

# **IN THE LIGHT OF WISDOM**

*by*

***Swami Krishnananda***

The Divine Life Society  
Sivananda Ashram, Rishikesh, India

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## FOREWORD

Millions of prostrations at the feet of Holy Master Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, the *Mahapurusha* of the past century! Countless prostrations at the feet of Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj, one of the foremost direct disciples of Sat Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj!

Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj joined Sivananda Ashram in 1944 and held the post of General Secretary of The Divine Life Society from the year 1960 until just before his *mahasamadhi* in 2001. He was an able administrator. His devotion to Gurudev was unparalleled. He wrote many books and gave numerous talks on different occasions right from his arrival at the Ashram.

This present book contains thirty-four talks given in the year 1970 to students participating in a special session of the Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy. At the request of numerous Yoga students, especially from the West, Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj agreed to give these talks in the form of lessons. The thirty-four lessons began on January 14, 1970 and concluded on March 4, 1970. This book is a Yoga manual. It is a handbook of Yoga. It contains everything that a Yoga student needs to know. Swamiji explains that Yoga, in the simplest terms, is a steady movement of the individual soul towards the Supreme Soul. Yoga is a steady ascent to the Divine.

These lessons were recorded on cassettes and then transcribed by Sri Shankara (Rudy), a Yoga student from the Aalst Divine Life Society Branch ( Belgium). He presented me with a bound copy which was lying with me for nearly 35 years. Now and then I used to read it. Later on I loaned it to our revered Sri Swami Atmaswarupanandaji Maharaj. He showed it to an American visitor, Mr. Scott Morrow, an ardent devotee of Sri Swami Krishnanandaji for many years. Mr. Morrow felt that it was very useful, especially for beginners, and so took it back to the U.S.A. with him. There he carefully edited the manuscript and prepared it for publication by our Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy Press.

I am greatly indebted to Sri Sankara of the Aalst D.L.S. Branch, to Sri Scott Morrow and to the Press staff for bringing out this invaluable book for the benefit of seekers of Yoga from all over the world. It is my earnest hope and desire that these lessons will greatly help the readers by removing wrong conceptions of Yoga and serving as a useful guide.

May the Grace of the Divine ever be upon you all.

Swami Vimalananda

## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

How rare it is to find a teacher of supreme truth whose knowledge is without equal, whose ability to teach is unparalleled and whose primary concern is to render the utmost benefit to the students seated before him! Such a one was Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj. Not only was he a master of yoga, Vedanta, the scriptures of India and the philosophy of both the East and West, he was also a saint and sage of great attainment. He was not someone who merely lectured from book knowledge; when he spoke, it was with a voice filled with the conviction manifested in a person who has realised the highest in his own vast and profound experience. Swamiji was able to explain the most philosophical concepts with clarity and insight. Once having heard him speak, the listener would have the feeling that everything that was needed had been provided.

As was mentioned in the Foreword, the lectures that make up the content of this book were given to a small group of students who had come to the Sivananda Ashram in Rishikesh, India in the winter of 1970 to be instructed in the fundamentals of yoga. Swami Krishnanandaji began the lectures on the auspicious day of Makara Sankranti (January 14th) in the Bhajan Hall and spoke five days a week over a period of eight weeks—giving 34 talks altogether, up until the conclusion on March 4th, 1970. These talks were recorded and transcribed, and for many years the resulting manuscript was with Sri Swami Vimalanandaji, a senior monk of the Sivananda Ashram, who reverently used the text for his own study and meditation. Out of a conviction that these wonderful teachings should be made available to a wider audience, Swami Vimalanandaji eventually gave the manuscript to a devotee who has edited the text into its present form.

The talks here are meant to be immensely helpful to a seeker on the spiritual path who wants to understand the concepts of yoga and put them into practice. Swami Krishnanandaji has gone into great detail, but at the same time he has taken care to explain things slowly and concisely so that one could easily follow the lessons without confusion. His emphasis was on the philosophy, psychology and practice of yoga according to the teachings of sage Patanjali. The first seven limbs of yoga as expounded by Patanjali (*yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana and dhyana*) form the basis of the instructions found herein.

Although there are a number of Sanskrit words used in the text, one need not be conversant with Sanskrit to follow the meaning. If a Sanskrit word is not explained through the context of the paragraph, an English translation is provided beside the word. In addition, there is a Sanskrit glossary at the end of the book to aid the reader. Most of the Sanskrit words have been italicised, with the exception of certain familiar words such as yoga, guru, karma and others that have become a part of common English. Readers from North America should take note that the grammar and spelling in the book accord with British standards of usage.

The editors would like to thank those who have helped in the work of bringing out this book and those donors whose gracious contributions made its printing possible. May the blessings of Sri Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji be on all those who take to the study of this valuable book.

—The Divine Life Society  
January 14th, 2005

## SHORT BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF SWAMI KRISHNANANDA

Swami Krishnananda was born on the 25th of April, 1922 into a highly religious and orthodox Brahmin family and was given the name Subbaraya. Already at an early age, he had become very well-versed in the Sanskrit language and its sacred texts. Through the study of scriptures such as the Srimad Bhagavadgita and the Upanishads, he was attracted more and more to the Advaita philosophy of Sri Shankaracharya. In 1943 Subbaraya took up government service in the town of Hospett, but his work there did not last long. Before the end of the same year, he left for Varanasi in order to pursue his studies in Sanskrit literature and philosophy.

However, the longing for seclusion and the unknown call from the Master pulled him to Rishikesh, where he arrived in the summer of 1944. When he met Swami Sivananda and fell prostrate before him, the saint said, "Stay here till death; I will make kings and ministers fall at your feet." The young man wondered how this could ever be possible, but the prediction would eventually prove true. Swami Sivananda initiated the young Subbaraya into *sannyasa* on the sacred day of Makara Sankranti, the 14th of January 1946, and gave him the name Swami Krishnananda.

Gurudev found that the young disciple was well-suited to general writing tasks, the compiling and editing of books, and other sorts of literary work. Swami Krishnananda confined himself mostly to his work and study in the beginning and did not have much contact with visitors, so that many visitors to the Ashram never even knew that he existed. Eventually Gurudev would ask him to do more serious scholarly work. His first book, 'The Realisation of the Absolute', was written in a matter of weeks when he was still only a young man in his early twenties.

Gurudev nominated him as General Secretary of the Divine Life Society in 1960, and he held that position until his resignation due to poor health in 2001. Swami Krishnananda handled this demanding position with great skill, and at the same time was able to serve as a teacher and guide to the thousands of people who came to him over the course of many years. He was a master of the scriptures, and he gave inspired lectures in the Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy as well as extensive talks in the Ashram itself. Swamiji was the author of over thirty works, and these books cover a wide variety of subjects—primarily in the areas of *sadhana*, philosophy and yoga. Only a genius of the highest calibre would be able to accomplish this intellectual feat, given the enormous volume of work which came to him as General Secretary of a large institution.

He was a rare blend of *karma* yoga and *jnana* yoga and a living example of the teachings of the Gita. He was a master of practically every system of Indian thought and Western philosophy. "Many Sankaras are rolled into one Krishnananda," said Swami Sivananda. Swami Krishnananda continued his service to the Ashram for forty years as it grew from a relatively small organisation into a spiritual institution widely known and respected throughout the world. Despite failing health in his later years, he continued to devote himself to Ashram administration and helping the many devotees who flocked to him. Swami Krishnananda attained Mahasamadhi on 23 November, 2001 after a lengthy illness.

## AUSPICIOUS BEGINNING

We regard this day of January 14th as very auspicious. It is called in India the *Makara Sankranti*, which is when the sun crosses the Tropic of Capricorn. Slowly winter will begin in Australia and summer will come to the northern hemisphere. This day is very auspicious for various reasons. It is at this very sacred moment that we gather here with a common purpose. The purpose is more than that which lies between a teacher and a the taught. In matters that are more than human, relationships are slightly supernormal. I hope you all understand what I actually mean.

The relationships in the world are of one kind, but the relationships which pertain to questions, issues and matters which are superhuman are themselves supernormal. This is the inner essence of the relationships enshrined in spiritual institutions. The relationship between one person and another in institutions of the spirit are not individualistic or human, but they imply and bear the stamp of something which beckons from above. It is something like a movement forward along a road on which one walks to a destination. Every step that we take forward is like a pull onwards; so also is this mysterious and unintelligible relationship among seekers of a common supernormal purpose.

I purposely use 'supernormal' instead of saying 'religious' or even 'spiritual', because these words have not been understood properly—but instead misused and sometimes even abused. We use the words 'religious', 'spiritual' and 'yogic' so many times that they have become commonplace. It appears as if we knew what yoga is, what religion is, and what spirituality is because we have heard the names so many times in newspapers, books and from people who profess to be teachers of yoga.

An idea occurred a year back, that it would not be bad if a few interested seekers were called to this institution and told what the essence of this matter is. Not that there are no people in the world who know this, but they are few in number; and few as the teachers are, so are the disciples also few. There are many who want this thing called yoga or religion or spirituality for a purpose that seems to be different from yoga, religion or spirituality. Very interesting indeed is this psychological phenomenon. We talk of yoga as the aim, religion as the aim, or spirituality as the aim, but internally, in our heart of hearts, we want to make use of these for a different purpose altogether, which lurks in our own bosom, so that our pursuits become means to certain personal ends. And so we use this so-called 'yoga' as a handmaid for our own personal ends. This we may intellectually argue, but it is at the bottom of the hearts of many seekers, honest they may be. Not that they are dishonest or hypocritical, but it is difficult to overcome what man essentially is. Man is man, after all. He has certain ways of thinking, and it is difficult to get over these stereotyped ways of human thinking. We have some ideas of good and bad; we are born with these ideas, and we want to die with them.

It is not fair that we simply die with the same old ideas with which we were born, and think that they are the right things. It may be that we are not right or that we need correction. Just as this is the circumstance and situation in small matters, this happens to be the situation in big things also. What we are in small things, that we are also in big things also. We should not think that we can just be careless in small matters but then be very careful in big matters. When we are careless in tiny things, then we will also be



careless in big things. Drops make the ocean, as you know. A small thing as a cup of tea that we sip is important in the manner of its intake, and a small thing like a few words that we speak to a brother is as important as the big matter that we regard as God-realisation or the practice of yoga. I am not just joking—these are serious things to reflect and meditate upon. There is nothing that is unimportant. Before God at least, nothing is unimportant, insignificant or unnecessary. We should not imagine that we are wiser than God, or that we can distinguish between the important and the unimportant. There is no such thing as unimportant in this world.

So, what we have to learn is not yoga, but to be able to think rightly. Let yoga take our interest later on—it is necessary to be human first. To be divine is a different matter, and it is a later stage. To be a *yogin*, an adept or a master, is a different question. What we have to do in the initial stages is to learn to be human—to be a human being—which is different from imagining that we are human. Although we may walk with two legs we may not really be human, though we are bipeds, because to be human is not merely to walk with two legs. It implies something more than that. It implies a way of thinking, a method of conducting oneself in life, an attitude towards life, a particular relationship that we adopt with other people, and our life as a whole. All these imply what we consider to be human.

So, it is more a regeneration of the mind that is humanity, than mere walking with two legs. We may talk with the tongue and walk with the legs, but even then we need not be wholly human. Before studying yoga we have to learn first to be human beings. It is from humanity that we rise to divinity. Let us be sure that we are humans first, and then let us think of divinity, Godliness, yoga, *atma*, *sakshatkara*, and so on. These are, as I said in the beginning, small matters perhaps. “Oh, these are just nothing,” we may say, but they have not to be taken like that. There is nothing unimportant, as I told you. At least for a spiritual aspirant there is nothing unimportant as long as it is connected with one’s personal life. We may remember one great motto: Anything that is connected with us in any manner whatsoever is not unimportant.

Just imagine for a few minutes what are all the things that are connected with our lives. They are important. They may be persons, things, conditions, situations, ideas, concepts—whatever they be, if they are connected with us in any manner whatsoever, they are important. They are not unimportant. So, this psychological brushing up may be necessary in the earlier stages of study—an honesty of purpose in the pursuit of the aim and a whole-souled adaptation to the goal that we are seeking. Whole-souled—underline this word, the pursuit should not be only partial, one-sided or intellectual. It is *you* who wants to study yoga—not your mind or your intellect. It is you as a completeness, as a totality, as a reality, as a vitality and a meaning. Seek this ideal of yoga. The whole thing is based upon a tremendous caution in the way we conduct ourselves in life. A cautionness in anything tells us: Cautiousness is yoga. Put in a humorous way, vigilance is yoga—not meditation on God. That is a different thing. A person who is not cautious is not a *yogin*. A very great *yogin* named Sanatkumara once said, “What is woe, what is failure, what is destruction? It is carelessness.” Carelessness is veritably death. To be careful is to be a *yogin*, and to be careless is to invite death and destruction.

Destruction is not necessarily a physical wiping out from earthly existence—every failure

is a kind of death. Any kind of a fall—psychological, social or personal—is a kind of dying. We are dying every moment of our lives, and we are also reborn every moment of our lives. Creation, preservation and destruction are taking place every moment. These are not cosmological events that took place millions of years ago. They are an eternal, perpetual and unceasing process that continues even now, individually and cosmically. So, the student of yoga is to be aware of all the subtle shades of difference in conducting oneself in life, to be cautious inwardly and outwardly, and to be wholly human, and then to aspire for the divine. At the present moment this may be difficult to envisage and comprehend wholly.

This is the background with which these series of lessons on yoga will be imparted. We are certain that it is going to benefit you immensely. It is something with which you can return home with great satisfaction, and something which is not easy to get everywhere. We cannot get this in bookshops or from people we meet in our day-to-day lives. It is difficult to get disciples; it is difficult to get teachers. Both these are rare in this world because they are rare specimens, and the combination of these two rare ideals is the occasion of the manifestation of God's grace. On this auspicious occasion, therefore, we offer a prayer to the Almighty to bless us with true goodwill and right aspiration to know what our true and whole-souled objective in life is.

Swami Krishnananda  
January 14, 1970

# CHAPTER ONE

## ATTUNEMENT WITH REALITY

The studies that we are going to make under this particular scheme may be grouped into three stages: the philosophical, the psychological and the practical. I shall try to take your thoughts stage by stage from the most initial concepts and ideals, which will culminate in the practice of meditation—which is true yoga, finally. This is a very detailed technique of the development of the mind, manoeuvring through various processes which are all very, very important. So, I will request you to attend to each description of the steps with attention because, as has been mentioned already, nothing can be regarded as totally unimportant. Every aspect will contribute finally to the superstructure of yoga, which is a completeness in itself. Yoga is not merely the last stage. It is the name given to the completeness or the total picture, which is present in the whole process from the beginning to the end, just as a human being is not merely the head, nor the limbs, nor the totality of all the limbs. We are not merely the mathematical total—we are the vital total. Likewise, not merely the last step that we take, but every step that we take is included in yoga. It is not the mathematical total of these steps that constitutes yoga, but something vital that is present in these combinations of parts. We are not merely a total of the limbs; we are something more than these combinations. Many parts put together do not make a human being. Likewise, the many stages of yoga put together do not make yoga, though they are essential in the beginning. Therefore, I will try to introduce the basic concepts that are presupposed by the progressive stages of yoga.

The question that, in the very beginning, arises in one's mind is, "Where is the need for it?" The need, the purpose and the goal are the incentives behind every action. There should be a necessity. And in certain experiences that we undergo in life, we begin to feel that in every one of our experiences, and in our every activity, we seem to be lacking something. Due to this lack, there is a total dissatisfaction in life. We are not satisfied with the daily eating of our meals; we feel that there is something more than merely sustaining ourselves with food. We are not satisfied with mere dressing; we feel there is something more than the clothes. We are not satisfied with our mere office-going or mere factory work; we begin to feel that there is something more than all this. We are not satisfied with anything. We have an inexplicable feeling within that in everything we do there is something lacking. We may not be able to explain ourselves properly, but our hearts speak a language which ordinarily we cannot explain or understand. In everything that we do, there is a want. Something is left out in everything that we do, on account of which we feel a kind of lacuna.

This is the beginning of the higher life. While this kind of discontent is present in every person, literate or illiterate, it becomes consciously developed in the literate, the understanding, and the truly educated. In Sanskrit we have a beautiful term to designate this condition of consciously feeling this peculiar lack or want in one's life. This term is *viveka*—literally it means discrimination. The capacity to distinguish between the necessary and the unnecessary, the true and the false, the real and the unreal are all the various translations of this term *viveka*. We begin to realise intelligently and consciously

that in everything that we do there is something left out. We never feel that we are complete in our life.

This condition of conscious apprehension of a want in one's life arises only in the higher stages of development of the human mind. Evolution rises, stage by stage, from matter to the organic condition. It slowly steps up to the plant or the vegetable kingdom, where inorganic existence shows signs of life. And it rises further to the level of the instinctive thinking of the animal, and then rises further to the level of the human being with the capacity to understand and logically decide. While we have all the characteristics of the lower levels—we have a body which is made up of inanimate matter, we subsist like plants and instinctively react like animals—all these features may be regarded as being in common with the lower states of life. We, as human beings, have a special characteristic of our own—the capacity of logical judgement—which cannot be found in the vegetable kingdom or even in the animal world. It is man, the human unit, that tries to think in terms of the higher. To judge the lower in terms of the higher is the speciality of the human way of thinking. The animals, for example, cannot connect the cause with the effect, and vice versa. That is why we say that their reactions are instinctive. They react only to external stimuli and then forget the whole thing afterwards, as if it had never happened. They cannot remember as we human beings can.

When the higher begins to determine the lower in any stage of life, law comes into play. We have various kinds of laws—laws of health, laws of family, laws of society, laws of the nation, and so on. The laws are for determining the lower from the higher. The law is only a symbol of the higher principle, which we regard as more real than the social level in which we actually find ourselves. Social living, which is one level or one condition, is to be determined by a higher level of existence. This is why we have laws. If such a determination of the lower by the higher were not necessary, no laws would be necessary, and there would be no need for governments, no need of plans, etc. Any plan, scheme, system, proposal or law is only symbolic of our aspiration to determine a lower existence by a higher ideal which we have not yet been realised, but which is implanted in our minds.

If the higher would already be realised, there would be no need of determining the lower by it—the one need not be connected with the other. The ideal is there, weakly before the mind's eye, but has not been materialised into the reality of experience. There is a kind of tension between the ideal and the real. So, we live a life of tension of various kinds, all of which boil down finally to the ultimate tension or conflict between the ideal and the real—the 'ought' and the 'is'. Something ought to be, but something else is. The 'ought' is the ethical and moral value that we have introduced in our life. This is also the philosophical, the metaphysical and the scientific objective in life. Things ought to be this, but they are not. They are something else.

### **THE CONFLICTS IN LIFE**

The real before us is in conflict with the ideal that is in our minds. Here we actually begin the true life of a human being, which is the reconciliation of the real with the ideal—a business which is out of the range of animals. They have no ideal, because they cannot think as human beings think. This is why we call them instinctive beings. This is also one of the reasons of our sorrow in life. "Oh, it ought to have been like this, but it is something else. What can I do about this?" People try to materialise ideals in many

different fields of life. Politicians, social workers, humanitarians, philanthropists, even saints and sages aim to materialise into reality what has remains now as an ideal. Or, the future has to become the present. The ideal is a kind of future before us. It is not yet in front of us, but is somewhere in the future—in the remote, distant future. We do not know how far ahead of us it is, but we feel that it is so necessary in our lives that we cannot exist without it.

The ideal is not a mere concept in our minds. It is not just a dream which we can brush aside. If the ideal is just a concept in our minds, we can throw out that concept. This ideal which remains now as a concept in our minds has taken possession of us so vehemently that our lives have become a misery without its implementation. All of us are unhappy merely because of the simple reason that the ideal has not become the real, and we cannot live that ideal. If it would be possible to give up the ideal entirely, we would have done it, but we are finding that it is as dear to us as our own hearts or our own breath, and this haunts us day and night.

When I say there is a conflict between the ideal and the real, I mean that this conflict occurs in every type of life that one leads and in every stage of life in which one finds oneself. In our personal life we have this conflict, in our social life we have this very same conflict, in our political and national life we have this conflict, and in international life we have this conflict between the ideal and the real—what ought to be and what really is. This is also the theme of a subject in the West which one may be familiar with, what is called analytic psychology. We need not go into the details of its techniques as practised in the West, but I am just mentioning the basic principles implied in this science. If conflict is visible everywhere in life, and if this conflict must be resolved if man is to be happy, what is the way to resolve this conflict? This was a question that posed itself before the analytic psychologist. The ideal conflicts with the real—here we are confronted in life with the devil, as it were, and we cannot be happy in this condition. We may pose the question, “Why not resolve this conflict?”

We have some difficulties in this effort. To cite some small instances of this conflict between the ideal and the real, we could take our social life. We have secret ideals in our hearts which society may object to under its own laws and rules. If in public life we were to express every idea of our minds, we know that what we call society would not wholly accept it, because each person has a set of ideas not necessarily concurring with society, and if everybody brings their ideas and concepts into public life, it may not be desirable. So society has laws that certain ideals should not be expressed in public life. The society in which we are living is our reality, and we have to adjust ourselves to it—otherwise we cannot live in the world.

But what about our internal desires? Our wish to achieve something privately, and to achieve an ideal, is to naturally express it in public life, and society says, “No!” There is the conflict. Society, which is part of our reality, objects to the ideal that is secretly cherished by us in our hearts. What are we going to do about this ideal in our hearts? Are we going to cast it away? We cannot do it, as it is our hearts that are speaking, and we do not regard it as objectionable. Unfortunately, society is going to regard it as objectionable. If we thought it is objectionable, we would not keep it in our hearts. What the private individual feels is necessary, society thinks is unnecessary. Therefore there is a conflict between the individual and the social ideal.

This was the beginning of the psychoanalytic technique. Some people went crazy, not being able to realise their ideals in life due to the taboos of society. “Don’t do this, don’t do that.” We have ‘don’ts’ everywhere! Well, if we go on multiplying the list of ‘don’ts’ like this, what are we going to do with our cherished ideal? The theory in analytical psychology was that these ideals must be realised somehow or the other, or otherwise the mind could not be happy, and it might become sick. There are mental sicknesses of various kinds, more serious than physical sickness, all caused by this conflict between the individual ideal and the social ideal. Society says something and we say something else—we say this, society says that—and, unfortunately, we are not independent of society. As a part of society, we seem to be incapable of living without it.

Where can we run away to in this world? Wherever we go, we will still be in human society, and society has its own peculiar notions or etiquette. It may be right, it may not be right—that is a different matter. Society is there, and we cannot escape it. We find it impossible to adjust ourselves to these laws and rules for a long time. So, the individual ideal rebels against the social etiquette and law. Society has its own strength, and it will put us down with its own powers. The fight between the individual ideal and the social ideal is social tension, and nobody can be happy.

### **THE INDIVIDUAL IN SOCIETY**

One may wonder what this peculiar society is; after all, it is itself made up of many individuals. What is society, if not all of us put together? Why not permit the individual ideal, inasmuch as society is only all of us put together? There is no society independent of individuals. But there is another peculiar trait of the human mind, which is studied in the field of group psychology, different from individual psychology. Each one of us may individually agree to one thing, but when we are all put together, we may not agree with it. This is what happens in parliaments, for example. If we would approach each parliamentarian individually, they would say, “Yes, it is supposed to be so,” but if they are all put together in the parliament, they may not agree with it. Strange! Individually, each person seems to be something, but when brought together they think altogether differently.

We can tackle a problem by approaching people individually, but not by approaching them as a group. Each parliamentarian can be satisfied individually, but not the total parliament. This is the peculiar mystery which lies as a distinction between the truth behind individual psychology and group psychology. There is something present in the group which is not in the individual, though, as I mentioned earlier, we may say that society is truly a total of individuals. It is not merely the total—there is something else in it. Many bodies put together do not make a society. The mental element is involved in society, and the total of individual minds assumes a peculiar emphasis when it becomes what we call a society.

This difficulty sets a barrier between society and individuals. On account of the existence of a peculiar mysterious principle called the social mind, as differentiated from the individual mind, it becomes difficult to resolve this conflict between the individual ideal and social law. So, individuals start to become unhappy, and where it is not possible to resolve this conflict they may even rebel and become antisocial. They become antisocial beings because they rebel so much, and are undoubtedly antisocial elements. Society does not want them, and it is these persons who later become criminals. They

become mentally sick and do not know what to do. Well, this is not possible always—we cannot always be a rebel. We find that it is a monstrous world that is before us, a world that is not able to understand us. We start cursing the world, “What a pity! Where am I standing in this world?” Nobody seems to understand us, and so we go on murmuring and complaining against the realities of life which do not seem to appreciate our ideals. So we suppress our ideals, bury them in ourselves. We go to bed earlier, that is all; we cannot tolerate this any more. We go on sleeping with these ideals, as if they are our children. But they will not sleep. The children will not sleep; only the parents are asleep. The children will go on crying, “What about us? What have you done with us, my dear friend?” We say, “Please, go back, do not talk, do not talk.” But how long will they listen to us? They will not sleep. These ideals of ours are our children. They are born of us, and we have to do something with them. Psychoanalysis thought that these naughty children, whether they be right or wrong, have to be dealt with in some way—otherwise they would make their parents crazy, that is all. We will go mad with these ideals. There are mental disorders detailed in psychoanalysis which they also try to treat by various methods, but that is a different subject altogether, with which we are not concerned.

These ideals, which have not been materialised but are cherished in the heart, should be brought out into reality. Only then can we be free. We cannot keep these peacefully inside us; we must do something with them. Either we satisfy them, or we see that they should somehow be eliminated. Some people try to kill them. “Oh, I cannot tolerate this! I must either destroy them or satisfy them.” They then do one of the two. One will find that both these things are difficult. We cannot destroy them like that. They are so intimately connected with our lives, and to kill them would be killing ourselves.

These ideals of ours are not outside us, and therefore we cannot throw them away. They are with us; they move with us, and they sleep with us. There are some peculiar conditions of mind, when people start hearing sounds in their ears, and they conclude that somebody is speaking. There is nobody there and yet some sounds are heard in their ears. Sometimes they begin to see visions and are highly disturbed. The person is so nervous because of someone talking and talking in their ears, though nobody is there, and no one is speaking. These ideals that are buried, these desires that have been suppressed and could not be expressed in life take shapes or forms, and they become visible difficulties in front of us. We are afraid of them. These are all psychopathic conditions, and this is not a healthy state of mind.

Now, according to the psychoanalytic technique, the solution was to bring out these ideals so that there may be harmony between the ideal and the real. One satisfies these desires, not materially, but psychologically at least. What is psychological satisfaction? These ideals get acted out through dreams. One may become in dream what one wants to become in waking life. Dreams, fantasies, and building castles in the air are some of the ways in which these ideals are expressed. Many a time one tries to substitute for these ideals. “When I cannot get this, I shall get something else, so that I’ll forget this completely for the time being.” But these ideas and ideals cannot be easily forgotten. Forgetting a devil is not the same as exorcising it. The devil is there, but we close our eyes and pretend it is not there—that is not a solution. We don’t see it, but it sees us.

So substitution is, therefore, not a good psychological method for clearing these avenues of the mind. Suppression is also not a good method. Suppression and repression are the

causes of our illness and destruction. Substitution, again, is obviously not a solution. The desires will have to be vaporised completely, like the camphor that burns up without leaving any residue, or like the mist that melts before the rising sun. These ideals should sublimate themselves into either the reality that is in front of us, or disappear into nothingness. There is no other way left to deal with these cherished ideals.

### **THE DEEPER CAUSES OF CONFLICT**

We should attune ourselves with reality, and then we are all right. Yet, instead we conform to society and the circumstances of the times. Whatever society says is okay with us. If we do not have ideals that differ from the rules and regulations of society, we are all right and have no tension. As time marches, we also march with it. When striding with the same speed and time as society, there is no tension. But if we are conservative, we will not change at the same pace as society; and then we will have to suffer. If we do not have the strength to change society, society will try to change us. We should either change society with our power, or adjust ourselves with it. If we cannot do either, then we become neurotic—we are going to suffer. People who want to change circumstances, but cannot, are the sufferers in the world. They say that society should not be as it is, and that it must change. But who is going to change it? Not us; we cannot do it. Then we go on complaining and suffering. Here I am reminded of a famous saying of a philosopher. “Give me the will to change what I can, the courage to bear what I cannot, and the wisdom to know the difference.” Very interesting! We do not have the wisdom to know the difference—that is our difficulty. We do not know what can be changed and what cannot be changed. We mistake the ‘cannot’ for the ‘can’. We try the impossible and then suffer—the sufferers are those who try the impossible. If it is possible, we can change it, but if we cannot change it and yet we want to, then we suffer in society. These are the simple forms of mental tension which philosophy studies in its superficial levels, and which has to lead to psychoanalytic techniques, especially today in the West.

But these conflicts do not end with merely social tension. They have deeper aspects, and these have not been studied by modern psychologists. We are not going to be happy even if society agrees with us. There will still be something in us which will remain dissatisfied. If the whole world says you are a wonderful man, you will not be happy. There are many people in the world who are placed in a good position, who are not criticised by society, but they cannot be said to be happy. We can query any one of them. A big person whom we generally regard as very important and well-placed—socially, politically and economically—if we ask him, “My dear friend, is everything all right? Are you happy?” we will see that no, he is not. What is lacking? He is perfectly in union with the existent form of society. He is well-regarded and respected, and yet something is wrong with him.

He himself may not be able to answer this question properly, because mostly people float on the surface of the mind. They cannot go deep into their minds, because their minds are merely extrovert. They think only outwardly, and cannot move the mind inward. The mind cannot think of itself. This is the difficulty with the mind. It can only think of others. The mind has become a subject of the judgement of other persons and things. It has never been able to subject itself to that self-same analysis to which it wants to subject other people and things in the world. The mind is not honest and



dispassionate in its habits—it wants to judge others but not itself. Because it sees itself as the judge, why should it judge itself? The judge judges only the defendants, but not himself.

This is the fundamental difficulty of the mind. It seems to be well off with human society, but it is not yet all right. Here begins yoga, yoga philosophy and yoga psychology. Psychoanalysis is not sufficient, though mental illnesses may appear temporarily cured by the analytic techniques. People have fundamental difficulties which are not quite abnormal. A person may be normal and yet have difficulties. It is not only abnormal people that suffer in the world—normal people also suffer. The psychology of yoga starts with normalcy and not with abnormality. Abnormal people cannot become yoga students. When the mind becomes thoroughly normal, then yoga analysis starts. When there is abnormal thinking, there is no yoga. This is very important to remember. What is abnormality? According to psychoanalysis, abnormality is the tension created between individual ideals and social law. Yoga psychology, though, tells us that even if the attunement between society and the individual is achieved, the human being is not going to be happy. There is still something lacking. This lacuna, with which I began speaking, will persist in spite of our having so many things in the world. We may have perfect health and a lot of money, and we may be well-placed in society, yet we are not going to be happy with all this.

Here we enter into the field of true philosophical analysis. Yoga has a philosophical aspect and a psychological aspect and also a practical aspect, as I mentioned before. The practice and the psychology of yoga are both based on its philosophy. By 'philosophy' I do not mean a theory that just occurred to someone's mind. It is not merely a viewpoint that we call 'philosophy'. Everyone has a philosophy in that sense. Our idea of the world is our philosophy, but there is a genuine philosophy in the true sense of the term—the wisdom of life, as we may call it. Philosophy is the wisdom of life; it is not a theory. The theories may be many, but wisdom is only one. We cannot have many kinds of wisdom. Great philosophers who were genuine thinkers along these lines defined philosophy as the wisdom of life, the love of this wisdom, and, more than that, the practice of this wisdom.

To understand life in its true perspective would be true philosophy. We must understand life as it is. We should not have a wrong idea about it. When we go to a place, we must understand where we are staying and what kind of people are around us. We should not go just like a fool, without knowing anything about the circumstances prevailing outside. "Where am I, what is this country, what kind of people are living around me, and what are the conditions in which I am going to be there?" All these are the thoughts that might occur to our minds when we go to a new place. When we are in life, when we are living in this world, it must be our duty to understand what it is in which we find ourselves. "What is it that I am seeing in front of me, how am I related to these things, and what am I to do with these things? I have got to do something with them. I cannot just ignore them. Because they look at me, gaze at me, stare at me, they seem to be wanting something from me. How am I going to deal with these things that I call the world in front of me?"

### **YOGIC ANALYSIS**

Here commences philosophical analysis—the perception of the world, and our having

something to do with it. We cannot simply say, "Let it be there, why should I worry?" We cannot say that about the world, as it will not tolerate that type of attitude. It will say in return, "You have something to do with me, and I shall also have dealings with you!" There is a mutual concord between the world and the individual, and here commences what we call life. Life is nothing but this relationship between the individual and the world. Our attitude in respect to the world is our life. Life is not only breathing—that is life in the purely biological sense. In the sense of values, life is more than mere breathing. This methodology of our relationship with the world is the practical business of our lives. Each one has one's own methodology, and many of these methodologies do not succeed because they are unconnected with the facts of life. Our living should be connected with the facts of life.

When we employ wrong techniques in life—wrong in the sense that there was no proper relation to the facts of life—then we get rebuffed and receive a kick from nature. Nature responds like a policeman who tells a cabdriver, "Go back, this is not the proper road; you do not know the method of proper driving. Turn that way." Just as we get a rebuff from a policeman on the road, nature gives us a kick. "What is the matter," we think. "Why should we get a kick like this from all sides?" If we have an electric wire and we do not know how to handle it or how to touch it, it will say, "Watch out, you do not know how to handle me." So the handling of what we call life is the practical business that seems to be there in front of us, just as in scientific or technological dealings there is a theory behind every invention, and a doctrine or a principle to be followed in every approach of life—scientific, technological, sociological or political.

The actions that the human being performs have a principle underlying them. We should not just act—there must be a method to our working. We do not go about randomly without an idea in our minds of where we are going. We should go with a definite principle in our minds. Likewise, there is a way in which we ought to conduct ourselves in life. This conduct of life, if it is going to be a success, should be based on a principle connected with the reality of life. If our ways of living are unconnected with the realities of life, one may say that life becomes a failure, and one becomes a grieved person, cursing nature. But nature is not going to listen to our curses. We can go on cursing and belabouring, but what does it care? We do not know nature, and therefore we do not understand it. The situation is like an ignorant man's complaining against the laws of his state. He does not know the laws, and he goes on cursing everybody. "Why is it like this; why like that?" A person who does not know the laws of the state may suffer due to ignorance, but ignorance of the law is no excuse—we know that very well. We cannot say, "I didn't know." Do not say, "I don't know." All people in the world seem to be in this position of, "I didn't know, I am sorry, please excuse me." We say this to nature also. "Excuse me, I don't understand you properly." But it excuses us with a kick, not with a smile—that is a peculiar law of nature.

The wisdom of life, which is philosophy, is an understanding of life. Yoga, therefore, is a philosophy upon which is constructed the most beautiful edifice of its psychology. And then there is the actual implementation of it, which one thinks is yoga and wants to study. Yoga is not merely practise without understanding. It is a practice with a tremendous understanding behind it, and when this understanding becomes complete, one becomes a perfect human being attuned not merely to sociological reality but to reality in its completeness. Yoga has many stages which I shall try to explain. Reality

also has many stages, and not merely the sociological reality which psychoanalysts are concerned with. There is something deeper than the sociological and the outer reality, through all of which we have to attune ourselves systematically, stage by stage. When we attune ourselves and harmonise ourselves through all the levels of reality, we are one with nature, one with truth, and ultimately one with God. This is yoga.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE RIGHT RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THINGS

In the previous chapter we were studying the nature of conflict—a very important difficulty in which we often find ourselves. The special feature about this psychological conflict is that, when we are in it, we do not always realise that we are in it. So, that psychological conflict does not become an object of our observation, does not become a part of our being, and therefore we cannot see this conflict, observe it or study it. Just as we cannot see our own eyes, we cannot see this conflict in our minds. The conflict would have lost its meaning if it had been possible for us to see it or observe it—just as a thief who is detected is no more a thief. The thief succeeds as long as he is not detected. Just as we cannot see darkness with the help of a torch, conflict cannot be seen through. It is in us—that is all, and that is the matter. The difficulty becomes a real difficulty only when it is not known to us as a difficulty. It is not an object before us in any sense of the term. When a person gets involved in this inescapable conflict between the ideal and the real, and at the same time it is not possible to detect his own workings in any manner whatsoever, then the mind divides the contra-events in order to work its way through. There is a twofold mystery about this conflict. The one is that we do not know that we are in a state of conflict, though we are in it. The second is that we cannot go on in a state of conflict forever, and it has to be resolved.

