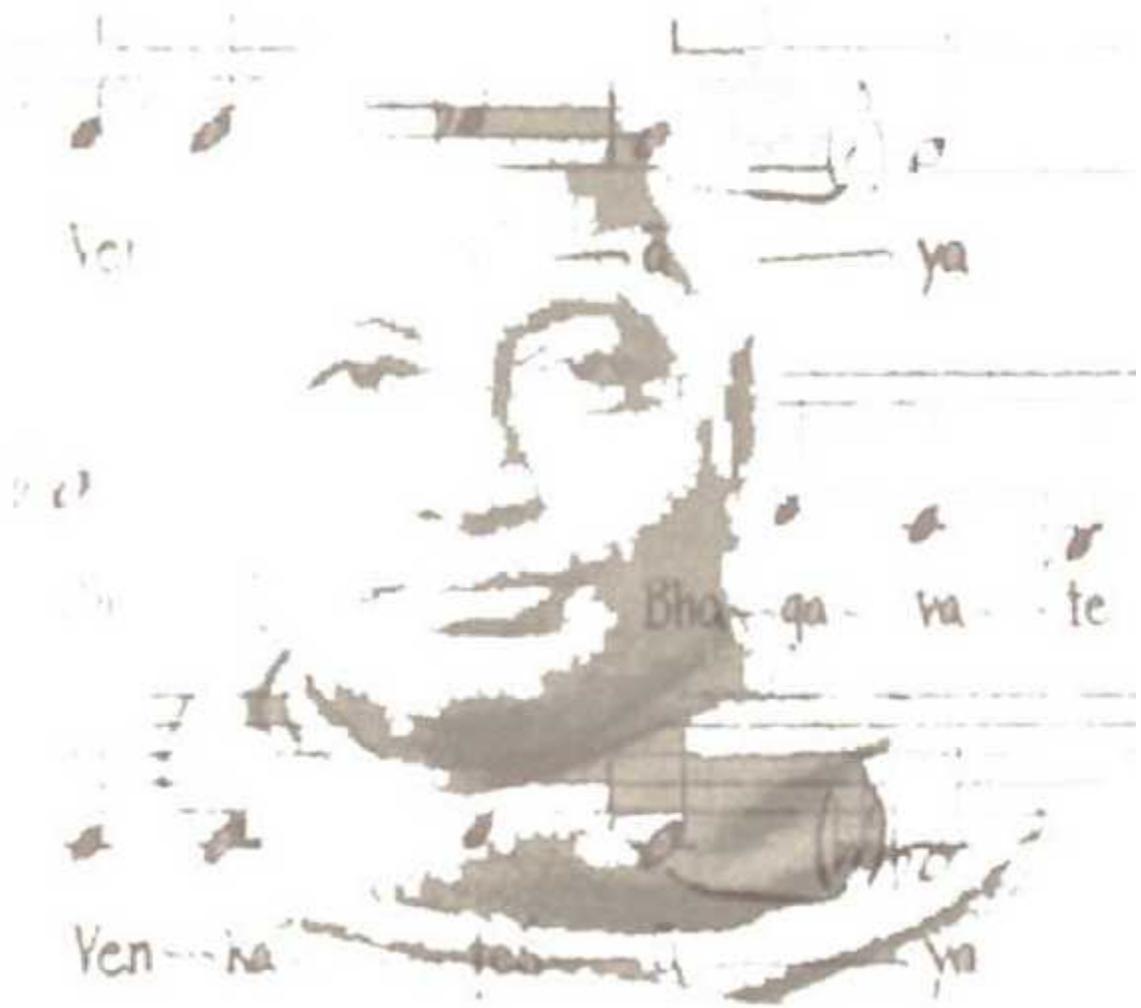


# Talks on YOGA

( FIRST SERIES )



SWAMI VENKATESANANDA



Om Namah Venkatesaya  
Om Namah Shivaya

Talks on Yoga  
1st series  
Talks on the  
Yoga Sutras of Patanjali

Swami Venkatesananda

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## Talks on The Yoga Sutras

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I suppose the name raja yoga came about to distinguish it from other yogas, because the author, Patanjali, does not call it that. He merely says, "So, let us now listen to instruction in yoga." Yoga anusasanam. Anusasanam is a beautiful expression - sasanam is almost a commandment, but 'anusasanam' is a piece of advice - take it or leave it - there is no compulsion here. This is also in the concluding chapter of the Bhagavad Gita where Krishna the teacher tells his disciple Arjuna, "I have told you what is right. Think about it and do what comes natural to you".

Yoga philosophy is not something you apply - like cosmetics - to mask something which you do not want other people to see. It cannot be applied, but has to grow out of you - like hair grows out of you, and make you what you are. The food that we eat is assimilated, it is no longer bread, tomato and carrot, but it becomes 'as similar' to me; and, in this way, the teaching must be assimilated. Nor can you listen to it and then make up your mind. You know, 'make-up my mind' is another funny expression. You can make up your face - put on some powder, rouge and lipstick, because you can see your face. But how do you make up your mind if you do not even know what your mind is? Because I don't know what the mind looks like, nor where it is, I cannot 'make-up' my mind to follow the teaching, and I cannot 'apply' the teaching.

The teaching must grow out of me, because it has been assimilated - it has become me. This cannot be forced upon anyone. Here, the procedure is exactly the same as consuming food. The food for the stomach enters the mouth, and the food for the antahkarana - the subtle inner being - enters through the ears and the eyes. If you try swallowing something without chewing it, the stomach will throw it up or quickly eliminate it. Even so, unchewed spiritual food is a menace. If what I hear or read is gulped down without being chewed, then it also comes out of the mouth or escapes through the other ear! Either you hear through one ear and then, without it being processed, it goes out the other ear - we forget about it; or if you like to be a lecturer, you hear and you read, and as soon as the thought enters - not even as an idea or a concept - it immediately comes out through the mouth, and then the circle is over. Then you don't remember later on what you said, read or heard! We had a wonderful friend in India who used to say that these people are 'eustachian' philosophers. It is a nice expression! There is a eustachian tube which connects the ear with the throat.

Some suggested that we do this partly, because of our anxiety to put things into practice, to act upon what we have heard, and to apply it to our life. But 'applying' teachings doesn't work. The teaching has first to be heard - sravana; secondly, reflected upon - manana - you reflect upon what you heard and that teaching is reflected in you - you hold the mirror of your mind steady, so that the teaching that you heard is reflected. In order that it may reflect the teaching without distortion, the mirror must also be efficient, free from distortion and dirt, and it should be steady. All these are taught in yoga.

So, first of all, listen to the teaching; second, let it be reflected in you; and then it is assimilated - nidhidhyasana - so that the teaching that you heard becomes you. From there on the teaching, the truth itself acts, the instruction acts. I don't act in accordance with the instruction, otherwise I will make a mess of my life - just as if I learn cooking from a book. I turn the stove on and place a pot of milk on the stove. If it comes to the boil, I must go and look at the book. But before I can look at the book there is no milk left! That doesn't work. I must become the cookery book, like most of these Indian women do. If you ask them for the recipe, they say, "A little bit of salt, little bit of ghee and keep it for some time." How much time is some time? How little is little? How much is much? Their finger tips are sensitive. The cooking comes from their own sensitivity, not from the scales or the thermometer.

Here is instruction in yoga - yoga anusasanam - listen to it - let it be reflected in your heart and assimilated by you. Later, let this yoga, this teaching, this instruction, itself act. So, the author of the Yoga Sutras does not claim to be the authority, nor does he impose the teaching upon any one. It is only a piece of wholesome advice.

The text starts with a definition of yoga.

Yogas citta vrtti nirodhah

During the coming few nights we shall probably return to this again and again, because the three words used in this aphorism - sutra - are nearly impossible of direct translation. Yoga - do we know what yoga means? Of course we know, it means union. If you pick up a sanskrit dictionary, you might find an enormous number of meanings of the word yoga - not just 'union', 'harmony', or 'integration', but all these and a lot more. So let us leave that for the present. Citta vrtti nirodhah. These three words are almost impossible of easy translation. Citta has been translated into 'mind stuff'. Perhaps there is one person here who might understand what 'mind stuff' means. What is mind stuff? Citta. What is citta? Mind stuff. Back to square one! Citta is the mind stuff, conscious, unconscious, subconscious, superconscious, cosmic mind, non-cosmic mind, individualised mind, cosmic consciousness, cosmic intelligence - all of them put together.

The next word is vrtti - equally difficult to translate. It has been rendered into 'thought wave', or 'mental modification'. The more words you use, the more obscure the meaning becomes. The Yoga Sutras is just a small little text of 10-12 little pages. The language is not terribly difficult. It needs a couple of dictionaries and three pandits to explain the commentary to you. And then someone felt that the commentary was a little bit difficult to understand, and so wrote a glossary, and that is impossible to understand. Such is the problem.

What is a vrtti? Some have called it mental modification, some have called it thought waves, some have likened it to ripples on the surface of a lake. These are

words - but what is the meaning? In sanskrit, there is a lovely word called 'artha', which is taken to mean 'meaning'. The dictionary meaning is quite different from what is meant by the word artha. The dictionary gives synonyms or at best paraphrases, and it tries to explain by comparing this with something else, etc. When we talk of 'meaning', we usually imply an explanation or a paraphrase, but artha does not imply an explanation. If, for instance, the word 'shirt' is used in sanskrit, and you are asked to give the artha, you are asked to give a shirt, not say it is pieces of material cut up and sewn in a certain way. This is an explanation. I am not satisfied with that. Artha means the object itself. When the words citta and vrtti are used, what are the objects they stand for? Here is a tape-recorder, but what is citta, what is vrtti? We don't want explanations. That is the reason why this Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, a small little text, is almost like an atom bomb!

"Citta vrtti nirodhah". Even the word 'nirodhah' is very difficult to translate. It has been rendered into suppression, repression, and therefore has given rise to all sorts of misunderstanding - people justifying repression or suppression of all thoughts. How does one suppress thought? If you see me sitting here, you can jump on my shoulders and press me down, suppress me. But how do you suppress that which you don't even know or see? Then you create something within yourself, you begin to see. Ah, I am thinking of that ring now, so I am going to suppress this thought. What am I doing? I am not thinking - which means, I am thinking I am not thinking. What about that thought which says 'I am not thinking'? If I am not going to suppress the act of breathing or the circulation of blood, why must I suppress another natural faculty called thought? But the word nirodhah can also mean control. I can control the car, and therefore, in the same way, I can guide this thought. I can focus my attention, and I can direct my thought in a certain way - that may be what the word 'nirodhah' means. But, that is not all, because, unless I can come face to face with this thing called citta and this thing called vrtti, my efforts at controlling, suppressing or directing them is bound to be futile, if not dangerous. We will come back to it as we go on.

To vaguely help us, Patanjali gives us a landmark - tada drastuh svarupe avasthanam. 'When this 'citta vrtti nirodhah' has been achieved, then the seer or the experiencer remains pure, and unsullied, just as an experiencer'. If this yoga does not happen, then vrtti sarupyamitaratra - your mind is nothing but the prevailing vrtti. This yoga doesn't seem to happen to us, and therefore we recognise this state.

My Guru Swami Sivananda often used to ask if we know what vrtti is operating in our mind. Even during the discussion today we often used the words 'I think'. Do we know anything other than 'I think'? Whether it is explicitly said or implied, this 'I think' seems to form part of all our concepts, statements and experiences. For instance, I think there is some pain in my stomach. What exactly is this pain? It is a sensation, a message that the nerves convey to my brain. When, where, and how is it called pain? Because I think it is pain. Is it possible for me to think it is pleasure? Of course, yes. What is the next word that

occurs to most of you? But 'I think' it is difficult. Exactly! The mind is so conditioned by convention and tradition that, if this thing happens, it must be regarded as painful. If I do not admit it as pain, then people send me to a psychiatric clinic.

