikesh, you are going to Heaven. But if you go there, you are going from Hell, and that Hell is taken with you'. Immediately they started beating each other. It was supposed to be a very holy place.

This happens to all of us - we carry our nature wherever we go. It is our nature that created the problem in the home or office or wherever it was. If only I could take my personality and hang it on the clothes-line and then go away, it would be wonderful. You could get new inspiration. But you are carrying your own junk. The same dustbin, the same garbage. Carrying this garbage wherever we go, why does it smell here also? It is here - neither the smell nor the inspiration comes from outside. It is here, in you. You cannot hang up your personality on the line; so, you must be watchful.

If you sleep on a problem, or meditate on it, it can help. Just as I said, if you are standing in mud, you can pull your foot out and wash it. But unless you realize that it is my foot that needs washing, you will never keep it clean. We do not do that, we do not wash our foot; we try to clean that mud; we want to empty the pond of that mud, we want to change others. No, that is not possible. If we had a domestic war, it is not as if I were mad, it is my husband who was mad, my wife who was mad. Then you are not washing your own foot, you are trying to clear the mud there. That you can never do, your foot will still be full of mud. Wherever you go, you will soil things. It is no use saying, 'I washed the mud there, why did it come here?' Till you go and wash your own feet, this will keep on happening.

Kim: Does all evil arise from ignorance?

Swami: It is like: 'Does God exist?' It is not a relevant question, because what exists is God. In the same way: 'Is all evil ignorance?' Ignorance is evil, isn't it? I do a thing that you call evil only because I am ignorant; that ignorance itself is evil. The moment the ignorance is gone, the evil is gone too.

Kim: In many religions the idea is not just like that, but there are actually two competing forces, God and the devil.

Swami: Devil is only 'of evil' as in French. Evil is ignorance, ignorance is evil. That evil is the veil of ignorance. When the ignorance is gone, your knowledge, your self-knowledge, acts spontaneously. That is what we were discussing yesterday.

Question: Swami, is most of the ego centred in the mind?

Swami: What is ego? And what is mind? I hope that this is what is happening during our morning meditation. You can even disturb the peace that you enjoy in your morning meditation to create this problem - it is a very serious problem. I see my mind, I see the thoughts arising; and when you are sitting there doing your japa, your mantra and so on, it seems to be so peaceful, beautiful - but it may be the peace of the grave, the whole attention is dead. It is of no use at all, we can go on for eternity. I see my mind, I see thoughts arise. How do I know I see thoughts arise? Because I can interrupt them. I am sitting here repeating my mantra, and visualizing the presence of God, and then I can see a few silly thoughts knocking here and there. As I see them, I can chop them off, 'No, I am not going to pursue that thought'. This kind of battle goes on for a little while, you can enjoy a sort of peace. But that is dullness, drowsiness. At that time it is good to awaken oneself with this question: 'If I am seeing the mind, who is I?' Naturally, if you ask this question a bit more seriously, you will find that the peace of your meditation has been disturbed. The peace of your meditation is gone, but it is very good for you - you will be at least awake, not go to sleep.

The 'I' is born of ignorance, and it thrives in ignorance so long as we do not bother to ask the right question: 'Who is this I?' And because we do not bother to ask this right question, this shadow of the 'I', the ego, continues to be and it rules all of our life. I am right, you are wrong; I am this, you are something different. And it goes on and on, till we turn the search-light of truth upon this 'I' itself. And suddenly realize - realize - that the 'I' itself is just a thought.