How are we going to resolve the conflict without knowing that we are in a state of conflict? This is a peculiar mystery of this psychological phenomenon. We conduct ourselves in a spontaneous manner—the spontaneity being the very nature of the working of the mind in conflict. It takes avenues of expression in order to relieve tension. All this we do without knowing what we are doing. When we are hungry for example and try to eat our meal, we do not logically argue about how this hunger arises—the physiological, anatomical and biological factors involved in the phenomena of hunger are not contemplated by us. We just eat our food, and there the matter ends. Like that, we just automatically do certain things to resolve conflict.

Now, this ‘we’ or rather the ‘I’ is a shape taken by the conflict itself. There are many layers of this ‘I’, and the outermost layer is the layer of mental conflict. We are slowly going to study what this ‘I’ really is, but suffice it to say for the time being that for all practical purposes of outer life, this ‘I’ is nothing but a bundle of conflicts knit together like a cloth made up of threads. We are nothing except a huge mass of conflicts of the mind. Just as a fabric is called a cloth, though it is made up of many threads, we regard this bundle of conflicts as ‘I’. So we are a huge vehicle of conflicts moving hither and thither, radiating the air of conflict wherever we go, because we ourselves are in a state of conflict. As we are not happy, we cannot make others around us happy.

#### CONFLICT AS AN UNNATURAL STATE

But conflict is not our true and healthy state—it is an unnatural state. That which is against nature is untruth. That which is unnatural cannot continue for a long time; it is nature that continues. Nature is truth. Untruth does not succeed—truth alone succeeds. Have you heard the great adage, “*Satyam eva jayate*”. (Truth alone is victorious.) The truth of harmony tries to establish itself in and through this conflict of mind, and we see

the avenues of the expression of conflict in very many ways. Some of these conflicts are called defence mechanisms, or we may say certain contrivances which the mind makes use of in releasing itself. Some of these are the attempts of the mind to utilise other persons and the objects of the world as instruments in bringing about a release of conflict. When there is no peace within us, we just try to forget the fact that we have no peace within, and we try to drown ourselves in certain outer phenomena. We just engage ourselves in hectic activity and forget the boredom of life.

We might have seen people carrying their radios with them wherever they go. Whether they are in the bathroom, or at the lunch table, or in the meditation room, it makes no difference—the radio must be there. They go to the market to purchase something, and the radio is hanging on their shoulders. They try to drown themselves in the sound of this instrument, because they have no peace within. They want to manufacture some peace artificially with instruments that they have created, because there is no peace inside. “If I have not got something, I will import it from outside. I will drown myself in a loud sound so that I may not hear any other sounds. I do not want to hear the sound of my own mind, because it is very inconvenient. So let me hear the sound of the radio, tuned very high; or let me just move about from place to place.” These people never sit in any place; they become a permanent tourist throughout their lives so that they have no time to think of their problems, because to think of problems is another problem. “Better not to think about them—let them die out,” these people imagine to themselves.

But the thoughts do not die out, as I mentioned in the previous chapter. They are there, watching for an opportunity to catch us. We think otherwise, and take a very light view of things. We allow these difficult conditions to lie underneath by just trying to forget them. However, we cannot forget the existence of a creditor—he is not going to leave us like that. We may say he is not there, but he knows he is there. While the forgetting of these problems by engaging oneself in something quite different is one of the methods of the mind, there are other ways which it adopts, such as associating ourselves with larger groups of people or busying ourselves with some work of the family. We become a social worker, or at least think that we are one, though we might not be in a position to do any good to society or think of larger things such as world problems, world peace and world brotherhood. We have no peace within us, and we want to bring peace to the world. We become a sort of important person due to talking about world peace, world brotherhood, international harmony and many other things of the same kind. While there is no intrinsic importance in us, we have an artificial importance in the eyes of the people to whom we are talking about these big things. We talk only of the world—nothing smaller than that—and this is one of the ways of the extension of the difficulty of the mind into outer conditions of life. The mind imagines that by going on expanding its field of activities it will be able to be free from the conflicts that are within.

We know that when we are very much aggrieved, we go and cry before someone, “These are my difficulties, oh, see how bad.” When grief is shared, it is lessened. Joy shared increases, as they say. If we have won a lottery we shout everywhere, “Oh, I won it!” Our happiness is increased by others knowing it. But, if we are grieved and we say so, the grief is diminished, because other minds share a sympathy and a part of our troubles. So, the mind tries this device in releasing its conflicts within by engaging itself in fields of activity wider than its own personality. But all this ends only as an attempt with no success, because this extension of the field of work has no end. How far and how long

can we go on extending? From our personality we have to go out to society. We may roam around the whole globe, but after that, what will happen? The Earth is the limit of our action, and we cannot go beyond it.

Well, we may try to go to the moon or any other planet, but the cosmos is so wide that we will never see its boundaries. We ask for more and more, and the more has another more beyond it. We have an infinity of space outside us, and the extension of the field of activity of the mind will have no end, just as when we see ourselves in two mirrors kept on opposite sides, we will see an infinity of depth, and we will not know where it ends. Space, and therefore the universe, has no limits.

To try to increase the field of one's work is not a solution to one's problems. We may gather the assistance of many people outside, but how many will we collect altogether? The whole world? Even then there are many things left out. Creation is not exhausted by this small Earth. Even if we roam around the whole solar system, creation is not encompassed. The intention of the mind is to reach the limit of its activity, and this limit is never reached by external movements. Any amount of external activity—though it may become a temporary substitute just to forget the monotony of life—life nevertheless becomes a monotony to many people. They just cannot tolerate it, but they do not know what to do with it, so they try to forget it in these manners. But though these may become temporal aids, they are not going to be solutions. We put off the creditor by saying, "Come tomorrow, sir, or after one month," but he will eventually come. It may be after five years, but he is going to come.

Likewise we tell this conflict, "My dear friend, go a little further—to society, to the country, to the world, to the sun, to the moon, to Jupiter you go." But he will come back. He may go because we put him off, but how long can we put off things? So, conflicts of mind cannot be put off like that—we have to deal with them. All our social attitudes are attempts at substitution and putting things off, and not at finding solutions.

This was the ground that I tried to pave in the previous chapter, and it is here that we have finally landed. We do not know where to go now, but we have to work like physicians and not merely like sick children who do not know what is happening to them. A physician tries to understand. He does not become flabbergasted by looking at a patient. We should not get upset: "Oh, what a misery!" This is not going to be our solution. Just beating our breasts or hitting our heads against the wall is not a solution. A solution would be to calmly sit and think as to what this is all about. "Why should I be in this condition? What is wrong with me? Why does it often appear that others are happy and I am not? Why should it be like this? Is it true that others are happier than I? If it seems to be so, what should be the reason? Am I a sinner while others are not? What is right with others and wrong with me?"

Generally, though, we think that something is right with us and wrong with others. This is very interesting. "The whole world is dead wrong, it doesn't understand me, and this world is not meant for me." We are the so-called prophets—we try to become prophets, and sometimes even incarnations. Psychology is a very interesting subject, and becomes more interesting when our own minds become the subject of study. Don't become a professor of psychology just to teach the nature of others' minds. What about your mind, sir, did you study it? "Physician, heal thyself! Teacher, teach thyself! Mind, study thyself!" This must be the motto, at least for a sincere student.

## YOGIC PSYCHOLOGY

Now, why this should all be there at all is a great question, a tremendous question that the world poses before us. Here we are on the borderland of true psychology, deeper than the so-called depth psychology. The philosophy and the psychology of yoga come to our help here while scientific analysis—whether in the field of physics, biology or psychology—has been attempting only empirical methods. The system of yoga has adopted different means altogether. One may ask, “What is wrong with empirical methods? Don’t we fly in planes and have we not reached the moon?” Well, all this we have done, but we have not done anything for ourselves. We have done many things, but all these things seem to bear no connection with our personal lives and problems.

We are the same persons that we were some centuries back, and our present day’s troubles are the same as they were some centuries back. Two thousand years ago man was suffering from something, and now he is suffering from the same thing. Yes, we have learned to fly like a bird and swim like a fish, but we have not yet learned to walk like a man—this has yet to be learnt. Man needs to be the subject of his own study, because man is the problem. Space and time are not problems, unfortunately. Why should we try to tackle space-time problems? Ultimately, the world has not really been the problem—we have been the problem.

I am reminded that a schoolteacher once asked a student, “Do you know, my dear child, who a politician is?” The student replied, “A politician is one who creates a problem and then tries to solve it.” Likewise, man seems to have created a peculiar problem around himself, and now he finds this problem has to be faced. But he cannot tackle the problem, because it is his dear child. We cannot tackle our children. We can deal with others’ children, but we love our own child so much that we cannot deal with it. We may be a good teacher of others’ children but not a good teacher of our own child—that is the difficulty. So, we may study others’ minds, but not our own minds.

There are some doctors who cannot treat themselves. Though they are physicians, they must go to other doctors. It looks very strange—why should they go to other doctors? But a psychological difficulty is there, and they cannot treat themselves. So, man’s problem is man, and not the world. Our problem is ourselves; my problem is myself and not somebody else or something else—not the sun, not the astronomical world, not society and not anybody else. Let us forget all these. Our problems are in us, and we are the problems.

I began by saying that we are moving vehicles of problems; we are made up of these unanswered questions. This is the outermost layer of the ‘I’ of the human being, the personality of conflict. We do not eat with peace, we do not speak with peace, and we do not sleep with peace. When we eat our meals we are not at peace, because we are thinking of something else. When we go to bed, we do not think of our having gone to bed; we think of something else—about yesterday or tomorrow. We should think of these examples for a few minutes and judge for ourselves whether this is correct or not. Whenever we act, we think of something else other than that.

There are some students in school who, when they are in the mathematics class, think of geography. The teacher is teaching mathematics on the blackboard, and the student opens a geography book. And when the geography teacher comes, he opens a

mathematics book. Students do this. We do not know why he is acting like that. He is worried, and it is because he is worried that he thinks of what will come in another forty-five minutes. Likewise, when we are expected to do something or meet someone, we may be anticipating something else. Now we are here, but we may be subconsciously thinking of what is going to take place after an hour. The future is there already touching us, so that we are never wholly living in the present. We are living always in an artificial future which has not yet become a reality to us. We are living in an imaginary world of fantasies, imaginations, reveries and ideals that may be realised or not.

Some philosophers say therefore that the world is like a dream. What else can it be when we live in fantasies and imaginations of the future that have not become the present, and which may not be realised at all? We are always brooding and brooding over something—we ourselves know this—and this is not a happy state of affairs. Yoga goes deep into this problem. Man has to be man. We have to be ourselves and not something other than ourselves. There is always an element of 'other than me' in ourselves. A foreign matter is always in our minds—something like a toxin, annoying us constantly. We are not wholly ourselves; we are always something that is not ours. We always have with us something that we are not, something that does not seem to be our nature, and something that does not seem to be real, and we carry these things with us always. This is the false self that we carry with us. Our selves have been carrying another false self, a shadow-like self wherever we have been going, imagining that it is us. Neither can we give it up, nor can we become it, because it is not us. We cannot give it up because we are thinking it is us.

Shall I tell a small humorous story? An old Swami told this story to me. There were two thieves. They were just moving about on a rainy night, and nearby some black thing was floating on the water. One of the thieves told the other, "My dear friend, it looks like a blanket. Why don't you go and bring it? This is a cold night, and it will be helpful." The other thief jumped in the water to catch the blanket, but he was struggling with it. He didn't come back. Two minutes passed, five minutes, ten minutes. The other thief on the bank said, "If you cannot retrieve it, then leave it." The thief in the water said, "I am leaving it, but it is not leaving me. It is a crocodile and not a blanket! I was trying to leave the 'blanket', but the 'blanket' is not leaving me." It was a crocodile and he had mistaken it for a blanket. Likewise, we try to catch a blanket, but the blanket is catching hold of us. We cannot leave it, because it is catching hold of us so tightly. We begin by thinking that something is pleasurable because it is desirable—like this blanket business—but afterwards it assumes its true nature as a crocodile and catches us by the throat. We want to drop it, but it won't let itself be dropped. It has become a part of our body, as it were, and it clasps its hands so tightly over our throats.

These 'crocodiles' are our pet desires, ambitions and cravings, sometimes acquired by heredity and sometimes they are newly created by our own wrong thinking and imaginations of the future. What a mess we have created in our minds. It should be very clear why we are unhappy in this world. We have a cloud of confusion covering the light of our minds, and we cannot see through this cloud properly. We try to see the world through this cloud of conflicts, but because we see unclearly through this mist of conflict, we see a world of conflict in front of us. The whole world is chaos. We begin to see that the world is not all right, because we see the world through this screen of darkness that holds sway over our own minds. This screen has become dark through



many layers of conflict getting layered, one over the other for years and years together. Yoga philosophy and psychology tells us that we have been doing so for ages. We have passed through several births; we should not imagine that this is our first birth. We have been living through many bodily incarnations. Through the process of evolution we have come to this present level of the state of mankind. The layers of wrong thinking and unfulfilled desires are all there with us, which we have carried through the different incarnations of the mind.

### **DISPELLING THE CLOUDS**

This cloud has to be dispelled; this is the purpose of yoga. When the clouds disperse, the sun shines automatically. In the same way, we need not create happiness—it is already there. Happiness is nothing but the release of these conflicts and tensions. You become the true 'you', and then you will know how happy you are. You must become the true 'you'—not the untrue 'you.' The untrue 'you' is this cloud, this conflict—so many things and layers that we have created around ourselves. We have many layers of self—a communal self, a national self and so on. We say, "I am a Belgian, a German, an American." This is the national self that is hanging on us.

Sometimes we belong to a community, and we begin to associate ourselves with it. We talk about it again and again, and we cannot extricate ourselves from the idea that we ourselves are a part of that community. "I am a Hindu, a Maharasthrian; I am this, I am that." These are the communal selves. Then we have the family selves. We have got family names which are called surnames, and to each person a surname is attached. It is a family heritage. We have so many associations. Then come the personal associations of "I am a judge, a teacher, a businessman, a professor." These are also selves we have created, but they are false selves. Socially also we have created these false selves. As if the inner problems were not sufficient, we have created additional problems by adding all these from outside. Inwardly there are also many layers; I shall touch upon these inner layers a little later on. Layers and layers of self are covering the true self. Like layers of clouds can make the sun dark, layers of the false self have made our true selves a mass of darkness, confusion, and therefore unhappiness.

In the previous chapter I was trying to give a broad outline of the basis on which doctors of psychoanalysis work, inasmuch as they feel that there seems to be a conflict between the inner ideal and the outer reality of society, which has become the cause of mental sickness. Health would be assured if this conflict could be resolved by the bringing out of these buried ideals into the daylight of outer life. Then the conflict would be resolved and the person would become happy and healthy. This is a simple analysis of the science of modern psychology and its therapeutic techniques. But the question is whether this society is a reality by itself. Are we going to be perfectly normal and wholly happy merely because our inner ideals and desires have been set in tune with the outer society, which we have been regarding as reality?

For psychologists, reality means the social world—we must be in tune with the world outside. For us 'world' means mankind. The world of human beings is called the world as far as we are concerned; we are not concerned with the astronomical world, that does not worry us so much. So if the world of human society is to be regarded as the reality, then the attunement of our minds with it should assure us human happiness. But we saw in our earlier discussion that this is not the case. People who are well off in society

are not always found to be happy. They have a secret problem which they cannot understand or much less explain.

Yoga began to contemplate the mysteries behind the phenomenon of unhappiness persisting in spite of one's having everything in life. We may be the king of the whole world, yet it is doubtful if we are going to be happy; we will have many problems. What is above this world? Why not conquer that? Maybe we have ambitions. Desires cannot be overcome even if we were the kings of this world. Death will come to us when it is time to leave this world. These are important difficulties of a person, even if he is the emperor of the whole world. How long are we going to be the emperor? It may be for a few hours. We may be asked to quit this world to a place of which we have absolutely no knowledge. Do we know when we will have to leave this world? Do we know where we go after leaving the world? No! What a pity, we do not know when to leave this place, and we do not know where we are going. Can there be a worse suffering than this? Yet, we seem to be cosily imagining that everything is okay. In a state of intense ignorance, we may be in a state of bliss. This is also a kind of bliss, as not to know anything is also bliss. That seems to be our final resort.

"But is this fair?" was the question of the seers who saw into the depths of things. They did not see empirically, but in another way altogether. The empirical method does not succeed, because it is unable to link up one thing with another causally, and it does not see through to the ends of things. The empirical method of observation is an external observation of an outer world which has no end at all. How long can we go on peeping through our telescopes? The world has no limits. There are two difficulties in the empirical approach. One is that there is no end to things; however much we may probe, there is something lying beyond what we can see. That is one problem. The second is that we have not seen the truth of things—we have only seen the shadows of these things, only their outer crust. Just as when we look at a person, we cannot see the true self of the person and see only the outer self. Like that, there is a put-on appearance of things which we see through telescopes, microscopes, etc. Qualitatively as well as quantitatively there is a failure in the methods adopted in empirical psychology. Yoga discovered that this is not the way, and we ought to find another way altogether. There is no use merely trying to look at things either through the microscope or the telescope; we have to see through them.

What is the difference between 'looking at' and 'seeing through'? They are quite different things altogether. The inner stuff of things has to be seen. We ought to see the object, the thing or the person as it is in itself or himself. There is no use in gathering information. Glancing over something—this is not knowledge. Yoga psychology is based on a philosophy that commenced with the observation of the fact that there is a deeper conflict in nature than the mere psychological conflict in the mind of the human being. This psychological conflict seems to be based on another conflict which our psychologists do not know. Why should there be this conflict of the ideal with the real? It is due to another, deeper conflict. Here we have entered the philosophy of yoga. There seems to be a conflict between the individual desire and society's ideal, because these two seem to be irreconcilable—one going one way and another going the other way.

There seems to be a fundamental conflict between man and nature. The conflict between man and society is small when compared to this conflict between man and nature. There

is a larger conflict of the irreconcilability between man and nature, because we do not know what this huge cosmos is. Inasmuch as we have not been able to answer this question of the relationship between us and this cosmos, we have not been able also to answer this question of our relation with human society. What we call human society is only a small fraction of the vast universe before us. Just as a finger is a part of a person's larger body, this so-called society which is apparently troubling us so much is only a part—a very small part, insignificant perhaps—of this vast and magnificent creation. It is creation that is posing a problem, not this small human society. The problem of society is a part of the problem of the world as a whole.

We might not have had the occasion to pose this question, because the small problems were engaging our attention so much. The person just beside us is causing us so much annoyance that we have no time to think of the larger difficulties in life. A person just near us is a problem for us, and we do not know how to deal with him. Our neighbour himself becomes a problem for us. Where is the time to think of the vast world outside? A great principle of philosophical analysis is that, unless one goes to the cause, the effect cannot be known. Our neighbour, the person near us, is only an effect of a larger cause. We cannot do anything with our neighbour or the person near us, because he is in the position of an effect. The person near us is not the problem—our intelligible relationship with him is the problem. The relationship between us and the neighbour is so nebulous that it becomes a problem, and we cannot solve it.

This is an effect of a larger question, which is the cause of all problems. The whole situation can be summed up in a single question, "What is our relation with the environment in which we are?" The environment is so big; what is our relation to it? What is the relation between man and nature, the inner and the outer, and the individual and the cosmos? If this question can be answered, all other questions in the world can be answered—the small question of the relation between the employer and the employed, the master and the servant, the husband and the wife, the parent and the child and so on. These are all small questions arising out of this big question of our relation to our environment.

### ADHYATMA AND ADHIBHUTA

Can you remember two Sanskrit terms? The inner and the outer are signified by two technical Sanskrit terms—the *adhyatma* and the *adhibhuta*. I won't use many words in Sanskrit, but these are very important ones. Try to remember them. The *adhyatma* is the inner, the *adhibhuta* is the outer. What is the relation between the two, and what are the meanings of these words? *Adhyatma* is that which pertains to the Self. *Atman* is the Self, you know. What is the nature of the Self? Let us not worry about that now. *Adhyatma* is that which pertains to the Self; *adhibhuta* is that which pertains to the world of objects. Put in metaphysical language, what is the relation between the subject and the object? While we have concentrated all other questions into this basic question of the relation between the subject and the object, we seem to be confronted by another difficulty, namely, the meaning of 'relation' itself. What do we mean by 'relation', or 'the relation between the subject and the object'? That is the question no doubt, but what is 'relation'? How do we explain relation or define it? We may say a relation is a kind of connection. We think of connection in the sense of links of a chain. For example, one link is touching another link, that link will touch just another, and so on forming a

chain. This is called relation, as far as our minds can think of it. But relation is not so simple as that.

We have been just glibly talking about relation. In this sense, when I touch this desk, my finger is supposed to be in relation with this desk. The question then becomes, what is 'touch'? Is my finger really in relation with this desk? Is a link in a chain really touching another link? We may say, "Yes, it is touching," but what is this touch? Does one link enter into touch with another link? Is there a relation of one link with another link? In a chain, does one link enter into another link, or does it lie outside another link? It does not enter—it remains outside. In a relation of this kind, which is perhaps the larger amount of relations in the world, the connected items lie outside each other. The child may be related to the mother, but it does not enter into the mother, or the mother does not enter into the child. They are outside each other and exclusive, even though the child may be so near the mother that she feels it as an inseparable part of herself. Yet, one is outside the other.

Exclusive relationship is the so-called relationship of most things in this world. That is why, though things seem to be related to one another, sometimes they depart from one another. There is then bereavement, separation and agony of various kinds. Friends turn away from each other. Relations—the very dear kith and kin—leave each other. There is separation of various kinds, and finally there is death. This relation of one thing with another does not promise actual connection between one object or person and another, because the related terms have not entered into each other. They have been always lying outside each other, and their relationship has been psychological rather than factual. There is no factual relationship between one link and another. There is a temporary, utilitarian or practical relationship which works through life. Something may work in some way, but it may not be the ultimate fact.

We have a working knowledge of things, as people say. We do not have a real knowledge—just a working knowledge which goes with life. We have been getting on with things through various kinds of relationships. The *adhyatma* and the *adhibhuta*, the subject and the object, man and nature, have been in this sort of relationship—not really related, but only apparently connected. So we have not been able to know what to do with this world. Nature has always been lying outside us. It has never become a part of us; it has never become ours. We have never been able to control or master nature fully, because it was always something different from us, and not ours. Ever since creation, this has been the situation. We have never been able to possess a thing properly. If we could possess it really, why should it leave us after some time? We lose things, as we say. Why should we lose a thing that is really ours? The reason is that it is not ours. We have been thinking that it was ours, but it asserts its real nature of not being ours when it leaves us. "I am not yours, my dear friend. Don't think I am not going." Things may leave us; it may be a person, it may be our own relationships, our own possessions—whatever it is—all that we possess may leave us.

We may be thinking that it is ours, but a time comes when those things assert their independence. "Oh, we are absolutely independent, just as you are. You think that we belong to you, as well as we may think that you belong to us. Why should I belong to you, sir? Why shouldn't you belong to me?" Why do we say some objects are ours, some persons are ours? What makes us think like that? The others also may think that we

belong to them. Instead of other things belonging to us, we may belong to something else. There is a relativity of belonging and relationship. Sometimes we are told that this is the world of relativity, one thing hanging on another and nothing absolutely independent by itself. We hang on something else; that thing hangs on us. This is a simple, crude explanation of the relativity of things, which we will look into in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **SUBJECT KNOWING OBJECT**

We saw that the subject and object seem to be creating an unbridged gulf. There is an unintelligible relationship between man and nature. This has been an age-old problem of every person without distinction, and it is doubtful if this problem has ever been solved. The relation between man and his environment, the individual and society, ourselves and another—all these are different ways of expressing the same old difficulty and question. It is difficult to reconcile myself with what is outside me. It is my problem, and this problem has many sides and many aspects, one inside the other. That which is outside me—a person near me, a neighbour beside me, a society around me, a country near my country or the universe facing me—it makes no difference, because all mean one and the same thing as far as my problem is concerned.

This was an eternal question that was posed before man's mind: what can we do with this that stares us in the face? Astronomers, physicists, chemists, biologists, psychologists and all sorts of people have tried their best to answer this question. However, no one has yet answered it satisfactorily, because the approach of methodological sciences is something like the attempt of blind men to describe an elephant. The blind men touched different parts of the elephant, but could not touch the whole of the elephant at any time. Neither the astronomer, nor the physicist, nor the biologist was in a position to touch the whole of nature at one stroke. They began to touch the legs, ears and tusk, and began to say, "It is long, short, like a wall, and so on." These are the answers that we get from our wise men of the world.

That is good enough as a workable hypothesis but not satisfying to the soul of man, because the soul can only be satisfied by the whole of nature. The corpse of nature cannot satisfy the soul of man. We do not want to be presented with the corpse of anything. We want living things—vital, meaningful and significant objects. A scrap of paper has no meaning to us, but when it bears the stamp of the government it becomes a currency note, and it receives a meaning. We want meaningful, not meaningless paper. We want method, symmetry, completeness, meaning and a vital relationship with things—then it is that we seem to respond to things through our souls. It is difficult for man to approach nature as it is in itself, because we cannot approach anything unless we understand it properly. We make a mess of things when we do not understand the things which we are going to handle. It may be even a cup of tea—we may spill the tea and get a stain on our clothes, if we don't handle it properly. We may burn our fingers on the stove or we may forget the sugar, and so many confusions may take place if we have no proper understanding and no concentration of mind. We may not be able to take even a cup of tea and sip it properly without dropping a little. So many things are small matters which indicate a lack of concentration and an unprepared mind. This kind of approach to nature will not bring satisfying results.

#### **HOW TO APPROACH NATURE**

We should not approach nature like a businessman approaching his account books. Nature has to be approached as nature would expect us to approach it. If a person is to approach us, how would we expect him to approach? If some person comes to us

seeking work, how do we expect him to come? He should come in a sympathetic manner, in an understanding manner, in an amiable manner, and in a manner which is agreeable to our essential nature. This is how we would expect a person to approach us, and not in a way that is contrary to our nature. If he does not approach us like this we are repelled by him, and we cannot bear his presence. If this is the human attitude, then this is nothing but nature's attitude as well. It is nature that speaks through us. When we expect others to correspond to our nature, it is the natural disposition of creation which speaks through our personalities. When we expect another person or another thing to approach us in consonance with what we really are, and we are made in this way, nature cannot be expected to be made in another way. But what have our scientists done? They have tried to conquer nature. How would we like a person if he were to come to us to conquer us, to overcome us, or to subjugate us? Would we like it? No, we would not like it. If I come to you to conquer you, will you appreciate me? Nature will not tolerate a person who tries to conquer her.

We try to utilise, conquer, overcome and subjugate nature. This is a very untactful method which we have adopted. Nature puts us off the moment we approach it in a conquering spirit or in a suspicious attitude. Nobody wishes to be approached with suspicion. Our approach should be sympathetic, if it is going to be successful. I will now try to go step by step to show how nature has been approached by our scientists up until this time. For the astronomer, nature appeared to be constituted of diversified objects, and he took things as they appeared. Each star and each planet was cast off from the earth, and there were no connections between one and the other, and they were surprised at how the stars were hanging above our heads. "How is it that the sun does not drop down on the earth?" is the wonder expressed by children even today. "How is it that the stars do not fall down? The sun and the moon are hanging in space. By what power?" is a question of children. And the grown-up children were not better in the wonder that they entertained in regard to nature. The rising and setting of the sun and the changing of seasons were all wonders and marvels. The original approach of astronomy was one of an attitude of the diversity of things. The *adhibhuta* or the external world was approached as it appears to the physical senses. This approach brought a knowledge which saw the universe as merely a wonder, a knowledge that was unsatisfying. As a consequence, the world remained a wonder. How all this universe came about could not be known. How things are and why they should be as they are remained an unanswerable marvel.

Man advanced in his knowledge of nature step by step until he reached the present circumstances of this twentieth century. The *adhibhuta* is a term to designate nature in its totality. *Adhibhuta* or nature was an astronomical diversity constituted of planets, stars, and so on, including the Earth, and there was apparently no relation between them. We seemed to be suspended in space in a very mysterious manner unknown to the human mind. Advancing knowledge revealed by various methods that the stars and the planets are not hanging or suspended as they appeared to be, but seem to be relatively attracting each other by a force called gravitation. That this relativity of gravitational pull keeps them in the position in which they are was a later discovery of many scientists of both the East and the West. Gravitational pull explained everything. The foremost among those scientists of the West was Newton, and in India we had the astronomers Bhaskara and Varahamihira.

Just for your information, it is said that in southern India near Vijayanagar, a great ancient capital of a Hindu kingdom of the past, that there was an image of Lord Krishna suspended in space, just hanging in space. How could this be? Many engineers came and stood looking at the image as it stood in space without being pulled down by the earth—with no wires or connecting links from any side. British archaeologists who were interested in the phenomenon later on discovered that there were four pillars on the ground which were made up of magnets. The four magnetic pillars were pulling this iron image on the top with an equally distributed power in different directions, in such a way that the image could not drop. They wanted to improve this and removed one pillar, but afterwards it did not succeed because an electromagnet was put in the pillar. They could not get the image suspended again, and the effect has been lost forever. Those ancient people were apparently wiser and surer than the present-day scientists!

The pull of a magnet is a similar, familiar phenomenon comparable to the universal magnetic pull of the stellar and planetary regions. The wonder remains as to how this could be conceived by any possible mind, if at all there is a mind of that kind who could set these bodies in such a harmonious relationship with one another. How many stars and how many planets are in the heavens? We cannot count them, and how is it that they are all so systematically and mathematically arranged with relative pull upon one another? If there is anyone who could have done this, there could then be no greater wonder than the mind of that person. Well, to come to the point, it was discovered that the heavenly bodies are not scattered, as children might imagine. There is an unknown power connecting these bodies, and this power is the explanation for the change of seasons, the movements of the stars and so forth in the astronomical universe. But our explanation is not complete here. The wonder yet remains as to what is this gravitational pull, and what have we to do with it? How are we to explain the universe for our purposes, and how are we going to understand nature? Unless there is a thorough understanding, there will be no satisfaction.

Knowledge is bliss. The greater the knowledge, the greater also is the happiness. If there is inadequate understanding, then there will be a dissatisfaction lurking within. “Something is not all right. I don’t understand this.” This is the sorrow of the scientist and the philosopher. As knowledge advanced, it was discovered that the gravitational pull was not the full explanation. The necessity arose to find out what these bodies were made of that were attracting one another. What is the sun? What is the moon? What are the stars? Of what are they constituted? The substance of the cosmos became the subject of study. While the superficial vision sees many colours, many sounds and many things in the universe, the analytic mind of the scientists discovered that the many things are made up only of a few things. The multitude in the variety of creation is explicable in terms of a few fundamental elements of which everything is made.

In India it was felt that everything was made up of five things: the earth element, the water element, the fire element, the air element and the ether (space) element. The ether element was an enigma for scientists. Everything is made up of these five elements—earth, water, fire, air and ether. All the wonder of creation is included in the wonder of these five elements. The vast astronomical universe is made up of these five elements alone. But what these five elements are—that is another question.



## THE CONSTITUENT ELEMENTS OF NATURE

One needs to go deeper and deeper. What is earth made of? 'Earth' is only a name that we give to something which appears hard to the touch, but the mere name does not satisfy us. We may use the word 'earth', but what is earth? What is water? What is fire? What are these five elements? Why not go deeper and discover what these five elements are made of? In Sanskrit these elements are called the mahabhutas. Maha means 'great', and bhutas means 'existing elements'. What are these made of? They became the object of further scientific analysis. We know as educated people what these discoveries have been. Physicists of later times analysed the elements of earth, water, fire and air, although they could not analyse ether because they did not know what ether was. It appeared to be a vacuum, and how could one analyse a vacuum? Hence, the vacuum was left out of the analysis. The analysis was only of the four elements of earth, water, fire and air. They went on dissecting these into bits and parts and minor particles visible only to a powerful microscope. It was proclaimed as a great discovery that these physical attributes were made up of elements. They said that there are about ninety-two or so elements. This was a great advancement by the scientists, and they were all very happy. "Now we have discovered nature!" We know that a chemical substance differs from another in constitution and function. Ninety-two elements constitute the whole of nature and these big bodies called earth, water, fire and air are nothing but complexes of minute particles, molecules or chemical substances—each different from the other in its constitution.

Then the desire arose to dissect even the molecules. They were cut into pieces by electronic processes, which was the work of more recent times. Electronic investigation revealed that minor particles or atoms constituted the molecules. A few people were not fully satisfied, and they thought there was something enigmatic about all this, and they were suspicious of these discoveries. Others however think that we have understood nature perfectly. Today we are told with tremendous confidence that we are in a world of electrical forces called electrons, protons, neutrons and so on. Everything is reducible to these fundamentals. What they are in essence—whether waves or particles—is not known for sure. Some say they are waves, some say they are constituted of jumping particles. Some gentleman said they are 'wave- icles'. Waves and particles combined are wave- icles—very humorous and interesting! "This is a world made of wave- icles," concluded Sir Arthur Eddington. Very humorous he was, and he became a great philosopher later on. If we don't know whether it is a wave or a particle, we can call it a wave- icle. He did this, and he proclaimed it as a great discovery. Though we generate electricity, we really do not know what it is. Let us not enter into this controversy. Nobody knows, and there ends the matter.

This is all interesting and very useful for us so far as it goes, but our question is a different thing altogether. "What is this essence or substance out of which nature is made, and how am I going to be related to it?" is my question. If I am told that nature is made up of electricity, it is all right. It is as good as saying it is made up of many bodies, or five elements or whatever it may be. It matters little to me what name we give to that which we call nature. But tell me what nature means to me, and what I mean to nature. What is the relationship between nature and me? Are we friends or enemies? Is there any relationship between us at all? This is the question scientists have not answered and which they are not going to answer. "We are not interested in the subject. That chapter

is closed,” a scientist might respond.

But in India this question was taken up by another system of thinking called the Samkhya, a school of philosophy which literally means ‘a system of knowledge’. Enumeration of the categories of reality means Samkhya. This Samkhyan analysis discovered that this gulf cannot be bridged ultimately. Nature is nature, man is man, and they will be always like this. Man looks at nature and nature may react to man, but there cannot be an ultimate resolution of this gulf between man and nature. Instead of saying man and nature, the Samkhya says purusha and prakriti. These are the Sanskrit words for ‘man in essence’ ( purusha) and ‘nature in essence’ ( prakriti). In this philosophy, there are only two things in the whole creation—purusha and prakriti. What man is and what prakriti is was the contribution of the Samkhya philosophy to us. It is on Samkhya that yoga is based, at least in one form. It is very important to remember that Samkhya and a particular system of yoga—Patanjali’s yoga—go together. I do not mean that the subject of yoga is exhausted by Patanjali, as it is just one system of yoga. Inasmuch as Patanjali’s system of yoga is based on Samkhya, it will be proper to know what Samkhya is because without an understanding of it, we cannot understand Patanjali.

### **HOW SCIENCE IS LIMITED**

The Samkhya’s question and problem were the same which I tried to state before you in the very beginning. But the Samkhya thinkers realised that the methods of observation and experiment alone will not suffice. Our modern scientists are committed to the processes of observation and experiment with laboratories, microscopes and telescopes. That is all our scientists can do—they can see and observe. But may I put forward a question: who is it that sees? The eyes? Why should we have so much confidence in these eyes? What makes us think that these eyes tell us the truth? Whatever be the discoveries or the proclamations of our wise physicists, I nevertheless pose the question: who is this physicist who is so confidently proclaiming truths? Who is this gentleman? In what way does he differ from the illiterate farmer in the fields? The unsophisticated person also sees just as the physicist sees; what is the difference ultimately between these two kinds of seeing? The scientist sees through the microscope, whereas the unsophisticated person sees without it. Well, what is the difference between using one lens or using two lenses? You may use a hundred lenses, but after all you are using a certain apparatus, the constitution of which becomes the very subject of your study. When you study nature, you should study your lens also. You use something which is itself unstudied and make use of it in studying nature. You are begging the question, sir! In studying nature you are using nature itself as an instrument. How can you understand nature? What are those microscopes and telescopes? Are they not themselves a part of nature? After all, what are your eyes themselves? They are also a part of nature. You use nature as an instrument in understanding nature! How interesting, and how humorous it looks!