We had a lovely discussion in Los Angeles one night about this problem of pain and suffering, and the topic of the loss of near and dear ones cropped up. I asked a young lady, "What do you mean, 'lose' someone? Was that fellow your property?" She said, "No! But do you think it is natural for us to mourn?" Then I told her the story of a wonderful person in India who didn't mourn when the husband died, even though she loved him dearly while he was alive. This young lady said, "You are right. But then you know, if my husband died, and I didn't weep and wail and mourn, people would think I am crazy, or I didn't love him, or I killed him." So, it is a convention. Even if I hated this man and he died, I am supposed to go into mourning.

So, what is pain? Pain is what 'I think' is pain. At the time of experiencing, this pain the experience is real - not as pain, but the experience in itself is real. Since I have conditioned myself to thinking 'this is painful', I experience pain. The experience is not pure. In the same way, something that is painful according to me, is pleasure to somebody else. The purity of the experiencing is lost and the prevailing thought becomes your experience. The mind says, "This is pain", and returns to it and experiences the same thing as pain; the mind says, "This is pleasure", and returns to it and experiences pleasure. This is almost totally unrelated to the experiencing itself, which may be totally neutral. I can give you an example. A young lady is sitting in the hall, and there are a few young men around in the audience. She feels somebody tickling her from behind. That's pure and simple experience, there is nothing pleasurable nor painful. If it is her husband, she is delighted, but if it is not the husband but somebody else, she is upset. The thing was the same, the experiencing was the same - but in one case the mind says it is pleasure and enjoys it, and in another case the mind says it is pain, and therefore it suffers pain. Our whole life is made up of nothing but thinking it is pain and experiencing pain, thinking it is pleasure and experience pleasure.

When we have not understood at all what this citta is, what the vritti is, and what one does with citta and vritti, then we go round and round in endless circles, creating our own pain and running away from it; and running after self-created pleasure.

We are approaching yoga as novices or seekers, so that we do not have an image of what yoga is - whether it is a state of mind, or something beyond the mind. We do not know anything at all. We only see that in our day-to-day life the mind passes through different moods, or modes of being. And we also see that much of our unhappiness, and most of our problems, spring from these changing moods. We do not suffer from our nature at all. I am a human being, a man, and that does not cause me the least unhappiness, or create any problem at all in my mind, or in my life. The intelligence that is built into me, sees the naturalness of it, and therefore does not reject it. I am a human being. I was born a human being, and I hope to die as a human being. That which is natural is free, permanent, and does not change. This is another important thing to remember, because when we talk of nature and the needlessness of a change in nature, somebody gets the wrong idea from it, and thinks "Oh, I am a man of vicious nature, I don't have to change my vicious nature." The viciousness is not part of your nature - it is a modification that comes in later. Viciousness is part of a change in the mood of the mind.

You might say it is human nature to be violent sometimes. It cannot be sometimes. If there is violence in human nature, it must be present from morning till night, and night till morning, just as we are human beings twenty-four hours of the day. Therefore I do not accept that violence or aggressiveness is part of human nature. As a matter of fact, I have rather an unorthodox way of putting it. You cannot even make yourself angry. Try now. You are laughing - that is not getting angry! Getting angry is a change which takes place occasionally, and therefore it is not part of nature. It seems to come and go. That is why my grandmother called it a devil or a demon or a ghost; something which possessed me temporarily, and left. What is natural and therefore permanent does not cause any problem.

I see the successively changing moods of mind create problems in my life, create a lot of sorrow, suffering, unhappiness. That is all I know. Then I begin to watch and to see how this happens. I have not heard of the word 'yoga', but I am merely watching my mind and the problems that the mind creates in my life, and I see that all these problems spring from changing moods of the mind. How do these changes take place? While I am sleeping, I do not know that I am asleep, but as soon as I wake up, I realize that I slept like a log of wood; I knew nothing. That is one state, but it is not natural to me because I am not sleeping all the time - the mood passes away and then I am in a new mood. I sit down to meditate. I look to see if I am sprouting wings, my thoughts are angelic - I am spiritually up-lifted. If I am psychically inclined, I leave my body and hover around and look at this silly little body with which I have no connection at all. I go away into the celestial spheres, have a cup of tea with some of these gods and goddesses - marvellous! After forty minutes or so I am still in an exalted mood. If I want to have a cup of coffee or something while still in that exalted mood I turn the stove on - I hear a funny noise, look at the milk and see it is boiling over. Hey! what happened? Just

now I was in a very peaceful mood, now all the peace has gone. I am upset and agitated because the milk has boiled over. Just then my child comes in and says, "I am hungry, Mam". "Get out of my way." Whew! how did this happen? Hardly half an hour ago I was still in the celestial spheres, and now I am so terribly worried and anxious, that I am starving my own child. Then the child goes away crying, and I run after it trying to pacify it. In the meantime something else has gone wrong, and I am miserable.

This happens to all of us. There is love at one moment, and a few moments later there is anxiety, anger. And yet if you have been watching yourself carefully and closely, as and when each one of these moods prevails, you are that mood, you hardly remember what it was like to be peaceful. When you are peaceful, you hardly remember what it was like to be beastly, aggressive, and even if you are able to remember, you think you must be crazy - how could I ever do that?

Often silly little arguments occur between husband and wife, or between brother and sister, and some absolutely ridiculous trivial thing leads to a great big earth-shaking explosion. I have a friend who is prone to this, and I used to tell her to buy a tape recorder and keep it in her pocket, so that as soon as she started talking nonsense, it would be activated and record all that for her to listen to a week later. Our conversations and our great serious dialogues and our discussions over the breakfast table are trivial - not for the moment, because during that time you are completely and totally that. So, as a curious student of yoga, I am watching this, I am seeing this happen. I try to tell my self, "Oh no, next time I lose my temper or become nervous when the milk boils over, I will calmly look at it and say, Oh, my dear milk, you are boiling over. I will switch you off." But the milk usually boils over when we are not watching - that's why it boils over! The next time it happens, I am as mad as I was before, because this changed mood becomes me. There is no part of me left to control this. Aha! That is the point. I still don't know if there is anything left. I am full of affection now. I don't know if there is anything left; just as I am a human being now, I don't know if there is the mentality or the nature of a dog hidden in me. Some people say, "I might have been a dog or a monkey in a previous birth, but I am not conscious now of any residual tendency of the past birth." In the same way, it is possible for me to look at the situation of changing mood. Is there a way in which I can modify this? It doesn't look like it, because every time the mood changes the whole of me changes. Then I study this a little further - how many types of changes do the moods of the mind undergo?

Pramana viparyaya vikalpa nidra smrtayah.

Sometimes, someone ask us a question, and we give the right answer, so there is the potentiality in the mind to take the form of right knowledge - pramana. There is also the potentiality for wrong knowledge - viparyaya, owing to ignorance or perversity. Then there is imagination - vikalpa, which seems to plague our lives almost constantly. We imagine somebody wants to harm us. If any of you suffer from this kind of thing, I have a very simple remedy. Stand in front of a mirror

and say, "Hey, don't kid yourself, you are not so important that anyone would want to kill you." If I have a suspicion that somebody is spreading some false rumour, why let this suspicion chew my heart? I jump in front of him and say, "How are you?" I don't ask him if he is spreading some rumours about me. Why must I provoke him? He may not be doing it. He is quite pleasant, with all his teeth exposed, and now I know that my own suspicion was wrong; that's all. If you have any neurotic suspicion, jump into it and verify for yourself that it is not there. If I am afraid of walking in the dark I take a torch. I walk into this dark, look around - no ghosts, nothing. I come back and sleep.

We must do everything that lies in our power to overcome this imagination, because here is something which we can neither confirm nor deny, which can neither be proved nor disproved, and this silly ridiculous thing keeps eating at our vitals. What for? There is no sense in it. Almost eighty to ninety percent of our miseries are born of this imagination. In this imagination, there is a little bit of wrong knowledge also involved. There was one girl whom I saw in Durban, South Africa, in 1962. Just around that time it was predicted that in two million years the earth would become cold and life on earth would come to an end. This girl had read about it. She wouldn't eat or sleep, and if anybody went into her room and said, "Hello", she would ask, 'Is it true the world is going to come to an end in two million years?' Imagination running riot! Imagination is wrong knowledge running riot.

I can see this happening in me. I can see right knowledge - I am able to work, to read, to write, to engage myself in meaningful dialogue. There is right knowledge, a lot of wrong knowledge, there is even more imagination, and there is sleep - nidra. Even when none of these things operate, memory - smrtayah - seems to flow in and out, and every time there is a strong memory, I am almost possessed by it. Depending upon the intensity of the past experience, sometimes it seems to evoke emotional responses, and sometimes it is just a matter of revival of thought. The impression created by a past experience has not been completely lost.

I keep looking at all these, and I can see that they are the only basis for the changes that my mind undergoes. These changes sometimes cause pleasant reactions, and sometimes unpleasant reactions. They are successive. I do now know of a state other than these, because, as long as I am awake, I am thinking. I am a slave of these thoughts. I do not even know if there is 'I' apart from these changing moods of the mind. This is terribly important to grasp. At this stage there is not even a hope of overcoming this. I am merely studying it, because I feel I am trapped in these changing moods of this mind, and it doesn't feel good.

It is possible that during these changes, the changing mood also brings along a little bit of pleasure, but that pleasure is not fully appreciated because, while I am enjoying it, I am also conscious that it is going to come to an end, that there is going to be reaction to it, and I am going to lose it. It is much easier for me not to have enjoyed this pleasure in the first place, than to have it, and then lose it.

There is a story where an old king and his queen are blessed with a son who is later banished to the forest and separated from the parents, and the mother wails aloud, "I wish I had not given birth to you, because then I would only be unhappy that I was a barren woman; but now that I have been your mother, to see you go away is breaking my heart." Therefore, even when these changing moods bring some pleasure into my life, the very changingness of the mood of the mind prevents me from enjoying it to the full.

Therefore I am watching this problem - not even hoping to be out of it, but merely studying it. Can I manoeuvre this so that only one kind of experience is had by me? No, that is absurd. Once I have seen that things keep changing from one to the other - for instance day to night, night to day, it is absurd for me even to think of a condition in which day alone or night time alone prevails.

Looking at this, can I accept it? Can I accept that life is misery? It is not possible to get reconciled to it because there is something which rebels, revolts against this condition. Can I live in the hope that one day I will be freed from this? No, that hope does not solve the present problem. When somebody is about to jump at my throat, I cannot look at him and say, "Oh, you are strong now, but one day I will also exercise and become stronger than you". He will floor me now. So, a future hope does not solve the problem however much we may pretend it does.

When I see that there is no possibility of my getting away from this, nor can I ever hope to get reconciled to it, it is then that I am intensely and immediately conscious. 'Intensely' means without a tense - without a past, present and future, without separation in time; 'immediately' means without a mediator, without separation in space. I am intensely and immediately caught up in this problem, which is with me till it is finally solved. I cannot rebel against it, because it is with me. There is no sense in teasing a poisonous snake that is under my bed - it is going to strike me if I tease it. I believe Buddha used this analogy in his last sermon on earth. "Live in this world as if you are living with a cobra." You don't tease it, because it is going to strike you, you don't accept it, you don't get reconciled to it, "ok, my dear cobra, you may live in my room." No, it may not accept you! If you cannot get reconciled to it, nor reject it, nor revolt against it, nor accept it, nor get rid of it, and you are locked in this room alone with the cobra, then how do you live? You live with such tremendous care and alertness - care, not in the sense of worry and anxiety, but in the sense that 'I am looking at it, and I don't let this go out of my inner vision for a single moment.' This is called *nirodhah*, control. Control is not suppression of the modifications of the mind, because you cannot suppress these changing moods.