But this is what our scientist does. The object and the subject are the same for him. This is “begging the question”, as it is called. He assumes something that he is going to prove. He assumes that he has understood nature well, and then wants to understand nature. But his lenses are not going to help him, because lenses are a part of nature. His eyes are also not going to help, because the eyes are also a part of nature. Nothing that he can

take from nature can be of any help to him in fully knowing nature. What else does he have that does not belong to nature? Is there anything that he can use as an instrument in studying nature that is not itself coming from nature? If he thinks it over, he will find that there is nothing else with him. He is just borrowed stuff.

When we use the term 'nature' we have used a term signifying everything that is existent—man's body included. Our bodies are included in nature, and we use them in observation and experiments. How do we observe an experiment? Science fails because of this difficulty. Science is a failure in the discovery of reality, because it begs the question. It borrows nature's property for understanding nature. Samkhya was awake to this difficulty of employing the method of mere observation and experiment. Science became philosophy. By 'philosophy' we mean the employment of the pure mind and reason in the analysis of truth, over and above the instruments which science uses from nature. Philosophy is a work of the mind, while science is a work of physical instruments. The pure mind alone can help us.

Samkhya is one of the oldest philosophies – perhaps the oldest in the world. The other schools of thought came afterwards. Samkhya says that no instrument can help us in understanding nature. We have to stand on our own legs—the mental legs, not the physical legs. Analysis was carried to its logical limits, and it was found that it was necessary to discover the presence of something which does not belong to nature in order that nature could be studied. If we have nothing of that kind, then we are a failure in life. We will have to say, "Hopeless; I accept defeat!" and there is no more trying to understand nature. Either we proclaim this and keep quiet, or we dive deep into our own minds and find out if we have anything which cannot be said to belong to nature. We must have something independent of nature. If there is anything of that kind, we may succeed in understanding nature. The Samkhya's analysis was thus, "I am the person wanting to know nature. I have to know myself first. It is not nature that tries to study nature. I, as a person, am confronted with this difficulty. My body has not been able to help me in the study of nature, because it is made up of the five elements which belong to nature and which constitute nature. Have I anything other than the body?"

#### **SUBJECT COMPREHENDING OBJECT**

The independent analysis of the adhibhuta revealed that study of nature is not going to succeed unless the adhyatma also goes with it hand-in-hand. The subject cannot simply be abrogated from the process of analysis. It is not the object that studies the object. It is the subject that wants to study the object. This is very simple to understand. Who is it that wants to study nature? Not nature. Nature never said, "I'll study myself." It is we as a subject—as a thinking being endowed with the curiosity for knowledge—that wishes to study nature. The purely objective method has failed, whether it is that which is employed by the Western physicists or the thinkers like the Nyaya-Vaisesika, etc., who were certain kinds of thinkers in India that thought of nature as constituted of diverse bodies. The idea that nature is made up of diverse bodies was a stage of investigation, as I mentioned already. There are other schools of thought in India like the Nyaya, Vaisesika, Mimamsa, etc. We need not bother ourselves about these names, as they are not necessary in our study. I am just mentioning that there are also other people in India who are like the Western astronomers and physicists who imagine nature to be made up of diversified bodies.

Samkhya however made an advance over these thinkers. The many things are made up of five essential things, but what these five things are cannot be understood unless I first understand myself. I am not going to understand anything else, unless I first know what the basis of my own being is. Here science borders on philosophy. When the objective analysis fails and the need is felt for a substitute for objective analysis, we turn from astronomy and physics to philosophy. Philosophical analysis reveals great facts. Man can study man, but nobody else can study man. Also, one man cannot study another man. That is a very interesting thing, because the other man becomes an object for the observing man. The difficulty was that an object cannot be independently studied. As you are an object for me, I cannot study you as an object. No object can be studied independently without reference to the subject, because the object is analysable only by this subject. Therefore, one man does not become the object of study of another man, as it is impossible. The Samkhya went deep into subjective analysis, through which it tried to understand the constitution of matter and the forces that are seen to constitute it. "What am I made of?" is a crucial question. "How am I to know myself? Whatever the method, instruments are not going to help me. I'll have to use analytical and synthetic processes of enquiry and judgment."

The subject does not fully comprehend the object because there has not been an understandable relationship established between the subject and the object. We are still halfway. We have not yet arrived at that stage where we can confidently say, "This is my relationship with the object." There is still a mysterious, unknown relationship between us. The subject concludes, "Unless I equip myself with the proper apparatus to understand the object in front of me, I am not going to touch this object. I should confine myself to the study of myself, and then let us see if something can be known of the object, because the object is also something like me. If I am of such a nature, other persons also are likely to be of similar nature. So by knowing myself, I may be able to know others as well." When a person boils rice, and he wants to see if it is well-cooked, he can take one grain and see if it is soft. If that one grain is soft, then one could conclude that the whole thing is cooked. He does not squeeze every grain in the pot.

This is the method adopted in philosophical analysis. If I can be sure of what I am made of, I can perhaps be sure of what others are made of. We seem to be in a common world of similar difficulties and relationships—whatever the relationships may be. "How am I going to study myself?" becomes the question. The method is one of analysis and synthesis. There are certain technical Sanskrit words to signify these methods of analysis and synthesis, but there is no need to use them. Let us not worry too much about terms and phraseology. It is enough if we know the subject; otherwise we will be busy only with the words, and time will be wasted in this. The point is that an analytical process has to precede a process of synthesis. To separate a subject or a question into fundamental units, and then try to relate them in a methodical manner is called analysis and synthesis. Suppose we have a huge mass of coins of various denominations. We separate by analysis the different denominations into various groups, arrange them and then count them in different groups. This is one crude example of analysis, but the example will serve us as we continue our inquiry into this complex topic later on.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### YOGA IS BALANCE

The phenomenon of sleep is not easy to study, because we have no consciousness in sleep. Nobody can know what is happening then, as there is no one to know what is happening. This has been the difficulty, due to which many psychologists have left out of consideration this subliminal aspect of our lives. Most of the psychologists have been busy with the study of waking life and waking phenomena. What generally goes by the name of psychology is only a study of waking phenomena; but human nature is not exhausted by waking experiences. We have many other things within us which are not entirely comprehended in our wakeful life. As we noticed previously in our study, there is a difficulty in our waking life on account of which we are not able to know things properly.

The difficulty is twofold. The one is that we are confronted with objects, and the object you have seen is known as the *adhibhuta*. It may be another person, another thing or the vast world in front of us—it makes no difference. That which is outside us is in the position of an object. It will not be possible to know the object independently, because it is always beyond the grasp of the subject. No proper or intelligible relationship has been established between the subject and the object. Just as one may walk toward the horizon but never reach it no matter how much one may walk, in all our scientific and psychological analyses the object never comes within our grasp. It seems to be further off than any place we reach. The more we try to see, the further it appears to be. The object is just like the horizon. It seems to be nearby, but we cannot reach it.

That is why the Samkhya thinkers turned their gaze inwards and decided that there is no use running after the mirage of the phenomenon of objectivity. The universe has no end or no limits. You can never reach the end of the universe. You may start traveling for a million years, but you will never reach the end of the universe. Then, what is the good of this subjective analysis? Let us try another method, was the conclusion of the Samkhya. Go inward and see if anything can be seen. Neither was the waking world a help, nor was the dream world, because it is also a kind of objective world. The help came from the phenomenon of deep sleep, not from waking and dream. The difficulty was, who is to know sleep when we go to sleep? Everything goes to sleep with us, including that which wants to know the sleep. The known and the knower get involved in the same problem, and there is no one left to make this investigation with which purpose we try to enter sleep. We close our eyes, go to sleep, and strive to study what is happening, but when we get up in the morning, we are none the wiser. We will know that we fell asleep, that is all. We want to know how much time has passed. In the spaceless and timeless phenomenon, everything enters into sleep. The object of our study absorbs the subject of study. When the policeman becomes a friend of the thief, the thief cannot be detected. Likewise the investigators get involved in the very object of investigation, and we come out of it no wiser. We enter into it like wise people, but come out like fools. Though our goal is to study sleep, we seem to have no equipment for it. We cannot use a microscope to study sleep. We seem to be losing ourselves entirely.

The philosopher's difficulty is very peculiar. How to study sleep when we ourselves go to

sleep? Through perceptual methods sleep cannot be known. However, perception is not the only way; there are several other ways of knowing. For example, there is the way of inference. We do not see everything with our eyes, but we can infer certain things from observed premises. If we see that the water of the river is muddy, we can infer that it must have been raining upstream, otherwise how would the water be muddy? We have not seen it raining, but we infer it. There are many other ways of approach. Another method is through implication. Certain things imply certain other things. The sleep phenomenon is studied mostly by this method of implication, and in some way we may say by inference. We know ourselves in sleep—not by direct perception—but by implication and a sort of inference. How do we know that we exist in sleep? We cannot easily answer this question, but we are cocksure that we did exist. We were not non-existent in sleep, but how did we know that we were existent? Who told us? We were not consciously there, yet we are so sure that we did exist while in deep sleep. To what is the surety due? Not to perception. No direct perception was there, as we did not perceive anything directly. No one could have been of any use to us there. We imagine a knowledge situation which seems to be a recollection of having slept. This is a very interesting analysis, and please observe it carefully, because this is a great aid that we have in truly knowing ourselves.

#### **ANALYSIS OF DEEP SLEEP**

How do I know that I slept? What makes me feel that I had a sleep when I had no knowledge of sleep, and I was totally unaware? We have only one resort. The resort is memory. I have memory or a recollection. What is the remembrance? When we say, “I remember something,” we thereby imply that we have a present consciousness which can be connected with our past consciousness. That is what we mean by remembrance. The past conscious experience has produced an impression in our minds, and when it becomes activated by our present state of consciousness, that impression becomes a memory. Memory is the activation of a mould created in the mind by a past experience. Suppose we have a crucible which has a particular shape. We can cast liquid metal in that crucible any number of times, and we can have the same shape. A crucible is a kind of vehicle that one creates for casting liquid any number of times, so that when the liquid solidifies itself, it can take the shape of the crucible.

To give another example, one has a gramophone record has grooves impressed into it, and through the permanent grooves one can go on replaying the sound. The grooves are formed only once, but one can hear the sound produced by it any number of times. Likewise, experience happens once, but the memory of it can be retained for a long time because a groove has been formed in the mind. The mind acts like a crucible, and it becomes the mould for the experiences that we previously had.

The sleep experience produced an impression in the mind, and that impression is retained even when we wake up the next morning. Consciousness is like a liquid in that crucible, and consciousness takes the shape of the crucible or the moulded mind, thus becoming a memory or recollection. “Who forms this groove in the mind?” is another question that comes to us. How is it that a groove is formed in the mind while in the state of deep sleep? What causes the modification of the mind? In yoga psychology, sleep is also a modification of the mind. It becomes very clear that it must be a modification of the mind, because it cannot be only a mould or a groove only. If the

mind does not undergo a modification in sleep, there cannot be memory. One should not think that sleep is an unmodified condition of the mind. It is a modification of the mind. It is a change of the mind in some form or manner. The present consciousness is connected with the past conscious experience—only then could one have memory. There cannot be memory when consciousness is not connected.

Dead matter cannot remember anything. Even the mould of the mind cannot have experience of its own accord unless it is attended with awareness. Memory of sleep is nothing but a peculiar modification of consciousness connected with the phenomenon of sleep. Suffice it to say that we are aware that we slept, and the awareness of having slept is called the memory of sleep. As I said, this awareness of having slept is possible, and this memory becomes meaningful only when the present remembering consciousness has a connection with another state of consciousness. Consciousness cannot be connected with dead matter. Birds of a feather flock together, as they say, but incompatibles cannot join together. Consciousness must have had a relation with another state of consciousness in order that the present can know its past. We imply or infer that there must have been some sort of consciousness in deep sleep if memory of it is to be explicable. If consciousness were completely abolished in the state of deep sleep, the memory of it would be unintelligible.

What memory could we have, if there was no connection of our present state of consciousness with the past experience of sleep? This is an implication: the fact of memory implies the existence of a kind of awareness even in the state of deep sleep. We can call it inference, in a way. If memory has any meaning, we have to trust our confidence that we did in fact exist in sleep. There is no other way than to conclude that there was a sort of consciousness in the state of deep sleep. We cannot have a greater infallible confidence than the fact of our having existed in the state of deep sleep. We do not require any proof of this. We ask for a proof for everything, but we never ask for proof that we existed in sleep. How wonderful! We had no consciousness whatsoever in sleep, so what is this confidence we have about having existed in sleep in spite of there having been no intelligible phenomenon, and nobody else to inform us? Why is it that we do not ask for proof for having existed in sleep? We want proof for everything; we even want proof for the existence of God. We distrust everything – we even distrust God, but not ourselves. Even when we were completely oblivious to our own existence, we were sure that we did exist; but when so many things are told to us about God, we don't believe. This is a peculiar interesting feature of our own selves. Nothing can attract us as much as our own selves. We feel so happy when we see ourselves in the mirror that we would rather see our own face than other faces.

This phenomenon of sleep reveals a tremendous fact that we did exist incontrovertibly in a state where we were not related to anything else. Remember this very important truth. While we are not related to anything else in the outside world, we did exist and we can exist in an unrelational condition. It is not true that our life is only social. Someone once said to me, "What is life, if it is not social?" Well, there is a kind of life which is not social, which we love more than any kind of social life. It is possible for us to exist without having any kind of social relationships. We will be surprised that we did exist in sleep without relation to human society, to the objects of the world, or to space, time and causal relationship—without relationship even to our own body and the sense organs, or without relationship with anything that we usually take ourselves to be in the

waking and dreaming states. These states are but intimations of what we truly are. We can know what we truly are in deep sleep, not otherwise. Now we cannot say what we are. We are so much entwined with other-consciousness; body-consciousness and the needs of the body and its accompaniments. So much are we engrossed in these vicissitudes of what we call external life that we are completely oblivious to what we truly are. But what we really are, we know in deep sleep.

What are we in the state of deep sleep? The first question is: did we exist in sleep? Do we regard ourselves as wholly present in sleep, or partially present in sleep? We cannot say that only a part of ourselves was in sleep. We are sure that the whole of ourselves was present in sleep. The whole of us was present in deep sleep—not a part of us. Then what is it that we call 'I' in waking and dreaming states? Do we add to the whole? Nobody can add to the whole—the whole is whole. When we say, "I was wholly present in deep sleep," we do not add anything to ourselves when we come into the waking condition. What is it that so holds our interest in the waking life, other than the whole that we really are?

So many things attract us and confront us, and we are obliged to pay attention to them. What are these things? It is the so-called world outside? Is it a part of ourselves? Is the body a part of ourselves? Are the senses a part of ourselves? We may say yes. Then we must say that in the state of deep sleep we were not wholly present, because a part of us was outside. The body, the senses, our friends and relationships—they were all outside. We cannot say that only a fraction of ourselves was present in sleep—nobody will say that. "I was totally, wholly, completely, perfectly present in the state of deep sleep. I was healthy," one would say. If we are wholly present in sleep, unrelated to anything else, then the unrelated condition is wholeness—not the related condition.

### **TRANSCENDING OBJECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS**

So, relationships are essentially false. This is what is implied in an analysis of deep sleep. All relationships are false. They are not true, because they do not belong to the whole. What does not belong to the whole cannot even exist. What can be outside the whole? This is why some people say that the world does not really exist. I will not go into the details of this question, as we are not concerned with it here. "The world is *maya*; it is non-existent; it is a creation of your mind," some metaphysicians will tell us. We can appreciate this point of view to a small extent when we dispassionately analyse the wholeness of our being present in sleep and the meaninglessness of any kind of relationship with things apparently outside our whole selves. If we are wholly present in sleep, then everything else outside that whole presence must be false. Hence, we are living in a false world. That is why the world does not satisfy us.

We ought to have existed perfectly and consciously in the state of deep sleep. Why were we not conscious in sleep, and yet seemed to be conscious in sleep? This enigma is what is called ignorance. Ignorance is not an absence of consciousness. Ignorance is rather a difficulty in knowing a situation. It is a positive state and not a negative absence of knowledge. When we are in a peculiar difficulty where we cannot decide anything, we are said to be in a state of ignorance. Now we have come to the last point of the Samkhya analysis. Our true nature seems to be unrelated, and at the same time a state of consciousness without which memory is impossible. What then am I truly? I am unrelated consciousness, not related consciousness, because one cannot have relations



with the whole. Remember this. Our true nature is—by implication we learn—unrelated wholeness of consciousness. It is not part consciousness, but whole consciousness, unconnected with anything else.

This is what the Samkhya calls the *purusha*. *Purusha* means the true being in us, the reality or the truth. Our essential unrelated nature seems to be a state of consciousness which does not stand in need of any external kind of relationship. We can exist without external relationships. This is one thing that follows from the analysis of deep sleep. Something else also follows, to which I hinted in the previous chapter. We get up from sleep with a tremendous sense of freedom, refreshment and happiness. It means that when we are unrelated to anything, we are happier. When we are related to something, we are not as happy. We are not so happy in the waking and dreaming conditions as in deep sleep. Even an emperor is not going to be happy if he doesn't sleep for a month. The whole earth may be ours, but if we are not able to sleep, which would we choose—sleep or emperorship? Not emperorship, because sleep is better. The emperor is not made happy merely through relationship.

What is emperorship? It is relationship with externals. That is what it means to be a king, ruler or a great person. All these mean a bundle of relationships, which are not our true being. Our 'bigness' is a false self. The so-called big person that we are is our false self, brought about artificially by relationships which do not belong to us, which we are not. We as a whole are not a bundle of relationships. We are happy when we go back to our true selves. We are not happy when we are in connection with other things because we are not those things. The many things that we seem to possess in the world are relationships which, as we now have understood, do not really belong to us and are not us. They do not bring us happiness.

This is why we are unhappy in this world. We now know why we are unhappy. We are other than what we truly are in the artificial condition of the waking condition. Therefore, no man can be happy in the world. Don't try to be happy here. It is impossible to be happy in a world of relationships or in an untrue self in the waking life of relations. The untrue cannot make us happy—only the true can make us happy. Hence it is that we find that we come out of sleep with a sense of refreshment and happiness. So happy are we—we would like to continue the sleep and not get up early in the morning. We don't want to get involved in a bundle of relationships once again, but somehow we are forced to by certain circumstances. The deep sleep condition reflects our true nature, and it is into that which we sink and which we truly are, and so we are the happiest. Happiness and our true being are the same. Being and happiness are identical.

In addition to being and happiness, we also know by implication that the deep sleep state was a state of consciousness. It was Being-Consciousness-Happiness, or *satchidananda*. This is the Sanskrit word for Being-Consciousness-Bliss. *Sat* is being or existence, *chit* means consciousness, *ananda* is bliss. We are *satchidananda*—Existence, Consciousness, Bliss packed into one Reality. Not three different features, but one condensed mass of Existence-Consciousness-Bliss we were and we are, but we have forgotten it. When we sink into it in deep sleep, we come out tremendously refreshed and happy. Nothing can make us so happy as this state. The analysis has led us to the conclusion that our true nature seems to be Reality—an indivisible unity of Existence-

Consciousness-Bliss which is *satchidananda*. However, when we come up again into this bundle of vicissitudes of relationships called the world, we completely forget this true nature, and through a mysterious ignorance we begin to say, "This is mine, and this is mine." This "mine" is a false relationship, and it entangles us more and more in states of unhappiness. The only recourse for a little happiness is to go to sleep again and again. There is no other way. When we are dead-fatigued with this nonsensical world, we feel like going to bed. Let us not think of the world anymore.

Wherever we go, we are only in the world. Now let us stop here and not go further. The Samkhya analysis has led to the point where one discovers that one's true being is consciousness, existence and freedom unparalleled, but along with this tremendous discovery, the Samkhya has made a mistake. It is the mistake of thinking that there must be some unknown material substance which must be the matrix of what we call the world outside. What is it that we enter into in the waking life? What is it that we see outside? Consciousness sees something in the waking world. What do we mean by the world? Though the Samkhya sowed the seeds for a higher analysis where consciousness was accepted to be a universal reality, it could not get out of the prejudice that there must be something behind the material phenomenon of the objective world, without which the world seems to be difficult to explain. "I may be consciousness, but what is this world?" The Samkhya posited an unknown, indeterminable matter, which it called *prakriti*. If consciousness is 'within', there is *prakriti* 'outside'. The Samkhya is therefore a philosophy of the *prakriti and purusha* relationship. We began our analysis of what relationship really means. We concluded our study with the recognition of the difficulty of the gulf between consciousness and matter—*purusha* and *prakriti*.

This quandary brings us to the end of the Samkhya, and it can go no further. As our scientists ended here, the Samkhya also has landed itself in the same difficulty. The physicists tell us that the world is made up of tremendous, indeterminable energy. Energy pervading and constituting everything is, according to modern physicists, the stuff of the universe. One might equate this with the *prakriti* of the Samkhya. The Samkhya and the modern physicists are on the same footing. They cannot go one step further, because it is difficult to know anything more than this. We have a dark screen in front of us or a mountain in front of us, one may say, and we cannot penetrate it. This difficulty into which the physicists have gone and in which the Samkhya has landed, is nothing but the old difficulty of the problem of the relation between subject and object. We started our analysis with a tremendous question of what relationship there can be between subject and object. Now we have concluded after all this study that the difficulty seems to be the same. We are no wiser yet. But there seems to be a ray of hope and a way out of this quarrel.

The way out is through our own nature. The scientist has not gone deep into the substance of his own being, because he is too busy with the world outside. I would ask you to read one small book. The very quintessence of modern physics is given there, and one will find how interesting it is, and also how the modern physicists have come very near to our Vedanta philosophy. It is a small book, but a very pointed analysis has been made. The book is called *The Universe and Doctor Einstein*. Read this book. It is written by an American journalist, Lincoln Barnett. He covers the entire range of modern science in this small book, and he concludes it very interestingly. I was very pleased to read the last page of this book. He says that the physical science of today has ended in

Einstein's theory of relativity. All of this is hanging on all of that, and that is hanging on this, and there is no such thing as unrelated motion. All motion is related to something else. If two trains run parallel at the same speed, the passengers cannot know whether the train is moving or not. Sometimes in the railway station, if another train is moving and we are standing, we think that our train is moving. It is because of an optical illusion created due to the perception of motion while being seated in a stable train. Einstein's theory of relativity concluded that motion is relative. Absolute motion does not exist, because nothing can be regarded as an absolute, existent and unrelated body. But the interesting writer of this book concludes with a very pertinent question: Who is it that is saying all these things? Who is this Doctor Einstein? All that we may attribute to a scientist—his body, his organs, his eyesight, his instruments—all these are a part of the relative world which he is trying to study. But who is this gentleman who is studying the relativity? There seems to be a necessity to study that thing which is making all these statements and which says that everything is relative. Who is this that is saying that everything is relative? Not the body, not the tongue that speaks, and not the eyes that see. These are all part of the relative world. With this, the small book concludes.

### **KNOW THE SELF AND BE FREE**

Here our Vedanta philosophy commences: Know the Self and then you shall be free. This is also the oracle of Delphi speaking. The whole philosophy is centred on the necessity of knowing the Self, and then one will know everything. We should not try to know the world, because we cannot know it, as it is unrelated to consciousness. Consciousness cannot relate itself to anything that is unconscious. Awareness and matter cannot come together. The Samkhya is in a difficult maze on account of falsely imagining that there can be a counterpart to consciousness and that it can be real. The counterpart of consciousness is unreal. It cannot be real, because consciousness is a whole, and it cannot be divided. Can one divide consciousness into parts?

Suppose, for the time being, we take it for granted that consciousness can be divided. Who is it that becomes aware of the divided consciousness? Who becomes aware that there are two parts of consciousness? Consciousness is aware that consciousness is divided into two parts. How interesting and humorous! Tell me what it is that is between the two parts of consciousness. We may say it is matter. What is the relationship between the parts of consciousness and so-called matter that we have posited between the two? Is it matter or is it consciousness? We can go on *ad infinitum* piling up matter after matter to explain the relationship between the imagined matter of our mind with a part of consciousness that has been presumed for the time being.

The simple psychological truth is that two parts cannot be known unless there is something which transcends the two parts. We cannot know that there are two persons or two things unless the two persons and things are transcended by a connecting consciousness. It is not two that see the two, but one that sees the two. One asserts that there are two; however, it is not two that say that two exist. I, as a single unit, know that there are two, three or a hundred. Even the multitude in this variety is known by one. I, as a single unit of awareness, assert that there are many things in the world. This one that knows should therefore transcend the limitations of the variety of the world. The one is completeness, as we just now have learned. The one unit of our conscious being is a whole and not divisible, and this indivisible whole cannot brook any kind of external

relationship. We are an unrelated whole. Do not say that there can be another whole.

Samkhya says that there are two wholes—consciousness that is a whole, and matter that is a whole. Here is one infinite, there is another infinite; but there cannot be two infinities. There are not two wholes—the whole is only One. If one asserts that there are two wholes, then neither is a whole—both are only parts. It is only theoretical jargon that the Samkhya invents when it says that there are two infinities, *purusha* and *prakriti*. Impossible. By implicated analysis and through a kind of inference, not by perception, we learn that our consciousness should be a whole, and that it is Being and Freedom combined. This is our true nature. This we are.

This is the *adhyatma* analysis of our ancient seers and sages, whose records we have even today in the scriptures. In India we have the Upanishads, which are supposed to be the recorded documents of these revelations of the sages. These sages did not know this by mere implication, but by diving deep into this experience. This experience of what we truly are is called realisation. Why should we not know what we truly are? Can we know what we truly are? This is the borderland of yoga practice. Now we have come to the border of the land of yoga. Why is it that we seem to be in a difficulty even knowing our own self? We seem to be a whole completeness and indivisible awareness, but at the same time we seem to be involved with something that we are not. Now we have found the necessity of going into a deeper analysis of the problem that is apparently before us. Even if our judgment has concluded that we are something whole, we seem to be involved in something. This is the problem of yoga which has risen out of the conclusions of the Samkhya and the Vedanta philosophies. So there seems to be a necessity of going further. Why is it that I seem to be unhappy and involved, though my judgment rationally concludes that I cannot be unhappy, because I cannot be bound? What can bind me? Relationships can bind me. Relationships seem to be incapable of any kind of connection with me as true awareness. Awareness is a unique something which cannot be related with something which is unaware. Such is my blessed true nature, yet I am so involved, miserable, restless. What is this?

### **CURING THE SICKNESS**

To rectify this is the purpose of yoga. We seem to be in a kind of illness. A sickness seems to have caught hold of us. What is sickness? To be out of tune with ourselves is sickness. We have a great science of medicine called Ayurveda. They say physical sickness is the imbalance of the material humours of the body called *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha* in Sanskrit, which simply mean the wind element, the bilious element and the cough element. There are three elements in us, and if they are all in balance we seem to be healthy. If there is an imbalance of these three humours, then we start saying, “I have got joint pains, cough, and all sorts of things which may lead to further complications.” If they are in balance, in equal proportion, then we are healthy. So health then is a condition of balance. This Ayurvedic science also gives us insight into our true nature. What is meant by balance of humours, and why should we feel happy and healthy when these humours are in a state of balance? What do we mean by balance? Balance seems to reveal our true nature. Imbalance seems to disturb the reflection of our true nature. The whole is reflected in a state of balance. The whole seems to be cut into parts in a state of imbalance.

I'll give an example as to what it means. If the sun is reflected in agitated water, it seems

to be shaking in the water. One cannot see an undisturbed reflection of the sun in shaky water. If the surface is parted, then the sun's reflection seems also to be parted, cut, muddled, etc. When a balance is maintained on the surface of the water, the whole is reflected and the entire sun is seen. Our nature is a whole—do not forget this fact. Our nature is not fragmentary or dissectible. In whichever condition the wholeness of our being is reflected, we are happy. It may be a physical condition, a social or a political condition—it makes no difference. If our wholeness can be reflected in any condition, we are happy. When our being is fragmented, we are unhappy.

“Balance is yoga,” says the Bhagavadgita. *Samatvam yoga uchyate. This is a great statement of the Gita.* A balance of forces is yoga; or simply, balance is yoga. Harmony is yoga—imbalance is not yoga. Imbalance is out of tune with oneself. So, what is yoga? To be in tune with oneself is yoga. To practise yoga and be in tune with Truth one need not leave the world. Do not think that yoga is going here and there, to this *ashram* or that *ashram*. All these things are not yoga. Yoga is anything which reveals or reflects the wholeness that we truly are, and the world is anything that makes us feel that we are fragmented, dissected, cut into pieces and out of tune with ourselves.

There was a lady from America who came here. Her problem was that she was out of alignment with herself. She asked me, “Swamiji, can you tell me how I can be in alignment with myself?” That question is the beginning of yoga psychology, the aim of which is to bring oneself into alignment with one's own self in every level of its manifestation. We have a true self, which by implication we discovered in the state of deep sleep, and we have a false reflected self in which we also seem to find happiness by secondary externalisation of our wholeness. We are happy with our family on account of this reason. When the balance of the family is maintained properly, our wholeness is reflected in it sympathetically and externally. As the whole sun is reflected in calm waters, so a balanced family can give us a little happiness. Our wholeness is reflected as the sun is reflected on the calm waters of a lake. When our family is imbalanced we are not happy, just as the sun may be shaking and disturbed as the waters are shaking. An imbalanced family makes us unhappy. It may be a community or a country—any further externalisation of the wholeness leads to unhappiness. When the country is in imbalance, we are unhappy. When there is international tension, we are not happy, because tension is not harmony. The wholeness is not reflected in any kind of tension. Yoga is a very deep psychology, based on tremendously profound metaphysics and philosophy. Yoga is so simple to understand, and one feels so happy when one understands what it really is. This is because it is something connected directly with us and not with something outside ourselves.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **HOW WE PERCEIVE**

We are in a thoroughgoing misapprehension about ourselves in all our dealings with life. We start with errors and therefore we end with errors. The whole of our lives in this world has been a contradiction and a confusion, a kind of march towards an apparently unrealised destination, because of an erroneous notion that we have about our own selves. We think we are something, and then we start acting based on this hypothesis. Unfortunately we are not these things—we are something else. That we regard ourselves as different from what we really are should be enough explanation for all our troubles in life. There is no need to go further into the details of our problem. Here is the answer to our question. We have started with the wrong premise and therefore end in a mess.

This is *samsara*. The tremendous entanglement in which one finds oneself is generally called *samsara*. A knot with which we have tied ourselves to an experience from which we are unable to extricate ourselves is *samsara*. A mire into which we have been sinking and from which we cannot rise up is *samsara*. This *samsara*, this earth-existence, forces the involvement of our false personality in a false set of experiences. To rise from *samsara*, to rise from earthly existence, therefore would be to endeavour to reach our true self and to be what we really are.

There should apparently be no difficulty in being what one truly is. The difficulty is in being what one is not. To put on a false self is difficult, but to be true to one's own nature should not be difficult. To tell a lie in a court is difficult; to tell the truth is not so difficult. We know what it implies, but the involvement in the apparent notion of the self is so intricate and complicated that ages have been spent in trying to disentangle oneself from this complication. Today we shall try to study a little of the nature of this complication into which we seem to have entered because of this false self. This is the beginning of the psychology of yoga. Psychology is the study of the thinking apparatus of the human being. It is not so much a study of the 'being' of man as it is of the 'thinking' of man. I have given a bare outline of what the true being of man is, and we'll have the occasion to look a little more into this mystery a little later. For the time being we shall leave this subject and try to understand what our practical problem is in spite of the logical, inferential conclusion that that was arrived at by implication that our true nature is something different from what we ordinarily think ourselves to be.

We concluded earlier, by way of inference and implication, that we exist as an unrelated something, not as a related mass of complications. We are something existing in its own right. We have something we can call our own, of which we are, apart from what we have and what the world has made of us. We are something of which we can be confident at all times, and of which we can have no doubts. Also, we realised that our being is intrinsically valid by its own right and status, and it is an indivisible unrelated awareness which extends into an almost infinitude of experience. The indivisible awareness should be another name for infinitude, because anything that is finite is divisible. All finite objects, anything that is limited, is divisible into space and time fractions. The awareness of ours is not divisible. We decided yesterday that it cannot be divided into parts. This implies again that the awareness, the Being-Consciousness-

Freedom that we really are, is an unending mysterious Absolute that transcends space-time. We are taken by our own conclusions to the heights of wonder, the wonder of all wonders, a surprise in regard to our own selves. "I never imagined that I am such a thing—I thought I was something else," would be our wonder.

In an anecdote that we are sometimes told, a lion's cub was reared among sheep, imagined that it was also a sheep and bleated like a sheep. But when it came in contact with another lion, the cub was told, "My dear child, you are a lion's cub, why do you bleat like a lamb? Because you have been living with the lambs, you think that you are also a lamb. Come and see your face in the reflection of the water. See, your face is like my face—a large lion. Why do you bleat like a lamb?" Then it taught the cub to roar rather than to bleat. Such would be our own surprise, like the cub realising that it belongs to the lion's group and not the sheep's group. When we are awakened into this light which stimulates our imagination to such an extent that we cannot believe our own thoughts, we seem to be entering in an ocean that we ourselves are. Nothing can be a wonder equal to this wonder. When this wonder catches hold of us, it will not allow us to stand on this earth anymore. We cannot control this experience. We cannot bear this feeling of being able to overstep the limits of space. "Such a being am I!" This stirs up our imagination so deeply and with such intensity that we rise into ecstasy.

This is what devotees, *yogins* and masters of wisdom call intuition, or at least the borderland of the higher life. This comes to us only occasionally or rarely, but these rare moments have to be made more frequent. This is the purpose of yoga. Now, this wondrous being that we truly are seems to be psychologically involved in something, but it is not really involved in anything external. It is involved in its own net. Who can bind that which is infinite? What involvement can there be for that which is not in space and time except when it chooses to be? Nobody can live with us unless we want to live with ourselves. Nobody can imprison us unless we choose to imprison ourselves. Nobody can do any harm to us unless we choose to harm ourselves. This seems to be our true status and position.

Well, this is another psychological mystery. All our difficulties are psychological involvements and not material limitations, even within the four walls of a prison. You have heard it said, "Stone walls do not a prison make." Stone walls cannot make a prison. Even here in an *ashram*, we are living within stone walls, and we don't call this a prison. A prison is something else, apart from merely the enclosure of a stone wall. Bondage is therefore something connected with a particular form of inner consciousness, and this is the interesting subject of study in yoga psychology. We should, for the time being, forget the usual psychology of the West. We have looked into its outlines in the very beginning of our lessons, and they are inadequate and are not going to help us much. Not even psychoanalysis in the present sense of the term will be of much aid to us, because it is all analysis of the waking state of the mind and partially of the subconscious levels; but we are deeper than all these manifestations of the surface mind.

### ADHIDAIVA

I mentioned last time two Sanskrit terms, *adhyatma* and *adhibhuta*. I shall now mention another Sanskrit term which is co-related to these two—*adhidaiva*. These three terms, *adhyatma*, *adhibhuta* and *adhidaiva* are mutually related to one another. To

put it in simple terms, they mean the 'within', the 'without' and the 'above'. *Adhyatma* is the within, *adhibhuta* is the without, and *adhidaiva* is the above. We have only these three outlooks in life. We either look above, or outside, or within, and one cannot do anything else. We have been trying to study the nature of the without—the *adhibhuta*—independently, as modern science does and the Samkhya philosophy did. We found that it was not very helpful to us because the purely objective analysis either lands us in a diversity of perceptions or a thick wall of indeterminability and inconnectibility, and as an agnostic attitude of reality something stands before us finally through which we cannot penetrate. An unbridgeable gulf between the subject and the object was what we confronted in the physicist's analysis and also in the Samkhya analysis. And then we turned to the *adhyatma* method, and to our surprise we realised here that we seem to be something more than what physics reveals or Samkhya revealed. Our conclusion through the *adhyatma* analysis is that we have a basis of infinitude of existence. Taking into consideration our actual waking experience—not what we logically concluded by an analysis of deep sleep—considering only the practical experiences of our mind in the waking condition, we seem to be standing opposed to an object in front of us in the form of the world.

The *adhyatma* and the *adhibhuta* have many layers of manifestation. The deepest *adhyatma* is that unrelated infinitude of consciousness in us. To know this is true knowledge. It is in this sense that we are told that *adhyatma-vidya*, or the science of the *adhyatma*, is supreme among all branches of learning because when one knows it, one knows everything else. We found by an objective analysis that in space and time there are the five elements—earth, water, fire, air and ether—and then we are told that inside these five elements are molecules, atoms, electrons, forces, energy, relativity and many other things, one inside the other. Degrees of objective reality were revealed by way of observation and experimentation carried out through scientific methods. Just as we have these degrees of objective manifestation, there also seems to be degrees of subjective manifestation. These degrees reveal themselves through our analysis and not by the use of instruments like microscopes, etc., because we cannot study our own selves with such instruments. Scientists began to discover the inner content of matter by observation through powerful instruments, and they realised that there were smaller and smaller elements in the apparently outer material complexities. There are subtler and subtler layers of matter, all of which finally get resolved in an indeterminable universal energy of which every configuration of matter seems to be a manifestation and a form. This was the discovery through the objective analysis of instruments.

Our subjective analysis of experience also reveals a similar series of layers of personality. Our immediate perception is a physical body—heavy, lumbering and weighty. In a physical and physiological analysis, the physical body reveals that it is constituted of the elements of earth, water, fire and air, and there is also a lot of space inside. We are told by biologists that the actual solid content of our physical body, were it to be completely compressed, could be contained within one cubic centimetre of space. Though we look so big, there is so little matter in the body. We are only blown up like a balloon with space, air and water within. That is the material element of our body, and it is made up of the very same matter which constitutes the physical world outside. We are then made up of earth, water, fire, air and space, just as bodies or objects outside are constituted. But how do we know that we have a body? Tentatively, it can be said that we see the



body with our eyes. Just as we see objects outside, we see this body also, and therefore this body is one of the objects of the world. Because it is seen as other objects are seen, the body is not only a subject—it is also an object. One can touch it, smell it, see it and hear sounds made by it. It has all the qualities of the elements.

The perceptual process is the way in which we come to know that we have a body. We can see, hear, touch, etc. The senses are the avenues of the perception of the body and also the perception of all objects of the world. We have in addition to the physical body certain means of knowledge called the senses. The senses are not merely the outer organs or the limbs, as will be revealed through further analysis. When I say, "I see the body," it should not be taken to mean that the eyes are merely the eyeballs. The ear does not mean the eardrum; the nose does not mean the nostrils; taste does not mean the tongue; touch does not mean the fingers. These are all external instruments which are made use of by a sensational power within us. The sense of feeling, seeing, hearing, etc. is different from the organ which the power of sensation makes use of. So the organs are different from the senses. The organs are physical, and they belong to the body, but the senses, which carry on the sensations, seem to be certain powers. We have within us certain peculiar capacities called sensory reactions, and by means of these we are able to know things, including our own body.

How would we know that we have senses apart from the external organs? We can see that under certain conditions of our personality our attention is withdrawn, and the senses do not function. The attention accompanies the sensations. The state of dream is a great help to us in realising that we have something within us apart from the physical body. There is the eye, the ear, the nose, etc. even when we are in a state of dream, but the physical eyes cannot see in the state of dream. There are some people who sleep with open eyes, but they cannot see anything while they are sleeping. The ears are available and they are not being blocked during sleep, but nevertheless one cannot hear. One may not have any kind of sensation when asleep, although all organs are there and all are intact. If this 'something' is not connected with the physical ears, if it is disconnected from the organs, there is no sensation. In the same way, an electric wire will not do anything when the current is off. The wire has no capacity to do anything and cannot provide energy or move a machine. The power that passes through the wire is what gives the energy. Otherwise it is just a piece of metal and rubber which has no value other than as a physical, inorganic stuff. So are the organs. They are vehicles to convey the power of sense from within us. This power of sense is realised to be different from the vehicle itself.

That the sensations are different from the organs which belong to the physical body is one discovery, but this is not the whole truth of the matter. There seems to be another necessity behind the powers of sense, namely what we call 'mind' or 'thought'. We can open our eyes, be looking at something and be thinking of something else at the same time, and we will not even see if people are passing in front of us. If we are working at a difficult mathematical problem, we will not hear sounds made near us. If we are deeply engrossed in a difficult question of any kind, we will not know events taking place outside us, though the ears and eyes are open. Sense, though healthily functioning, may not reveal knowledge of the outer world if the mind is not connected with the senses. While the organs are to be related to the senses, the senses are to be related to the mind. This is another very important thing in perception. The body is necessary as a vehicle.

Yet, the body alone cannot work unless the senses vitalise the body, and the senses alone will not do, because the mind has to connect itself to the senses.

### PRANA SHAKTI

We have five senses—seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching. With this fivefold apparatus of sense we begin to know that there is a world of objects outside and that we have a body, and so on. This function becomes successful on account of the mind being connected with the senses. Just imagine how many things are within us—the body constituted of the five elements, the five sensory powers, and the mind connected with the senses. There is another mysterious element within us which seems to be at work even when the mind is not thinking. In deep sleep, for example, we have no idea of our bodies or of the senses and the mind, but something is there which keeps us alive. That is called the *prana*. We do not die in sleep, though we do not think, do not see, and do not even have any such experiences. Life persists even in deep sleep.

Another name for that life is what we call the *prana shakti*. We have what is called the *prana* within us, which is externally manifest as breath. When a person was declared dead and it was said that there is no life in the body, people used to verify this by holding a little piece of cotton near the nostrils of the person to see whether breath was there or not, or really the *prana* had departed. Now they use scientific instruments, but previously people used to have this little cotton kept near the nostrils to see whether the *prana* was still present. *Prana* is life, ordinarily speaking. People say that they have *prana*, which means that they are alive. *Prana* is a *shakti*, an energy, power. That by which we are able to lift our fingers, walk about on our legs, speak, or do any kind of activity is *prana*. This is what we call strength, energy, vitality and power. Usually when we say, “I have power”, it means we have *prana shakti*.

This power, strength or *prana* is not only the energy that we gain from eating food. People think that *prana shakti* can be increased by taking more of certain kinds of food. It is not so. There is a slight difference between the caloric intake of the diet, the weight of the body and even the health of the body, from the vitality of the body. A person may be very healthy and yet lack vitality. This is a very important thing which yoga students should understand. We should not think that we have vitality merely because we look healthy. We may not be suffering in the medical sense—we may not be sneezing, we may not have headaches, we may have good appetite and all that, but we may have no vitality within. If vitality is wasted or lost, it cannot be recovered by diet, though weight can be increased and it may appear that we are healthy. *Prana* is different from the outer condition of the body—*prana* nothing but a manifestation of our true nature. What we truly are cannot be increased or decreased. This is also very important to remember. We cannot increase what we are, or decrease what we are—we are what we are. We may increase or decrease our possessions, but we cannot decrease ourselves or increase ourselves. This ‘something’ which we really are manifests itself outside through the mind and the senses towards the extremities of the body.

The manner of the manifestation of what we really are—and we are something wonderful, we already know—has an impetus conveyed through the senses and the mind to the body. This manner of the expression of our real nature through the external avenues of the mind, the senses, etc. is *prana*. It is a vibration of our own self. *Prana* is therefore a vibration; it is not merely a gross electric energy—it is subtler than that. We

have a *shakti* or a power within us with which we are born, and though it cannot be really gained or lost, its connection with the body can be diminished by certain errors that we may commit in our daily lives.

We will have occasion later on to study a particular observance in the practice of yoga called *brahmacharya*. We will not talk about it now. Suffice it to say that *brahmacharya* is the art of the conservation of energy or vitality in us. Though it need not be thought of as increasing or decreasing by itself, it may appear to get increased or decreased due to its connection or disconnection with the physical body. Due to certain functions that we perform or by certain errors that we commit, the *prana* may loosen its contact with the physical body. Yet, we may also increase the strength of our body through its connection with our body. This is another interesting subject which we shall have occasion to study a little later on.

So, *prana* is the vitality within us, due to which we digest our food, but which is not manufactured by the food that we take. If it were not there, our food could not be consumed. *Prana* is something prior to the energy which the intake of our diet seems to supply us. Vitality is something sacred. “*Prana* is God Himself,” says one of the Upanishads. In India, *prana* is worshipped as the very embodiment of *Hiranyagarbha*, the cosmic energy. This *shakti* also is within us, and is an intermediary link between the subtle body within and the gross body without. Life in this world and life in this body are the connection of this *prana* with this body. Death means the separation of this *prana* from the body. The mind feels the body through the *prana*. The *prana* may be regarded as the tentacles through which the mind feels the presence of an object. Just as the very touch of a magnet can vitalise a rod of iron, the very touch of this *prana* vitalises the physical body. Finally, this life-principle comes from our true nature, the Self itself. From the empirical point of view, life means the relation of the *prana* to the physical body, and death means the disconnection of the *prana* from the physical body. So, we have the senses, the *prana* and the mind in addition to the physical body made up of the five elements.

### THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ORGAN

Now, in yoga the concept of mind is a little deeper than what our general psychology tells us. It is difficult to translate into the English language what we understand really by the thinking principle within us. Generally, when we use the word ‘mind’, we mean the function of general thinking, indeterminate thinking, but our psychological apparatus is constituted also of certain functions other than merely thinking in a general sense. Just as we have tried to remember the three terms *adhyatma*, *adhibhuta* and *adhidaiva*, try also to remember four Sanskrit terms indicating the four functions of this psychological organ. *Manas* is the Sanskrit word for the psychological organ in its capacity of thinking; *buddhi* is the function by which we understand, judge or decide; *ahamkara* is that by which we assert ourselves and affirm or arrogate anything to ourselves, and *chitta* is the function by which we remember the past or retain a memory of a previous experience. These are the four general functions or psychological organs. In the yoga psychology of Patanjali, *chitta* means all these four things. In the psychology of the Vedanta, this fourfold function is called *antahkarana*. *Antahkarana* in Vedanta is the same as *chitta* in Patanjali’s yoga. These four functions can be multiplied into many other functions, but essentially the psychological functions are four.

So within the body are the senses, and within the senses are the mind with the *prana*—the mind with its fourfold function. The physical body is what we are aware of in the waking state. In the dream state we are not aware of the physical body, and the other functions are carried on independently of a connection with the body. Independent of the body and the mind, the *prana* and the senses function in the state of dream. In deep sleep no such function is there—neither are we aware of the body, nor of any psychological function. Though the *prana* is present, we are not aware of it. This is a discovery of the internal layers of our personality. Just as we saw that there are layers of objective reality known through scientific analysis, astronomy and the Samkhya, so there are degrees of manifestation externally in the *adhibhuta*.

I mentioned another term called *adhidaiva*. Why did I mention this? What is the connection? *Adhidaiva* means that which presides over, that which superintends, that which regulates or controls. *Daiva* means a deity. A superior power generally may be said to be a *daiva*. Sometimes it is also called *devata*, or *adhidevata*. Why should we introduce the *adhidaiva* here? This is another thing that we have to learn. What is the part which *adhidaiva* plays in our study of yoga? Why should it be there at all in addition to *adhibhuta* and *adhyatma*?

Here comes the role of religion in addition to philosophy and the practice of yoga. There are some Vedantins and philosophers who think that the gods of religion are myths or fables. That this is not so is what we shall learn by an analysis of the *adhidaiva* principles. Something more is implied in all these tenets of philosophy, religion and yoga than what we can superficially understand. I think Hamlet said, “There are more things in heaven and earth than our philosophy dreams of.” We should not think that our philosophy can allow us to understand everything, or make remarks that there is nothing or that there is everything. Buddha said: “Both are extreme statements. Don’t say there is everything; don’t say there is nothing. Both these are wrong statements. Truth is in the middle.” We should be cautious in making statements in this matter. We cannot say what is and what is not until and unless we are confident that we have understood ourselves in the position in which we are placed.

The necessity for the introduction of something called the *adhidaiva* arises on account of the necessity to understand the relation between *adhibhuta* and *adhyatma*. As a matter of fact, *adhidaiva* is nothing but a relation between *adhibhuta* and *adhyatma*. We know through a connection that we establish between the *adhyatma* and the *adhibhuta* that there is an objective world. The question which we tried to raise sometime back was, “What is this connection or relation?” and to answer that we had to go through all the processes of analysis over the last few days. What is the relation between the *adhyatma* and the *adhibhuta*? How do we know that there is a world outside? Who tells us that there is something external to us? We shouldn’t accept immediately what the senses tell us. How do the senses jump to the objects? Our eyes are here within our bodies; how do they jump to the mountain to tell us that the mountain is there? Our senses do not move physically from our bodies to the objects outside, and yet they tell us that there is something outside. How do they tell? What is this non-physical relation between the outer world and us? We know the existence of a mountain in front of us, though not through our physical contact. It is due to a separate relationship that we have. This is the mystery of the process of perception.

This leads us into further mysteries which the world seems to enshrine. The world is a wonder, if we think of it. The external world is a wonder, we are a wonder in ourselves, and the relationship between the world and us is also a wonder. The whole creation is a marvel! This relationship, which we call perception of the world, reveals many mysteries. That we can know the existence of a distant object without physically coming into contact with it shows that our relationship with objects is not always physical. One thing is certain: the connection between the *adhyatma* and the *adhibhuta* need not always be a physical connection.

If it is not physical, what else can it be? What have we in this world other than the physical? We cannot see anything other than the physical in a physical world, but we seem to imply that something non-physical is persistent and is involved in at least the process of perception of the world. How do we become aware of a distant object? What connects us with the mountain in front of us? We may say that light rays emanating from the sun, the moon, the stars, fire, a torchlight, etc. travel in space and impinge on the retina of our eyes, and then the image of the object is cast onto our eyes. Once this happens, we know that the object is there. This is may be our explanation. The light rays are unconscious of their function, because light has no consciousness of itself. The torchlight has no knowledge of its own function, and the light that is shed on the object outside is not self-conscious. It is a physical light; and the retina of the eyes is also not conscious.

Just now we learned that the eyes may be open in the state of sleep, but that we see nothing because something within is not connected. The eyeballs are not conscious—they are physical and they are situated in the physical body. Physical rays fall on the physical retina. How can we be conscious of the world outside? How can we know that there is a mountain outside merely because matter has impinged on matter? Light rays impinging on the retina of the eyes is matter contacting matter. This cannot reveal knowledge. The question is: how do we know? What is the process of perception? We may say, “Mind is involved and the senses are involved,” as we mentioned before. It is not merely the eyes that are necessary in perception—light is necessary, the eyeballs are necessary, the senses are necessary, and the mind also is necessary, may be our answer. But are the senses and the mind conscious? Can we say that the senses are conscious, and the mind is self-conscious?

By analysis of our own personality, we have discovered that we can withdraw the consciousness of all these functions while in the state of deep sleep. They are there, but they are not conscious. The mind is not conscious, the senses are not conscious, the *prana* is not conscious, and the body is not conscious. Yet, we exist as a being which is conscious. Consciousness seems to animate the mind, the senses and the body in states other than sleep. However, there is a condition where the truth is revealed that the mind, senses and body are not conscious. In deep sleep we become aware of this fact.

We are conscious—but not the mind, the senses or the body. These become aware of their existence when they shine as a mirror shines when light falls on it. The mirror is not capable of shining unless light falls on it. The mirror cannot shed light. Light is different from the mirror, though we may say that the mirror shines—likewise are the mind, the intellect, *manas*, *buddhi*, *ahamkara*, *chitta*, the senses and the body. So do not say that the mind is the cause of perception of the mountain in front, because the

mind has no consciousness. Not the light, not the retina of the eyes, not the body, not the *pranas*, not the senses or the mind help us in the knowledge that the mountain is there in front of us. How do we know that there is an object outside, when nothing that we have has any consciousness? Without consciousness, without awareness, without intelligence and without understanding, how can we know that there is a world outside?

What we learn here is that the connection between us and the object, between the *adhyatma* and the *adhibhuta*, should be capable of revealing consciousness. It cannot be an inert material relation. There is actually no material relation between us and the mountain there. We are aware of the mountain through another principle that is functioning within us, which is super-physical and which can vibrate sympathetically through these instruments—the mind, senses, body, retina and so on. The connection should be super-physical and super-psychical also; it is not merely a physical connection. The mind alone cannot reveal the knowledge of an object outside, because it has no consciousness. The relationship between us and the object outside is super-physical, super-psychical and super-mental. If we like to call it so, it is a spiritual relationship. The relation between us and the object is spiritual—not even psychological or physical. It is consciousness that reveals the presence of an object outside. How this consciousness reveals the object outside, is the subject that we have to study later.

## CHAPTER SIX

### GOD, WORLD AND SOUL

In order to understand the meaning of *adhidaiva*, we had to go into an analysis of perception. We noticed that the perceptual process implies more than what seems to be on the surface. There is a need for a conscious connecting link between the seer and the seen, without which we can have no knowledge of the world outside. It is not the light rays, the retina of the eyes, the senses or the mind that are ultimately responsible for the phenomenon of perception. All these may be there, but if something else is not there, we will not know anything. A corpse has all the features of a human being, but one essential thing is not there, and therefore it is unable to perceive anything.

Likewise would be the attempt to know things with all the necessary apparatus provided, but with the element of consciousness missing. It is therefore consciousness which supplies the soul the perceptual capability. Therefore, the link between the seer and the seen should be naturally and obviously a relation of consciousness, without which we cannot account for our knowledge of things. Hence, consciousness seems to be underlying the whole process. The process of knowledge is indwelt by the principle of consciousness.

We must carefully note as to what it means when we say that consciousness indwells the process. A process is a series of certain motions connected with one another, a complex made up of parts. This is what we mean by a process. A process is a succession of certain events or stages, and none can be aware that there is a succession unless there is someone transcending the process of succession. If there are only bits of process, one bit will not know another bit of the process, and there will be no such thing as a process. We will only have unconnected bits dislodged from each other, and each bit will be aware only of itself and not of another bit. In that case, where would be the process through which there is linkage of all these bits? Consciousness of process implies a transcendence of the processional passage of events, links or stages. It is very important to remember that the awareness of a procession is not involved in the procession. The awareness of the movement of anything is not a part of the movement itself. Hence, 'process of knowledge' implies something which is different from the process.

There should be a being hidden behind the process of change, transformation, succession or becoming. This rule applies to every kind of transition taking place everywhere in the world—whatever be the kind of change or vicissitude. Knowledge of vicissitude implies the existence of something that is not involved in the vicissitude. Knowledge of vicissitude implies the existence of something that is not involved in the vicissitude. That we have knowledge of the world as a process of change implies that we have in us something which does not change with the objects that change. When we say that the world is transitory, we mean that there is something within us that is not transitory. The idea of being finite and limited shows that there is something in us which is not limited or finite. It is very clear and simple to understand. The perceptual process therefore implies the existence of a consciousness which is different from the process. It is this that makes us become aware that there is an object outside, though it may be far away in space. Our sense organs need not physically come in contact with

objects. The consciousness element in us, together with another psychological event, allows us to know the object outside.

### **THE TWOFOLD PROCESS OF PERCEPTION**

There is a twofold process involved in perception—the mental and the spiritual. The mind and consciousness, which should not be confused with each other, function simultaneously in the process of perception. The mind is very, very elastic, and it is a force whose pervasive capacity is incredible. More rapid is the work of the mind than that even of the most sensitive photographic plate. Quick and rapid as the photographic film is in receiving the impressions from outside, quicker and more rapid still is the mind in its functions. Instantaneous seems to be the work of the mind. Faster than light and faster than electricity can the mind travel. We say the fastest thing is light; but the mind is faster. With such a rapidity of motion does the mind move towards the object that we cannot know that it has moved. We cannot catch up with the speed of the mind, and so we do not know that there is motion at all. It is similar to a motion picture in which the individual pictures move so rapidly that the human eye sees the scene as being in motion. This rapid movement of the mind towards the object is for a purpose. The mind pervades the form of the object by a movement.

How the mind travels is a very interesting subject, and there has been a lot of controversy among psychologists and philosophers as to the constitution and function of the mind. Many think that the mind is within the body and cannot go outside. If it were in fact locked within the body, perception should be inexplicable. If everything is within us, and nothing is outside us, how are we to come in contact with things outside? This led people to the conclusion that the mind can function within the body and yet extend its operations outside the body. It can be attached to a particular body and yet connect itself with other bodies. Just as a lamp may be located in a particular spot but it can shed its light around a larger area, the mind does not actually give up its location in the body but it can stretch its arms outside to a certain extent.

What enables the mind to perceive an object is not merely the physical proximity of the object, but also the interest that the mind has in the object. When there is absolutely no interest in an object, perception may be difficult. We may be sitting in a railway car with many people, and yet although they are so near, we may not even be fully aware of them, because we are not interested in them. Physical proximity may be necessary, but it is not the only thing necessary. More important is mental interest, because attention follows interest. Where there is no interest, there is also no attention. This also explains memory; we cannot remember a thing in which we are not interested, however much we may scratch our heads. Interest, physical proximity, the phenomenon of physical light, and a healthy constitution of the sense organs—all these factors must come together in the process of the perception of an object.

### **THE VRITTIS**

But there is a more essential element than even these, namely, consciousness. The two features of perception are—knowledge and knowledge of a form. In the perception of an object, we have knowledge, no doubt. It is not a general knowledge but a particular knowledge linked with the form of the object. A mountain in front of us, for example, is a specific type of knowledge that we have. It is called determinate perception,



specifically related to a particular object or a group of objects. This limitation of perception to a particular object is the work of the mind, but the illumination behind it is the work of consciousness. So, there is a twofold feature of perception—the form and the consciousness of form.

Specification and the awareness of the specification is the twofold feature of a perception of any kind. This specification of an object is called a *vritti*. This is a very famous term occurring in yoga psychology. Mental *vritti*, *manovritti* is a term used in Patanjali's yoga system. "The control of the *vrittis* of the mind is yoga," says Patanjali. So, what is *vritti*? *Vritti* is nothing but the function of the mind by which it assumes a specific modification in relation to an object. This specific modification is a kind of mould into which the mind casts itself in respect of an object which is in front of it. When there is perception of a mountain, there is a *vritti* of a mountain, one may say. The mind has a *vritti* of a mountain, a *vritti* of a person and a *vritti* of this or that. A *vritti* is nothing but a mould into which the mind casts itself with reference to an object in which it has interest and which it cognises.

'*Vritti*' is a very important term to remember. It will occur many times in yoga psychology. There are so many *vrittis* of the mind, because there can be many cognitions by the mind of objects. It can go on cognising many things, because there are many forms in the world. Therefore there can be many *vrittis*, and these many *vrittis* get piled up in the lower layers of the mind. The mind has many layers; we shall study these sometime later. Just as honeybees have two stomachs, one for actual digestion and the other merely to store, the mind seems to have at least three 'stomachs'. One is for receiving, one for storing and another for digesting, one may say. This is what the psychologists call the conscious, subconscious and unconscious levels. The mind rarely digests anything—it only stores.

The situation is comparable to a retail shop and a wholesale shop. The subconscious is the retail shop, and the unconscious is the wholesale shop. Many things are there deep in this unconscious, but a little of it is stored for daily purposes in the subconscious, and the things immediately needed are kept just in front. That is the conscious level. The shopkeeper also has many things inside, but one cannot see them. These are the stored-up *vrittis* of the mind. Our personality is made up of *vrittis*—nothing but *vrittis*. The whole of psychology is nothing but the study of the *vrittis* of the mind.

These *vrittis* are illumined by the consciousness inside. Life is given to the *vrittis* by consciousness, just as seeds germinate in the earth when there is rainfall, proper temperature, manure, etc. *Vrittis* activate themselves when consciousness enlivens them; otherwise they lie buried like dead seeds. In the act of perception, a *vritti*, or a form of the mind, functions in respect of an object and the consciousness underlying it. This consciousness in relation to the perception of an object may be said to be the *adhidaiva* of that object, while the object is the *adhibhuta*. This consciousness immanent in the *vritti*, which is necessary for the perception of the object, may be said to be the *adhidaiva* of that object. It is the presiding deity in oneself, without which one cannot know the object. The location of this consciousness in the perceiving subject is the *adhyatma*.

The *adhyatma*, *adhibhuta* and *adhidaiva* ultimately are not separated from one another—they are interrelated. Like the three angles of a triangle connected by three

sides, one will find this structure of *adhyatma*, *adhibhuta* and *adhidaiva* is a mentally related construction. One is not independent from the other, and when one takes up any item for consideration, the other two will also come up automatically. When we walk, we walk with two legs, and if there is a three-wheeled vehicle, when it moves we will find that all the three wheels move simultaneously. It does not mean that only one wheel moves. This *adhyatma*, *adhibhuta* and *adhidaiva* complexity is a three-wheeled vehicle, as it were, which takes all the three wheels together when it moves.

When this psychological fact is extended to the universe as a whole it becomes God, world and soul. *Adhyatma*, *adhibhuta* and *adhidaiva* are nothing but the seeds of the development of thought in the concept of soul, world and God—individual, universe and Creator. These are the further reaches of this simple analysis of perception. There is a consciousness underlying both the seer and the seen, on account of which there is perception of an object. We have to be aware of ourselves, and we have to be aware of the object. The link between these two is consciousness, which should transcend the subject and the object. It has to be simultaneously present in the seer, the seen object and the seeing process as well; otherwise there would be no knowledge of objects at all. If we are bereft of consciousness, there is no perception. If there is no connection of consciousness with the object, there is no perception, and unless there is a movement of consciousness through a *vriddhi* towards an object, there is no perception.

We may also ask whether there really a movement of consciousness towards the object. Movement is another name for a process. Does consciousness also undergo a process or is it a part of the process? It cannot be, because a process can only be known by a processless being. If consciousness is a process, there should be another processless consciousness behind it. The process is not of consciousness—it is rather of the *vriddhi*. *Vriddhi* is a process, but not consciousness itself. The consciousness that is behind the seer, the seen and the process of seeing is 'being' rather than a process. It is existence as such. *Adhidaiva*, by which we may understand the presiding consciousness above the tripod of seer, seeing and seen, is not subject to change as the phenomenon of the object or the process of perception are. This presiding deity of the subject-object relationship is called *adhidaiva*.

### THE DEITIES

Why are there so many gods in religion? I just mentioned this previously without saying anything in detail, but something interesting is there underlying this: how the religious idea of many gods arose, and that there are some who are loath to the idea of many gods. We should not make hasty statements in regard to things transcending mental perception. We should not say yes or no in regard to these things immediately. We are not in a position to pass judgment on these super-physical matters. We are here to be very humble in such things. There can be many gods from one point of view, though there is only one God ultimately. Hence religious consciousness has a great value and meaning.

Who are these many gods? Let us go, step by step, with a careful analysis of the consciousness situation. Earlier I mentioned that there are stages or degrees of objective reality. This is covered by the Samkhya and corroborated even by our modern scientists. There are degrees of the manifestation of the objective reality, and there are also degrees of our personality. There are layers of our personality—one under the other like the

peels of an onion. There is the first peel, then another peel, and a third, and so on. Many peels constitute an onion. Likewise, we have peel after peel constituting our vestures which are the layers of our personality. In Sanskrit they are called the *koshas*. *Panchakoshas* translates as the five *koshas*. *Kosha* means vesture—a kind of shirt, you may say.

Just as there are degrees of manifestation of objective reality, we noticed that there are also layers of the subjective personality of the *adhyatma*. The vital sheath is constituted of the *pranic* energy, the organs of action, the senses of perception or knowledge, the mind, the ego, the intellect and the other layers of the mind including the subconscious and the unconscious. The physical sheath is constituted of the elements—earth, fire, water, air and ether. These layers are animated by the Being-Consciousness simultaneously. Like the rays of the sun which simultaneously travel millions of miles through very many layers of space to reach the Earth, the sun of consciousness inside the deepest recesses of our being lights up all these layers of personality, including the lowliest vesture which is the physical body. We are at once aware that we are a total personality, with body, *prana*, senses, mind, intellect, *ahamkara* (ego) and many other things. We are in a position to know that we are a total complex of personality at one and the same time, on account of this sudden illumination of the entire personality by this consciousness within us.

There are layers after layers or degrees of reality—subjectively as well as objectively. Such as if one draws a large triangle on a canvas or a blackboard, there is a base to the triangle. Just above the base of the triangle, a few inches above it, suppose a straight line is drawn parallel to the base, touching both the sides of the triangle. A few inches above the second line, a third line is drawn, parallel to the second, and on and on line after line is drawn until one would reach to the apex of the triangle. One will find that each line is parallel to the base, and each line which rises above is nearer to the apex than the lines at the bottom. One will also notice the peculiar interesting feature of these parallel lines—the lines seem to be connected to the triangle on each side, and that the lines tend to rise higher and higher to eventually fill the apex itself. When one reaches the apex, one will find that no additional line can be drawn; it is a point where no motion of any kind is possible.

This is an example to understand the relationship between *adhyatma* and *adhibhuta* in relation to the *adhidaiva*, and how the many gods can be the one God ultimately. All these lines can finally absorb themselves in the one point which is the apex of the triangle. The many gods of religion, whether of the East or the West, are only the names that we give to the consciousness that is necessary for the existence of any degree of reality—objective or subjective. If we accept that there are degrees of reality, we have to accept there is a consciousness implying every degree of reality. That consciousness is *adhidaiva*, and that is the god of any particular degree.

Therefore, one may have a god for any stage of the manifestation of reality, whether externally or internally. We have gods outside in the heavens and gods inside within us. The heavens are nothing but the regions that we contemplate as identical with the positions of the different degrees of objective reality. These positions have to be somewhere, and that somewhere is heaven, the higher regions, one of the other worlds, and so on. Subjectively, too, the very same gods are superintending and presiding over

these regions. In the Vedanta and yoga psychologies we are told that gods preside not only over the cosmos outside, but also over our own sense-organs, our minds, etc. Previously I said that we have many gods, and there is no place where a god is not present; and every god has some name which we have given in our own languages. The god may be named in Greek or Latin, or in Sanskrit or Tamil—it makes no difference. According to our own language or dialect we give some name to this god whom we adore, but the god does exist—he is not a myth. If degrees of reality exist, gods must exist.

### **BHAKTI AND JNANA ARE ONE**

Religion has a value in practical life. We have to ascend from the gross *vriddhi* to the higher *vriddhi* by an assimilation of the *vriddhi* into a higher state of consciousness which is immanent in it. These are the stages of yoga which we will study. All the many stages of yoga and steps of yoga are nothing but the ways of the absorption of the lower *vriddhi* into the higher, by means of a consciousness immanent in the *vriddhi* or what one might call the god of the *vriddhi*. Religion and philosophy are not separate—there is no contradiction between the two. It is all dry philosophy that says that there is no God, no gods, no religion, no temple, etc. Everything is necessary. Why not churches? Why not temples? If we can have a kitchen and a lavatory, then why not a church or a temple?

There are all varieties of the egoism of man which assert things suddenly, without understanding. Humility is the prerequisite in the search for Truth. No egoistic man can know Truth. We should be very humble and assume the Socratic method of knowing nothing rather than asserting an egoistic point of view. Knowledge does not come where ego is present. We cannot really understand the mysteries of the universe so easily, and it is fatuous to assume too much wisdom in the very beginning. We have to go slowly, stage by stage, with open eyes and firm steps.

The *adhidaiva* is this presiding consciousness over a particular degree of reality, both objectively and subjectively. The *adhidaiva* is the connecting conscious link between the subject and the object in any level of manifestation of reality. It may be physical, it may be psychological, it may be vital, or it may be intellectual. There are said to be seven worlds—one above the other. Theosophists are very fond of talking about the many worlds above. They do exist, if degrees of reality do exist. The worlds exist, the gods exist, religions exist, and devotion to the gods therefore is one of the ways of realisation of Truth.

*Bhakti* and *jnana* are ultimately one, as it is usually said. Though many think that *bhakti* and *jnana* are different, they are not. They are only two ways of looking at the same thing. We may have love for the presiding deity of a degree of reality—which is devotion—but when we meet the last point of the triangle I described, the devotion merges in ultimate Being itself, and *bhakti* becomes *jnana*. Love and the lover become one. There is no contradiction between devotion to God, the religious observance of *bhakti*, and the philosophical contemplation of knowledge. They are one and the same, and all are co-related.

The degrees of reality are the explanations for the existence of the many divinities or gods of religion, and these divinities are connected with us. They are not far away in the heavens, millions of miles away. They are transcendent and immanent both. They are

transcendent in the sense that they imply both the subject and the object. They are immanent in the sense that they are present in us also. The presiding deity is the connecting link between the subject and the object. This connecting link is transcendent because it is not limited to the subject, and it is immanent because it lives in the subject as well. God is both transcendent and immanent—not only a god but also the ultimate God are of the same nature. Here we have an interrelated cosmos before us, not merely an objective world. The cosmos is an interrelated system of subject, object and its presiding consciousness.

We are not in an isolated world and we are not unbefriended persons—we have friends everywhere. We cannot be in a place where we have no friends. Everywhere there are friends; the world is flooded with friends. This should give us confidence and joy. In one of the great scriptures, the Yoga Vasishtha, it is said, “Gods shall protect persons who abolish the ego.” Why should not the gods come to help? The gods are everywhere. There are divinities flooding the whole cosmos.

Light emanates from every quarter of creation. There is no spot in space where consciousness is not present, where God is not present. Such is this wonderful, beautiful and magnificent world in which we are. Now we have come to the conclusion that we are in an interrelated creation. It is not merely a far-off *adhibhuta*, or an isolated *adhyatma*, or a distant *adhidaiva*, but a mutually related, co-related system is this universe. A rise from one level to another would imply a threefold rise. Yoga is not subjective or objective—it is universal. Some people think yoga is a selfish practice, only performed by some individual in a room. No; yoga cannot be practised in a room—that is impossible. For the *yogin*, there is no room. If yoga means an ascent from the lower to the higher, there is no such thing as an isolated, independent or personalised yoga. Such a thing does not exist.

We should not think that *yogins* are selfish people. There are some uninitiated and uninformed people in the world who think that yoga is a selfish practice of private individuals who are not concerned with the world outside. *Yogins* have tremendous concern, more concern than others, and they are concerned with more things than even the wisest man in the world. The *yogin* is more altruistic than anyone in the world, because his concern is for the whole of creation and not merely one country. The so-called patriot may criticise the *yogin*, thinking that he is a selfish man. However, the patriot limits his love only to his own country, while the apparently unconcerned *yogin* is concerned with the larger structure of the cosmos; otherwise he would not be a *yogin*.

### ALL LIFE IS YOGA

Let us remember, there is no such thing as a private yoga of an individual—such a thing is a myth. All yoga is one. All life is yoga; the whole life is yoga. There is no such thing as your yoga and my yoga, Eastern yoga or Western yoga—it does not exist. Yoga is one, because any step that a practitioner takes is a universal step. It is not an individual step which is no real step at all, because one remains in the same position. When we take one step, we drag all the three together with us—the *adhidaiva*, *adhibhuta* and *adhyatma*. Either we have taken this threefold universal step, or we have taken no step at all. There is no such thing as an individual step of a private body. This is the answer to those uninformed wiseacres of the world who think yoga is a selfish practice of some persons in a corner of the world. It is not so.

The practice of yoga is a majestic mosaic of values which opens up our eyes to the structure of the whole cosmos and makes us concerned with everything in the world. This is the advantage, and also a disadvantage in the practice of yoga. Its advantage is that the whole world is backing us up in yoga. It is a kind of disadvantage at the same time, because we cannot ignore anything in this world in the practice of yoga. We cannot close our eyes to something and then be a *yogin*. We have to be completely awake to every kind of reality and every degree of manifestation of reality.

We cannot say 'this is mine' and 'this is not mine' in the true practice of yoga. We cannot say 'this is necessary' and 'this is unnecessary'. We will find that there is nothing unnecessary. Everything will become necessary one day or another—even a mouse can save a lion as in the story of Aesop where a small mouse saved a captured lion. Even a mouse could save a lion, though in the beginning the lion laughed at the thought of a mouse being able to help him. Even the most insignificant things in the world may become important one day. We should not look down on any person or thing in the world as insignificant or as something unconnected with us. We may be lions, but a mouse may have to come to our aid one day. The whole world therefore is the concern of the *yogin*, and the whole world is the object of study of the *yogin*.