Yogas' citta vrtti nirodhah

When these vrttis - called modifications of the mind - are controlled, it means that you are living with such intense alertness and care that in all these changes you are really unaffected. You are watching - intensely, immediately; and so, here and now, you are living with great alertness. Suddenly, like a flash of lightning,

you begin to understand that these changes happen, no doubt, but there is an unchanging witness throughout. That which is aware of these changing moods is itself not changing. Waves roll on the surface of the ocean but underneath the ground is still. Water flows down the Ganges, ever changing, but down below the bed of the river is constant, unmoving, unchanging. But, here the analogy is defective, in as much as we are talking about two completely different things - the river bed and the water. In the case of the mind, or the consciousness or the intelligence, the whole thing takes place in one substance. It is the intelligence that, in its unmodified state, is able to watch all the modifications that take place on its own surface - the whole thing is citta. With the waves, the streams, the currents and the unmoving substratum, the whole thing is ocean. Ocean is not just the name for one part - the whole thing is the ocean, the whole thing is the citta. The movement takes place only in relation to an observer - as the river flows only in relation to a person standing on the bank of the river. But, if I am the river, there is no motion, no change. Just as between the time we assembled here, and now, the hair has already grown one fiftieth of an inch. I do not even know it grew, because it is part of me. I am the whole thing, I am the totality.

It is only when I separate myself from any one of these experiences that it is seen as a movement. But when I am the total experience, the total intelligence, there is no movement. When I am the total consciousness, all changes that take place within that total consciousness are part of the total consciousness; just as in one's body venous blood is being pumped into the heart and the heart is pumping out - tremendous activity goes on all the time - but as you are sitting in meditation, you seem to be completely immobile, stationary, steady, firm. When you look at these small fragments of your own physical body, you find tremendous activity going on in every department of your physical being; but when you view the whole thing, it is one - steady, stable and peaceful. There are no changes at all. That is citta vrtti nirodhah.

I don't think there are simple words in which this sutra can be quickly translated. One has to understand the whole concept of the vrtti, the mental modification. Only as long as I isolate one little modification and look at it, it seems to be painful or pleasant. But when the whole intelligence is realized as one, there are no problems, and there is no suffering.

### 3

Yesterday we saw that we do not know what citta - mind stuff - actually is; nor do we know what a vrtti is. Vrtti can mean a thought wave, an idea, a concept, a percept, a movement of thought, the arising of thought, or a modification that takes place in the mind stuff. Even sleep is regarded as a vrtti. We usually think that sleep is not covered by thinking, though Patanjali seems to suggest that sleep is that modification of the mind stuff where - it is difficult to translate this - the mind stuff gets hold of an idea of nothing - I suppose in simple words it means that in sleep I think I am sleeping. The whole of me, the whole of the mind stuff thinks that it is asleep.

We do not really know what citta nor vrtti are, and therefore we do not know what nirodhah or yoga means. But we know the ways in which vrttis are experienced. We saw that these ideas broadly fall into five categories: right knowledge, wrong knowledge, imagination, sleep, and memory. When we realize that it is the ever changing moods of the mind that cause distress in our lives, and we realize that we are trapped in this, as a man is trapped with a live cobra in his room - we can only think that we are free of it, then there is great alertness. That alertness can be regarded as nirodhah - it is not control, suppression, restraint nor expression, but great alertness. We are trapped with this, we cannot get out of it - suddenly we see that we are free, because we 'are' it; suddenly we see that, whether the wave is called the wave or the ocean, it is all water. Whether there is an idea or no idea, a right idea or a wrong idea, imagination or sleep, or none of these things, the mind stuff is the mind stuff constantly.

When this is directly realized, it does not distress us any more. The changes do not affect the unchangingness of the substance, of the truth. Any number of streams could flow into the ocean, any number of waves might rise in the ocean, but the oceanness of the ocean does not change. With all the changes that take place, the totality is forever unchanging, and all that takes place in this totality takes place, happens. The happening or the experiencing alone is true. If we are struggling in the swimming pool, about to be drowned, it is in the struggling that there is pain or distress; but if we are part of that swimming pool, non-different from that swimming pool, then there is no struggle. We are completely at peace within ourselves. We realize that within this totality that whatever change happens, happens - it is not brought about by me or you.

This knowledge is identical with self-realization, or with the understanding or realization of the totality. The whole is constantly whole - it does not undergo any diminution - and if changes appear to take place in that totality, those changes do not affect the total. That is the meaning of the famous mantra that we recite at the end of the meetings and Satsangs.

Om.

Purnamadah purnamidam purnat plirnamydacyate  
Purnasya purnamadaya purnamevavasisyate

In simple mathematical formula. It means: 'infinity plus infinity is infinity, and infinity minus infinity is still infinity.' Infinite changes can take place in the infinite, but the infinitude of infinity is not affected. Ah! That's marvellous.

When this understanding has been reached, we no longer see events as having the polarity of 'I see you' - seeing happens, seeing takes place. The most inspiring sutra in the whole of the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali is where he states this plainly in simple words: *drasta drsimatrah*.

In this total cosmic being, events take place. When the eyelids part, exposing the living eye, seeing takes place - why do we say then, "I see'?" Because the moment we say the word 'I', we create polarity in the single experience of seeing. Ramana Maharshi said this very beautifully, "First 'I' is created in your consciousness, and then 'I' creates the rest of the world." Is that right? Watch tomorrow morning when you are about to wake up. 'I am in bed'. So, the first creation is 'I', the next creation is the bed, then comes the rest of it. Once the 'I' is created, it creates a million other things.

In this pure happening of seeing, as soon as the thought 'I' arises, it creates another one - you. 'I see you.' I have a rather crude way of putting it: the eyes are open and I see - if it is certain that I see with open eyes, why can I not say 'I don't see', or 'I don't want to see, so I don't see'. It is impossible. When the eyes are open, they see. But why does the feeling arise - 'I see'? For instance, I am sitting on this mat, and if I don't want it, I can throw it away and sit on the floor. But, as long as the eyes are open, they see.

Therefore, if we cannot stop the seeing from happening, perhaps we are not responsible for it either. Seeing takes place, totally independent of us; or seeing alone happens, and in that happening, somehow, somewhere, an idea called 'I' arises.

When we do the repetition of the mantra - japa - and meditation, we are asked to trace the place where the 'I' thought arises. If one is able to do that, one is able to understand who is this 'I' who is repeating the mantra; and then one is able to extend that understanding to all activities. Who is it that is listening? Or perhaps these things do not exist at all, and merely seeing and hearing happen.

When seeing, hearing, talking, sitting, sleeping, and all experiencing happen without the arising of the idea of 'I', they are pure. There is no impurity in experiencing, there is no division between I and the experience. It is only when we say, "I experience this", that the qualifications are added on later. I am eating this fruit and experiencing that it is sweet, sour or bitter; but when the experiencing happens without the creation of the 'I' consciousness here, the qualifications of those experiences also vanish. In that experiencing there is neither pain nor pleasure; but there may be natural reaction - just as a piece of cloth when it is thrown into the swimming pool gets wet, and a piece of cloth

thrown into the fire is burnt to ashes. The cloth does not catch cold, nor yell with pain.

When experiencing is seen as pure experiencing, then there is no idea of pain there. The body may still react in the way that it is meant to react. For instance, if someone sticks a pin into this body, it might draw itself away, but the feeling 'I am hurt' does not arise. If a thorn enters the foot, the head may refuse to function and lie down - that is perfectly normal. If a gentleman gets up and gives a blow on this head, the head may reel - the whole body may reel and lie down - it's a natural reaction, but there is no feeling that 'he hurt me'. When the 'me' arises in this pure action and the illusory idea of 'I am hurt' arises, then this 'I' creates its own object - 'I am hurt by him'.

We can easily see that this is what creates all our problems in life. If we can see everything as pure happening, if we can be instantly alert and watchful to see where the idea of 'I' crops up, then the problems of life cease. That is wisdom, that is enlightenment. It is when this knowledge is not realized - in the sense that this knowledge is real to me - that all that we have been discussing in the past twenty minutes sounds silly, doesn't make sense at all. That is called avidya. That state of mind in which this knowledge is heavily veiled, is known as avidya. How this avidya arises, nobody knows. How is it that in what is considered cosmic being, cosmic oneness, you and I come to be different people? I don't know. It is like so many of these wonderful questions, "Which was first, hen or the egg?"

All these chairs and tables and so on are placed on this floor and the floor is on the earth. Stretch your imagination to whatever extent you like - you can not visualize the extent of this universe. Is there a roof or floor to it? I once had a funny mental exercise. I was lying down on the verandah of my room at Rishikesh facing the sky, just close to the bank of the Ganges. It was a beautiful night - there was no moonlight and therefore the stars were shining brilliantly. I had just read two little booklets known as 'Believe It Or Not' by a man called Ripley. He had mentioned that at one spot on this earth the force of gravity had gone haywire, so that, if you dropped a ball, it ran up hill - something like that. While lying there, I thought, "How am I sticking to this earth?" - because of the force of gravity. If by some good luck the gravitational force collapses, just where the body is resting on the verandah, what will happen? I become the first human satellite! But strangely enough I have locomotion. I am unattracted to any of these stars and planets, I keep going, going very fast. The solar system, then this galaxy, then the Milky Way have been left behind. I have limitless life. If you drop me from the roof, I will fall down on this mat, but if I drop like this in space, where will I go and land? I am not going round in circles, I go straight out of everything. Where do I go and land? If you say that after twenty thousand light years I go and knock against a funny little wall that's on the other side of the universe, I am going to ask what is on the other side of that! Can your mind conceive of this? No. Even so, if we ask how this ignorance - avidya - has come about in the first place, and if cosmic consciousness, cosmic being, or omnipresence, is true, why is it that we have forgotten; or, if you and I are really

one, why is it that I am thinking that I am different from you - these questions cannot be answered. The answer is in questioning.

How is it that I am different from you? We all ate from the same bowl; the same piece goes into his stomach and my stomach, but the same mental peace doesn't come into his and my mind. Why is it so? Who can answer that! But this is clear - that when this knowledge is veiled by avidya - ignorance, then out of that ignorance emerges the first idea called 'I' - asmita. Asmita is often translated as egoism, but by egoism is not meant the little sense of vanity that we may suffer from - "I am a Swami, I'm a learned man or a yoga teacher." No, all these are despicable, ridiculous, foolish ideas, which come much later. In our day to day living, how and where does the idea arise - 'I am'? - whereas the truth seems to be that life 'is'. How did this truth get itself mangled into 'I am'? Life is prakrti, nature, but 'I am' seems to be a perversity of this nature. Nature does not create a problem, but 'I am' creates a problem - is the source of all problems. The stone lies in the garden - it creates no problem at all - but when that stone is picked up by this 'I am' and thrown at somebody else, that creates a problem.

They have a very wise saying in India: 'All that God created is purifying, and all that man creates is filthy.' I suppose this saying was invented long before chemical pollution took hold of us. The pandits used to explain it in this manner. A dead body buried in a pit does not become filthy. It is absorbed by the earth, purified and utilized. A body thrown into the river soon disintegrates - disintegrate means that it has been put together, integrated, and then it decomposes. A body thrown in the fire is consumed, and even if it is left exposed to the air, it disintegrates. The whole thing is broken down, and there is no impurity left. But when man participates in God's creation and contributes his share, all that becomes filth.