It is not simply one branch of learning with which he is concerned—unlike our modern students who are concerned only with more particular things in schools and universities. We might ask these students, "What are you studying?" "Oh, this and that," they may answer. But in the field of yoga we are not just studying this or that—we are studying everything. The student of yoga is a student of everything, not merely one branch or a few branches of learning. We ought to study the whole of creation, and study it not merely as an object outside us, but as something vitally connected with us. We should not think of *adhibhuta* as distant, because it is as connected with us as the *adhyatma*.

In doing this practice, we will find that we are citizens of a wider world than the world that is before our eyes. We cannot belong to any nation or country, truly speaking. We cannot belong to any person or to any thing, and nothing can belong to us. The truth is that nothing belongs to us. How can anything belong to us in this mysterious structure of the cosmos? People who say "this is mine" and "this is not mine" naturally come to grief, because they go contrary to the truth of things. Whoever cries "mine and not mine" has to suffer, because this is a cry against Truth. Truth shall triumph, so we should not cling to this notion of "I and mine". These notions are not going to help. They are only a vilification of reality and a cry against the very idea of creation itself.

We might have heard the word '*vairagya*'. *Vairagya* will automatically come to us through the practice of yoga—we have no need to struggle to practise *vairagya*. Why should dispassion not come when we have this awakening? How could we get attached to anything, when the world is made in the way that it is? We can understand how simple it is to be unattached to the world. Why do we imagine that it is so difficult to practise detachment? "Oh, I'm so involved in this." How can we be involved? It is impossible to be involved in a structure of this kind.

Hence, detachment becomes a spontaneous way of living. We cannot but be detached in a world of this nature. In this way, yoga becomes a natural condition of our lives. It is not an effort that we have to exert. We have to be *yogins*, and we cannot be but that.

This is a wondrous vista that gets revealed before us through an analysis of the nature of creation and the beautiful relation between the *adhyatma*, *adhibhuta* and *adhidaiva*, the degrees of reality and their interrelationship.

I mentioned that we have to rise from the lower to the higher, and that this is yoga. The *vrittis* of the mind are in different degrees of reality, and every *vritti* is connected with a particular object; and as there are degrees of these objects, there are also degrees of the *vrittis*. We have been told that there are seven stages of knowledge and seven stages of the practice of yoga also. These stages are nothing but the rise of the related consciousness from one condition of *vritti* to another condition. But what are these layers that we have to transcend, and how does consciousness manifest itself? In what form does it reveal itself—in a particular degree of reality, or in a form of the *vritti*?

This is what we could call the ‘evolution of consciousness’, and about which people like the philosopher Henri Bergson have written a lot. Bergson’s wonderful book *Creative Evolution*, for which he won the Nobel Prize, is worth reading. This creative evolution of Bergson, or for the matter of fact, any biological evolution, is nothing but the study of consciousness as it appears to evolve through the different degrees of reality. I mentioned that consciousness cannot really evolve, because it does not change and is not involved in a process. It appears to evolve as it gets extricated from the clutches of the different degrees of *vrittis* of the mind, just as light appears to get brighter as the mirror becomes more and more polished. A dusty mirror reflects less light; this does not mean that the light is less, because the light is actually the same. But as the mirror is polished more and more, the light appears to be brighter and brighter. One cannot say there is an evolution of light—the evolution is only in the mirror.

The ‘evolution of consciousness’ is therefore a misnomer. Consciousness cannot evolve, but it appears to evolve when it is studied in relation to that which does evolve. Yoga is a conscious attempt at bringing about this evolution from the base of the triangle to the apex of the triangle where multiplicity merges into unity. The study of these stages of consciousness is the psychology of yoga. This psychology is very interesting, and without a careful study of this psychology of the nature of consciousness that appears to evolve from the lower to the higher, we cannot know what yoga practice actually is. This requires the use of *chit*, which I shall take up another time.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THE CHANGES THAT YOGA BRINGS ABOUT

Now we have come to a stage where we have to pause a little and try to ponder what we have analysed. We should not go on jumping from subject to subject without properly understanding and reviewing what has been taught. These lessons are something like a chain. We have now crossed one link, and so it is necessary to see how far we can understand what has been revealed. Yoga is practice—it is not merely listening or appreciating or even understanding. To practise yoga is to practise the understanding at which we have arrived. To rest the mind in that understanding is ultimately the purpose of yoga. We have reviewed the essential fundamental level of this understanding of the practice. We started with an analysis of the immediate situation in which we find ourselves in the world of human society, and we also realised the world's inadequacies and contradictions as well as its tantalising character, to give an insight into the structure of human society and the world outside. We tried to make an analysis of the *adhibhuta* in the scientific and the *Samkhya* fashion. This analysis was not fully satisfying, because it led us to a maze through which we could go no further. Then we turned inward to the *adhyatma*, and the internal analysis revealed a greater truth than the outer could offer. We came to the conclusion that our essential nature is different from that which we think ourselves to be. The analysis finally resolved itself to the decision that our true nature is one of pure awareness—free from the shackles of the mind, senses and body.

Then we had the necessity to analyse further the relation between the *adhibhuta* and the *adhyatma*—the subject and the object. In this analysis we had to go into a little more detail concerning the nature of perception. This revealed that the perceptual process is ultimately conscious. Perception is not the work of light rays or the eyeballs or even the mind as an external psychological instrument. We found that consciousness is immanent in the seer, in the process of seeing, as well as in the object that is seen. These three aspects of the perceptual seemed to be faces of a single consciousness which could not be divided into parts. We seem to be moving deeper into a great sea of awareness in which we found that an infinite consciousness underlies all apparent relationships. Though there are many terms of a universal relation, the major terms are discovered to be *adhibhuta*, *adhyatma* and *adhidaiva*. These are the three points of the triangle of the universal structure, as we saw, or we may say the three links in a circular chain, or three faces of a single experience—the above, the outward and the inward—all which seem to be pervaded by an undivided and infinite Being which is at once awareness and freedom. Such is the basis of our nature and the world outside as well as the explanation of the relation between the two. This should be your meditation and your attempt at fixing the mind, and in this attempt you have to see that the mind does not move outside. This is essential, because it is futile to think of the many. The multitude in you and the variety of the world have been resolved into the threefold complex of *adhibhuta*, *adhyatma* and *adhidaiva*—beyond which and outside which there can be nothing. If you can concentrate your minds on these resolved fundamentals, you will be able to see what your weaknesses are.



## MEDITATION

You should attempt to sit for a few minutes, close the eyes and contemplate your true position. When you deeply concentrate the mind on this state which you have arrived at now through analysis, you will find a change will supervene in your mind and in your internal structure. If your concentration is good enough, you may experience some motion in the body—a tremor or a jerk that you may feel. The jerk that you feel is due to the intensity of concentration. The *pranas* which have been accustomed to move within the body are now told to work a little further, so they become shaken up. When you come out of this state of concentration, you will come out with a feeling of strength, a feeling of freedom and a joy which will fill you inside and outside. You will feel as if you have drunk tasteful honey which energises the whole system like a tonic that has been injected into your body, and you will not be able to explain what you actually feel.

Chant OM ten times, with a deep sonorous tone. Don't think anything. Don't think of the breath. Let the breath take care of itself and try to move the mind through these processes with which you have concluded the interrelatedness of conscious being. Sit silently for fifteen minutes, and when the silent meditation is finished, chant OM for fifteen minutes, and then following that, sit silently for one more minute.

You should make a note in your books of what thoughts occurred to your minds during these minutes. How many thoughts: one, two, three, four, five... You can open a separate page for this: "Thoughts That Occurred During Meditation." Another time when you sit, you can verify if the same thoughts occur or some other thoughts are coming, and whether the thoughts have diminished in number or increased for any reason. If thoughts have occurred other than the thoughts with which you started meditation, you should keep a watch over these thoughts. The thoughts that occur to you in your meditation are your desires. This is a very good way for finding out what desires you have. In ordinary activity you cannot know your desires, because you are drawn into activities of various kinds. There are many people, many things and many attractions to which the desires can be directed, but now you have closed your avenues of outer perception and activity, so the desires can feed themselves without any objects outside. Every day before you go to bed, you should sit for a few minutes and deeply try to feel these feelings that you have tried to entertain just now.

'Daily' is very important—not 'occasionally'. Before retiring to bed the last thoughts should be these and no other, and when you get up from the bed, the first few thoughts should be these and no other. These few thoughts will charge your body like a battery and will enable you to get on with your day without repercussions of any kind. It is a difficult task, but you will succeed. You will have the strength to bear the circumstances of life which confront you, but also gradually you will find that the atmosphere around you will change according to the change that you have undergone within. The world outside will not be the same that it was sometime back. This change outside you will take place to your own surprise.

People will start speaking to you in a different way altogether. Things will have a different attitude towards you without your knowing why it is happening. To your own surprise and marvel you will see that things are slowly changing their attitude towards you. Even those who disliked you may begin to like you. Things which started gravitating away from you may gravitate towards you. It is difficult to explain what

changes will take place, but it is enough if I say it will be to your surprise.

However, you should not expect changes outside immediately, as that would be another desire which would enter into your heart. The consequences automatically follow, but you should not meditate for the sake of the consequences. This is also very important to remember. You should not sit for meditation with an expectation of the results that may follow. They may follow or they may not follow, but you should not concern yourself with them. I am just mentioning that they will follow and must follow, but your thoughts should be concerned with the causes and not the effects.

Go to the cause and manipulate the cause. Tap the source and don't go to the externals. The externals which are connected to the source will revolve automatically according to your manipulation of the source. In these few minutes of concentration, you would have observed that it is a real task to bring the mind to these restricted areas of thinking. You have not been asked to concentrate on any one point. To concentrate on one thought is a still greater difficulty.

My suggestion was to revolve the mind over a few thoughts of the interconnectedness of things, or the relation of the *adhibhuta* with the *adhyatma* and the *adhidaiva*, and the immanence of consciousness in all these three. To rotate the mind over these thoughts in a restricted area should be the beginning of your attempt at meditation. The higher stages would be a further restriction of thought where you will have no movement of thought. You have only tried to limit your thoughts from the many to the few. The few thoughts will energise the body and your whole personality. Practise this concentration of your consciousness along the lines you have studied these few days; and if you have taken note of the thoughts that occur to your minds during these lessons, boil them down to a few thoughts alone for the sake of concentration of mind to see what they actually and fundamentally mean. These fundamental thoughts should become the object of your concentration because they include and imply everything that is external. Make these the object of your meditation

The world will cease to torment you, and slowly it will become your friend. The annoying world should be made an object for your meditation in this manner, and it will not annoy you further. A dog may usually bark at you, but when you pat it on the head it may actually start licking your feet. The world will cease to bark at you and will start licking your feet when you handle it properly in these ways, with these methods of connecting yourself with the world. The world barks because you have not been able to relate yourself to it properly. The dog does not bark at its master—it barks at a stranger.

Why should you be a stranger to this world? Be friendly with the world, and it will befriend you. This is certain. This is a metaphysical and spiritual truth. Let these thoughts be your subject for meditation for a few days—daily before retiring to bed and daily after getting up from bed. You will know the change within yourself if you dispassionately and sincerely resort to this type of meditation. It should be taken seriously and in right earnest and in the proper way that I have suggested to you. You will see the marvel working, the wonder taking place, and you will not seek anything else after having sought this.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### POSSESSING NOTHING

You will have to follow these processes very carefully, stage by stage, and it is essential that you should not miss the link or the argument—otherwise you will not be able to do anything. The thoughts have to be trained in a very comprehensive manner. No link can be missed, else there will be a difficulty in concentration of the mind. You should try to close your eyes and think over the series of thoughts which we have gone through previously, otherwise you will forget the earliest ones and remember only the later ones.

You are going to build up your lives with these lessons and not merely learn something and leave. It is very important to remember—you are not doing this just to learn something, but to transform your lives. Unless these thoughts enter your lives, they will not help you. Hence, it is necessary to think deeply over every aspect of the question, and see that everything is clear—clear as daylight. If any thought cannot be assimilated into your life, it means that you have not understood it and traced it out. A problem should not remain a problem for all times—it should be resolved.

We have discovered that there are three faces of an experience, and it is an erroneous notion to conclude that an experience is only unilateral. Most people who are uneducated and illiterate in this true spirit think that all difficulties come from outside. They think, “All my troubles are from others, not from me. The world is the source of trouble for me.” This is a primitive way of thinking. “The world goes on changing, irrespective of my suffering. The world does not seem to care for me. The history of nations, the change of the world, the seasons, society—all these seem to be unconcerned with me,” is a complaint of the observer of the world. This is the first stage of thinking, the most rudimentary form of it. “All that happens, happens only in the world, and nothing happens in me.” This again is the *adhibhuta* view of things, bereft of any connection with the *adhyatma*.

The fact that we are also somehow involved in the changes of the world is a later stage of thinking. It is not true that all change is only outside. In a higher way of thinking, there also seems to be some corresponding change in us. The person may realise, “I am not as unconnected with things as I thought myself to be. Somehow there seems to be some relation of mine, some contribution of mine to the changes—historical as well as social—in the world.” A still higher way of thinking is that the changes are accounted for not merely by outside forces or our own actions, but that there is something else also present, which is the divine element. This is the *adhidaiva* about which we have already spoken.

From the outside we come to the inside, then we go to another element which seems to be comprehending both the without and the within. That third element has a voice in everything that happens in the world. We cannot simply brush it aside as non-existent or unconnected to events that take place in the world. Unconnected with it, unrelated to it, or without reference to it, nothing can be done and nothing can happen. Our thought ascends through stages, beginning with the purely external—which we may call the materialistic view of things—to the internal psychological or the idealistic view of things. Then it proceeds to a superior synthesised view of things, to which it is difficult to give

any appropriate name at the present moment. It is not realism and it is not idealism—it is something more than both. This third aspect is invisible, though in a sense more real than both the visible terms related in perception and experience.

Unfortunately for us the invisible seems to be the reality. The reality is not visible, and the visible is not the whole reality. It is this third element which is so important and which superintends the 'I and the Thou', the subject and the object. We arrived at this conclusion by a very careful analysis of the nature of the perception of the object, through which we discovered that there is a connecting conscious link between the seer and the seen which is superior to both—transcending them and yet immanent in them. The *adhidaiva* is transcendent to the *adhibhuta* and the *adhyatma* and yet immanent in both. This is why we are often told that God is both transcendent and immanent. He is 'above' and also 'in'.

The God element, the celestial element, the *adhidaiva* element—or any other gradation of our concept of God—is the presiding principle over the experiences of the subject and the object and is transcendent and immanent simultaneously. It is the connecting link between the seer and the seen. The conflict between the two, seer and seen, is resolved only by the third element. We are always in a state of conflict between ourselves and the world outside, and it cannot be resolved by any method we can employ, except by the introduction of a third thing—the unseen and yet more real.

#### **THE WORLD NEEDS UNDERSTANDING AND NOT CORRECTION**

People in the world are not aware that there is a third element involved in experience, because the third element is not seen. We believe only what we can see. This is most unfortunate, because our troubles can be attributed only to this ignorance, which is an ignorance of the fact of a superior element involved in experience. What do we then do in our ignorance? We try to resolve this conflict in our own way, without reference to this third invisible element. There is for us no question of the third element, because we do not know that it exists at all, and yet we feel the conflict is present when "the shoe pinches", as they say. The world is painful, it is annoying, and it is difficult to get on with things because of an irreconcilable dualism between ourselves and the world outside. We do not know what to do with this world in front of us. It sometimes looks so rigid, so annoying and so unreasonable.

We employ our own individualised methods of adjusting, adapting and reconciling, but all these fail in the end. How long can we go on adapting? The world goes on changing so vehemently that we are not in a position to adjust ourselves properly with it. We think that we can adjust ourselves to it in one condition today, but then in a moment it changes so that we have to work to adapt ourselves to its vicissitudes. This is indeed very unfortunate, and we cannot understand where we really stand. We try many methods. Politicians try to restore unity in the world by some kind of external adjustments, but they too have failed. We have had very great statesmen down through history, yet they did not succeed. They were wiser than those that exist today, but despite all their efforts they are now all gone, and today we may not even remember them. The world is the same old thing in spite of all the great men that trod the earth.

We try many forms of social adjustment. We try methods of social uplift and innovations of various kinds—in the family, in the economy and in other types of social relations. In

every type of concern we try to bring some kind of adjustment and harmony into society, so that the world may become better than it was. We have failed, and I don't know if anyone has ever fully succeeded to his satisfaction in improving the world. Everyone has failed. Why should it be so? Why should the world be so intractable and unavailable to any kind of human approach?

We see the world today—is it better than two thousand years ago? Sometimes it looks worse. Why should it be like this? Because we have employed innumerable methods in an attempt to correct the world, but the world does not stand in need of correction. The world needs understanding and not correction. The world needs understanding minds, not minds that try to conquer the world or rectify it. “What is wrong with me,” the world will retort. “Why do you want to correct me?” The world has less egoism than the human mind, and it is only where the ego is present that rectification may be called for. Do we see ego in the wind? Do we see ego in the rivers that flow, ego in the sun that shines, or ego in the seasons? We don't see egoism in nature. Egoism is only present in mankind, who is forever complaining.

What kind of correction do we want to make in this egoless poor thing called nature? What is wrong with the world? All attempts at reform have failed—the human approach, the sociological approach, the political approach and the commercial approach—because of our artificial ways of understanding the world or nature, and because we are totally unaware of the true remedy. We cannot jump into the world and correct it; that would be impossible. We have to correct it through a higher power. That which transcends us and the world can alone correct the world. What power do we have when we are ourselves a part of the world? Being a part of the world we cannot have the power to correct the world, because that which belongs to the world has all the characteristics of the world which is to be corrected. In this case, the defective element tries to remove the defect. The individual is defective in the sense that the individual cannot stand apart from a nature already supposed to be defective. Who then is to correct nature, unless it is a power and an understanding superior to the whole of nature in its completeness?

We cannot set right anything in this world. So it is that human approaches fail in every field of life. Every man dies with a sense of remorse. When people pass away from this world, they go rigid and discontented. “Oh, it is all hopeless; I have made a mistake.” This we will realise, and this everyone has to realise. The day of realisation may come too late when nothing else can be done. Everyone leaves this world with a discontented heart, because everyone muddles with things in a confused manner and with a lack of proper understanding of things.

It is for this reason that we are so afraid of death. We do not know what happens to us once death comes. Suddenly we are strangers to this world, carried on by a power of which we have no knowledge. We have lived in discontent, and we die in discontent. What is the good of living like this? Sometimes it seems that trees and plants are better off than us. Man is so miserable, and it is high time that a remedy be sought to deal with this illness of man's mind which has always been regarded as something superior to the animal and vegetable kingdoms, but which passed away in a condition more unfortunate than the animal kingdom. All this is because we have floundered and made a mess of our lives in this relation to the world outside. We have tried to take the law into our own hands, and here it is that we have committed a mistake. We should not take the law into

our own hands. The simple truth to remember is that we cannot administer this law to the world. The *adhyatma* cannot rectify the *adhibhuta* in its physical and psychological sense. Man cannot do anything to the world, because the world keeps him in its grips. Man is in the grip of the material laws; hence it is that man has failed in understanding the world and in controlling nature.

### **YOGA IS KNOWING THINGS AS THE ADHIDAIVA WOULD KNOW THINGS**

The only way to approach it is through a proper method. That which understands nature is also that which has power over nature. The purpose of the human being should not be to tackle nature, but rather to probe into that force which can manipulate nature with an authority superior to the powers of nature itself. All this comes through a simple truth which we have to remember: we cannot do anything unless we approach the world through the *adhidaiva*. We have tried to control, understand and utilise nature, but it has not come under our control even till this day. We have tried to contact nature for the sake of utilising it, but our contacts have been futile, so we have not been able to harness it properly. How then do we contact nature: through the eyes, the ears, through the sense organs, through the hands, through the feet and through these external avenues of sensation.

Yoga, on the other hand, has a quite different method of contact. If I were to be asked what yoga is, I could put it into one sentence: "It is knowing things as the *adhidaiva* would know things." This is not a knowing as a man would know. The *adhidaiva* has a consciousness of the *adhibhuta* and the *adhyatma* which is quite different in nature and structure from the knowledge that the *adhyatma* had, independently of the *adhibhuta*. Yoga is the diving into that consciousness which acts as the connecting link between the *adhibhuta* and the *adhyatma*.

*Bhoga* is enjoyment and yoga is realisation. We try to enjoy nature rather than to understand or realise it. The enjoyment is known to lead to complications and sufferings later on because of a wrong approach to things. We cannot approach nature by any intelligent method. Our personality is made up of many layers to which I have already made reference—the physical, the vital, the mental, the intellectual and so on. These layers of our personality try to contact nature outside, and we try to grab the world and enjoy it as an object, if possible. The subject can come in contact with an object by means of the sense organs, and there seems to be no other way to accomplish this contact.

We have the five senses of knowledge, and with these alone we can contact the world and enjoy it. If these are defective, there will be no enjoyment and no knowledge of nature outside. We could not possess anything permanently with the sense organs, so therefore we inevitably find this method unsatisfying. Nature has refused to be possessed by means of the powers of sense. We cannot possess anything permanently, and things that appear to be ours today belong to someone else tomorrow. Union ends in separation, life ends in death, all happiness ends in a kind of sorrow—this has been our experience.

Why should it be like this? It is because it is impossible for nature to be possessed through the sense organs. We cannot possess our wealth, we cannot possess our family members, we cannot possess objects of the world, and we cannot be truly related to

anything, because our relationships with things have been through the sense organs, which are a part of nature. We try to have physical contact with things, and this we regard as 'possession'. If something is tightly held in the palm of my hand, I may think that it is in my possession, but this is not so. That which is in the grip of our fists need not be ours. It can flee from us in spite of its being our nearest possession from the physical point of view. Physical proximity of things is not possession, and things can exclude each other even if they are physically proximate.

We may be sitting on the lap of some person, and yet we are independent, and we cannot be controlled by that person. Just because there is physical proximity, it does not mean that we belong to somebody or that somebody belongs to us. This applies to everything in the world, including wealth, relations, position, occupation, etc. All these are physical and spatial relations. Sometimes it appears that there is no real friend in this world. Because of this mysterious aloofness of things from us, whatever our condition may be, we seem to not know what life is. We have been gazing wonderstruck, trying to understand a little bit of what this life means and why it should be so unkind to us. Nature has been insisting that it be understood—that is all. Nature craves to be understood, and if we refuse to understand it, then it appears to be unkind.

We are familiar with law. How can a law be a friend of anyone or an enemy of anyone? Law is an impersonally existent symbol of the relationship of things. If we abide by this impersonal law, we may say that law is friendly, but if we cannot understand the law, it may appear to be very unkind. We cannot therefore designate law as either this or that. Nature is a set of laws, and to be or not be a friend of nature depends to what extent we have understood nature and its laws that are inexorably operating both in us and outside us.

We can never understand nature or the world outside through the sense organs, because as I have already mentioned many times, the sense organs are physically related to the world outside. Earlier I tried to say that the sense powers are conveyed outside through the sense organs. The organs are physical. How can we grasp a thing unless with the hand, and what is the hand if not a physical object? Grasping, which is our idea of possessing, is a physical contact but is not a real relationship with things. So enjoyments, which are nothing but the placement of one object in physical proximity with another object, are not real enjoyments. We cannot really enjoy anything in this world.

### **OUR SO-CALLED ENJOYMENT**

We are living in a fool's paradise. Our so-called enjoyment has been merely a kind of titillation of the nerves and the sense organs—"a scratching of what itches us", as it is sometimes said. When the nerves are tickled, it looks as if we are enjoying something, but it is not enjoyment. We are mistaken thoroughly, because after the tickling of the nerves, there is a fall of the strength of the nerves and we feel worse than we were before. After enjoyment, whatever be the nature of the enjoyment, we feel more miserable than before the enjoyment came. We want to cling more and more, so we want more and more repetitions of the same kind of enjoyment—the same contacts, same possessions, same quantity, same songs, etc.

We are under the erroneous notion that the repetition of the tickling of the nerves would

be enjoyable, but the nerves will get exhausted by being tickled constantly, and they will go on reacting for some time after they cease their contact with the object. However, we inevitably become old. Old age supervenes and the nerves refuse to react with the same intensity as before, and we cannot enjoy as we did earlier. In fact we did not enjoy even earlier except for the fact that we tickled these nerves in order to create a sensation in the whole system. When we are tickled, we feel happiness.

The whole of our lives has been an attempt to repeat the tickling of these nerves which connect themselves with the different sense organs. We have been mistaking this for real enjoyment, but we have never been satisfied with these enjoyments. We have never been satisfied, because we have never really enjoyed anything—we have been only tantalised. We have only been shown something but never given that thing. The nerves have been fooled, and the sense organs have never understood anything. The mind plays second fiddle to the senses and the organs, and we have been living this kind of foolish life. Yet, we try to understand nature and be happy in this world. Impossible!

This was the deep analysis of the psychology of yoga. Where comes the need of yoga? The need comes because we never live happily without it. Lacking it we will be miserable, so there is no choice. For yoga or against yoga, do or don't, want it or don't want it—there is no such question. We can never live without it. Either we have it, or we live miserably. Yoga is the way of the wise life, the understanding life, the life of the insight into the nature of things. Who can live without it? How can there be life without yoga then? There is no such thing as life without yoga. Life is either lived with it, or life is as if a nothing. People in their credulity have been trying the way without the practice of yoga, and we know where they stand, and most of us are in the same condition.

The yoga analysis discovered that the contact of the seer with the seen—the subject with the object, the *adhyatma* with the *adhibhuta*, my personality with the world outside—has been a thoroughly unsatisfactory and artificial one. We have never been able to contact the world properly. We have never been able to possess anything truly, and we have been only deceived from the very time of our birth. The world has deceived all people who have come to into it. Everyone has been living a foolish life, but they discovered this only when they had to depart from this world. That it is difficult for one person to learn from the wisdom of someone else is another interesting thing in life. We will have to pass through this learning process ourselves, and we will have to realise it ourselves ultimately. “Oh, I am sorry, I made a mistake, I never listened to the advice of that person.” This would be the lament of everyone, without exception.

There is no escape in these matters except through wisdom, understanding and honesty of purpose. The *yogin*, the student of yoga, is a tremendously honest person and one hundred percent sincere in the pursuit. The yoga student is a person who has realised their position properly. “Oh, how miserable it is if I don't have it. The world cannot in fact be grabbed, the world cannot be possessed, and the world cannot be enjoyed.” All our misbegotten plans have been revealed in one minute. We cannot be happy in this world if we are going to employ the same old erroneous ways of contacting nature. This will not succeed. The vast nature outside is shrewd enough to escape our grasp.

The only way is the yoga way, which means to say the way of directly contacting the lower by means of the higher. We and the world outside are on par with one another, and we are living in the same degree of truth, because both of us are equal. The lower



cannot contact that which is at its same level, when the two exist in a similar degree of reality. For example, there are certain husbands and wives who are equally educated, and one will not yield to the other, so the family is unhappy. If some chore needs to be done, who is to do it if both are equally educated? So there is an unhappy tension in some families which have similarly educated partners. To further extend this example, if we consider ourselves to be educated, nature may say, "I am equally educated. Who is there to control me? You want to harness me, but I will harness you!" How can we feel that we will master nature and then try to use it? Why shouldn't nature use us in the same way? In what way are we superior to it? We should not try to fool nature like this. Other persons have been fooled in this way, but nature has never been fooled.

### **UTILISING THE HIGHER MEANS**

Hence, to understand the world and live in the world is to utilise the higher means rather than our own hands and feet. We know the epic example of Draupadi's asking for succor from Sri Krishna when she was in dire distress. This example is a symbol of man's seeking a higher power for success in life. Husbands are of no use. All failed, and Draupadi's strength by itself failed. What help can we have in this world? Not from those who are related to us, not from those who are sympathetic towards us, and not from that which belongs to us. When everything fails, who will help us? Something else has to come which has neither friend nor foe. Friends and foes may take time, but that which is neither a friend nor foe has no necessity for time to come to protect us, and so will come at once to our aid. Immediately and instantaneous is His action. Such is also the power and the joy that we derive through the practice of yoga. It is not temporal succession—it is instantaneous immediacy. We will not be given it afterwards or tomorrow, but now, at this very moment. There is no future for reality, because it is non-temporal. Hence, the yogic approach is very unique, and that is why I said that we have to understand this very carefully and totally.

We can apply these techniques every day in our lives—not tomorrow, but today itself. We can apply this technique even in the smallest of things and not only in the big thing that we call contact with God. We can attain real sympathy from the world outside even in our smallest contacts. Have we understood this technique? It is this technique that we can employ uniformly in every situation. We can be like the cat in the story that knew only one way of escape. The story goes that there was a conversation between a jackal and a cat in the jungle. The jackal asked the cat, "If a hunter attacks us just now, what will you do?" The cat said, "I will jump to the top of a tree." The jackal replied, "Do you know only one trick? What a fool. I know a hundred tricks to escape. Nobody can catch me. I know a hundred tricks when you only know one trick." While this conversation was taking place, they heard the barking of hounds attacking them from all sides. The cat immediately jumped to the top of a tree, but the jackal was thinking, "What trick should I use now? Which is better, this trick, that trick, or the third, fourth, or fifth?" The jackal spent a long time revolving these ideas around in its mind, but before it could act the hounds attacked it. In the final analysis, it was certainly not wiser than the cat.

Likewise, we have been trying to be 'wise' in this world, but too much of this wisdom is not necessary. We have to employ a simple technique of being honest in every encounter. That is all. When we are honest with nature, it also reacts very sympathetically, like a mother's reaction to a child. We see that a mother's reaction

towards her child is not complicated. It is very simple, as we know, and immediately there is a happiness between them. But if two politicians meet, what a complexity arises. How to shake hands, how to smile, how to look—they are all great skills. All these are absent in the simple affection between mother and child because it is real, whereas the friendship of politicians is false. This type of artificial relationship never stands; it eventually fails. Nature does not expect us to be a politician with it. It wants us to be very simple in our approach. Nature wants us to be very simple—not complicated or complex.

The simple way of the child's approach to the mother is itself yoga. It is not a very difficult technique; we should not be afraid of it. Yoga requires a very, very honest approach and an opening of our hearts to the 'motherliness' of nature. If we cry before nature, "Mother, I am yours," it will open its resources to us immediately. "Yes my child, please come to me." But to be simple is the most difficult of things in this world. We can very easily make things complex, but we cannot be simple. Truth is simple, and that is why simplicity is difficult. Yoga is this supreme simplicity of approach, where we become so humble and so uncomplicated—almost a nothing.

This is what they call self-surrender in the *bhakti marga*, the path of devotion. We almost become a nothing; and then nature inundates us, takes possession of us and fondles us as her own. We become one with the world when we cease to be an independent person. This is yoga in one sense, but we have many layers of complicated personality, and these complications have to be resolved. It is for this reason that we study these interesting technicalities of yoga practice. It appears to be a technicality because we do not understand it properly, but when we understand it, it becomes a natural thing.

To walk with two legs is a tremendous technicality; but once we know how to walk, we walk without thinking of our legs. How many times did we fall before we learned how to walk? We know very well how difficult it was. To walk across a tightrope in the circus involves a greatly complicated technique, but for one who knows it, it is simple. Everything is difficult when it is not understood. When it becomes a part of our nature, we just do it without thinking of it. Likewise is the process of yoga.

Our attempt to contact nature through the sense organs is therefore a failure, because nature lies outside the sense organs. Anything that is wholly outside cannot be intrinsically related to us. Our relationship with the world has been extrinsic and not intrinsic. It has been external and not internal, which means to say there has not been a true relationship with nature. We should then not try to contact the world with our sense organs—we will not succeed.

Hence, enjoyment is not the way of wisdom; yoga is the way. Yoga does not mean a kind of asceticism or a withdrawal or relinquishment of the normal life of the world. Again, this misunderstanding has to be removed. Yoga is not withdrawal. From where would we withdraw, and into what? Try to understand the implications of the studies we made earlier. In yoga we are not withdrawing into anything—we are only rising into something higher.

#### **SUBLIMATING THE WITHIN AND WITHOUT INTO THE HIGHER**

The 'without' and the 'within' have both to be sublimated into the higher. This is what

we do in yoga. Where is the withdrawal? It may be a withdrawal, if we regard withdrawal as a comprehending of the outside and the inside in something which is above and including both these two. This cannot be normally called a withdrawal. We become fuller and more complete in the consciousness of yoga, because here we simultaneously grasp both our being and the being of the object instead of trying forcibly and erroneously to possess a thing which does not really belong to us. We cannot think of possessing anything in this world, because the world does not belong to us. If we think that the world is our possession, the world also can think that we are its possession! Both are equally applicable, if we employ this law of possession. But if we go to the third element of an encompassing consciousness, which is transcending and including both, then there will be a unification of the two children under a single parent, as it were. It is like two legs walking systematically under the order of a single personality or like two eyes working together in seeing. They harmoniously work together in seeing an object.

Likewise, in the yoga consciousness, the external world and the internal subject come into a symmetrical union. Here one is not controlling the other, and one is not trying to possess the other. Inasmuch as there is no attempt at possession, it is real union. Possession is different from union, and union is different from possession. People unnecessarily and falsely try to possess, although they cannot really come into union with these things. That is why there is bereavement and separation. The method of yoga is the systematic art of the rousing of the lower consciousness to the higher in a comprehension of both—the outer and the inner. This process involves several stages of ascent.

Whatever be the stage in which we are, that stage has to be properly understood through analysis, and then alone will it be possible for us to rise to the higher level. We should not try to go to the higher without understanding the lower. The lower will have to pay its due before we try to go to the higher. Because the lower is included in the higher, the higher will demand our proper relationship with the lower. We should not imagine that the higher would suddenly come to help us. As Christ said, “Render unto Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s.” We cannot merely run to God with the notion that we can despise the world and be a friend of God, because God is in the world also, and He will try to contact us in His immediacy rather than in His transcendence.

The world is not outside reality, because the reality is that which comprehends both—the world and us together. That which is real is that which includes the subject and the object, and this is true at every level of reality and in every grade of truth. There is then no abandoning the world or escaping from life and running away. It is impossible; to where can we run away? We are in the world wherever we go. If at all we can escape, the escape should be to the higher, and not merely to some corner of the lower. Yoga then is a very cautious manipulation of consciousness, subtle in its articulation and spontaneous and joyous when it is made a part of our lives.

In every step that we take in yoga, we as living personalities are involved, and not just our bodies or sense organs. By manipulating the body alone, the objects or our possessions alone, or the *prana*, the senses, the mind alone, independently, yoga cannot be achieved. As a complete personality we should be engaged in yoga. We are inclusive of all the relations that seem to belong to us—our family, our relationships, our servants,

our entanglements—all are involved in our yoga. We cannot say, “Let the entanglements be there; goodbye to them, I shall practise yoga inside my room.” Entanglements are with us, and they cannot leave us. In yoga, our entanglements also have to be sublimated, as the world is a part of our yoga. We cannot kick the world outside and say that we will be separate from it. Our world is with us, and it will not leave us at any time.

### **YOGA IS A COMPREHENSIVE STOCKTAKING**

The sublimation that is attempted in yoga is a comprehensive stocktaking by our consciousness, in which no relationships are excluded. Yoga is based on an attention to every one of them. We have to take stock of our relationships therefore, which means to say our desires and our commitments. If we have commitments, we cannot be a *yogin*. We must fulfil those commitments first or find out a way of putting an end to them in an effective manner—then only can we take to yoga. Else, they will be there as ungerminated seeds, and they will germinate one day. We must take stock of all our longings and unfulfilled ambitions. We may sometimes even have a desire to become an emperor or a president. Well, this may be laughable that one should aspire to be that which one cannot realise in one’s life, but sometimes these ideas come to one’s mind. There was a Brahmin, says the Yoga Vasishtha, who saw the procession of a king, and an idea passed through his mind, “How happy is this king. If only I had been him!” With this idea he died and became a king in the next birth, because even passing thoughts produce an impression in the mind.

There are no such things as passing thoughts. We cannot say that a thought is unimportant if it is there. Even these passing thoughts that might occur to us must be taken note of properly. For or against, good or bad, pleasurable or otherwise, friendly or acrimonious—whatever they are, we should take stock of them. “What are my subtle entanglements?” Nobody else can know this; only we ourselves can know it. We have some subtle entanglements which the public cannot know. We may know them ourselves, but we cannot express them to the outside world for fear of censure.