So, what is nature? The body is part of cosmic nature and does not create any problems. When the body grows, it grows naturally - grows up to a certain point, and then it begins growing down. That doesn't create any problem - it is only when the idea of 'I' comes up, that it creates a problem. My grandmother did not wear spectacles. She had very good sight until she was about seventy five, and she used to read a lot. Afterwards she did not say she had lost her eyesight, but 'I have read enough'. When you begin to worry, "I have lost my eyesight, it is a tragedy to me", it is the 'me' that creates all these problems. Where does that 'I am-ness' arise? I do not know. That is why they said 'I am' - asmita - is the result of 'I do not know' - avidya - they go together.

When this idea of 'I am' crops up again and again, it divides the world: I-you, I-he. If the 'I' is not there, there will be no division. The same soup goes into all the bodies, and all the bodies eventually go into the same earth - what is the difference? It is the 'I' and the 'I am' that creates this difference 'I-you'. There is seeing, and in that seeing, I - see - you. The one single event of seeing is somehow divided into I-you. One end is 'I' and the other end is 'you'. 'I' is therefore the dividing factor, and it goes on dividing the whole universe. As it goes on dividing

it says, "Ah! he scratches my back, he's my friend, I like him. But he doesn't help me, I don't like him." I like - I don't like. Raga-dvesa.

First there arises ignorance, and out of this ignorance egotism or 'I am-ness' is born, and this 'I am-ness' divides everything in this world into 'this I like - this I don't like'. This is my world - not the world as it is, in God's nature. The moment I become aware of something - which is already a division - I immediately classify it into 'I like - I don't like'. On account of this division I am caught up in various actions, which are good or not so good. The action produces reaction, and the reaction itself produces more reaction, and it goes on and on.

Lastly, I am so deeply involved in this mess that I don't see any alternative. If you have ever spoken to people who like wars, violence and exploitation, and ask them, "Why don't we turn away from this war?", they answer, "But what is the alternative? Would you like to have peace if the Russians invade us, if the Chinese bomb us?" I am so deeply sunk in this mess that I don't want to see an alternative - not because I can't see one - and therefore I cling like mad to the present state, even though I know that it is dreadfully imperfect. Patanjali tells us that these are the five sources of our perpetual unhappiness - avidya, asmita, raga, dvesa, abhinivesa - ignorance, egoism, likes, dislikes, and clinging to life as it is.

We are trapped in this cage of vrttis - ideas. Whether the ideas are good or wicked, we are caught in them, and we do not seem to find a way out. Entertaining an idea of liberation is not liberation, thinking I am free is not freedom. Is there a state free from these ideas? How do I know? I may think there is, and that again may be another idea! So, one must be alert, awake, careful, cautious and vigilant. This has been compared to living with a deadly cobra in one's room; but the cobra is outside me, while the idea is inside. I am not looking for an external enemy, because as long as I think that I have an external enemy; I will invent an external saviour. If you say that my trouble lies outside me, that I am tempted and commit some sin in relation to the external world, then I can invent a saviour who will forgive that sin. Externally imposed discipline only invites externally sought redemption or forgiveness, and that does not work. First I introduce the idea of sin, then the idea of temptation, and these two together bring about the idea of a fall and make me feel guilty; so, I produce another idea called forgiveness, and then the last idea of redemption and salvation. All these are ideas - they may provide temporary solace and some kind of consolation. Such belief exists in many religious communities all over the world. I am not against this - where ignorance is bliss, to carry on is best.

So, I do not even try to get away from it, because if I entertain the idea that there is a way out of this, I am already creating a counter-idea, which will give me consolation; but a consoling idea is like a blanket - it can put me to sleep, whereas I need alertness, tremendous vigilance, great energy. If a consoling idea is introduced into my consciousness, I know that somebody is going to forgive me and save me, lift me up and put me into paradise. It takes away the edge of my vigilance. 'Paradise', incidently, I believe comes from the Persian/Arabic word Fardesh, which is similar to the Sanskrit word Paradesam, which only means foreign country. To Australians, the United States is a paradise, and to people there, Belgium is a paradise.

So, as long as I entertain the idea that temptation and my troubles lie outside me, then I also invent a saviour outside me. If the guilt comes from outside, I invent someone to forgive me, also from outside, and I am quite safe. 'I' is quite safe here, untouched, untouchable. I can continue to be such a fool for millions of centuries, doing nothing about it.

Without creating an idea of redemption or salvation, with the mere consciousness that I have got to live with this cobra - this thing called idea - all my life, then I learn to deal with it, and that dealing with this cobra is what is alluded to in the word 'nirodhah'. Nirodhah is untranslatable - it is not restrain or control. What does control mean? I can control or restrain an idea only with the help of another idea, and that is also given as one of the aids in dealing with them. For instance, if what is considered an evil idea haunts you day and night, get over it by introducing a healthy idea into your mind. That may work for some time - temporarily, like tranquillisers. If a person is suffering from cancer, a

tranquilliser is not going to help him for long, but it may ease the pain for a little while. If I am haunted by filthy, evil, unhealthy or ignoble ideas, I may put on a record and play lovely songs or hymns, and endeavour to substitute healthy ideas. I have not removed the unhealthy idea, but I have covered it over with what I think is a healthy idea - but the ideas are still there. One may promote one's own good tendencies and allow the evil tendencies to lie dormant for some time, but the tendencies are still there, and one has to overcome both these, eventually.

It is not as though I have two different personalities within me, and one side of me is all evil, and the other side of me is all good. It is the same mind, the same mind-stuff, the same energy that is in me, which throws up these different modifications or moods. If I understand that, then I shall be constantly, eternally vigilant, and never relax that vigilance, even when I appear to be very holy. It is the same mouth that kisses the baby and says "O my darling", or uses insulting, filthy language on somebody else - the same mouth, the same breath, the same energy. The love that flows between friends is the same love, the same energy, the same mind, the same thing which can turn into violent hatred. I put the blame on him and say, "I thought he was my friend; so I confided all my secrets in him, and he betrayed me", Nonsense! That is not what we are talking about. Look within. How was it possible for this mind-stuff to undergo this change? I had high regard for him, he was my friend, I loved him. How was it possible for this to undergo that change? If it was possible for love to undergo this change and become hatred, then, as long as this potentiality and movement is there in the mind-stuff, so long this can happen. If I have not lost my temper for the last 12 years, it has not gone anywhere - it was only a transformation of the mind stuff. The mind stuff and the energy are there, and this combination can again produce that mood which I falsely imagine I have overcome. One does not overcome these things. All that can help us is eternal vigilance - nirodhah means eternal vigilance - because I am trapped with this cobra in the same room and there is no way out. I have to live with the potential venomousness of the transformation of the mind stuff. Patanjali provides us with a few aids for maintaining this eternal vigilance:

Abhyasa vairagyabhyam tannirodhah.

By practise and dispassion, the restraint of the changing moods.

That's all. In the sutras the words used do not conform to grammatical rules, so even the sentence is not complete. 'Practise and dispassion - that controls.' If you want to cultivate this eternal vigilance then these two may be of help to you. What does abhyasa mean?

Tatra stithau yatno abhyasah.

Tatra - there, stithau - standing, yatno - effort, abhyasah - practise.

These are the meanings of the words in the original. Put these words together, juggle them around, and produce your own meaning. Remember, I am trapped

with this thing called idea, and whichever way I turn is 'idea.' 'There I stand unmoving.' Unmovingly I stand there, unwinkingly I look at the idea which is a movement of energy in this mind stuff. When I stand unmoving and watch this thing with unwinking attention, then nothing takes place which I do not expect. It is as simple as that. Do not let us get terribly involved in the psychic phenomena that yoga is usually associated with. It is quite simple. When does the milk boil over? When we are not looking. Have you ever kept looking at the milk pot and allowed it to boil over? Of course not. Milk boils over when we are not looking; and tragedy strikes our life when we are not vigilant; the unexpected happens because we do not expect - simple. If I find a truck rolling towards me and I stand in front of it, it is not called an accident, but suicide. I expect it to run over me. That is the point. There is a vast difference between the two. I will still grow old, lose my eyesight; but because I am watching like a hawk, I am not shocked, there is no distress. I see it coming and I stand unmoved.

Tatra stithau yatno abhyasah.

I see what you call an evil thought entering into my psychological field and I know from where it rises. It shall not proceed if I do not want it. If I want it, I am committing suicide. It is as simple as that. I must stand there without even the hope of escaping from that trap. The moment I introduce this element of a redemption or escape from this, I am destroying my vigilance, because I am going to forget it and think, "never mind, something will come and lift me into the heavens." If it happens - God bless you. But if it does not happen ...

There are a number of very holy men who have said, "Just trust in me and follow me and surrender yourself unto me and give a blank cheque - you do not have to do anything - do not meditate, do not do anything, and when I go to heaven you are all lifted up there." They quote a parable: "When you get into a plane you have full confidence in the pilot. You hand your destiny over to him, sit there, fasten your seat belt and relax. You are lifted off from Gent and dropped in London. In exactly the same way, live with me in my ashram, surrender yourself unto me, and you will get to heaven." But when the holy man suddenly dies - now what do I do? I surrendered myself to him, I hoped that he would take me to salvation and then suddenly he collapsed and died. What must I do? Who will I go and ask now? The only fool who is responsible for that is the man in the mirror. So, any of these consoling theories may be a trap. I do not even accept that there is a redemption from here.

In the Yoga Vasistha, it is said that, as long as I am here, I am creating my own world; and when I die, I create a world suited to the condition in which I find myself then - I call that a heaven or hell. In this world itself there are people who think that this is heaven on earth, and others who think it is hell. When such is the case, these other ideas about heaven, hell, redemption, or salvation, have no meaning at all. So, wherever I am, I am trapped with this idea, tatra stithau yatno abhyasah - to stand there unmoving with unwinking vigilance - that is practise. And since I am watching this whole phenomenon with unwinking vigilance,

nothing unexpected happens. I do not go to hell unexpectedly - I do not go to heaven unexpectedly either. I do not sin unexpectedly, I do not do any glorious, virtuous action unexpectedly.

Vairagya is even more grossly misunderstood. If we have been closely following the use of meditation technique that was discussed this morning, perhaps we understand also what is meant by vairagya - dispassion. Dispassion is the opposite of passion. Do we understand what passionate attachment means? The man is attached to his wife. Is it true? What do we mean by 'I am attached'? Are you glued together, so that when you get up and walk your wife or children also come with you? You see, people first assume that there is a thing called attachment, and then start from there. Why should I drop this if I do not pick it up? Only if I pick it up, do I have to worry about dropping it. The more I try to detach, the more I get attached. For instance, a young man comes to a Swami and says, "You know, I am in love with that girl and she has run away with somebody else; how do I get detached from this?" The Swami says, "Forget her, do not think of her." So, he goes to bed, and thinks, "What did the Swami say?" "Forget her" - and there she is. If the Swami had not told him to forget her, he would have forgotten. Why pick it up at all?

Therefore, forgetting this thing called detachment, I look at 'attachment.' I want to know if it is real. What does attachment mean? Am I attached to somebody? No. What you and I call attachment is nothing more than an idea. Detachment is not running away, nor kicking something away, but seeing that there is no passionate attachment in this world. It does not exist. I thought I was attached to the boss for whom I was working, and I thought I could not live without my colleagues. Then I was promoted. About a year later, I went back and saw everybody was flourishing - nobody was attached to me. What is attachment, except an idea? When you are looking at the idea of attachment, steadily, with unwinking vigilance, and it does not bother you, it also undergoes tremendous change, it is no longer attachment. When the light of your own inner gaze is focused on this false idea of 'you are my sister or my mother, etc.' the falseness disappears. You are still there as my sister or my mother or whatever it is, but once the false idea of attachment has gone, the truth of love survives. The relationship is not destroyed.

Most people who interpret vairagya think that, if somebody had been my wife before I had become a Swami, I should hate her, throw her out of my mind. It is not possible. If previously I was attached to her, that means I possessed her - attachment means possession, doesn't it? Be honest! I do not want her to look at somebody else. That is what is called attachment. I may rationalise it and tell myself I want to protect her from danger. That is humbug! The plain truth being that she is mine now. When the falsity of this idea disappears, the truth is there. That is love. There is no sense of possession, knowing that I cannot possess. I am not suggesting to myself that, "Well you know, I am a yogi, and therefore I do not want to have possessive feeling towards you." No! I may or may not be a yogi, but I see as a fact that there is no attachment and no possibility of possessing the

other person.

When you stand firmly facing every idea as it arises with unwinking vigilance, the light of that unwinking vigilance dispels the falsity of the idea. Not the falsity of the whole idea itself. In that idea, there is a truth, the truth being the intelligence. Every ideal based upon truth, just as a wave has the whole ocean underneath. The waveness of the wave is false. The wave is nothing other than the ocean water itself. The waveness of the wave being an idea, the waveness goes away. Attachment is an idea - that falsity is removed, and the truth on which this idea is based, still shines. If the falsity of attachment is removed, love manifests itself. Therefore, yogis defined it negatively - dispassion - vairagya.

This word vairagya also means non-colouring. Raga also means colouring. So, I can see the colour of this man's skin and the colour of his hair, but if I wear coloured glasses and look at him, I am not seeing him as he is. Vairagya can also mean this. In which case again it is not a commandment to run away from truth, but to discard colouring. Do I feel attracted to a person because he or she gratifies me in one way or the other, pleases me or affords me pleasure? Then I am looking at that person through a coloured glass. If the coloured glass is thrown away, then I see him as he is, irrespective of whether he lives to please me or whether he is interested only in harming me. Can I see through all this? Can I break the mask that I am wearing of myself and come face to face with him? Can I see another person without distortion? That is called dispassion - vairagya. These two enable me to stand firm and look with unwinking vigilance at the truth, which is - there is only one obstruction, one veil - 'idea'.

Vigilance, which was considered the best translation of the word nirodhah, can be achieved by abhyasa and vairagya. Ahhyasa means standing steady, unmoving, and observing the changing moods of the mind, and vairagya means not being distracted from this stand by temptations. That is what we endeavour to train ourselves to do in our morning meditation. I try to focus my entire attention upon the mantra - or whatever be the object of meditation chosen, and even though I may become aware of distracting influences, I refuse to be distracted. These two - or the one with two sides: abhyasa and vairagya - are given to us as aids to this vigilance - nirodhah.

There are quite a number of practices which help us to develop this vigilance - one of the pranayama practices I referred to earlier is

Pracchardana vidharanabhyam va pranasya.

'Exhale and hold' - means to hold the lungs empty. When we hold the lungs empty, it is impossible for distracting thoughts to arise in the mind - we are almost fighting for our lives.

Another technique given is

Isvarapranidhanad va

'By devotion or surrender to God' - isvara. But what is isvara? That which is. It is a very beautiful way of avoiding argument and escaping from being cornered. If I suggested that there is a heaven somewhere, and in that heaven there is a lovely little chap with a large crown seated on a throne, then some one may question me and, not make a fool of me, but reveal that I am a fool. But here is an argument that throws the onus of responsibility for disproving it on you. What is isvara? That which is. As long as you admit that there is something in this universe, you are admitting that there is isvara. Unless you have the ability to prove that nothing exists, you can really not prove me false! But here, in the Yoga Sutras, after having said that the mind can be controlled and vigilance cultivated by being devoted to, or surrendering to isvara or God, Patanjali defines God in a very beautiful way - isvara purusa visesa. It is important, however, to remember that such a definition in no way sanctions limiting God, and reducing Him to a mere concept. Hence, neither the word isvara nor the word purusa nor visesa should be taken to be a proper name nor even as the definite category.

God is a special type of person, not unapproachable, but very near, very close to us, Here the word 'purusa' is used in a metaphysical sense - 'that which rests in or rules over a city' - the body is often referred to in Indian philosophical literature as the nine gated city. That intelligence which dwells in and rules over this city is itself the purusa. See how God is brought almost within reach of your fingertips. This is the ordinary purusa. But God is a special purusa. What is the difference?

The intelligence that rules this body has fallen into the trap of limitation, so that it feels that it is limited to this body and, in a strange way, dissected from the rest of the universe. For instance, the dinner that I ate today is being processed, and as soon as it is digested, the intelligence sees it as part of me now. But the same ignorant intelligence - what a travesty! - refuses to identify itself with an amputated limb. As long as this hand is sticking to my wrist, it is also me, but when it is chopped off and left there, it is not me any more. It seems to be a strange form of intelligence which is more fond of limiting than of expanding itself.

This intelligence that rules over this body, and has fallen into the trap of limitation, is not isvara or God, but is fairly close to God. 'Isvara purusa visesa' can mean 'special' or 'what remains'. Now, when we eliminate all the physical organs of the body, the energy - prana, and this ordinary limited intelligence, what remains is isvara or God - that which is still intelligence, but not limited. Isvara also is intelligence, but it is not limited to this body. That intelligence which pervades this body, but is not limited to it, connects you and me, and therefore enables me to communicate with you now. In Indian philosophy, a beautiful illustration is given. In this hall there is space, outside there is space, but what about the walls? That is also space isn't it? Is it possible in this manner to divide space? This space, or room, is twenty feet across - it is the room that is twenty feet across, not the space, because even where the wall stands, the space is still there. We use the expression "that space is occupied", but it's a silly expression - space can never be occupied. Where the wall stands, the space is still there, nothing has happened to it. Yet, in a manner of speaking, we limit that space, and say that this is a room. In the same way, when we have eliminated the body and the individual intelligence - all the walls and the roof have been taken away, the same intelligence is still there, but not limited. A reason why it is said that, even while you and I seem to be separate, different and distinct, we are still not separate. If we have a room in space, and we knock down the walls which also occupy space, what we have left is much larger - so the remnant is much larger than the original limited intelligence. We all exist in that 'isvara purusa visesa' - the same purusa or intelligence, but here, without any limitations. By surrendering ourselves to the purusa, God, or isvara, this vigilance can be achieved. Surrender is not the repetition of a formula, but the abandonment of the assumed division between the omnipresent being and the individual. It is facilitated by remembrance of the omnipresent being, isvara. How do I address isvara?

Tasya vacakah pranavah.

According to the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, if we must use a word to denote God, it is 'Om'. He does not say it is God's Name. If God is omnipresent, infinite, and therefore He alone exists, He does not need to have a Name; but if we need to indicate God verbally, then we say 'Om'. 'Om' is a mantra. In one Upanishad, this word 'Om' is used in the sense of 'yes', a mere simple affirmation. I believe the word 'Amen' also means the same thing. If you go to Ceylon and meet some of the

Tamilians there, you will find them using 'Om' nearly all the time in their conversations. Some one asks, "Would you like a cup of coffee?" 'Om'. 'Om' merely means 'yes', nothing more.

That much is official. Now comes something unofficial. I was wondering, if that is God's Name, and we go on repeating it all the time, I think that must bring peace and happiness in our lives. Instead of saying "no", if we kept saying "yes" to everything, then there is no trouble at all! 'Om' in sanskrit may be 'yes' in English. This may also be the Name of God. Why not? What is wrong with that? Instead of rejecting, rebelling, revolting, saying "No, no" to life, if we replace that with "Yes", I am sure that our life would be more peaceful and joyous, and there would be greater harmony in our lives.

Incidentally, there is a Harley Street specialist, Dr Graham Howe, who once came to the Ashram at Rishikesh and gave us a series of talks on psychology. He said that it was his belief that most of our illnesses arose from neurological blocks caused by "no". The moment we say "no" to anything, something gets blocked somewhere. Anyhow, that may be another meaning.

Tajjapastadartha bhavanam

'Om' is the name of God. If we sit on the sea shore and listen to the roaring of the sea, we hear 'Om', listen to the refrigerator - it also says 'Om' - every sound is 'Om'. Therefore, the verbal indicator of God - isvara is 'Om'. This special being that God is, is not the object of the limited intelligence, but the 'special intelligence' which is realised when all limitations have been dropped. Therefore, the personal ego, born of this limitation, must be surrendered.

How does it surrender? How do I surrender to God? What is God? I do not know. What am I? I do not know either. This 'I' the basic ignorance - avidya. I do not know what this cosmic, unlimited intelligence is, because I am trapped in this limitation. This ignorance is not like my ignorance of the Japanese language, for instance. My ignorance of the Japanese language does not automatically make me know the Chinese language - that ignorance does not give rise to some other knowledge. But, spiritual ignorance is something very special. When I don't know what this omnipresent unlimited intelligence is, that ignorance gives rise to egotism, to the ego sense. I do not know what the Cosmic Being is, and therefore I know, I exist. The false knowledge of 'I am' is the direct result of the ignorance of the Cosmic Being. One would expect, when there is ignorance, that there is nothing at all, but no. When there is ignorance of the totality, that ignorance gives birth to a strange knowledge of 'I am' as an individual, as an ego, as a personal reality, as a limited ignorant intelligence.

So, these two are the two sides of the same coin. On the one side there is ignorance, on the other side there is ego sense. While this ignorance lasts, I feel I am almost like God, because I am not conscious of any existence other than my own. I am the centre of the universe - everything in the universe exists for me, for

my sake. All this is an extension of the same ego sense.

What does one do in this? I see I am trapped in this limitation, I cannot get out of it. Whatever I think or know is an idea, I have no access to anything beyond, and I am conscious that every one of these ideas is only a seed that germinates into more and more suffering, sorrow and pain. When that is realised, I keep knocking at the cage, at the prison wall - the prison wall being ignorance, until the wall collapses, and 'I' also collapses. The wall has ignorance on one side and egotism on the other side. So, as the wall collapses, ignorance collapses, and along with it the 'I' also collapses. That is called surrender

Isvarapranidhanad va

Surrender is not merely saying "O Lord, I am thine, all is thine. I surrender myself. Not my will, but Thy will be done." "As long as You do exactly what I want, Thy will be done." That is nonsense, hypocrisy! Surrender must come in the course of a genuine search. That way, also, one leads a life of total vigilance. This is another method suggested by Patanjali for the conquest of mind.

We have thus far developed the understanding that yoga is not a department of life, but the whole of the life; that God is not a sort of King sitting on a throne somewhere, governing the whole universe, but the indivisible cosmic existence. I think it is not difficult from there to see how all our faculties, and all that is happening in the world, have to be seen as an integral part of this yoga. Everything in the world, and all the faculties and potentialities in the individual, contribute to self-realization, or discovery of this indwelling, omnipresent intelligence. It is omnipresent, therefore indwelling, and at that indwelling point, the omnipresence is easily reached. That is yoga. There is no evil nor devil here, no satan to avoid. If there are vrttis, they are there because the potentiality of vrtti or thought formation is there in the mind, not because you created them. Why are they there? So that we may be vigilant. Why has God created a thief? So that we may lock our doors, not hate the thief. This was seen consistently in Swami Sivananda's behaviour. He didn't want His disciples to keep catching rats and killing them. He said, "If you value your clothes and books, put them in a cupboard and lock them up. Why leave them carelessly around and then go catch all the rats that have been nibbling them? The rats are there to teach you caution." It is a beautiful way of looking at it.