We can however have our own private diary. If we are afraid that this diary will be seen by other people, we can then note down the weaknesses in code which we alone can understand. We may be afraid, “How can I write it in a diary? Somebody may see it,” but it is for our own good. Our weaknesses can be written in a code which we alone understand. Everyone has subtle entanglements in the world. They are subtle in the sense that they cannot be publicised; they are secret longings of the heart which the world has refused to fulfil. These longings have to be dealt with properly if our yoga is to succeed; otherwise we will be simply nowhere. These longings are like our children, and they have to be properly reared and educated and treated with consideration.

The first thing therefore in yoga is to take stock of the entanglements of our personality. There is a twofold conflict in our nature. One is purely psychological, and the other is factual. There are many difficult Sanskrit terms to designate all this, but we shall try to avoid them to save the bother of remembering them all. There is a psychological conflict and a factual conflict. The factual conflict is that which occurs between us and nature. A factual conflict occurs if we cannot reconcile ourselves with the world outside. The mountain, which is an object of our perception, cannot be intelligibly related to us, and there is a conflict between us and the mountain which is an object outside of us. This is a natural or a factual conflict, as we may call it. The conflict between the object and the

subject in a metaphysical sense is one as well.

Then there are psychological conflicts; for example, the conflict between our desire and its fulfilment. Not all of our desires can be fulfilled, so there is a conflict between our desires and the possibility of their fulfilment. This is a psychological conflict. From the psychological conflict we have to go to the factual conflict, which is the higher reach of yoga. The lower one is studied in abnormal psychology, and the higher one usually in general psychology. So again, we go from the lower to the higher.

Everybody is 'abnormal' in the sense that there is a psychological conflict in everybody's mind. A stocktaking of these psychological entanglements has to be done in a very dispassionate manner. We should not try to hide ourselves from ourselves. Though we may hide ourselves to others, we must be open to our own selves at least. If we are not open to ourselves, we alone are going to suffer—nobody else. With this analysis of the relationships which our mind has with outer life, we will have taken one step along the path of yoga. The resolution of psychological conflict is the purpose of the psychoanalysis and psychology of the West, and I have already mentioned how yoga differs from psychoanalysis. Though we may try to resolve the conflict between the desire and its fulfilment, even if we succeed in this we will have a higher conflict between us and the world outside. The resolution of this higher conflict is the object of the psychology of yoga.

## CHAPTER NINE

### THE IGNORANCE OF THE MIND

If a powerful wind blows over a lake and there is a cyclone and tempest, there cannot be any proper reflection of light on the surface of the water, and it becomes worse when the water is muddy. Muddy water shaken up violently cannot adequately reflect the true position of an object, even if the object were very near the surface of the water. If the sun is shining in the sky, and yet the winds are strong and the waters are disturbed, the reflection of the sun cannot be seen properly. Through the power of the light of the sun an observer would note that there is something shining, though one could not easily see what it is that is shining.

Likewise is the process of perception. It involves only a faint hint as to the presence of some light existing somewhere, without which perception would be impossible, but at the same time we cannot see this light which we conclude must be there. A little brightness which seems to be visible on the surface of the water makes us feel that there should be something bright which is reflected in these waters. Yet, we cannot actually see it because of the disturbance on the surface of the water.

In the process of perception, recollection and inference we may come to know that there should be a light, a consciousness and an intelligence behind the process of perception, inference, etc. That we are aware of the world outside is enough proof that there is such a thing called awareness. But we are more conscious of the world than of this awareness, in spite of our concluding that without awareness there could be no cognisance of the world. Awareness is first and the world appears afterwards, but the winds on the surface of perception are so strong and the surface seems to be so turbid that we are able to see only the shaky surface and not the light that is shining through the surface.

We can see our bodies and we can see the objects outside, though it goes without saying that we can neither know ourselves nor others without there being an intelligence relating ourselves to the objects. That which is the very presupposition of all perception and knowledge is hidden beneath the processes of perception. That which is hidden as the being is never an object of our consciousness. Consciousness is so swallowed up in the objects that we appear to be lodged in a physical world of physical objects and located within a physical body. The subjective awareness has practically died in our lives, and we live in bodies more than in intelligence or consciousness. Something seems to be happening which disturbs our being conscious of that which underlies the process of perception.

I mentioned earlier a word called '*vritti*' in connection with an awareness of perception. A *vritti* is a mood of the mind, a modification of the mind, a way in which the mind tries to connect itself with an object—a movement of the mind towards an object. A *vritti* therefore is a transformation, a change and disturbance on the surface of consciousness. A *vritti* has the capacity to mould itself into the form of an object in perception, and it becomes so identified with the form that we cannot know which is the mind and which is the object.

## IDENTIFICATION OF THE MIND

This identification becomes intense both in extreme love and extreme hatred. In both cases the mind gets identified with the object beyond a certain limit, so that the mind loses itself in the object. The mind and the object become one for all practical purposes and we love a thing as our own selves, or we hate the opposite thing to the utmost. In both these extremes the mind lodges itself positively or negatively in the object with such an intensity that one cannot make a distinction between the mind and the object. In scriptures and yoga texts some analogies are given to explain how this identification takes place between the mind and the object. The example usually given is that when an iron ball is heated red-hot in a fire, the ball of iron is not longer visible at all—we see only a ball of fire. The ball of iron has become a ball of fire through the heat integrated into it, and if we touch the ball we would get burned. It is not the iron ball that burns; it is the fire in it that burns. The identification between the ball and the fire is such that we cannot distinguish the one from the other. For the time being there is no appearance of iron there at all, as it seems to be only fire. Yet we know that there is iron in it, and it is not merely fire. So is the mind's activity in love and hatred.

Intense love and hatred are such identifications where one cannot know whether there is an object separate from the mind and vice versa. It is just impossible to be without that object in the case of love or be with that object in the case of hatred. The mind can take such extreme shapes in rare occasions and identify itself positively or negatively with an object in this manner. The mind does not always go to extremes like this—the extreme steps of the mind are very rare because it is difficult to conceive of absolute love or absolute hatred. We have only ordinary love or ordinary hatred generally speaking, and in this process there is only a slight contact between the object and the mind, just as there is only a slight heating of the iron ball if the fire is weak.

The movement of the mind is like a wind that blows on the surface of the true consciousness within us. It is the *vritti* again. For all practical purposes we may say the mind's function is the same as a *vritti* of the mind. Yoga is concerned with *vrittis* very much, and sometimes yoga is defined as the control of the modifications of the *vrittis* of the mind. We will learn slowly as to why these modifications have to be controlled.

As I mentioned in the analogy, the winds disturb the water so much that the shaky surface will not allow a true reflection of the light. By an analytical process we have realised that our true nature is one of being and awareness, without which even perception of an object would be impossible. But it seems to be an irony that in spite of our logical deduction that we ought to be Being-Consciousness alone, it is the only thing which we cannot be conscious of. When we are conscious of many other things in the world which we do not seem to really be us, how is it that we cannot know our own selves and get lost in other things which do not reflect our true being?

This is the mystery of the mind. The mind not only prevents the awareness of our own self but also drags the consciousness out to the objects to which it is attracted. In Sanskrit these two processes are called *avarana* and *vikshepa*. *Avarana* means a covering or a veil over consciousness such that we cannot know that the consciousness is there. Due to this veil, we become incapable of knowing our true nature. This is the screening of the consciousness by the potentialities of the *vrittis* of the mind. These potentialities become thick and dark, and they are often referred to as the unconscious

level of our personality.

This unconscious mind is nothing but the unmanifested *vriddhis* which weigh heavily upon us like dark clouds covering the sun. It is not merely that these clouds cover the sun of light within us—a tempest is also created side by side. When there are thick clouds covering the sun, the wind also starts blowing. There is confusion all over—wind, cold, and everything. The darkness created by the thickness of the layer of the *vriddhis* prevents our being conscious of our true nature. Together with this, there is a violent passion for perception of what is not our own true nature, a positive viciousness of the mind that drags it away from itself to other objects. People who are silently sitting for months and months need not necessarily be good people; this may be a preparation for a storm. When the weather is gloomy, dusty, cloudy, and when no breeze blows, we may be sure that a tempest or a storm is going to break out. The torpidity of the mind is a preparation for violence of the mind.

*Avarana* becomes *vikshepa*. *Avarana* is covering and *vikshepa* is distraction of the mind towards an object. Perception is one kind of *vikshepa*. The very fact that the mind is eager to see things outside or hear sounds is indicative of its *vikshepa* or distractedness. All this is because primarily there is no awareness of its true nature. *Avarana* is the cause, and *vikshepa* is the effect. We forget ourselves first, and then we become aware of others. We cannot be aware of others unless we first forget ourselves. These two cause and effect processes take place almost simultaneously in us. We do not know when it is that we forget ourselves. We do not know when it is that we become aware of other things. To forget the Self and to become aware of the world is one and the same thing—it is a simultaneous act. *Avarana* and *vikshepa* take place then almost at the same time.

We cannot easily handle this inner layer of the potentiality of the *vriddhis* because of getting too involved in the process of perception and various other kinds of distraction. Nevertheless, we have to gradually disentangle the mind from its impetuous identifications with its objects. Yoga is nothing but awareness of the true nature of the Self. Worldly existence or samsara, the cycle of transmigratory life, is another name for this identification of consciousness with the functions of the *vriddhis* in relation to objects. The wind has to stop—only then can the surface of the waters be calm. As long as the winds blow, the waters will be shaking and getting split up in different directions.

### **THE TEMPESTUOUSNESS OF THE MIND**

Prior to the identification of the Self with itself, prior to the Self-establishment of consciousness, our purpose is to get a glimpse of it, a hint as to its very existence, and visualise at least its reflection through the *vriddhis*. We have to find it first of all and locate its whereabouts; only then can we think of getting attuned with it. Where is this Self or consciousness? We do not know where it is, so how can we search for it? To know its whereabouts, we must at least have some hint as to its existence. For example, we can know the existence of an object in its originality by locating its reflection in water. When we see something reflected, we know very well that there is something which is reflected. The first thing then is to visualise the reflection properly and then to go to the original.

The *vriddhis* of the mind are unceasingly active and prevent the establishment of



consciousness in itself, continuously throughout one's life, so that we can never at any moment be aware of our true nature. The *vruttis* are like a perpetual wind that blows without cessation, and they move in different directions, taking different shapes and intensities. The *vruttis* do not move towards objects like a uniform wind that blows. The *vruttis* blow like winds no doubt, but the winds take different directions of movement. One time they come from the right, another time from the left, and sometimes they start blowing from all directions. Sometimes they will move circularly, sometimes linearly, and so on. Many times they carry dust with them and many other things which blind our eyes, so that we can see nothing.

This is the tempestuousness of the working of the mind. The mind's movement, which is a *vrutti*, can be ordinary or special. When it is ordinary we call it distraction, which is the incapacity to concentrate, the absence of memory and so on. When it is intense we call it a passion—something that is uncontrolled. A *vrutti* gone out of control is called a passion, whereas a *vrutti* which is mild, of which we are aware, is a distraction or a vacillation. "I am very distracted," we sometimes say, which means that we are aware that we are disturbed. But when we are in a state of passion, we will not say, "I am in a state of passion," because we get lost in it so much that we cannot be different from the *vrutti* which has taken that form. Mild aberrations can be known, but intense aberrations cannot be known.

The mind has various intensities of self-identification with objects -sometimes it is slightly distracted, but sometimes it seems to be at a standstill without functions at all. Its condition of 'standstill-ness' is also a kind of *vrutti*. It is a potential preparation for movement in a particular direction. Sometimes it stands confounded without knowing what to do. In these three conditions of the *vrutti* the consciousness that is our true nature gets blurred completely, and whether we are in a state of confusion or in a state of preparedness for an action, or in a state of action, it makes no difference in the sense that we are not aware of ourselves at that time. Yoga is not possible when we are just in a state of preparation for action, or involved in a state of action, or in a confused state. When self-consciousness has been completely extinguished by the blowing of the 'winds' of the *vruttis*, any attempt at yoga is impossible.

We may be wondering how to still this violence of the mind. We will realise later on that in yoga we do not achieve anything special which is not already in us; we will merely become aware of what is already in us. Yoga is not a gaining of something that we do not have. It is only becoming aware of what we really have, or strictly speaking, what we really are. That we seem to be involved in what we are not is the mystery of the mind. As we analysed the mental situation previously, we came to know that our being, which is inseparable from consciousness, extends itself to infinitude because this consciousness is indivisible. We cannot cut our divine consciousness into parts. It seems to be extending itself out into a state of infinitude and eternity. Such a consciousness, which is implied in both the object and the subject, the *adhibhuta* and the *adhyatma*, is what we are not able to recollect, remember and be conscious of.

To recollect it, to remember it and to be conscious of it is our yoga, and the nearer we approach it through our minds, the more powerful we become, and also the happier we are. The more distant we are from the true nature of our being, the weaker we feel and the more disturbed we are in our lives. This is in terms of the theology of God-

realisation—we may call it by any name we like. The powers of yoga are nothing but the vibrations of the Self which the mind receives when it approximates more and more in nearness to the Self. The powers that truly sustain and support us do not come from outside, for we only become more powerful when we go nearer to our own inner selves. The further we are psychologically from ourselves, the weaker we are physically and mentally. The nearer we are psychologically to our own true nature, the stronger we are and also the happier we are. This is the secret of yoga.

What makes us be distant from ourselves, and what makes us aware of our true nature? It looks very strange indeed that we can be away from our own self, or that we can be identified with ourselves. How is it possible? What does it mean to be identified with one's own self, and what does it mean to be away from one's own self? Does it make any sense? How can you be away from yourself? No one can be in actual fact, but we can psychologically be away from ourselves. Truly we cannot be away from ourselves, but we can imagine ourselves to be something else other than what we are. This happens to us in dreams, for example. We cannot be away from ourselves truly, but yet we think ourselves to be something else in a dream. A king may think that he is a beggar. Sleeping in a bed in a room, a person may imagine that he has travelled thousands of miles. One who has gone to bed with a heavy meal may dream that he is intensely hungry or starved.

How all these things that are contrary to the facts are possible is explained by the phenomenon of the mind itself. The mind can construct situations which are contrary to reality and which create an imaginary problem. This imaginary problem, when continued for a long time, becomes a kind of truth. Often a lie which is uttered many times takes the form of truth. We go on telling a lie a thousand times, and then people imagine that it is a fact. Likewise is this work of the mind. It constructs an imaginary circumstance or environment around itself as it does in the analogy of the dream. The mind goes on doing it again and again for days, months and years together. It is a matter of lies and more lies, and we get habituated to this way of thinking and think it is the only thing possible and that there is nothing else.

The only thing that seems to exist for us is this world of objects. All the things that people talk of in terms of religion, philosophy and yoga seem like stories told to us which convey no proper significance, because we have become so accustomed to the erroneous ways of thinking for years and years together that this erroneous thinking has covered us like a thick cloud. To be away from oneself therefore is only thinking that one is different from what one really is. In a drama we may put on the garb of someone else, we may speak like another person and play that role completely. If we go on playing the same role day and night for years, perhaps we may become only that. It is like a king playing the role of a beggar in a drama for so long that he forgets his kingship and becomes a real beggar. Thought processes can solidify themselves as it were, and thoughts can become veritable objects.

### **THE HYPNOSIS INTO WHICH WE HAVE SUNK**

This is what has happened to us. Our bodies are nothing but a solidification of our thoughts—not one day's thought or two days' thought—but for years and years we have been thinking wrongly, and it has materialised itself in the form of this body. What we have thought has been responsible for the formation of this body and our relationships

with things outside. This is the entanglement and the hypnosis into which we have sunk. The work of yoga is the disentanglement and the de-hypnotisation of ourselves. For this the mind has to be weaned from its usual processes of thought.

We ought to undergo a thoroughgoing psychological analysis of our own self before any attempt at yoga can be done. If we are shrewd enough, we can do this ourselves; otherwise we will have to seek the help of a master. A good guide is very essential in yoga, because we cannot analyse our own minds. We never think that we are wrong, and under these circumstances a competent master or guru is essential. He only can know what is wrong with us. The processes of the mind, which are the *vrittis*, take a concrete shape in the form of perception and identification with the objects and make self-awareness impossible, and we are constantly in a state of anxiety, restlessness and unhappiness and even go to the extent of constantly being born and dying through the physical body. All this is the effect of the mind's identification with things—first psychologically, then physically.

Yoga is therefore a subdual of the mind, in the sense that self-consciousness in its true sense of universality would be impossible as long as the mind functions in its usual ways. The *vrittis* are the great obstacle in yoga. We cannot be aware of our true being as long as the *vrittis* function objectively or externally. When we are absorbed in a thought of another, how can we be aware of ourselves? To come to the dream analogy again, we are so much absorbed in a wrong perception of a so-called object in dream that we cannot know that there is such a thing called waking. As long as we are in the dream, which is the absorption of the mind in an imaginary set of objects, we cannot even be told that there is such a thing as the waking state.

Such is the identification of the mind with imaginary objects. Whatever be the worth or intensity of the teachings of yoga, the mind is unable to understand or grasp it because it is so much involved with the objects. No one can tell us that there is waking as long as we are in dream. So also it is that nobody can tell us that there is such a thing called the Absolute or the Universal Self, or the possibility of waking from this world, because we are so involved in the world—as we are involved in dream perceptions.

The involvement is simple enough to understand if we compare our experiences with the dream world. We are able to see the dream world as if it were an external reality merely because of the intensity of the false identification of the mind. The intensity of the aberration of the mind from itself in dream is such that thoughts appear as objects in a dream. We can see a mountain, and we can see a stone or an object against which we can hit our heads. In a dream we can fall from a cliff. Even though all these are thought constructions, the elimination of the self from the mind can be so intense that it can convert itself into an external object.

Scriptures tell us that God became the world in this manner, and consciousness assumed the form of variety in this way. To return from the variety to the unity is yoga. This can be done only by a careful study of the processes of the mind by which it has assumed the variety, and then by finding ways and means of turning the mind back to the unity. In the beginning therefore the purpose of a student of yoga would be to kill the passions of the mind, and then to investigate its ordinary weaknesses in the form of the general *vrittis* of perception. There is no use thinking of concentration of the mind or doing yoga when any kind of passion, whatever it be, takes possession of us.

There is a particular as well as a general modification of the mind. The particular is the impetuous modification which I called a passion, and the general is the ordinary perception of things, which is what we call consciousness of an object. Both these are obstacles and both must be overcome on the path of yoga. The overcoming or the subduing of the passions of the mind is the moral preparation that we are called upon to make in the practice of yoga, and the control of the general *vrittis* of the mind is the actual meditation itself. Meditation is a higher process, and it cannot be attempted as long as the lower passions are taking hold of us.

It is very difficult to know that we have certain passions, though we are always in the state of one passion or the other. It is nothing but a name that we give to the intensity of a desire whose form the mind may take at any time. Passions may be of the senses or of the ego. Both these are equally passions, and once we are under their grip we cannot concentrate the mind on anything else. We have five senses, and any one of these may be in a state of passion and virulent opposition to the state of concentration. Each sense has to be countered properly, because each sense is a mischief-maker. Like a judge who carefully and dispassionately examines witnesses individually in a court, we ought to take each sense organ individually in its isolated structure as it identifies with objects.

What is each sense doing at any given moment? We may have to watch it for days together, and then we will know how it operates. When we prevent a sense from functioning for days together, which is called *tapas*, we can know what a sense organ desires. When we fast for some days, we will know what foods we really want. We become strongly filled with appetite, and even small things look delicious after a three-day fast. Likewise, we can fast the senses for a few days and know what they are really after. It is difficult to know them in their usual performances, just as the real nature of a person cannot so easily be understood when in society and the person's nature comes out when he is isolated from other people and watched carefully.

We cannot know ourselves when we are in the thick of society's activities. This is why many people take to seclusion and isolation, because in that circumstance we can know what we really are, what it is that we have been after all this time, and also what our weaknesses are. If we live alone for two or three months in some isolated place, to some extent we can know what our minds are because we are cut off from the usual enjoyments of the world, and the desires can take proper shape when we are alone.

### **ETHICS AND MORALITY**

A careful isolated analysis of the sense powers and our ambitions is a proper preparation, ethically and morally. We should not think that morality is a kind of imposition that is inflicted on us by society, though many people are sometimes under this impression. One may think, "What is this stupid thing called ethics and morality? Is it a kind of torture inflicted on us by society? Why should we not be free to do what we want to do?" It is not just a social imposition on us. Morality inflicted on us from outside will not stand long. That is why there are rebellions.

It must be a spontaneous morality of the *yogin* which he wants to observe for its own sake—merely because morality is in consonance with reality, and immorality is in dissonance with reality. Whenever we are in conformity with Truth, we are supposed to be moral, and we should not think that society is inflicting this upon us. Why should

they inflict upon us a punishment to be in consonance with Reality? People who think in such childish ways think that all laws are impositions from outside. Laws may look like impositions from outside in the beginning, but later on they become spontaneous necessities felt by each one for oneself. The rule of law does not originate from outer society. It first originates from ourselves, and then it is extended to what we call “society”. If we are not prepared to be consistent with the demands of the nature of Truth, we are not going to realise Truth.

The first prerequisite in yoga therefore is to be consistent in one’s behaviour with the demands of the nature of Truth. Our conduct should reflect the nature of Reality. This is morality. If our conduct is dissonant with the nature of Truth, it means that we do not want it and are only talking about it unnecessarily. Our heart does not long for it, and our behaviour shows that this is so. Ethics and morality in yoga are a conscious endeavour to reflect the nature of Truth in one’s own behaviour in life.

So it is that the understanding at which we have arrived by the analysis that we have made up to this time should be reflected in our lives outside. “I seek it not only in a process of intellectual analysis; I seek it also in my practical life.” This should be the attitude of a student of yoga, because truth is not an object merely of intellect or emotion. Truth is that which is the sum and substance of life in its totality—external as well as internal. Hence passion of any kind is inconsistent with the nature of Truth. Vehemence or violence of any kind whatsoever is an activity of the mind which denies the very existence of Truth.

We have certain basic desires from which other desires originate, and which may assume large proportions at times. These few are generally called creature comforts, a few which are the longings of the ego, a few which are biological needs, and a few which reflect our longing for higher life. The creature comforts are the need for food, clothing and shelter. These are needs but they can also become luxuries, in which case they become obstacles. We need a strip of cloth to cover ourselves against nature’s onslaughts, and we need a little diet for the upkeep of the body. These are what we call “creature comforts” or the needs of the body. Though these needs are very few, they can assume the proportions of luxuries later on, and we mistake luxuries for needs.

A yoga student therefore should be cautious as to distinguish between luxury and necessity. Luxuries become obstacles because we will be thinking of them. We should not possess those things, the loss of which will disturb our minds. Is there anything we have, the loss of which will annoy us, worry us and upset our minds? Then it is better that we don’t possess it. Keep only that, without which we cannot get on in life, and these things will be provided to us. Don’t go for more. Bodily and vital needs must be properly distinguished from luxuries and comforts which are not necessary.

In addition to the bodily and vital needs, there are longings of the ego like name, fame, power and authority. These are obstacles to yoga. These are reactions of the ego to the outer environment, and these have to be properly analysed with great caution. These are not necessities. They are mere pamperings of the ego because we can exist without them, although we may not be able to exist without the creature comforts. The egoistic reactions or the ambitions as we call them are obstacles in yoga, and these have to be overcome. The biological necessities of sleep and sex are two other factors which need careful attention in yoga. They may look simple, but they assume difficult forms

sometimes. One cannot completely close one's eyes to these phenomena, because these become difficult to handle when they are wholly ignored. Anything that we totally ignore becomes a difficult situation for us. Neither can we completely identify ourselves with the desire, nor should we ignore it completely. We ought to tackle it properly with shrewdness and caution. There are desires which take different shapes when they are fulfilled and other shapes when not fulfilled. There are desires which we can fulfil harmlessly and desires which will bind us if we will try to fulfil them. Harmful desires and harmless ones have to be distinguished.

Therefore the bodily, the vital, sensory and egotistical needs have to be carefully detailed and made objects of study, and we have to be sure that we are not caught up with any kind of passion in our lives for or against anything. Sometimes, as I have said already, we seem to be incapable of living without something, and sometimes we seem to be incapable of tolerating something. These are two extremes of the mind. We feel that we cannot bear certain things and that there are certain other things that we can't live without. We have to be very subtly conscious of both these extreme dimensions. We should not allow the mind to take vehement forms of either love or hatred. We see that once a desire becomes vehement it becomes difficult to handle. A lion's cub can be handled when it is small, but when it becomes big it becomes dangerous. We cannot go near it because it will attack us. The preferences of the mind operate in a similar way. In the beginning there is a preference, then it becomes a need, and then it becomes a passion. Hence, it is better to nip it in the bud when it is a mere preference. If one must have a preference, it should not be allowed to assume large proportions.

When we are calm and quiet, not engaged too much in any object or event of the world, we have to make this analysis within ourselves. The preparation of yoga is ethical and moral in the beginning, and the actual practise comes afterwards. There are stages of the practice of yoga. We have been up to this time busy with the philosophical analysis. I mentioned that there are at least three stages of yoga: the philosophical, the psychological and the practical. Up to this time we have been carefully noting down the details of the philosophical foundations of yoga, and we have been touching to some extent upon the borderland of psychological analysis. We have not yet come to the practical aspects of yoga, which we have to see a little later on. But we are now considering the prerequisites of this actual psychological analysis and practice. The ethical and moral preparations are most important, and they are essential to the practice.

## CHAPTER TEN

### THE OPERATION OF THE ETERNAL LAW

The practice of yoga is more than a mere understanding of its principles, because there are many who may be able to understand it but cannot practise it. The reason for this is the peculiar preparation that one has to make in engaging oneself in its practice. A kind of unique strength is necessary in the practice of yoga. It is not anyone and everyone who can take to it with ease. Many start with enthusiasm but do not conclude it, because of certain unforeseen difficulties that sometimes confront them in the middle, and often in the very beginning itself. A peculiar kind of strength is necessary for this practice. A weak mind which is susceptible to the changing judgements of people cannot take to the practice of yoga. There are people who go on listening to everything and believe in everything so that they live in others' minds and not in their own minds. Whatever they hear, they believe. When one belief contradicts another, there is a sense of despair and a confusion of mind.

A student of yoga should have a power of judgement, and he should not be merely a puppet in the hands of the views and judgements of other people. It is humility and goodness and also a kind of wisdom to listen to everybody's views, but it does not mean that we should necessarily acquiesce to all of them. A judge listens to the reports of everyone in the court, but it does not mean that he will accept as final veracity everything that he hears. To receive views and opinions and to consider the judgements of other people in regard to things is one of the ways of acquiring knowledge, it is true, but knowledge is not merely a gathering of information. It is a sifting of essentials, the sublimation of principles involved in what is heard and learnt, and a gathering of the essence rather than the chaff of the outer knowledge. The student of yoga should have a mind of his or her own. We cannot afford always to live in borrowed wisdom or information and strength gathered from others.

It is futile to think that we can always be in the midst of others who will protect or guard us with their physical power or their wisdom. A time will come when the student of yoga will realise that he is alone in this world, and his aloneness is the peculiarity of the wisdom that becomes opened before the inner eye. The truth is that we are alone. That we are apparently in the midst of friends and associates is a kind of illusion that has been cast over us, and this illusion will be dispersed like a cloud when the time for it comes. We will stand alone, and then we must have the strength to confront the realities of life.

A student of yoga is one who is ready to face life. Life will stand in all its nakedness and in its barren reality when relationships which were falsely associated around us get dispersed, and we awaken to the facts of life. These are stages through which every person has to pass if one is to take to yoga earnestly and seriously. It is not wise to think that we shall always be in the midst of friends, that institutions will guard us, and that there are other things that will protect us. This is a child's attitude towards things—that the parents will always take care of it. This attitude cannot always hold, because truth opens itself one day or the other, and we find ourselves alone in this world.

Before nature teaches this lesson with the rod, it will be proper for us to learn it of our

own accord with a maintenance of our dignity. Instead of being pushed down to a place, it is better to honourably go ourselves. Even when we are not prepared to learn, we will nevertheless be taught the lesson. This is nature's method. It is very difficult to bear the way in which nature teaches lessons to us, so it is more proper and fitting that we do it ourselves rather than do it later under compulsion. No one can escape this law of nature, and truth shall triumph.

The truth is that we are alone in our essentiality, and the final reaches in the passage of evolution will be a single person's walk. "Strait is the gate," we must have heard it said in the Bible. Narrow is this gate that releases us into the beyond, and two people cannot walk together in this narrow passage. Broad is the way of destruction, but strait is the gate to heaven. So narrow is this gate that we cannot take an assistant, a servant or a friend with us—we have to go alone. This is the fact and the ultimate reality of things. The evolutionary process of nature tells us that this is the truth when it comes to us as a kind of pain, a shock and an unexpected and unforeseen truth—but everyone must undergo this.

The student of yoga should be a little cautious and a little different from the common folk who learn only by receiving kicks from the world. Yoga is a conscious attempt at participation in the evolution of nature, instead of being driven like an ass by the compulsive activity of nature's evolution. To bear this truth requires a strength to face truth as it is in its unrelatedness, and it also needs a kind of strength which cannot be developed by acquiring the possessions of the world. This is the foundation of yoga practice—the development of the inner toughness of our personality where we can sleep with confidence and wake up also with confidence. Normally, we go to bed with fear, and we wake up with anxiety. This is hard to bear, and it is not good that this state of affairs should always continue. Go to bed with a sober mind and a sense of attainment, and wake up also with a sense of strength.

"From where does this strength come?" may be the question. It is not muscular strength that we are speaking of, for then the elephant would be the best student of yoga. It is a peculiar kind of strength which most people lack, and this strength is different from a robustness of the body. It is not the strength that we gain from proper nutrition. With all this nutritional sustenance we may nevertheless be weaklings and frightened even by the movement of a mouse. The strength which enables us to be confident in this life is a different kind of strength, which is more than just bodily strength. This is the essential prerequisite in the very commencement of the practice of yoga. There is a famous saying in the Upanishads, "This *Atma* cannot be attained by weaklings." This does not mean, as I said, physical robustness. It is an inner toughness that we maintain by a peculiar training that we voluntarily undergo in our lives. We may become weak for some particular reasons and these reasons have to be avoided.

Why we become weak and feel that we are weak is to be the subject of our analysis at the outset. What makes us feel diffident and incompetent, to lack confidence, to feel that we cannot walk firmly on our legs and that we expect only suffering in the future? Why should it be like this, and what is the reason behind all this? The reason is dissipation of life in many ways. The energy and inner strength that we are supposed to garner in ourselves is already in us, because the strength that we are speaking of here does not come from outside. Nobody can give us this strength. We have been born with this



strength to some extent, and we have also been born with a joy which may afterwards take leave of us due to certain other reasons.

### **THE HARDENING OF THE EGO**

We have seen small children who look so beautiful, with rounded faces and brilliant bodies. We feel a kind of affection for children due to the harmony of the elements in the children. This harmony gets disturbed later on due to the formation of certain characteristics in the face and body on account of the intensification of desires and ego. The elements which constitute the physical body in a child are distributed in a harmonious manner, and that is why they are so attractive. In adults however the ego hardens itself gradually and desires get channelised in particular directions. The localisation of desires in particular objects disturbs the harmony of the elements of the body, and our faces become ugly. We know how badly an old man's face droops, and it grows uglier and uglier as the body gets more distorted and unattractive as age advances. The beauty of childhood passes away when the ego begins to manifest itself. Ego and desire finally mean one and the same thing. The ego is the motive force behind the channelisation of desires. That the child has no particular desire is a very important psychological fact. On account of their incipient state, the child's desires are distributed generally and not channelled particularly in any direction. The child's desires are general and not particular, and so there is an undisturbed maintenance of the harmony of the elements of the body.

Wherever there is harmony, there is a sense of freedom or happiness which the intellect cannot understand. The children are happy. They run about skipping and jumping and do not understand the realities of life. This ignorance itself makes them so happy. The child's simplicity is the reason behind its joy, the harmony of its body and even the harmonious working of its physiological organs. Children sleep well, eat well and digest everything, but elders often cannot eat, cannot digest and cannot sleep. The reason is the same: there is an unequal distribution of the energies of the body on account of localisation or channelisation of desire.

This is the beginning of the dissipation of human energy, and the older we become, the weaker we feel in our systems. "Oh, I cannot stand, I cannot walk, I cannot digest anything well, I do not get sleep," is a general complaint of many people. It is a self-created problem, due to ignorance of the laws of life. We imagine something to be good for us, but it turns out to be contrary to our well-being. We try to fight with fundamental principles in the attempt to fulfil our desires, but the facts ultimately succeed because our illusions cannot stand before them. By hook or by crook our desires want to be fulfilled.

These ways which we generally adopt to satisfy our desires due to the impulse of ego are not in harmony with the laws of society or the laws of nature. Though desires are also present in the child, they are present in seed form and are therefore as yet unmanifest. The desires are not directed toward any particular object and are not lodged in any particular form of the body. They are in an equally distributed, unmanifest condition. While the symmetry of the system of the child is due to its ignorance, a later stage may come in the lives of certain adept people where the same symmetry can be established by a conscious adjustment to life.

This is the case with a saint or sage. He is as lustrous, beautiful and powerful as a child, whereas the ignorant man suffers. The scriptures of yoga tell us that rightly practised yoga produces a lustre in the body similar to that seen in small children. A capacity to do hard work without feeling fatigue and a capacity to have good sleep are characteristics of a saint, and not of a worldly man. While the reasons may be quite different for a child as compared to a saint, the consequences are the same. The harmony that is maintained in the body of a child is due to ignorance, whereas in a saint it is due to wisdom. But the others, who are neither children nor wise men, are the sufferers in the world, and they constitute the majority of mankind.

This unfortunate condition exists in most people because of an unintelligent manipulation of desire and a foolish way of tackling things in the world. To allow a desire to run riot is not wisdom, but this is what most people do. Our desires run amok like wild horses which cannot be controlled, and if horses drag a chariot crazily, we know what will happen—it will be thrown into a ditch. The human condition is beautifully illustrated in the Kathopanishad, and is seen as comparable to a chariot driven by the horses of the senses. Our desires pull us in different directions, and we are unable to know which desires should be fulfilled and which should not. The condition worsens when we are not in a position to know how to fulfil a desire.

Our ways of approach are wrong due to the ignorance of the nature of things. Due to this ensnarement in desires and the objects of the world, we run hither and thither like water which runs in different directions when it falls off a cliff. Our energies are psychologically dissipated due to the squandering of our strength. Even though all people innately possess this energy, it is wasted through this process of desire fulfilment. When there is this wasting of bodily and psychic energy due to unnecessary activity, restlessness and anxiety of various kinds, we become lost to our own selves. We feel a sense of weakness, not only in the body, but also in the mind.

### **WEAKNESSES THAT HINDER US**

When such a weakness creeps into our system, we cannot concentrate our minds on anything. We feel dazed, we feel sleepy. Even if we sit in a lecture hall and listen to a discourse, we feel sleepy because our minds cannot concentrate. We neither hear anything that has been said, nor can we understand what has been said, because the mind builds castles in the air, runs hither and thither, or gets torpid and sleepy. These are signs of weakness. Oversleeping is also a kind of weakness of the body. We constantly feel tired and feel like to go to bed. “Oh, let me lie down.” We always feel like lying down. The feeling that we are always tired shows that we have no strength within, and that the strength has gone away due to maladjustment of the energy of the body.

Too much emotion, too much longing which cannot easily be materialised, too much anxiety, and an excess of any kind of emotion—all these drain our energy. We may have taken a very sumptuous and nourishing meal, but upon receiving shocking news our nerves may be agitated, and immediately we feel as weak as if we were going to die. The diet we have taken is no support for us at that time. Shocking news which affects the nerves creates such a psychic disturbance that the meal we have taken is of no use. It looks as if we had eaten nothing for months, and we will feel like sinking into the earth. Such is the power of emotion.

It is useless for a student of yoga to think that he can have strength merely by eating well. There are people who eat well in this world but who are not happy, and they may be very weak and rigid. We should not imitate these people. Those who wear nice clothes, live in spacious houses and eat well are not necessarily happy people, and these are not going to be our examples. The path of yoga is a different way of approach altogether, where we try to understand ourselves in relation to nature. Our relation to nature is such that we cannot take liberties with nature. We should not take too many liberties with nature or even with our own body. "Oh, I cannot digest well." Well, if this is so, then one should not eat so much that one falls sick afterwards. Nature has a principle of its own, and while it tolerates errors to some extent, it cannot tolerate them for a long time. God and nature work in the same way. Their mills grind slowly, as it were, but very finely, and we should understand this as citizens of the universe.