Everything has a meaning, and it is up to this intelligence to discover that meaning. Vigilance - nirodhah watches these citta vrttis. There is constant vigilance of what goes on in the mind. Vigilance is not thinking in itself, but thinking can also be made use of. Logic is not to be shunned, but must come to its own conclusion. Logical conclusion is when logic rationalizes itself, analyses itself, synthesizes itself, and comes to its own conclusion, saying, "Thus far can I travel and no further". That must be done. If we do not do that, we are lazy. There is a wonderful story which illustrates this in the Mahabharata. Draupadi was the wife of the five Pandava brothers, who had a gambling bout with their rivals in which they lost everything. Then the rival - who was cheating them, said, "Don't you have anything else to gamble with? Just one more dice and you could have all your kingdom back!" So they gambled with Draupadi as the pawn, and lost, and Draupadi became a servant maid. Her new master said, "Come bring her here and disrobe her." She was a strong willed princess and she fought off the man for sometime, but she was not strong enough. Then he started pulling her sari more and more violently, so inch by inch she had to yield, fighting. When Indian women wear the sari, they usually tie a final knot, and once that goes, everything goes. He had reached right up to that, and it is said that even then she covered up the knot and started hitting him and fighting him off. When even that became impossible, then she threw her arms up and prayed, "Krishna, please come and help me". It is said that at that instant a miracle happened! The man pulled off sari after sari, but she still remained clothed. The moral in the story is that, when dragged into the court, she didn't start yelling, "Krishna please help me!" - she had some strength in her arms, so she fought.

Even now, whenever we are tempted to pray, "God! Please help!", I can almost

see God standing in front of us, saying, "That is why I gave you your brains - use them first. I gave you a strong body. Go on - work hard with what I have given you. When you have exhausted all that, then say, "Please God, give me some more!". So, all that God has given has also to be used - if you have brains, a logical analytical intellect, use it - but use it in the right direction, in such a way that you discover the limitations of logic. Use your physical powers in such a way that you realize - without really coming to the end of your tether - that there is a limitation to what can be done physically, and mentally. Go up to that, because until you do, there is no vitality in your prayer. Have you ever prayed for food? No, because you have never felt hungry. You can say, "God, look after my bank account," but that is not vital, like a living prayer of a man who is starving. If only some kind of apparatus can be invented to measure the intensity of that prayer, you will realize that the hungry man's prayer is far more intense than the prayer of all of us put together. Our prayer is lukewarm, because the urgency is not there, because we have not exhausted our given resources. In a lazy man's prayer, there is no intensity. If you have a problem, solve it - put forth the maximum self-effort you are capable of, use all the resources at your disposal, come to the end of it, and then say, "God, this is all I can do." That prayer has got a certain intensity, reality, and that prayer is immediately answered. Your lukewarm prayer is of no value at all.

So, here in yoga, we utilize everything. Make the physical body do some yoga asanas, not because you want to be strong and muscular, but even the asanas are meant only as discovery on the physical level. The cells are covered with toxic substances so that what once was health comes up again. Prana, the vitality, is there already, but it has been covered over with laziness. By doing pranayama and the asanas, you are discovering that these faculties are in you. Do not let them go to waste. Then you want to meditate, to watch what goes on in the mind. You see thoughts arising and falling. Some thoughts are distracting, destructive and distressing - shall I pray for help now? No, don't you have some ammunition in your arsenal already, with which to deal with these?

Vitarka badhane pratipaksa bhavanam

Patanjali says in the Yoga Sutras. Do not run away to God just now. Wait a moment. God has already provided you with the counter measures. If these distracting, destructive, distressing thoughts arise in the mind, confront them with their opposites. As soon as the thought, "This man is a crook, a horrible chap" arises, confront that thought with another, "Oh, but that man is good," and, if the mind suggests all the evil that a person has done, confront it with all the good things that he has done. I saw this in Swami Sivananda. Once a man - who was our postmaster, secretary, treasurer, all in all - ran away, taking the last cent that was in the ashram. Everything was completely finished, we were drowned in debt. That was the worst financial crisis I had seen during my stay in the ashram. It led to police investigation, because even some government money had been embezzled. For a few days, postal inspectors and police inspectors came in asking questions. Swami Sivananda would say, "He was a good man, he did a lot of good

work, two or three books he produced." There is a beautiful statement in the Ramayana which also illustrates this. Rama's stepmother was responsible for banishing him to the forest, and one of his brothers also went to the forest with him. During their first night when they had to endure such hard living conditions, the brother of Rama said, "But for this woman you would be lying in the palace." Rama turned to him and said, "Don't you have something else to talk about?" That is the point. You have this capacity of being able to confront a distracting, distressing thought with its opposite. For instance, you think you loved some person. If he has cheated you, or let you down, or harmed you, think of his good qualities. If somebody is rude to me, I immediately think of somebody else. "Well, she is rude, but this man has been extremely good to me, and I have done no good to him at all." I am sure all of us have had such experiences. So, as soon as the idea comes into your head, that 'so and so' was ugly to you, immediately confront it with another thought that someone else is very pleasant.

In the same way, we can use our own rationalizing faculty even in meditation. We want to meditate and discover this indwelling cosmic intelligence. Maybe it is there, but we still feel, "I am here." How can we say there is no ego? If somebody looks at me and says, "You are a fool," I am hurt - how can I say this is false? If an idea like this crops up in your mind, confront it with another one. This logical churning goes on within. "The ego is very real - I cannot deny this. He is very different from me. I cannot deny this". Then my own intelligence brings up the logical opposite - "But one day I dreamed and in the dream there was a big crowd. Somebody came up and garlanded me, and somebody threw a bunch of stones at me. Then I woke up and there was nobody there. I was alone in the room. Where was all this?" It was in me. Were all those people who played their respective roles in the dream real? They were real at the time I was dreaming. Was I also real in the dream? Yes. Someone garlanded me, someone threw stones at me. Were all those stones real? Of course they were real - but only as long as I was asleep. In the same way, we are all dreaming now; and while this dream is going on, I and all these people are real, egoistic, independent entities. It is possible that I am an egoistic, independent, eternal entity, and so are all of you; and it is also possible that all this is a mere dream appearance, as real as the diversity perceived in a dream - maybe. So, I argue within myself in order that logic may come to its logical conclusion. This is called vitarka;

Vitarka vicaranandasmitarupanugamat samprajnatah.

This sutra has been interpreted by some commentators as signifying three or four different types of samadhi. I do not know there are different types of samadhi - the same technique or method seems to lead us from one to the other. As I am sitting and trying to meditate, the mind throws up all kinds of arguments - pro and con - and I confront them with counter arguments. So, argument and counter argumentation is the first stage in this meditation. This goes on for some time until the mind or the intellect reaches its own barrier, which is the rational barrier. The intellect does not function beyond ratiocination and logic. Logic comes to its own conclusion - that is logical conclusion. When I have no logic nor

rationalizing intellect, I steadily begin to watch, to look. I am not enquiring in the sense of using the mind - that stage is past. I see no argument at all for or against the existence of this indwelling intelligence, and I see no reason for or against the truth or the falsity of the ego. I am helpless, and the intellect is helpless; so, it stops functioning there. When this happens, the intelligence which is reflected within me, begins to function. I cannot rationally discover this intelligence, I can only look - vicara. Vicara is translated as enquiry - but it is not enquiry in the senses of asking, etc. Cara means to move and vicara is to move in a single direction efficiently. I may ask, "Who is repeating the mantra?" - but once that has been done, there is merely looking. If that is the meaning of the English word 'enquiry', marvellous; if it is not, the proper meaning has to be discovered. It is merely looking without thought, without thinking. When all your energy moves in a single direction, there is no movement, no dissipation of energy. Energy moving in a single direction is like laser beams - it goes on and nothing is lost. Therefore, the person who is meditating conserves his energy. That is called brahmacharya. When there is no movement of thought in this intelligence - and therefore no loss of energy - there is no sorrow, but peace and great tranquility, and that peace is felt by the enquirer - you - as bliss.

Vitarka vicaranandasmitarupanugamat samprajnatah.

When this great bliss arises in you, then again this vicara - enquiry - continues, and you say "Ah! Who experiences this bliss?" Then the answer arises in you, non-verbally: "It is I - I am - I am bliss."

This feeling of 'I am' is still there - that is as far as you can reach unaided. There is no God necessary up to this point - unless you say "It is because of God's Grace we are here, it is because of God's Grace I am able to get up at five in the morning, and it is because of God's Grace I am able to sit in the lotus position." This is a very high state of samadhi or consciousness which can help you in life; but even this is subject to being lost - because as long as the feeling 'I am' - the belief in the existence of egoism - is there, so long the veil of ignorance is also there, and you have not completely discovered the indwelling omnipresent intelligence. Therefore, there is the ever-present danger of falling from that and getting involved again in rubbish. Beyond that it is difficult for the human being to go unaided, and that is where we need the Grace of God. That Grace, again, manifests itself when you knock; and while knocking at the door calling, "I do not know", helplessly you fall down - and when you fall down, the door opens. That is called Divine Grace - or whatever you like to call it. When you collapse, the egoism and the avidya - ignorance also collapse. There is enlightenment. Did you achieve it? No. Did you not achieve it? Yes. No questions can be answered rationally from there on.

One of the methods by which we may be able to control - or become vigilantly aware of - the mental modifications or ideas, is by the dual process of abhayasa and vairagya - practise and the cultivation of dispassion.

Abhyasa vairigyabhyam tannirodhah.

What is practise?

Whatever enables us to be steadily rooted in enquiry, in vigilance. Unless this is borne in mind, I may start doing something which might lead me astray, instead of helping me. To give you an example that suddenly came to my mind; somewhere in some scriptures it is said that if you build a temple for God, you go to heaven straight away. So, now I want to build a temple because I am a great devotee of God; but, in the course of building it, I become so terribly involved in drawing up the plans, meeting the architects, fighting with the contractors and cheating the labourers, that halfway through I have completely forgotten all my devotion to God! In all these cases, one has to be very cautious in understanding the injunction or the scriptural statement. When the Wright Brothers announced that they could fly, some priests denounced the whole thing saying, "No, the scriptures say angels fly", but the scriptures did not say that human beings cannot fly! When the scripture commanded, "Thou shalt build a temple for thy Lord", they did not command that in the meantime you should forget all about Him. But that is what we do very often.

It does not matter what abhyasa or practise of yoga we undertake, as long as it has some relevance to our life. Yoga means joining, but it is a tragedy that our yoga has no relevance to our life at all. It seems to be completely disjointed, disconnected. Often we hear yoga described as something which takes us away from life. For instance: "A yogi is supposed to be completely unconcerned with his appearance" - but why not be clean and neat and then be unconcerned? I think that is more sensible. Be neat and clean and wash your clothes, your skin - if not for your sake, for the sake of others - and then be unconcerned. Some teachers have said that the yogi loathes the very sight of money and women - devils own instruments! I have seen very good people supposedly devoted to God and full of desires for liberation, who come to a Swami with some offering, and in it there is always a currency note - crumpled, to show their indifference for wealth. Must you show this indifference to wealth by crumpling a currency note? If you do not care for money, do not run after it; but if you have ten dollar bills, keep them nicely, neatly. There is no harm in it.

If we do not understand the spirit of yoga, then we can become strange creatures who attract attention. Why must I be unusual? Why behave in an unusual way just to attract? Why can't I be a part of the life stream, exactly like every body else? To become attractive is not all that important in life. It is important to remember that it is the spirit of yoga that matters. I cannot become

a yogi if I am something unusual. If I am, either people will put me on a pedestal and worship me - in which case I am not with them, or they will trample upon me - again I am not with them. If you go to India, you will see this everywhere. But why not be in the stream, and live such a life as would be in strict accordance with the spirit of yoga. Whatever you do must have a direct relevance to life, and when that life is lived in accordance with the spirit of yoga, you become a yogi, never mind your appearance. The two things to be borne in mind, whatever be the practice we indulge in are, one, the spirit of yoga should not be forgotten at any stage, and two, that practise should have immediate relevance to my life - otherwise it is not yoga.

The word abhyasa has also been taken to mean the eightfold practice that is set out at great length in the Yoga Sutras. We will have a quick look at the first five. Yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, and pratyahara. These are considered bahiranga - externally visible and externally recognisable practises of yoga. The last three, dharana - concentration, dhyana - meditation, samadhi - super-consciousness, or self-realisation, or enlightenment, are supposed to be inward - antaranga - not things that are meant to be paraded in public. I think that distinction is terribly important to remember. If they are inward, then they are constant throughout our daily life. If you remember that, then you will realise that meditation is not sitting in a corner with closed eyes - that is obvious, an external practise, a publicity stunt. If meditation is to be antaranga - inward, then it must be something that nobody notices. You may be sculpturing, singing, cooking, reading or sweeping, but in and through all these, the spirit of meditation is preserved. That is why it is called inward practise - it is not something we do in order to attract attention.

The first five are very interesting. In the Yoga Sutras, all the eight are called angas, limbs. It is usual for teachers of yoga to refer to these as the eight steps of yoga, but the word 'step' is not there in the original text. It only says 'astanga yoga.' A baby boy on the first day of his life on earth is a complete miniature man. All his limbs and all the organs of the body are present at the moment of birth. It is not as though some kind of a God decides that, as a baby is not making use of its brain for the present, you can give birth to a baby with just a mouth and a stomach, and then afterwards slowly add on the brains, the arms, etc. It does not happen that way! On the very first day, the whole baby is born with all its organs intact. Even so, on the very first day, you begin to practise yoga, all these eight limbs must be born together. So, do not say, "I am practising asana now, in another ten years time I will practise pranayama, then comes pratyahara, then dharana, and then dhyana, and then I will go to the Himalayas for samadhi."

No! If I practise yoga, I must practise all the eight limbs, all the eight aspects of this yoga right from the first day. You will see as we go that it cannot be otherwise.

The first limb is called yama, which is another sanskrit word with two pages of meaning. The God who presides over death is called Yama. Yama also means 'restraint', and 'thus far and no further'. That is what death does! I go on doing all

sorts of funny things, and something says, "Thus far and no further. That will do enough for this life time."

Yama is fivefold - ahimsa, satyam, asteyam, brahmacharya, aparigraha. What are they? Ahimsa means non-violence in thought, word and deed. There have been people who have said that this must be practised before we can proceed any further, before we can even practise asanas, or think of doing some pranayama. Their argument is that, unless we are well established in all these virtuous qualities, our minds will not allow us to meditate, and our prana will be disturbed - so, we cannot do pranayama. Or it may also work the other way round - that unless we know how to meditate, we may not know in how many hundreds and thousands of little ways this violence manifests in us. And what exactly do we mean by violence? Are we really non-violent? It seems that once Socrates was sitting outside his house, and a soldier who was chasing a murderer came past and asked him, "Did you see a murderer run past this way?" Socrates looked at him and said, "What do you mean, 'murderer'?" "A killer". "Oh, a butcher!" "No, no, no, a man who kills a man." "Oh! a soldier!" "No, a man who kills a man in peacetime." "Oh, executioner'." "No, a man who kills a man in peacetime in his own house." "Oh, a doctor!"

It is funny, but then we do not regard all these things killing as murder. I saw the latest translation of the Holy Bible where The Ten Commandments were translated in very modern language. It is not, "Thou shalt not kill" any more, but "Thou shalt not commit murder." So, it is up to you and me - we assemble together in a sort of council to decide what exactly the good Lord meant by murder. Killing someone in self-defence is not murder; but what does self-defence mean? If you become a lawyer; you will learn all this - how to interpret, how to twist and turn to suit yourself. I have heard it said that in some countries polygamy is allowed, whereas we are strictly monogamous. Is that so? Well, almost. If I do not like this woman, I divorce her and get married to another. That is precisely what I call polygamy. No man sleeps with three women at the same time. So, what is the great difference? The thing is still the same - I have merely twisted it to suit my convenience. If it is a spiritual law, cheating or bluffing oneself is a waste of time. You will really and truly adopt these principles only when you are vigilantly watchful to see where you are bluffing yourself.

Hypocrisy is the worst of all sins - for want of a better word. This hypocrisy can go only when I am vigilantly watching myself. That vigilance itself is yoga. Yoga is not something which comes later, yoga comes right there in the first step - if you want to call it a step. If I want to practise non-violence, I do not pretend that I am allowed righteous indignation. For instance, we were witness to a beautiful drama in India when we attended an enormous conference. The first day, something went wrong. Every speaker had been allotted thirty minutes. The first speaker happened to come twenty minutes late. After ten minutes, some one passed a note under his beard: 'Five minutes more.' The man blew up - everything caught fire then! Then somebody made the dreadful mistake of saying, "You came late". He replied, "I did not come late, your car came late. I was waiting in my room

from seven o'clock this morning! I was not at fault." The organiser happened to be near me and I said, "Go there, fall at his feet, and say, 'Holy man, forgive me. Speak as long as you like, it was my fault.'" So, immediately he calmed down and went on speaking - it was a miracle. If I had lost my temper and shouted like that I would have forgotten what I was saying before, but he did not. After all these histrionics, he came back just where he left off, and continued just as if nothing had happened. Marvellous! That evening we had a dinner at the Rotary Club and were all in a very jovial mood. Someone remarked, "What kind of holiness is this, that even holy people become angry?" This Swami was there, and he flew into a rage, saying, "Of course, only we can be angry - others cannot. We are here to correct them," That's it! We can tell ourselves all sorts of marvelous things, and we bring in all sorts of funny arguments to prove to ourselves that righteous indignation is allowed, losing one's temper or getting angry in order to correct others in one's custody is allowed - and so you go on. Like the french language - you formulate the rule, and then go on with the exceptions. There are so many of them that you have forgotten the rule before you are half way through.

Therefore without the rule and without the exceptions, I can only arrive at the correct understanding of it if I vigilantly watch what happens within me. Only then it is possible to understand what is meant by yama; otherwise our whole life will be either perversion or fanaticism, both of which are extremes. Either I fanatically say, "Oh, no, I won't become angry at all, he may go on murdering you", or I become perverted and lose my temper at the least provocation, and blame the whole thing on the provocation. This applies to all the various disciplines mentioned under yama.

Then the next limb is called niyama. Niyama, in simple language, means a well regulated life; saucha - purity, cleanliness, santosa - contentment, tapas - an austere simple life, svadhyaya - study, recollection, isvarapranidhana - devotion to God. All these things regulate our life and remind us constantly of the yogic spirit.

The third is called asana - sthirasukhamasanam. Any firm and comfortable sitting posture is asana - unfortunately the word 'sitting' is not there - any firm and comfortable posture; sthiram - firm, sukham - pleasant, asanam - posture. The word sthiram or firmness was used because of a theory that if the body is restless, the mind will also be restless. But, if yoga is meant to be a whole-life affair, then the mind has to be steady even when the body is not steady. I have to be active to work; and even when I am working and the body appears to be restless, the mind must be peaceful. What you are taught in hatha yoga classes is perhaps not what is meant by posture here, or it may even mean that. If it does not, then there is no problem, but if it does include all those postures, what is the meaning? That is marvellous, something beautiful! You are accustomed to a certain standing posture, you stand with your head up and feet down, planted firmly on the floor. Then suddenly some yoga teacher comes along and says, "Stand on your yead". It is an unusual thing - while you assume the posture the whole balance is lost, the circulation is reversed - things seem to happen in your

head, in your stomach and in your feet; all sorts of things happen within the first few seconds. Then, for the next minute or so, you are enjoying it. Probably the intelligence in the body got a shock - it never expected you to be so crazy as to stand on your head! Then suddenly it says, "Aha! this is what you are doing now, good." The whole intelligence goes to work, and you find the head, the neck and the eyes relaxing, the breathing becoming more and more steady. Marvellous! I did something crazy, and yet this intelligence was so clever that it was able to restore balance and harmony within hardly half a minute.

Thus I discover that even if mistakes are made in my life, that intelligence is somehow able to restore harmony. Once I have discovered this inner intelligence and its omnipotence, I get faith in what you call God, God's Grace and so on. So, maybe even these postures are included.

Then comes pranayama. Pranayama to me does not mean just regulation of breath - though regulated breathing does calm the mind. Patanjali gives us the following as the benefit of pranayama:

Tatah ksyate prakasa varanam  
dharanasu ca योग्याt manasah

By the persistent practise of this pranayama, the veil that hides the truth - the intelligence in you - is removed, and the mind becomes fit for concentration. What is the veil of ignorance? The veil of ignorance suggests that I am this body; that there is no great supernormal intelligence in me, and my mind is the only intelligent instrument I have. This will go by the practise of pranayama. What is the practice of pranayama here? When prana and apana become equal,

pranapanau samau krtva nasabhyantara carinau - Gita V-27

Prana is that which promotes life, and apana is that which brings on death. Can these two become equal? Can I be as unafraid to live as to die - can I face life and death without longing for one and hating the other? If life and death means exactly the same to me, then I am practising pranayama. If I am anxious to live or to die, then I am not practising pranayama. In all this, the vision is resolutely turned within.

The last three limbs of yoga - last, only because they are listed last, not because they are to be cultivated or practised last - are concentration, meditation, and what is known as samadhi. Although the eight limbs of yoga have been named one after the other, it does not necessarily mean that they have to be practised one after the other, but it is customary to regard the last three - concentration, meditation and samadhi - as happening in that sequence. What is concentration?

Desa bandhas cittasya dharana.

The world around us presents various experiences through the senses - the ears, eyes, nose, the tactile sense, and the sense of taste. At least through the first four, the world constantly pours into your mind; and yet, on our day of silence, perhaps you noticed that what you did not pay attention to immediately, did not exist. At least it was not perceived. In the same way, perhaps the memories of all the events that have taken place since our births are stored in the brain, but until the attention is focused upon a particular section of the memory bank, that particular memory is not revived. For instance, this morning, when I was looking for a name, as soon as I looked at Kira, the attention was focused upon that particular bit of memory, and the name was remembered. This happens to us all the time. It is concentrating our attention that makes us revive this memory, and enables us to perceive the world.

So, concentration is not something that is only part of yoga practice, but something which you and I do nearly all the time. Otherwise you can imagine that, if all the memories that were stored in your brain, suddenly made themselves manifest now, you would go crazy. There is this selective perception which functions all the time. The yogi wants to know how to make this happen. When you go to the theatre or watch a Western movie film, all your attention is gripped there - you do not even know who is sitting next to you. But then it is involuntary - somebody else switches your attention on, and therefore that attention is of no spiritual value to you. But it gives you an indication that it is possible for you to focus your attention.