The energy that a student of yoga is called upon to retain in his or her system is the predisposition to concentration of mind. All of yoga is concentration of mind, we must remember. Whatever be the type of yoga we may be performing, concentration of mind is necessary. It may be a practice of *asanas*, it may be *pranayama*, it may be *hatha* yoga or anything else, but if the mind is not there, it is not going to help us. Even in a simple posture like the *savasana* (corpse pose), at which we may laugh when it is being called an *asana*—it is the most difficult *asana* to perform, because due to agitation we may not be able to properly perform *savasana*, even though we may be able to stand on our heads.

Concentration of mind properly done relaxes the mind, but to be relaxed is a most difficult thing. Concentration is the same as relaxation; however, it is not an exercise of the will. Many students of yoga think that concentration is a tremendous effort of will, where we have to put pressure on our nerves, as if we were walking on the edge of a sword. It is not so. Concentration of mind is at the same time ease of the mind. At any level of the practice of yoga, even in the first rudimentary level, what we are called upon to achieve is ease in the system and not concentration in the sense of undue pressure exerted on any part of the system.

Yoga is not compulsion forced on the body, the senses or the mind, but it is rather a freedom that we give to them. While we may lack freedom in the world, yoga gives us both joy and freedom. We become at ease and at one with ourselves, whether it is through the physical postures of *asanas*, whether it is through the retention of the breath in *pranayama*, whether it is through meditation on the Absolute—it makes no difference. It makes no difference at what stage of yoga we are; the point is how we feel. Our feeling should be one of ease, release from tension and at-one-ment with ourselves. Very important to remember: at-one-ment with our own selves. This is yoga in every one of its stages.

We are out of tune with ourselves because of too much thinking of unnecessary things. People usually say, "Oh, I am too busy!" Because of this excessive busyness in life, we are neither able to perform anything dexterously and successfully in our lives, nor are we able to maintain mental poise. By a collectedness of the mind through an understanding of our relation with nature, we can live a little happier than we usually do. It is not proper to try to fulfil every one of our desires. This is the reason why we feel weak—on account of the anxiety created through the attempts to fulfil the desires that

we have in our hearts.

We must have a justification for the fulfilment of our desire, but it gets justified only when it is fulfilled in reference to the higher level that we want to attain in our lives. This is also a kind of morality of desire. Morality can be defined as the consciousness that the higher level should determine the lower. When our desires can be made compatible with the operation of the law of an immediate higher level of life, then we may be able to fulfil those desires easily, and they would also be justified. Actions become immoral if the fulfilment of our desires in a particular level of life is incompatible with the demands of the higher level immediately above.

### **MORAL CONSCIOUSNESS**

It is difficult for the ordinary man to know what morality is, because he cannot know what the higher level is. The higher is that which sublimates, includes and transcends the lower, and at the same time makes us freer and happier. The laws of the world, or the laws of God by which we are supposed to abide, are all ultimately the higher determinings of the lower levels of life. I have been trying to explain the necessity of a moral life, and it is morality that brings strength or inner toughness, and it is immorality that makes us weak. What morality actually is cannot be known by the study of textbooks of ethics. These texts will not reveal to us the truths of this matter, because morality is so uniquely subtle in every given situation or circumstance. Often its special forms, though not its general forms, differ from person to person, from one country to another country, from one season to another season, and from one circumstance to another circumstance.

The moral life is a difficult life—not just a stereotyped track that we have to tread. It is difficult, just as the proper prescription of a medicine by a physician is difficult. It is not easy to prescribe a medicine—it is a very complicated science, and the doctor has to understand the situation properly. Likewise is the understanding of the moral conduct that we have to adopt in our lives. What is proper is difficult to understand without the exercise of a proper understanding.

When we attain a sense of wisdom, we conform to laws operating within us as well as outside us. Tending to integration in a higher level of our lives, we become truly moral in our consciousness, and this gives us strength. A moral person is stronger than a person with a sword or a gun. This is why for example that people talk of Mahatma Gandhi so much, although he had a frail body and no weapons in his hands. His strength came from a conviction born of a moral consciousness. All morality is strength, and immorality is weakness. Whatever be our possessions, if there is no moral consciousness within us, there will be weakness side by side with the possessions.

We can be terrified even by a fly if there is no inner moral consciousness. If there is a confidence born of the abidance by law which is morality, there is a peculiar kind of power that we feel within which difficult to explain in words. If we always feel confident, everything will be all right on account of the simultaneous feeling that we are on the right path. “I am right, I shall not suffer in this world,” will be our confidence. This is one form of the moral consciousness.

I may reiterate that there is no yoga practice without moral consciousness within. It is not only a practice, it is also a state of feeling and consciousness. No one who is not

moral can be a *yogin*. Morality is not only make-believe or the following of the social law of morality—morality is a state of consciousness. I purposely use the phrase “moral consciousness” rather than “following the moral law”. We may be practising the moral law of a society, and yet we may not have a moral consciousness—in which case we will again feel weakness. We may be a very important and well-placed person in society, but we may not have the strength to maintain this moral consciousness within.

The Bhagavadgita explains the situation very beautifully in one of its beautiful verses: “One may be morally disciplined in outward limbs of the body, but inwardly contemplating objects of sense.” This is not morality. What we are in our minds is our morality. We may be anything outside in human society, but this is something different. What are we inside? That is our own morality. What people say about us is not our true nature. They may say this or they may say that, but their judgements may not be correct because nobody can see within us.

This is a very important aspect of yoga practice, and if this is missed, we will miss the whole calculation. If we come initially to the error that two and two make five, all our later calculations will be wrong. Whatever be the effort we make for our calculations, we have presumed in the beginning that two and two make five. Likewise, all attempts at yoga practice will be a waste of time and energy—bringing nothing in the end—if we make the mistake of thinking that we are quite all right when we are not. Let no one be foolhardy enough to think that everything is quite all right. Nobody can be quite all right in this world. One has to be very cautious, because one can slip at any point on a path which is so precipitous. It is easy to be self-complacent but difficult to be self-critical. It is the nature of the mind to be complacent. “I am always all right, and others are wrong,” is a peculiar way in which the mind works in this world.

It is a psychological quirk that the mind feels that it is highly rational, although this is not a correct feeling. The person will be the loser, if this attitude is maintained throughout life. The moral foundation is going to determine the higher success in yoga, and morality is not outward conformity to moral law, but rather the maintenance of a moral consciousness within. Our hearts should be satisfied that we are moral—it is of no use if others say that we are moral. When we close our eyes and we are alone in a room, if our hearts are truly satisfied, then we are wholly moral and God will save us. Otherwise, all the worlds cannot protect us.

This is a small point which many students of yoga miss in their enthusiasm and in their practice and so they complain, “No God, no yoga, no religion and nothing else has come to me. I am fed up!” There are people who have been meditating for twenty, thirty, forty years and they achieve nothing, because they started with a wrong basis of self-complacency. They had small weaknesses which covered their vision like sand particles in their eyes, due to which they could not see anything properly. This fact is mostly ignored in the practice of yoga, and many teachers of yoga do not lay sufficient emphasis on this aspect of moral consciousness.

No student of yoga has patience enough to think of this important matter. They are all interested in *asana*, *pranayama*, *pratyahara*, *dharana*, *dhyana* and *samadhi*, and not in the basic principles. It is very unfortunate, and it is quite evident as to why we are not successful in our practise of yoga. A small mistake that we committed in the beginning has spoiled the whole affair, and despite all our efforts of years and years, we will realise

when it is too late, “Oh, I made a small mistake, and the whole thing has gone dead wrong!” Let no time be wasted in false assumptions as to one’s perfection. Let no one imagine that one is perfect. God alone can be perfect—no human being can be. Let there be this humility first.

### **PROCEEDING CAUTIOUSLY**

Do not be too enthusiastic in these matters—go slow and do not try to jump. Walk slowly and cautiously, with a review of the steps that have already been taken. Every day make a review of yesterday’s practise. “Has it been all right, or was there a difficulty? What has happened to me? Can I take a further step?” This is the way in which we have to review our yesterday’s practise and our yesterday’s problems and difficulties. This foundation must be properly laid. The foundation is very important—more important than the building, we must remember. What is the good of having a beautiful building, if it has a shaky foundation? The foundation of yoga is a moral consciousness, and again I insist that it is not conformity to outer law, which is different altogether. The morality of the conformity to outer law is different from yoga morality, which is a consciousness.

We must be satisfied, not others. There is no use for others to be judges of us—we have to be our own judge. If we are satisfied from the whole of our hearts, then it is all right. Otherwise, something will be murmuring from within, “My dear friend, it is not all right.” We may be trying to hush up that voice, but it will not keep quiet. It will tell us again and again the same thing. A conscious endeavour to maintain this sense of morality, an attitude of moral consciousness and an honesty of purpose are the foundation of yoga practice. This itself is a practice. The ability to maintain for a protracted period, if not continuously, a moral consciousness is itself a very important step in yoga. This takes a long time, because to maintain a moral consciousness is identical with being unselfish in the world. We cannot be selfish and at the same time moral. The deviation from the moral consciousness occurs on account of the desires which we want to fulfil somehow or the other. How can we be moral and at the same time be happy in this world? This is a conflict within us. It is not true that happiness depends upon immorality. This is a false notion. The moral consciousness will make us so happy; and later on we will realise that it is a permanent happiness which will not leave us, whereas the happiness that we acquire by hook or by crook is an illusion before our eyes which will leave us one day.

One should not commit this mistake of imagining that by deviation from morality one can be happy. The discipline of desire is necessary for the maintenance of a moral consciousness. We cannot just be at the beck and call of our whims and fancies and at the same time be moral. We should not be whimsical. We should have correct judgement and a logical way of thinking in the smallest things also. There is no ‘smallest thing’ in the world, because everything is equally important in its own place. In everything we have to be logical and careful.

We have to see everything from all sides, not only one or two sides. It is like the commander of an army who weighs the situation properly from all directions before taking a step. We cannot simply say, “March!” like a foolish person. We will have to know whether it is proper to march or not, what our strength is, what the strength of the enemy is and where they stand. This is the way in which we will make a whole review of the circumstances. Like the army commander who has to be very cautious, a yoga

student maintains a carefulness of step, and he disciplines his desires with tremendous effort.

In the beginning of our practise, we should not live in the thick of an unwholesome environment and then think of controlling our senses. This is why in the beginning we are asked to be a little away from the hustle and bustle of the cities. Later on when we have sufficient strength we may also be in the cities, but in the beginning it is not proper. A great saint has given a small illustration to explain the necessity of a little isolation in the beginning. We know that fire can consume *ghee* (clarified butter). If one pours *ghee* into a fire, the flame will blaze up more and more and burn up the *ghee*. Pour tons of it into a large fire, and the *ghee* will be burned up without any residue, because fire has such strength. But suppose the fire is only a spark, and we throw ten tons of *ghee* over it; the fire will not be able to consume it, and the spark will be consumed by the *ghee* itself. Pour ten tons of *ghee* over a spark of fire and the spark will be extinguished, though a larger fire has the capacity to burn any amount of *ghee*. Likewise it may be that we have the strength to bear anything in life, but in the beginning we should not waste this strength that is incipiently present inside us but not yet manifested outside. We should not live in the midst of objects of temptation and then try to control the senses. It is too difficult.

In the beginning stages we should physically distance ourselves from the objects of temptation, and not merely claim that the temptations are not a problem because we think we are not mentally attracted. “Oh, I am a mental *sannyasin*. These things don’t affect me!” We can say that only in the more advanced stages. In the beginning it is difficult to control the senses or discipline them, and they will have their own laws and prescriptions. We will succumb to them one day or the other, and then it will be difficult to come back to the normal position. Therefore, in the initial stages it is necessary to live in a guarded atmosphere. That is why people go to ashrams, cloisters and convents—to live in a guarded atmosphere. We cannot simply do whatever we like in institutions of that nature, and so this is a good protection.

In the beginning it is an external protection—a kind of compulsion, we may say, but in the earlier stages this kind of compulsion is necessary. Afterwards this compulsion may become a spontaneous moral consciousness, but in the beginning the restraint must be there. In the beginning a tendency is there to fulfil the desires rather than to be moral. Life in a protected atmosphere of a cloister or a monastery or in the presence of a competent Guru or master is necessary. Because of the temptations, we cannot be at home and then be successful in yoga. We know ourselves what the temptations are in city life and at home.

From the outward discipline of this nature, we move towards a spontaneous inner discipline of the moral consciousness, and then we are strong enough to be able to practise the steps of yoga. This is the strength to which I made reference earlier—a strength which we mostly lack but which is very essential. We should never feel diffident or nervous in the practice of yoga. Confidence is necessary. We should not be thinking, “I do not know whether I am right or wrong, and I do not know where I am standing.” This doubt has to be dispelled by clear thought. If we cannot do it ourselves, we must go to a competent teacher. It is not that we can always be independently clarified in our thought. That is why a Guru is necessary. When we cannot understand, we go to a

master. “This is my doubt and difficulty and problem,” we say, and it will be clarified for us, and then we can proceed further. Thus, with a clarified understanding and the consequent moral sense that we are able to maintain, we become strong.

This strength is what generally goes by the name of *brahmacharya*. The term ‘*brahmacharya*’ is more than what it outwardly means to people. It is the sum total of the retention of energy in our system by the avoidance of all leakage of energy in any manner whatsoever. *Brahmacharya* is not merely ‘celibacy’ as it is translated in English. It is more than that; it is the maintenance of a moral consciousness. One may be a celibate and yet may be finding it difficult to maintain this consciousness of *brahmacharya*. It is an overall continence and not merely celibacy. It is a continence of the powers of sense taken in their totality, which renders the body strong, healthy, tireless and even lustrous. This energy is very essential for the practice of yoga, without which we feel weak in body, mind and soul. Lacking this energy we will feel wearied in our spirits. This should not be the condition into which the yoga student is driven.

Cautiousness is yoga, in the same way as consciousness is yoga. The moral sense in all things is not an unimportant item in yoga. It is very important, and it is very essential that we make a careful note of this essential limb—the moral consciousness. Once one is properly and in adequate proportion established in this, then we can say that almost fifty percent of our difficulties are over. This is an essential aspect of yoga which I tried to emphasise, because this is a point which most people miss in their practice. It is due to this error that there may not be visible success in the practice that has been carried on even for years together.



## **CHAPTER ELEVEN**

### **SKILLED PREPARATION**

Earlier I spoke about a very essential part of yoga practice which is mostly ignored. It is a mistake which people usually make, which should explain failures in the practice of yoga and an apparent defeat which people suffer in spite of arduous efforts undergone for years together. Yoga is a matter concerned with ourselves and not with our relations outside, and unless we are all right, yoga is not going to be all right with us. What we are in terms of human society is not going to be of importance here, because it is not society that will do yoga for us. It is we ourselves who have to do it. It is inaccurate to judge ourselves in terms of people's considerations about us. These outer considerations have absolutely nothing to do with our internal relations in the practice of yoga.

We as individuals, independent units of consciousness having a status of our own, are concerned with the practice and not with our external associations of any kind. We have to give up that old habit of judging ourselves in terms of others' vision of us and to not look at ourselves through the world outside, but directly in an apprehension that is immediate and non-relational. The practise of the moral law was what I tried to explain previously, but it is easy to think that the moral canon is not an essential part of yoga. Yet nothing can be more important and more concerned with yoga, because morality is what gives health to our personalities.

We can understand how essential health is to us. Whatever be our position in the world, if there is no health, we will find it hard to make our way in the world. All other things would become meaningless to us, if we are not healthy in our bodies and in our whole system. The moral sense, the moral feeling and the moral consciousness are the health of our personality—like physical health. If these are not present, everything will be “at sixes and sevens”, and there will be no yoga practice. It is necessary therefore to keep our system in order before we try to do anything with it or through it. Yoga is something which we are going to do with this personality of ours, and so it has to be kept in order, in balance and in tune with itself.

The personality often gets out of tune, and this is because of the immoral and unsociable attitude that many a time we adopt. The health of the personality is a little different from the health of the body. The health of the personality is the establishment of oneself in the moral consciousness. Just as health brings us strength in the physical sense, health also brings us strength in a wider sense. The moral strength is more than the physical strength. The stronger we feel morally, the more competent also we become in the practice of yoga, and then half the work is already done. “Well begun is half won,” as it is said.

If this is borne in mind carefully at the very outset, the practise of yoga is not a difficult thing. It is the preparation that is a difficult thing. To get ready is more difficult than to actually do, and all the time mostly goes in getting ready. To strike a match takes less than a second, but to make the match will take a lot of time. Many days will have to be spent in manufacturing a matchstick, but to strike it is a question of only an instant. The practise of yoga truly speaking is like the striking of a match. We need not be very much worried about striking the match, but to make this match is a little more of a difficult

affair, as it cannot be done in a day. To make ourselves fit instruments for the practise should be a greater concern than what we are going to achieve through yoga, or how we are to sit for meditation, or any of the other routines. These things will take care of themselves of their own accord and need not cause us too much anxiety. We will find that the later stages become very simple and clear if the foundation has been well laid.

### OBSTACLES ON THE PATH

Many obstacles naturally present themselves in this attempt at the practice of yoga. However, even the attempt is something very sublime and praiseworthy. This is one of the great things we have to learn from the Bhagavadgita. Even an attempt at the practice of yoga is something superb, let alone its actual practice. But this attempt is beset with difficulties of various kinds and sometimes even dangers which frighten us and make us want to retreat. There is initially an unpreparedness of the whole personality, and when we take to the practice of yoga, the personality may manifest certain characteristics which exhibit its unpreparedness. In the beginning this unpreparedness may come in the form of a sense of diffidence and a doubt as to whether the practice is meant for oneself. “Can I actually do it?” and then later, “Is it worthwhile?” and further, “I hope that I am not under an illusion.” These are the ways, to mention only a few, by which a retardation of progress even in the initial stages may set in and we will not be allowed to take even the first step.

Often the first step is the most difficult step, but once we take the first step then it may become a little easier. Still though, we may not take the first step, but we will be brooding and contemplating even before taking the first step. All these are symptoms of the impurity of the personality which resents any kind of cleansing. This impurity lies dormant as a sort of psychological dirt and resists being cleansed thoroughly in the sunlight of the understanding. Many people are too conservative and would not allow any kind of innovation in life. “Everything is all right. What I am is perfectly okay. Don’t meddle with me,” is the retort of the mind to any kind of educational process that one may try to introduce into it.

This is the condition of *tamas* where the mind will not allow any kind of interference with its old habits. The second is the work of *rajas*—the desires getting activated. The very frightened state of the mind itself may activate its desires. For instance, if we find out that we will be fasting tomorrow, we will feel hungry today. The very thought of tomorrow starts some work in the mind today. It is purely psychological. The thought of having a trouble tomorrow is enough to have a trouble today itself. Through this example we can know how mysteriously the mind works. Through its projection of ignorance, the instinct of *tamas* prevents our intervention in the mind’s old ways of thinking. *Rajas* tries to stimulate desire in a slightly intensified manner and would not allow us to take any positive step in yoga. *Tamas* and *rajas* are obstacles in yoga, and all the obstacles in yoga are forms of *tamas* and *rajas*. We may have a thousand obstacles in yoga, but all these are ramifications of the functions of *tamas* and *rajas*. *Tamas* works negatively while *rajas* works positively. *Tamas* prevents us from doing anything, and *rajas* sidetracks us into erroneous channels of action.

This activity of *tamas* and *rajas* starts even at the very outset in the moral preparations that we try to make as a limb of the practice of yoga. Self-complacency, a sense of self-perfection and an honest feeling of one’s being complete and all right—though it may be

wrong—are the ways in which *tamas* works. “I need no teaching, I know everything very well, and there is nothing more to learn,” is a conscious manifestation of the *tamasic* instinct of self-complacency coupled with wrong living. Because no person with any sense will say, “I need no teaching. I am all right, I know everything.” This is the work of *tamas*. *Rajas* makes matters worse by adding desires to these ways of the mind’s thinking. Small desires are projected outwards by the *rajasic* nature, and though these may be relatively small in scope and actually quite silly to outward observation, they may take such proportions that the mind may be entirely absorbed in them.

The mind can get totally absorbed in an engagement even if it is silly and small, if it is not allowed to engage itself in anything else. If we block out all the activities of the mind, it will engage itself in foolish things, and they can absorb the mind totally and wholly. The mind follows what is called the method of regression. It is a regressing of steps by the mind to lower and lower levels of satisfaction when the higher levels are unavailable. “If I can get five apples it is all right, but if I cannot get five, I will take at least four, and then if not four then three, or two or even one. If not even one is available, then at least let me have the remnants.” This would be the attitude of the mind in regard to every kind of satisfaction. It may get attached to things which are so small that it would be difficult for a normal mind even to understand.

These are the regressive processes of the mind, and these obstacles occur in the very beginning despite attempts at a proper recourse to yoga. There are various odd types of obstacles which prevent us from going in the proper direction. Doubts of various kinds harass the mind, and we become so sceptical about things that we do not know where we actually are. There are suspicions about people around us, suspicions about the teacher whom we have chosen, suspicions in regard to the atmosphere in which we are staying, and suspicions in regard to our own competency of practise. Everything seems to be mired in suspicion, doubt and vacillation.

The mind will not fix itself on anything. Later, the mind tries methods of substitution by changing the poles of action and approaching things in a way quite at variance to the earlier intention. The mind would then be lost in rationalisations and specious arguments, not knowing that it has gone astray, and only realising the true situation after many years when it is too late. This process may end in a condemnation of human society and finally questioning the very justice of God’s creation.

These are not exaggerated circumstances; they often become the fate of sincere seekers—sincere, but not discriminating and understanding. In the practise of yoga it is not enough that we are merely sincere. We also have to be understanding, discriminating and capable of proper judgement. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa used to say that the devotee of God need not be a fool. He must also be a person of understanding. Devotion does not mean mere sentimentalism, emotional outbursts and a loss of control of oneself. Yoga is an all-round discipline of oneself and especially of the psychic mechanism of which emotion is only one aspect.

### **THE HEAD AND THE HEART TOGETHER**

Equally important is understanding. The head and the heart, which are usually supposed to be the principal limbs of our system, represent understanding and feeling. These two have to be combined in any approach in yoga. We have to be careful that we

do not go to an extreme either in too much rationalism or too much sentimentalism. Too much logic is bad, but too much emotion is equally bad. We will have to combine a logical approach with feeling, and then our practice becomes a proper instrument. It is easy to accept that reason and feeling should go together, but in practise it is difficult. We always go either to this extreme or the other. We are either too much critical about things or too submissive. It is rare that we find a proper proportion of these two elements in our personality. We either start weeping as if there were nobody to help us, or we twist our lips in a critical attitude, as if everything in the world is wrong and we alone are right.

The humility of the student of yoga is not weakness of any kind but is a flower that blossoms due to a great understanding which is rare to find in this world. The student of yoga is always in a state of understanding which is combined with an appreciation of things. It is not merely understanding; it is reinforced with appreciation of things, and when appreciation goes with understanding, we become firm in our personality and nobody can do anything to us. It is not the toughness of obstinacy but the toughness of confidence, understanding and the capacity to adjust oneself with the realities of life.

The student of yoga does not react to surroundings but rather absorbs circumstances into him or herself, and the capacity to absorb circumstances is itself a proper reaction. It is not an ordinary reaction that we will find in a sincere yoga student. It is difficult to explain what it is actually. It is an all-encompassing confidence in one's position. Understanding and appreciation are the supreme virtues of the world. Sometimes we understand but cannot appreciate, and sometimes we appreciate but cannot understand. To bring these two together is difficult enough, but this is true goodness—it is the crown of all virtues. All virtues are like attendants of the simple virtue of the capacity to blend understanding with the appreciation of things.

Here it is that we become a super-person and not an ordinary human being. We cannot be ordinary human beings in this condition, because we combine the qualities of all humanity, which is summed up in appreciation or feeling and understanding. There is nothing in a human being except these two factors—the feeling for a thing and understanding of a thing. We as persons are nothing else but this, and all other things follow these two. In the judgement of our own selves, as well as the judgement of the world, these two principal elements of our psychological make-up have to get blended properly.

This would at the same be a caution that one has to exercise in yoga. The caution has to do not with danger impending from outside, but rather the caution that must be exercised because we may forget to blend these factors in proper proportion, and therefore lean in one direction alone. It is this blend of factors of understanding and appreciation that makes us feel happy within ourselves. Nothing can make us as happy as confidence, and no happiness can be present if these factors are not properly blended in our personality. We then become independent, and we feel a strength of an unusual kind. Only through this can we step into the true realms of the practice of yoga. It is in this sense that the Upanishads say, "Weaklings cannot practise yoga." It is this strength that we are called upon to have in yoga practice. So this is, by way of a recapitulation of the ideas that I tried to present earlier, the preparation for the practise of yoga. For all purposes we should regard the preparation as more important than the very practise

itself, because everything that we are going to do in the future depends on this fundamental groundwork.

Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj has prescribed three methods of self-discipline, which I always advise to be followed in daily routines as a kind of a personal check-up. The first is the spiritual diary, the second is the resolve form and the third is the daily routine. Sometimes people used to call this the “*trisol*” of Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. *Trisol* is a trident with three prongs, and Lord Siva is supposed to be holding this Siva’s *trisol*. We may call it Swami Sivananda’s *trisol*—the spiritual diary, the resolve form and the daily routine. The spiritual diary is a series of guidelines which can be modified according to our own needs, temperament and particular practice. One should consult these guidelines and question oneself as to how able one has been in following them. One queries one’s own self and by answering the queries in the spiritual diary. Through the maintenance of this diary, we will be able to check our progress every day and also know where we have gone wrong or failed. “How many times have I done this, and how many times have I not done this,” and so many other questions are there. From this we can have a good review of what we have been yesterday and previously, and what we ought to be in the future. A good stocktaking of our conduct, our strengths and weaknesses, etc. is the regimen of the spiritual diary.

The other part of the spiritual trident is the resolve form. There is a form available of the resolves that we ought to make: “I shall do that this year, and I shall definitely do it. I shall not do these things this year, and under no circumstance shall I do them. There are small weaknesses which should be avoided this year. I am not going to do these things.” It is a vow similar to those that we might take on New Year’s Day or some other auspicious occasion.

In order that we do not forget our own vows and break them in the middle, and also to instil some fear in our hearts, we can take these vows in the presence of Mother Ganga or before the rising sun or in a temple. We would be frightened to break them afterwards, if we have promised in the presence of these “witnesses”. “I cannot break this, because in the presence of Ganga I have said this, before the rising sun I have said this, or before the deity in the temple I said this.” We cannot break these vows because we will naturally be frightened. This is the way of ensuring that the vows are adhered to. The observance of these resolves is implied in filling in the resolve form.

Then we have the daily routine which is the third item. One should not just be hazardous in one’s practice on different days. Today we do a thing, tomorrow another thing, the third day another thing—all unconnected. This will not ensure our success. In yoga practice, a kind of tenacity to routine is very essential. The time of our getting up in the morning and going to bed, and also the time for such simple routines as our breakfast, tea, milk, lunch, walk, study, etc. should be fixed. We will do these things at a specific time. It should not be like today having our breakfast at eight, and tomorrow at ten. Every day we should have these routines at a fixed time. The time for our prayers, for our *asanas* and *pranayama*, the time for study, the time for meditation, the time for going to or returning from our jobs, the time for our other kinds of work—whatever be the system that we have been following in our day should be connected with certain specific hours of function.

When these items of the daily routine repeat themselves at specific hours of the day

every day, they retain a kind of strength. When we have a habit of making the mind do specific things at certain times, it will do them and it will do them automatically. Like the two legs that walk—when we go for a walk, we do not have to think of the legs. We walk miles and miles without thinking that we have got legs. That is because it has become a habit. Likewise, the mind may make it a habit to follow this routine merely because of the discipline and the system of timings that we follow. If we have different times for things on different days, then we will not be able to stick to them. The daily routine has to be chalked out first: what is going to be our daily routine, and then when are the items to be fulfilled? These are two aspects of the daily routine.

The spiritual diary, the resolves and the daily routine are the three prongs of the trident of Siva. We can remember important precepts of practice, and we will find out how beneficial and necessary they are for us as students of yoga. Discipline is yoga, and where there is no discipline there is not only no yoga, but also no success in any walk of life. All successful people in the world are people who practise self-discipline. We would find it difficult to even discipline our servant if we are ourselves not disciplined, because the world around us imitates us in our conduct and personality and not in the words that we speak. What we are is more important than what we say and sometimes what we do.

### **A GENUINE PERSONALITY**

Hence, it is necessary to build up the personality first. We have many a time seen that it is as if we had no true personality at all—we shine with borrowed feathers. But these plumes drop off and we end up with no true personality of our own. There are people in the world who appear important on account of an office that they hold, the power that they exert, or the authority they wield. However, when they have lost or given up these positions, they just look like nobodies in the world. Take for instance a senior politician who is thrown out of office. If he has no true personality of his own, once he has lost the power of his office, he will become a non-entity. Today we may be the president of our country, but if we have no genuine inherent personality, we will be nobody after we have left the office. No one will know that we exist at all. We should not become important merely because of the office that we hold or the authority that we wield. This is an artificial importance that we assume, which can be thrown out immediately and cast out into the wind when these positions are not there, and we revert to what we were originally.

The person with a genuine personality will be as important as a big man of the world, for different reasons of course, even if social status is not associated with him. A building up of the personality is to be something by oneself and for oneself. Are we something in ourselves apart from what we are to others? Have we substance to us? Do not tell me what others say about us and what we mean to others—that is a different matter. But what are we when nobody says anything about us, when nobody looks at us, and when nobody will have anything to do with us? What are we then? What we are at that time is our personality, our substance and our vitality. This is our strength and this is the real person.

This real 'you' it is that has to practise yoga, and not the politician's personality or the businessman's personality. These are not going to practise yoga. The real 'you' is something which is not seen in daily life. Mostly we live a public life rather than a

private life. People who are very busy in the world and who are so engaged in things have no time to think as to what they really are in themselves. All the definitions of themselves are in terms of others. “Who are you?” one might ask them. “Well, I am the son of so-and-so.” We are nobody by ourselves; we are only a son of so-and-so or a daughter of so-and-so. We may mean something to somebody, and somebody means something to us, but I am asking who *you* are, not whether you are a son or a daughter of somebody.

We define ourselves in this manner, and we cannot define ourselves without relating ourselves to somebody else. This kind of personality is a false personality, and this is not going to help us in yoga. The social relationships and the possessions that seem to be ours are different from the elements that we have to foster in the practice of yoga. Plotinus, the great mystic, used to say, “Yoga (of course he never used the word ‘yoga’ and I am substituting the word ‘yoga’ for what he said) is a flight from the alone to the Alone.” The ‘Alone’ is the Absolute, and we as the alone have to fly to the Alone. We cannot carry our baggage with us in the practice of yoga. Alone we fly to the Alone in yoga practice without associations of any kind. This aloneness it is that ensures moral strength, as well as the power of will, understanding and feeling. The more we realise that we are alone, the more we gain strength in our personalities. The more we associate with others, the weaker we are in our personalities.

In our daily meditation, a few minutes may be dedicated to realising our true position in this world. What is our true position? Mature minds will be able to understand this quickly. We need not be taught what we are truly. We go by a friend’s smile and words of appreciation too much, but there comes a time in our lives when these smiles and appreciation don’t help us. We seem to be needing something more substantial. A few minutes daily we must spend in order to realise what we really are—not a son of so-and-so, not a prime minister, not an office-goer, etc. We should not define ourselves in this way. We should ask ourselves, “What am I when I am cast to the winds?” This is our true personality, and when we realise this honestly, we will gain a strength from within. “This is my true position. I never knew this.” We gird up our loins in a different way altogether, not depending on others and things outside us which can leave us at any time. The strength of the aloneness is a superior strength, a strength of moral perfection and a strength of our true relation to nature and finally to God. It is only in this sense of aloneness that people become truly devoted to the religious and spiritual ideals.

Many a time a complete isolation from possessions has turned people to God. Everything has been lost and all the family has died—these circumstances occur to many people, and then they turn to God. “Oh, there is nothing in this world!” But we need not always be driven to these conditions, because we can consciously delve into these situations and not have them forced on us under duress. “What has happened to somebody else may happen to me also.” We need not wait for the time for things like that to happen to us. They need not happen, but they can happen. We should release ourselves from the false clutches of psychological associations and be prepared for the worst. Do not take anything to be unexpected—we should be able to expect anything in this world. It is ignorant to not have this degree of expectation. Never say, “I didn’t expect this.” We have to expect the worst, and then we will not be taken by surprise by anything in this world. Everything is expected, we are prepared for it, and we have the strength to bear it.

A recollection mentally of our true aloneness and unbefriendedness in this world, a recollection of our essential personality, of our social atmosphere, of the necessity to be alone and standing on our own legs, and a final realisation in our own minds of the need to look for the higher—these may give us strength enough to practise yoga. “The higher alone has to come to my aid; my present level is not going to help me. All people in the world are like me. Who is going to help me, and what help can they give? They are in the same situation as I am. So there is no point in expecting help from other people. They cannot give me any substantial help in times of need.” The lower can be helped only by the higher, and so to look for the higher is spiritual morality. This is a step higher than merely the moral consciousness to which I made reference previously, which again is higher than mere abidance by the moral code of society.

These are levels of morality. The outermost is mere conformity to the law of society. The inner one is a realisation of the need to practise the moral canon inwardly and voluntarily. The highest morality is the dependence on the higher levels of being. For success in all walks of life, these contemplations, these reviews and these analyses will make us so strong in our personalities that we will smile to the whole of nature. Nothing will be able to shake us up afterwards, because of our confidence in having resorted to this realisation of the higher backing us up at every point of our activity.

This, in a religious sense, is called devotion to God—whatever be our God or whatever our concept of God may be, it is immaterial. Surrender to God, dependence on God and devotion to God, etc. are religious ways of expressing a very scientific and psychological truth of the necessity to depend on the higher level for the sake of success in the lower. Thus, and by these and many other means which we are free to think of for ourselves, we can build up a true personality, and we can face the world confidently without diffidence of any kind. In this firmness of the personality that we have achieved by a gradual daily practice, we will be able to face the facts of life. Perfection, even to an approximate extent in our attempt to build a true personality, is itself a great achievement in yoga.

What I have explained up to this time is one step in the practice of yoga—a very essential limb of the practice of yoga. When we truly consider it, we will find it to be many more things than what it seems to be on the surface. To build up our personality and to be something in ourselves is very essential. Our happiness will rest merely in a contemplation of these values that constitute us, and will not anymore depend on our associations outside. Just to contemplate what we really are would itself be a great pleasure for us—rather than contemplating objects of sense, possessions or relationships.

### **MAINTAINING A BACKGROUND OF THOUGHT**

We must have a background of thought. We must be able to withdraw ourselves in times of necessity like a tortoise withdrawing its limbs. We should not ignore our background of thoughts. It is not that we may always be able to maintain a poise of mind, and sometimes we are disturbed by certain things of the world. At that time we must be able to withdraw ourselves into a background of thought that we should be able to maintain perpetually, and that would be our home. It may be like a tortoise withdrawing its limbs into its shell, or it may be like going back home. When there is nothing else to distract us, we retire into this profound place. That retirement into the background of thought, which is our permanent reality, will give us sufficient rest.



Everyone should be perpetually maintaining a background of thought to which we are able to retire occasionally in times of need, because the movements of our minds in the outer world are momentary associations and needs. They are not our perennial needs. When winds blow violently from different directions in the world and we cannot stand these winds, we must be able to withdraw ourselves into our home which is our true personality. When we contemplate these aspects properly and in their thoroughness, we will appreciate how important it is for us—not only in the practice of yoga, but also in the many small things that we have to do in our lives. There are many small things that we do, and they will become objects of enjoyment. Even such simple things as sweeping the floor, washing or cooking may become a beautiful art for us when we do them with this firmness of personality and a confidence in what we really are. All our activities will become a beautiful art, and art brings satisfaction and joy.