Now, from there on, we enter into what is yoga. To deliberately and voluntarily focus the attention upon something, is concentration. If somebody watches your breathing while you are doing this concentration and entering into the meditative mood, he will see that the breath becomes very fine and smooth. In meditation, the breathing becomes so fine that you almost do not notice it - there is no deep breathing or deep inhalation and exhalation at all. The breathing is nearly suspended. The entire force of the mind, the beam of consciousness, seems to flow in one stream. Mind is a flowing thing - it is not static - you cannot arrest it, or bottle it up. When you think you have stopped the functioning of the mind, you only think you have stopped it. To concentrate is to let the mind flow in a single direction, and let this happen where and how you want. This is the first step - desa bandhas cittasya dharana. There is only a restriction of the spatial

dissipation of my mental energies. At present, I can hear something, I see all sorts of things, I can smell cooking, I feel the chill wind, I am thinking partly of what I am saying now and partly, perhaps, I am thinking of what we are going to do tomorrow - all the rays of the mind are dissipated. When all the rays are gathered together and beamed on a single object, this is dharana - concentration.

In meditation, the stream does not flow outward, but inward. In order to understand an object, you cannot possibly let the attention flow onto the external object, but you must examine your own mind - or consciousness - which apprehends and sees an object. I cannot possibly know what it is, because the vibrations that are emanated by it enter the senses - the eyes, the ears - and they are gathered by that aspect of the mind which is called manas - the coordinating agent or the registrar of the mental university. For instance, if I look at this tape-recorder, the eyes see something, the ears hear something and the hand feels something. All these sensations are gathered together and co-ordinated by the manas. With that information, the mind approaches another department, the memory bank or citta. "Did you see anything like this before? It is black and has a handle sticking out, so and so dimensions and makes a noise all the time. What is it?" The memory bank says 'tape recorder'. Then all sorts of other things can happen. The whole thing is projected again on to what is called the buddhi, or awakened intelligence. Buddhi is not a dull, routine, mechanical intelligence, but awakened intelligence which can recommend and give valued judgement, e.g. "It is a good one, it is not such a good one, I can afford it, I cannot afford it." Then the entire thing is again presented to what is known as ahamkara - egotism - which issues orders. "Right, we'll buy it; I don't want it; we'll steal it; it may be dangerous." etc.

Some of the yoga scriptures even have detailed locations for these aspects of the mind. The manas - the co-ordinating agent - is said to be in the mid-brain, and the citta - the memory bank - is supposed to be in the heart. It is the citta that provides emotional energy. Don't you say, "He touched my heart" etc. They are all figures of speech, but they do mean something. Even though physiologically the heart may not be a thinking organ, it seems to play some part in evoking emotional equilibrium or emotional outburst. So, manas - the co-ordinator - is in the middle of the head; the citta - mind stuff or emotional part of your being - is in the heart; and the value judgement or the buddhi is supposed to be on top of the brain. Therefore, when you are confused, you put your hand to the brow, "What must I do?" You are squeezing your buddhi to see if something will come out of it! The ahamkara - egotism is in the region of the heart.

If something in our daily life has an extraordinary emotional impact, we act foolishly. Do you know why? The head does not play any part at all in this - the senses are not co-ordinated here, nor is the buddhi or the intelligence consulted. Immediately your emotional being is touched, the ego jumps in and says, "Come on, get it." Afterwards you sit and regret for your whole life-time! Therefore, whenever there is a strong emotional reaction, the reaction is immediate, unthinking, unintelligent.

So now, I see this - I do not know what it is. I can only discover its real nature by first asking myself, "Where do I see this? What is it that is seen?" The research workers inside may ask for more information. I can gather that information, but it is all fed into the citta. Knowledge of what you and I consider an external object is not outside, but here inside me, in my brain or my heart. I don't know where. So, in yoga we learn to focus and direct the beam of attention on itself, on the perceiving subject. You may look at the object in front of you, but its perception takes place within you. When the entire stream of consciousness pours within you on to that spot where this is perceived, the picture becomes clearer and clearer.

Samadhi has been variously translated - contemplation, meditation, deep meditation, super-consciousness, enlightenment, trance, ecstasy, imperturbableness, total calmness, the peace that passeth understanding, or where movement of thought completely ceases. That samadhi looks at what makes this impression or impact on the citta - watches carefully - and there is instantaneous knowledge; because when there is no movement or thought within, whatever impression is brought into the mind by the senses is looked at and is understood directly, without the intervention of memory, prejudice or value judgement. Samadhi is where there is no movement of thought. It is where consciousness - we do not call it the mind at all - becomes directly aware of the mind - the citta, which merely receives these impressions. And, therefore, the knowledge is pure, undiluted, unpoluted, undistorted. That is samadhi. Samadhi may or may not need one to sit with closed eyes in a dark room, because it is supposed to be practised throughout one's daily life, whatever one is doing. It is possible to let all these functions take place - the mind functions, the senses still continue to receive impressions, the citta is calm and still - so it does not interfere at all - and the innermost consciousness becomes immediately aware of every experience - the truth as it is - independent of previous experience, of prejudice, of bias.

There is this intelligence in the body, in every cell of your being, and in every cell of your brain. It fills your whole being - body, mind and soul, and is capable of looking after the body and the mind, and the world and all its affairs, from moment to moment, from day to day, without all these calculations and worries and anxieties and fears. But now we are not aware of this intelligence. We are not only unaware of this intelligence, but its place has been usurped by a thing called egotism - 'I', 'I can do this.' The 'I' depends upon the memory bank and the buddhi or adjudicator, and is therefore not free. Again, if the 'I' is caught up in an emotional outburst, even the adjudicator is dispensed with and there is instinctive, blind action, which leads to endless regret and remorse. If all these things are seen for what they are, then they come to an end. The inner intelligence or atma - or whatever you wish to call it - shines within itself without any interference by the citta, or ahamkara, or ego; and from moment to moment it acts spontaneously. Therefore, such action is pure, beautiful, wonderful, loving.

Maitri karuna mudito peksanam  
sukha duhkha punya punya visa  
yanam bhavanatas citta prasadanam

Patanjali, while giving it as a sadhana, hints that such may be our conduct. A person in whom this intelligence functions in all its purity, has a four-fold attitude to others in the world - maitri, karuna, mudito, upeksha. The commentators have said that the student of yoga or the yogi is friendly to all his equals - maitri, is compassionate and merciful in his dealings with those who are less fortunate than he is in one way or the other - karuna, is happy at the prosperity and superiority of other people - mudito. It is not that he compares, but he cannot help knowing that there are some people who are better than he is, and there are others who are not as well as he is. Then, lastly, when the yogi comes across behaviour that the world calls wicked or evil, he says, "They say God is omnipresent, but this person is violent, brutal, silly, aggressive - why does God act in this way? I don't know, I'll keep quiet." That is, not to condemn and not to justify, but to leave it alone - upeksha - do not press it one inch further, mind your own business and go your own way. If you justify him, your own mind will start justifying the same behaviour on your part. If you condemn him, you become a superior type of person, "I am so holy, and this fellow is a rascal," and you begin to justify righteous indignation in yourself. Either way you open yourself to some kind of wickedness, or evil. Do not concern yourself with this evil. Leave it there, and go your way. That does not mean that if I am a smoker and I come and ask you for a sandwich, that you would not give me that. This is a separate transaction. I am hungry, you feed me - my smoking has nothing to do with your compassion.

That is the attitude of an enlightened person, because his behaviour is not a reaction produced by his prejudice, memory or value judgement; his actions spring from pure consciousness, from the pure intelligence that fills his entire being. This intelligence is pure, uncontaminated, unpolluted - and therefore its actions are always pure. Technically this is considered a sort of lower samadhi, where I am still there - the 'I' is still there.

I am somebody different from you, I am separate from you. If you are superior, I am happy; if you are my friend, I am pleased with you; if you are inferior, I am merciful; if you are wicked, I ignore you. But 'I' is still there. Even in meditation there is still clearly the 'I' consciousness, the ego consciousness. I am aware of my own bliss, of my own consciousness; so that there is a division there, and the ego still functions as an independent entity.

At some stage or other in meditation, this concentrated beam of light is directed to that. What exactly is it that I have been calling 'I'? 'I' am friendly, 'I' am unfriendly, 'I' see him, 'I' don't see her. What is this duality? How is it born? Is this real? And who am I? What am I? How is it that I am able to see within myself an image of something else, on which I concentrate, on which I meditate?

It is here that the yogi feels that some Grace is necessary. How do I know myself? I can trace the path of the sensations - I see this, and my eyes carry the vibrations to the manas, and it carries a description into the mind, and that description is referred back and says, "He is a young man". That is because the ego is still there - judging, watching, decoding, and remembering. But how does one know what the 'I' is? With what do 'I' know what 'I' is? If I say, "Yes, I know what I am," that again is a regression - the 'I' steps back and looks at the same thing, and says, "I know myself." There is a division there. It is this division that enables me to experience a sensation. 'I am happy' means, I stand apart from this thing called happiness, and I am touching this happiness and therefore I am happy. 'I am unhappy' means I am pushing this unhappiness away from me, and because there is this subject-object relationship, I know this. As long as this division between the experiencer and the experience remains, the experience is an objective experience - it is painful, it is pleasurable, it is honourable, it is dishonourable. Yet I ask myself, "When I am fast asleep, this experience of pleasure or pain does not exist, and therefore there is a possibility of abolishing this space, this distance, between seer and the seen - between the experiencer and the experience. If it is possible to abolish this division, perhaps the division does not exist and I have created it." What has created it? What is the difference between now and the deep sleep state? Now, thought functions; it is thought that creates this division. Thought creates the concept of 'I', the idea of 'I', and having created this idea, 'I', it throws the experience away as the object, and the 'I' goes on touching that object, touching that experience. Patanjali gives this in a very beautiful sutra which is worth serious consideration and meditation - drasta drsimatrah.

On the first day we said,

Tada drastuh svarupe avasthanam.

When one is in a state of yoga, then the seer exists in his own essential nature - without modification, without identification with the various ripples or ideas that arise in the mind. The seer exists as he really is. And now Patanjali says, "Whatever you called the experiences is nothing but polarized experiencing." In simpler words, it is not 'I see you,' but 'seeing takes place'. When the eyes are open, seeing takes place, and from somewhere within there is the thought, the idea - 'I see'. Then this 'I see' has to have an object, and therefore 'you' comes into being - 'I see you' - whereas, in truth, seeing takes place, seeing happens, just as sleep happens. In sleep, if somebody tickled your foot, the foot would be withdrawn. You would not say, "I withdrew my foot." No, when something touched that foot, the foot withdrew. Seeing happens, hearing happens - in the same way, all life can happen. Even thinking can happen, talking can happen, everything can happen in this world - non volitionally - without the prompting of desire, ambition, or inhibition. When things spontaneously happen, it is through the function of the intelligence that is inherent in you. That is known as kaivalya - complete freedom, total freedom. You are alone, not in the sense that you are lonely, but you realize that there is no division - 'I' and 'you' - and therefore that

which is, alone is.

Why is this called yoga? Because the experiencer and the experience suddenly become one. But did they 'become one'? The experiencing, the seeing, the event called seeing alone was, but somehow in this, a duality had been created. I - see - you. When this dualism is abolished, it looks as though that which seemingly was divided, has once again become one. It was never divided, and therefore it does not become one at all. 'I - see - you' was an idea created by ignorance. When this ignorance goes, there is union of the experiencer and the experience - when nothing is sought after, and nothing is rejected - and therefore there is peace, there is bliss.