Work no more becomes a drudge to a person who builds up a strength of personality of this nature. Life becomes a manifestation of beauty, and there is no more such a thing as menial service or undignified labour for that person. Menial service does not exist in this world. There is no such thing as something lower, because it all assumes a beauty of its own when it is done by a beautiful person. The beauty lies in us and not in the work that we do. The work becomes beautiful if we are beautiful. We are so ugly in our personalities, and yet we expect beauty in things that are connected with us. When a beautiful person does the work, the work also becomes beautiful. Convert your personality into a work of art and beauty, an object of admiration and satisfaction, and then we'll see if the world is beautiful or not. This is how we have to build up our personalities, and then we will realise that our joy knows no end.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### ANOTHER TYPE OF MEDITATION

We will do a little meditation now, in a slightly modified form. Previously I suggested a review of the analysis of the mind in meditation, and hopefully these ideas have not been forgotten. Every stage of the development of the analysis is going to strengthen and clear up the lower strata that we have studied. In a state of meditation one attempts to fix the mind on the conscious relationship between the *adhibhuta* and the *adhyatma*. I am sure that many of us have not succeeded in fixing our minds, because we are not accustomed to thinking along these lines. I mentioned before that thoughts that occur during meditation should be noted down for further review afterwards. We must note down the ways in which the mind wanders away from the chosen ideal. By a repeated movement of thought along the same circles of concentration and by continued habit, the distractions can be gradually avoided. The points that distract the attention are many in the beginning, but they gradually become less and less. In the beginning we will find that gross things attract us, and then later ideas and thoughts are more the basis of distraction. The essence of the process of meditation in yoga is an adopting of different techniques. The techniques may be different, but they are all directed toward the achievement of the single purpose of establishing a harmony between ourselves and the world outside—the *adhyatma* and the *adhibhuta*. Remember again that we have attempted to visualise our essential consciousness as a connecting link between us as the *adhyatma* and the objective world as the *adhibhuta*.

I would like to suggest another method, because it is good that we adopt different methods to accustom the mind to concentrate on the same idea or ideal. Every day we are eating food, but we vary the food items in order to make them more attractive. The food items may be different, but the purpose is the same. Likewise in meditation, lest the mind be bored by a monotony of thought, we have varieties, but with the same purpose. I will suggest two methods with which we can review our thoughts. Imagine two tanks of water filled to the brim and lying on the same flat surface level. Imagine that a stream of water flows and connects the two tanks. It can simultaneously touch the tank to the right and the tank to the left. In the same way, imagine our consciousness not as something lodged in our bodies, just as the water is not lodged in one tank.

Mostly we think that our *Atman*, or the *jiva*, or the consciousness, or the mind is inside this body. Let this idea go, because it is not a correct notion. That is why I have given this analogy. The water is not only in one tank. One tank is ourselves and the other tank is the world outside, so we should not think that the water, which can be compared to consciousness, is in one tank alone. The consciousness is not only in us, but it is also in the universe outside, and that same consciousness is between the two. That is the stream connecting the two tanks. The two tanks represent our bodies and the world outside. Mostly we think that we are the tank itself, but we are the water in the tank and not the tank itself, and so we have access to both the tanks simultaneously. As consciousness we can touch ourselves and the world at one and the same time. This is one way we can concentrate on our true Self, which is not limited to Mr. So-and-So—this person or that person. It is that which connects both this and that, both the *adhyatma*

and the *adhibhuta*. The one tank is the *adhyatma* and the other tank is the *adhibhuta*, and the water in it is the consciousness which connects both and which can have access to both at the same time.

Another form of meditation is where we feel that we are rising up in an airplane. Imagine being seated in an airplane and rising up. We know that the higher we go, the smaller the objects below will look. So high do we go in an airplane that the Earth looks very small. The prior sense of immensity and complexity at the Earth level becomes very insignificant. As we go higher up, people look like ants and huge buildings lose their importance, and if we go even higher the whole Earth may look like a dust particle. If we go still further, then we may feel that the whole solar system is like a small bunch of physical bodies in which there is a small shining centre which is the sun. Higher still and we may see even the whole of the Milky Way in which the solar system moves, and higher still we may see all the many stars beyond it. Higher, higher and higher we rise, until the whole universe is seen as something overcome, skipped over and transcended. We cannot see anything on Earth, as it is altogether gone from our vision. Simultaneously with this thought, connect the thought of this consciousness flowing between the two tanks. That which is rising up in the plane is the consciousness and not the body. The consciousness has not only connected itself in the subject and the object, it has also risen above them. Consciousness is then both immanent and transcendent. Consciousness is immanent in the seer, the seen and also in the connecting link, and we experience transcendence by ascending to higher and higher levels and feeling ourselves to be a consciousness that is universal.

## **CHAPTER THIRTEEN**

### **THE NECESSITY FOR YOGA**

Now we have to go back to the lessons we had at the very beginning and freshen up our memories about the need which we felt for the practice of yoga. The need also will explain to some extent the methods that we have to employ, just as the measure of our hunger will tell us what type of diet we have to take. There was a necessity for yoga, and that necessity itself is sufficient explanation of its methodology of approach. The need was felt on account of a lack that was felt in social life. There was a persistent feeling within that something is dead wrong with human society, and the world is not going to make us happy. This is what is called “the divine discontent” which comes upon every seeking soul. It is a discontent, but it is divine, because it is a pointer to a higher kind of life. If nothing can satisfy us in this world, it goes without saying that we actually have an idea as to what can satisfy us. That something which may satisfy us should be something different from anything we can have in this world, because the world has been seen to be incapable of providing satisfaction. We have experimented with different persons and different things, and we find them unsatisfying. Then it was that we felt the necessity for a deeper probe into our situations.

Earlier in our discussions, we went into the method of relief from inner tensions caused by a conflict between the ideal within our minds and the reality without. We are not happy, because society is not always going to accept the requests of our minds. We have many kinds of rules in society on account of which our movements are restricted and the avenues of our satisfaction are limited. These are some of the reasons we found for our being unhappy in the world—we would like the whole world for ourselves, but that will not be allowed because other persons are there like us in the world who want equally as much. As a result we try many other methods of satisfying ourselves in this world. These methods, covertly employed, also do not always succeed. Sometimes our secrets get known to people, and then matters become worse. However, even if our methods are not discovered, they do not always succeed.

There is a moral prick of the conscience, a fear, an anxiety, an incapacity and various other factors coming upon us to defeat our purposes. So, man is not happy. This is what we discovered by a careful analysis of the social situation. Even if psychoanalysis is going to relieve this tension for the time being, the world is not always going to be our friend. The analytic technique of psychology is not a permanent relief, but is only a medicine applied for a temporal headache. However, we are going to be unhappy even after we are relieved of this illness. Hence comes the need for a further research into our mental realm, which was the objective of yoga analysis.

The need for yoga has been felt because the world has been discovered to be impossible to manage. The world wants us to abide by its rules and regulations. Although the urge within us is to control our environment, the world is not going to abide by our whims and fancies. This is what we discovered through our earlier analysis. It looks as if we have become a puppet in the hands of the rules of the world. There have been dictators who tried to ravage the whole world with their powers, because of the urge they felt to rule over everything. But afterwards they discovered that the method they employed was

not successful, and the world recoiled upon them with a great revenge. Dictators never fully succeeded in the world; they were all wiped out, because the world took such a vengeance upon them.

### **THE URGE TO OVERCOME THE WORLD**

The world is not going to be subjugated by human powers, it is not going to be utilised for human purposes, and it is not going to be used as an instrument for human satisfaction. This is what we ultimately realise—often when it is too late to amend. All people that lived in this world, ever since creation perhaps, have realised this truth finally when they were about to leave this world for the other world. Yoga is a conscious analysis of this peculiar situation in which we find ourselves. It is an attempt at resolving another conflict that seems to be behind this superficial conflict between the psychological ideal and the social law outside. The inner, deeper conflict is the apparent irreconcilability of the urge to overcome the world and the possibility to overcome the world.

If it is absolutely impossible to do anything with the world, why is it that we have an irresistible urge to conquer the world and make it our own? What is this irrationality in our aspirations? Everyone wishes to control everything and have everything for oneself. “If the whole universe is mine, it will be very good. Well, I may fail in the implementation of my desire—that is a different matter—but why is this desire working in me at all?” Such a devil is working inside us which seems to have no reason.

Yoga tells us that it is not a devil working; it is something full of meaning which is highly rational in its conduct. This urge is not irrational. The way of its implementation may be irrational, but the urge itself is supremely rational. It is explicable within the very structure of things, and yoga tries to discover the rationality behind this urge in the human mind. To subdue the whole world—the whole universe if possible—and to find ways and means of materialising this urge is possible, because something totally impossible cannot rise in our conscience. If it is absolutely unreal, it should be impossible for it to rise into our minds.

The conflict is not between our desires and the social laws—the conflict seems to be something different. It is between the irresistible urge for perfection within and the impossibility of implementing it in practical life. Our longing for perfection contradicts the realities outside in the world, and vice versa. While perfection is the thing that we need and we want, it is the only thing that we cannot find in the world. This is the contradiction between the world outside and the longings inside. It is not merely social laws that contradict us; the world’s structure itself seems to be such that it appears to be in conflict with what we long for from within.

We tried to understand the reason for this urge within us in our analysis of perception of the world in one earlier stage of our study. We realised that we have as our true nature and true Self something which seems to be transcending our body personality, and which is transcendent even to the world of objects outside. This is what we studied. By implication, by inference and analytical judgement we discovered that the true Self must be different from the material encasement. The Self seems to be a conscious entity which refuses to be restricted to the bodily limitations, and it moves out in its reaches to the objects outside. It seems to be immanent, not only in us as personalities or

individualities, but it also seems to be immanent in the objects of perception outside. Not only this, it seems to be present even in the process of perception.

I have already given an analogy for us to meditate on, namely, the waters in two tanks being connected with a stream. Our consciousness, our true Self, seems to be a kind of stream filling our personality here, filling the object there, and connecting the two together in an inseparable, indivisible and unbroken link. Such seems to be our true nature, and there should be no wonder as to why an urge for overcoming the conflict between the inner and the outer should arise in our consciousness.

The longing for perfection arises not merely from the mental realm of our personality. The mind, which is limited to the body in all its practical functions, receives an impetus from the consciousness within. The impetus is a universal urge, because the consciousness is indivisible. This indivisible something which seems to fade away into an infinitude of being, gives a push to this limited mind, and an infinite push can be tremendously powerful. We can imagine how powerful the infinite could be, and such infinitude of propulsion received by this fragile mind of ours is the explanation for this longing to attain unlimited perfection—whether or not the world of objects outside is going to understand it and answer its needs. In its discovery of the rationality behind this human longing for perfection, yoga psychology realises also another important fact. If anything is rational, it should be practicable; the irrational is impractical. If there is any reason behind our longing for this infinitude of perfection, if it is rationally justifiable, it should also be practicable.

Yoga should therefore be a practicable affair, and it should not merely be a wild goose chase. If an infinitude of my being is the explanation for my longing, I should be able to fulfil this longing. My mistake may be in not being able to put it into practice properly in a world of this nature. The mistake does not lie in the longing itself. The urge within itself is not meaningless, but the difficulty seems to be in how to relate it to the circumstances of the world outside. We don't lack intelligent people in this world, but we lack people who can relate their intelligence properly to the prevailing situations in the world.

There is no use in having intelligence merely in theory. The intelligence has to come down to the level of the earth and then be acted out in accordance with the practical conditions prevailing in the world. Intelligence is not merely a theory; it is a capacity to adjust oneself with the world outside. That is intelligence. When rationality, which is another name for intelligence, pushes itself forward in our lives, it also gives us hope and seems to promise a fulfilment of our expectations. Yoga analysis of psychology is therefore deeper than the psychoanalytic techniques, because while psychoanalysis concerns itself merely with the conflicts of one individual in his relation to the society immediately around him, the psychology of yoga concerns itself with a genuine conflict of the human mind in general—not merely with one person's mind in its relation to what is outside itself.

It is not my difficulty or your difficulty—it is the difficulty of every person in this world. There is no use in studying one person's mind to cure an illness, because this illness is general to all people. We cannot take one person to the clinic and examine the mind of that person and cure that person of that conflict. It is impossible to truly cure the malady in this manner. It is a general malady that seems to be pervading the minds of

all people, and it is more a subject of general psychology than abnormal psychology. Sober minds which are perfectly sane are in this state of conflict. It is not abnormal minds alone that are in conflict—normal minds are also in conflict, says yoga. What we call normalcy of behaviour is itself a kind of conflict. We call it normalcy because everybody seems to be in the same kind of conflict. If everybody in the world is a fool, we cannot know who is a fool, because foolishness looks normal. If there is however another person of a different nature, then we can try to find out the distinction. Everybody without exception in this world seems to be in a similar state of conflict. Not even one is an exception; hence, we cannot know that we are in a state of conflict.

### **YOGA BRINGS FREEDOM FROM CONFLICT**

Conflict has become a state of normalcy to us. Inside there is conflict, and outside there is conflict. Everywhere there is conflict in every person that we see. We live in a world of conflicts, and therefore it is that we are not able to realise our situation. We cannot judge whether people are abnormal or normal. It is difficult to define what is abnormalcy and what is normalcy. For us, the majority is normalcy, and the minority seems to be abnormal, but this is not the correct way of judgement. The judgement of yoga psychology is more fundamental, and it needs a profounder rectification of the ways of human thinking than is generally known to people. That we look all right need not mean that we really are all right. To actually be all right is a different thing altogether. If we were really all right, there would be no sense of longing or want in our minds anymore.

The sense of want itself is an indication that something is not all right in us. If there is something annoying our minds, we cannot just go scot-free with the idea that we are normal in our ways of thinking. According to yoga psychology, to be perfectly normal is to be free from any kind of conflict with nature outside—not merely with people around us. Even if all our friends agree with us, the world—which is more than just people—may not agree with us. If all the world of people is going to claim that we are normal, or perhaps even a great person, it need not be correct, because the world is more than people put together. The other aspect of the world which is different from ‘people put together’ may not agree with this conclusion.

Yoga goes deeper still—deeper than human psychology—into the psychology of creation itself. The yoga student therefore is not considered merely to have relationships with human beings. The world does not merely mean mankind. When we talk of world peace, for example, we unfortunately mean only mankind’s peace, but mankind does not make up the whole world. Mankind is only one part of the world. What makes us think that humanity is all the world? Universal brotherhood does not merely mean mankind’s brotherhood. Yoga psychology recognises this and therefore goes into the fundamentals. Unless we are in harmony with the world in its truth, we are not going to be happy in this world.

The world is not merely man—remember this important point again. Even if we are in tune with all people, we cannot be truly happy. A thunderstorm may strike on our heads, but this has nothing to do with people appreciating us or being friendly with us. The impetuous forces of nature and the intractability of the elements are something quite different from man’s attitude towards them. The earth’s orbit, for example, has nothing to do with people’s thinking about us or people’s thinking about themselves. If all the

nations are at peace, it doesn't mean that we can have any control over the movement of the Earth. We can have international peace in mankind's realm, but peace cannot be insured by everyone merely acceding to it. Something else also has to accede, and we cannot ignore that aspect of the matter.

We have to remember that there is a vast universe around us, wider than the population of the world, and we cannot completely ignore it in our consideration of our environment outside. To yoga, the world is not mankind merely, and not humanity. Yoga also considers the world in its creational aspect. One may say that yoga psychology is more metaphysical than it is simply human. In one sense we may call yoga "metaphysical psychology", in the sense that it goes into the fundamentals of things as they are and not as they merely appear to us. Social adjustment may be a need, but adjustment to the world is something which should be regarded as a greater need.

With this foundation, yoga tries to build up the structure of its practice. The psychology of the mind in its relation to other minds is different from the psychology of the mind in relation to existent things as they are. Generally, what we mean by psychology is mental reaction to other minds—especially human minds. But what is the mind's reaction to other things of the world? These things also exert an influence upon us.

The objects of perception are the concern of yoga psychology—not merely the minds of other people. The reconciliation of the mind with its objects is the foundation of yoga psychology. This reconciliation has been attempted by the Samkhya, and it also did not succeed. The reconciliation was not practicable because of the conflict between the *purusha* and the *prakriti* of the Samkhya. On one side there is the infinite consciousness of the *purusha*, on the other side there is the infinite *prakriti* or matter. There was a gulf between the two, and one stared at the other without being able to touch the other. If *prakriti* gazes at *purusha* and the *purusha* gazes at *prakriti*, and one will not come in contact with the other, what is the relation between the one and the other? There Samkhya ended in a particular philosophy of its own, into which we need not enter now.

Yoga psychology realised that, notwithstanding this metaphysical dualism of the Samkhya, a kind of freedom for the *purusha* could be achieved if it could understand its true relation with *prakriti*. Consciousness can appreciate its relation with matter. In our analysis of perception done earlier, we went beyond the gulf in the Samkhya between *purusha* and *prakriti* and discovered a natural relationship of consciousness between the subject and the object. It appeared that a proper reconciliation between the subject and the object would be impossible without delving into this consciousness which is between the subject and the object. Yoga psychology therefore is based upon the acceptance of the fact that the gulf between the subject and the object is not final, but it can be resolved through adopting a means higher than that available merely to the individual mind. It is a means which seems to have connection with a deeper nature of the individual—the true Self of the individual.

All lower conflicts can be explained only by the higher reconciliation. Nothing that is visible before our eyes and nothing that we think in our minds can be resolved or understood properly without reference to a realm above, higher than or deeper than the mind and the senses. Thus, we philosophically conclude that the practice of yoga should finally be based on a reconciliation between consciousness within and matter without. It may also be the point of the Samkhya, namely, the reconciliation between the *purusha*



within and the *prakriti* without. Man and nature have to be reconciled—they should not create a jarring noise between themselves, they should not clash, and they should move parallel with the same speed and with adequate understanding of each other.

If nature and man, the object and the subject are to move parallel, at the same speed, and in the same direction, there will be no conflict, and the world would then be our friend. But if the world moves in one direction and our minds move in another, there will be no parallel movement in us, and we are not going to be reconciled. The world is not going to answer to our needs. Now, the question is, is the world going to follow me, or am I to follow the world? Who is to lead, and who is to follow? Man, in his egoism, feels that the world should follow him. This is the dictator's attitude, and we know what happened to the dictators. Not one of them has survived, because nature has no ego, and it will not tolerate an ego. The ego will be subjugated one day or the other. Man cannot bring nature down to follow his ego. The egoless condition is superior to the egoistic condition, because the former is more general, while the latter is special and particularised. While the former condition of egolessness is applicable in all conditions, the condition of egoity is applicable to individuals alone. The special has to be subsumed into the general.

Man has to obey nature, for nature will not obey man, and a proper settlement between the two must be arrived at if both are to exist and function at a common level of reality. At present, the levels of reality between the two are poles apart. The conflict between man and nature has been caused by the ego of man; but if ego is removed, nature fuses itself into man and man fuses himself into nature. There should be nothing to prevent this union. Two egoless beings will cease to be two beings—there will be only one being. While two egos try to repel each other, egoless beings try to unite with each other. When man becomes egoless, he becomes one with nature outside, and he becomes as powerful as nature itself.

### **THE PSYCHOLOGY OF YOGA IS THE FUNDAMENTAL SCIENCE**

The harder the ego, the weaker is the person, because the more he is remote from the natural powers. The most egoistic of people are also the weakest. They may assume an attitude of power and confidence, but nevertheless they can feel threatened from any side. The lesser the ego, the more powerful and confident we feel, because of our being backed up by the natural forces around us. Therefore, the path of yoga is to diminish the ego, so that it may become in tune with the egoless condition of nature. The individuality should become more and more ethereal, thinned out and capable of attunement with the egoless condition of nature. The object before the mind is not merely one local body like a mountain or a tree; the object is all things that are in front of us. The whole of nature is our object, and all the small bodies are only parts of it. The mountains, the rivers, the trees, the plants and the many things that we see in front of us are nature gazing at us from different directions. Nature in its totality is our object. Man's mind has only one object, not many objects. We have to confront only one thing in the world and not many things. The whole creation is a single object which is operating with its many hands; but they are only hands—the body is one. The five elements, the astronomical universe in front of us, and even the bodies of personalities—all these are only arms of a single nature spread out everywhere.

We have to confront nature in its completeness and not try to confront this person, that

person, this body or that body. This is not going to satisfy us. In that sense, the psychology of yoga is more all-encompassing than the general psychology which is studied in schools and colleges. Yoga is a psychology of the mind in its relationship with a universal object, and it does not deal merely with the relationship between this object and that object. Hence, it is the study of fundamental problems of human nature. If these problems are studied, we study the problems of everyone in the world—mine, yours and everybody's. The psychology of yoga is the fundamental science, and it is the gate to open up the mysteries of nature itself.

Yoga meditation, which is the actual practice of yoga finally, is a development of the psychology of yoga and a blossoming of its psychological investigation, we may say. We cannot practise meditation unless we are an adept in this psychology. There is no use in merely closing the eyes and meditating when the mind is not prepared for it. The mind in all its functions, including the function of meditation, is backed up by a power within. In ordinary life the mind is pushed by a longing for satisfaction of its desires, but in meditation—which is the highest reach of yoga—it is stimulated within by a universal longing for Self-realisation. In this stirring up of consciousness towards a meditation on reality, there is a contribution made by every part of nature. Friendship and co-operation come to us from nature from every side.

In the same way, when opposition comes from nature, then it will also come from every side. When nature opposes us, we will find ourselves in hot water at every moment. Wherever we look we will find problems, difficulties and troubles, if nature starts opposing us. We cannot place our foot in this world when nature is against us, but if it is co-operative, we will find heaven everywhere. This is how nature works—for or against. It is like God Himself working. If God opposes us, the opposition will come from ten directions, but if He starts helping us, He will provide us with bliss from ten directions. We can imagine how difficult meditation is, given that nature is our object of study and analysis and that this is the foundation of yoga meditation.

Let go of the idea that meditation is a simple affair. On what are we meditating? Who is our object of meditation? We cannot engage ourselves in a meditation of any kind if nature is against us—it will put an end to our meditation in a minute. Meditation may not succeed unless we are co-operative with nature and friendly with it, and only then will it permit this function of our minds to proceed in meditation. We need to have a thorough understanding of what this meditation means and what we are supposed to do, and only then can the practice of yoga advance.

The act of meditation, which is real yoga, is a function of the mind in its relation not only with our individual personality and society outside, but also in its relations with the world as a whole. The psychology of yoga is very interesting, but it also requires in its studies a very careful attention to the mind. We are not studying in this psychology a particular mind, but “mind stuff,” which means in its generality “chitta.” It is the usual term used in yoga to signify the stuff of the mind, rather than solely the mentation of the mind. In this psychology we are not merely studying thinking, but rather the mind stuff itself. It is the substance of which our psychological organs are made—the stuff of the mind which is in relation to the stuff of the universe outside. This chitta is not just thinking connected with one person or thing outside. The substance of our minds is in conflict with the substance of the world outside, and so the substance within has to be

brought into reconciliation with the substance without. This is the purpose of the psychology of yoga. We now know where we stand when we are a student of yoga.

It is not a joke—it is a very serious matter, and nothing could be more serious in this world. We know what things we are dealing with in yoga and how we are to understand ourselves and what confronts us outside. What our problems and difficulties are should be clear to our minds. Yoga is something more momentous than any other thing in this world. Yoga is not one of the duties or the functions of a person, it is the only function of a person—nothing can be as important, and everything else comes afterwards. All other things pale in significance, considering the importance of yoga. When we understand this properly, everything else becomes meaningless, relatively speaking. All functions, performances, duties and all commencements in life come afterwards, because all these become insignificant when compared with the importance of this supreme enterprise of the human mind in yoga.

Yoga is not a hobby. We may try it and leave it, or try to go without it, but we cannot go without it. Yoga is not of the East or the West—it is of everybody. It is not of a man or a woman, it is not of this age or that age, and it is not merely local. It is the law of the cosmos that we study in yoga, and who can exist without it? Can anyone afford to be without it? One can imagine what yoga is and what it means to mankind and the world. This should strengthen our personality and give us confidence, because we are dealing with realities and not with phantoms. At the same time, yoga gives us an idea of the ways of approach in life.

All this should remind us how cautious we ought to be in yoga. We are dealing with a thing which is everywhere around us. If people are surrounding us in all directions, we are more cautious in dealing with them than when there is only one person in front of us. Let there be no misapprehension that we are dealing with this object or the other object in yoga. We are dealing with a force rather than an object—a force which is in all directions—and a force which is also within us. Yoga is a study of universal force and a realisation of it in practical life. For a few minutes at least each day we should close our eyes and contemplate this truth.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

### THE TRUE RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

The purpose of yoga is attunement of the individual with the cosmic, and inasmuch as in this effort the cosmic has to be approached as it is and not as it appears to us, a difficulty presents itself. We can only know it to some extent as it appears before our eyes, but any kind of approach to it in the manner it appears rather than as it truly is would be a mishandling of its laws. These laws will naturally set up a reaction when they are not properly handled. We cannot know what is in the world outside, inasmuch as our ways of knowing are the eyes, the ears and the different senses. These are incompetent to know nature, the world or the universe for two reasons. One, they are a part of the world, a part of nature and a part of the universe, and so we cannot know that which is their very cause. The second reason is that the world stands before the senses and the mind on account of the operation of the law of space, time and causation. However, there is one way by which we can have some idea as to what nature contains within itself. It is this clue that yoga takes in its analysis as well as its practice.

That which is in us should naturally be that which is in nature, because we cannot have anything within ourselves which is outside nature's purview. By an entry into our own personality, by a study of what we are, we can know what the world is, because we are specimens of what the world is made of. The study of the subject by the subject, the study of oneself by oneself, may give an indication as to the way the world outside has to be approached. What we are the world also is, and therefore the way we have to approach ourselves should be the way we have to approach the world. There is no other way, and any other way would be an erroneous path which will not lead to success. We already tried to make an analysis of the layers of the cosmic existence outside. What is within is without, and vice versa.

Inasmuch as yoga is an attempt at the integration of forces within in relation to the corresponding forces without, yoga has taken many forms. Some have emphasised only the subjective approach, some the objective approach, and some have tried to bring the two together. The purely subjective approach led to such techniques as *hatha* yoga, *kundalini* yoga and certain aspects of *raja* yoga of Patanjali, and sometimes to the extreme views of certain idealists.

The mentalists and a few proponents of the Vedanta philosophy took a very subjective turn in their ways of analysis and practice. The special emphasis on the subjectivity of truth took such extreme turns that the world was seen as being only in our heads, and that every head has a world of its own within. It looked as if our minds were making this world. We have heard it said that the world is a mental creation, though we might not have understood properly in what sense it is a mental creation. There are numerous people who go on harping on this notion that the world is made up of mind stuff. This is a purely subjective approach made by certain schools of thought which confine themselves to the discoveries made within the human personality. However, these schools did not pay sufficient attention to the outer counterpart of the human personality, namely, the universe or the macrocosm.

On the other hand, another section of people did not pay sufficient attention to the subjectivity of truth, and contended that truth is purely objective. This was the *bhaktimarga* or the devotional path in which God is objectivity rather than subjectivity. Contrary to the *hathayogins*, the *kundaliniyogins* or some of the Vedantins, the *bhaktas* (devotees) began to affirm the pure objectivity of God and sometimes even, in Christian theology especially, His utter transcendence rather than immanence. Also in the Muslim school of thought we have the transcendence of God emphasised rather than immanence. “God is above, not here,” they would contend.

### TRANSCENDENCE AND IMMANENCE

All devotional schools of thought emphasise the transcendental aspect of God rather than His immanence. Though they do not deny His immanence, they are not very much concerned with it. God is above rather than within; God is difficult of approach, rather than an immediacy within us; God is a Father, the Supreme Parent, rather than the Atman within—these are all the emphasis of the *bhakti* cults both in the East and the West. God is the universal rather than the individual. He is the omnipresent and omniscient Creator of this vast universe, and it is in this attitude that we have to approach Him, the most magnificent, all-encompassing and transcendent Reality. This is how God is approached in the devotional schools or the *bhaktimarga*, in which the subjectivity of the devotee becomes insignificant to a large extent. The seeker is a small insignificant individual before this tremendous Maker of the cosmos.

Who is this small, puny man before this tremendous and magnificent Creator of this universe? So the path of surrender or *bhakti* emphasised that the small man is nothing before this Supreme Master of the cosmos. The only way to approach God in this way would be to annihilate the personality, which is really a nothing in its essentiality before God, who is the Maker of all things. How large is God, how huge is this cosmos, how enthralling is this universe, and what is this small man in regard to this frightening universe? How powerful should God be, Who is the Creator of this magnificent universe? How can such a powerful being like God, the Sovereign of the universe, be approached by a puny and mortal individual encased in a body? Hence, the importance of the subject is abolished in *bhakti* yoga, and the importance of the object is emphasised.

The Vedanta takes the opposite point of view. The Vedanta has many schools, and not all the schools agree with one another. One of the schools, which is the most extreme in its subjectivity of approach, abolishes the value of the object and emphasises the pure subject only, saying that the whole universe is a creation of our minds. In the West there was a philosopher of this kind named George Berkeley, who is reputed to have propounded the curious philosophy that even the mountains, rivers and trees in front of us are dancing just because our mind is dancing—otherwise they wouldn’t be there. If we do not think of them, they will not be there. This is the Berkeleyan subjectivity of the West, which is not a new thing for India, because in India we also had thinkers of that kind.

Extreme emphasis on one side, namely the subjectivity of reality, led to the conclusion that the whole world is in the mind of man—your mind, my mind and so on. We ourselves make the whole cosmos. It went to such an extreme that certain Vedantins began to affirm that even the idea of God is only in our minds. “There is no God except

what we contain in our own thoughts. Even the idea of *Ishvara* is a concept of our minds. Even the idea of the Creator is an idea, after all.” This was a tremendous move to one extreme side which was taken in the idealism of the subjective Vedantin.

On the other hand we have the extreme step of the *bhaktas* or devotees, who denied the importance of the individual and emphasised only the supremacy of the Creator of the outside world. We therefore have a gulf between the Vedanta and *bhakti* yoga, the one saying that we make the world, and the other saying that we are made rather than being the maker. Both these approaches are good so far as they go, but they present certain difficulties of their own, because whenever we take a step in one direction, we are going away from another direction. This is a very simple principle which we can easily understand. When we move in one direction, we are going away from another direction, and we cannot pay sufficient attention to all directions at the same time. If we move towards Badrinath, we are going away from Rishikesh. If we move towards Rishikesh, we are going away from Badrinath. How can we move in two directions at the same time? What happened to us then is that these theories which were originally meant as solutions to human problems ended only as theories. They were only doctrines and philosophies, but were not solutions for human problems. There were many such schools of these thinkers holding endless discussions, and controversies increased both in the *bhakti* school as well as in the Vedanta school.

If we study the history and philosophy of religion, especially in India, we will find how interesting the nature of the controversy was and how it would eventually lead to a more practical approach. However, at the time people became merely meaningless puppets in ideological discussions which had no bearing on practical life. Philosophy, which originally was intended to be a furtherance of wise and practical living, became the object of extreme analysis and study which led the mind astray. The difficulties of the merely logical approach had such an impact on the practical attitude to things that life became a bundle of difficulties, in spite of these schools of thought which abounded in the country. Even today these people persist, and even today we have people who follow the different schools, and the emphasis is only on the differences of the schools rather than on the aim or the objective of the path that is to be taught. The *Vaishnava* does not like the *Saiva*, the *Saiva* does not like the *Vaishnava*, the *Advaitin* does not like the *Dvaitin*, the North does not like the South, the West does not like the East, the white does not like the black, the top does not like the bottom—this is what we find in the world. All this will naturally lead to dissension among human beings, landing them in an abyss on account of having gone astray from the original intention of the practice of philosophy and religion.

### **RELIGION MUST BE PRACTICAL AND NOT JUST THEORETICAL**

Religion gets despised when it loses its purpose and when it becomes merely a foolishness of the priests, the churchgoers or the temple-worshippers. Today most unfortunately, religion has become both in the East and the West a doctrine rather than a way of life, a theory rather than a technique of practice, and a kind of psychological accretion that has grown over the personalities of people which can be shed if we wear our religion as we wear our coat on our bodies—we can put it on or throw it off. “If I want religion, I shall have it; if I don’t want it, I shall cast it away like an unneeded coat.” This is the reason why we have certain governments, for example, which do not want

religion, because religion has nothing to do with life. If religion has nothing to do with life, how can it have anything to do with the hard practical ways of living of the government? It is impossible to reconcile religion and the spiritual approach with the governmental administration and the sociological way of thinking, when religion becomes merely a kind of balm that we apply to ourselves, but which can be washed off.

This 'balm' is the theoretical extremism of the priests and the dogmatists of religion rather than the participants in it. We are facing forces today which threaten the very existence of religion—atheism, materialism and many other 'isms'. The threat is due to this armchair philosophy of religion which the propounders of organised religion began to teach without concern for the practical problems of life. Religion is not going to survive if it has nothing to do with practical living, because we cannot live merely with theories. What are theories? They are only formulas that we make, like formulas in arithmetic or algebra. We cannot live merely with formulas. They are meant to be applied in the technological field, the practical field and also in the field of living, but we cannot live merely with diagrams, formulas, techniques and scientific theories. These are only symbols that represent a fact, and if the fact is not there and if we have only symbols before us, life becomes empty. There is then this apparent gulf between life and religion today.

There is a difference today between the rulers and the pope, the bishops and the teachers of religion. We have the common schism between religion and administration—they have nothing to do with each other. We call a country a "secular state" or a "secular society". This implies that religion is only a fancy and a whim of our minds which is better kept aside rather than connected to our practical lives. This attitude is deleterious to the health of the personality. Today we know this attitude and this understanding of religion, philosophy and spirituality have been the cause not merely of a doctrinal difference between practical living and religious aspiration, but it has led to certain more serious problems in life, such as revolts of people in different sections of society. Revolts are the things which we read about in newspapers nowadays: revolting factories, revolting schools, revolting universities, revolts in the family, revolts of the son against the father, and revolts of the subordinates against the bosses in the office. The whole life of the world today can be summed up in the word 'revolt'. No cooperation, but only revolt. I revolt against you, you revolt against me—this is life.

This is the point people have reached today after the advance of civilisation. The reason should be simple and easy to understand—there has been no connection between what our heart feels and what our life demands. The needs of society, the needs of the body and the needs of our personality have nothing to do with our inner aspirations. They seem to belong to different worlds altogether. This erroneous approach to the ideology of the heart of man and the needs of the personality outside have their effects in every level of society, and they also affect seekers of truth. The ideas and ideologies enshrined in churches and monasteries and even in yoga practice, the gulf between the inner and the outer, and the differences between the subjective and the objective have been the "original sin", if we could call it that.

This misapprehension has descended upon mankind in every one of its levels, and we cannot reconcile the inner and the outer in any field of life. It may be in our kitchens, in our bathrooms, it may be in our offices, it may be between two friends, it may be in any

level of society—we will find this gulf between the inner and the outer is a gulf that always remains. We do not know what to do with the friend near us. That which we see in front of us may become a terrifying apparition which we would want to avoid at all costs. This attitude of the bifurcation of the inner and the outer is philosophically the Samkhya, politically the difference between the state and religion, psychologically the difference between desire and its fulfilment, and spiritually, religiously and philosophically it is the difference between us and our Maker—man and God.

The true purpose of yoga in its essence is to bridge this gulf, and when yoga bridges this gulf, it bridges the gulf in every level of society, so that it becomes a remedy for every one of society's ailments. Yoga is a bridge between us and God, and also between two friends. It is the solution for the difficulty that people have in relation to everything that is outside them. A yogi would be a good businessman and not merely a good meditator. He would be a good worker, he would be a good friend, he would be a good cook, as well as a good sweeper. He would be the best of the lot. That is what yoga will do for us, if we understand what yoga is. If we were a clerk in an office, we would be the best clerk if we were a *yogin* along with being a clerk.

Even if we do the work of sweeping, we will find that we sweep better than anybody else—we do it as a yogi does because yoga is an art. It is that which gives beauty to things, and even simple things in life will assume an artistic shape when yoga is behind these simple things of life. Wherever there is a gulf between the inner and the outer, there is ugliness. Wherever there is harmony between the two, there is beauty. The art of painters and musicians, architectural and sculptural beauty, and the beauty of literature are nothing but the beauty of the harmony between the inner and the outer. Wherever there is this union between the inner and the outer, there is beauty and there is happiness, there is strength, and there is a feeling of completeness in life.

#### **YOGA IS NEITHER SUBJECTIVE NOR OBJECTIVE**

An extremist attitude in yoga should be avoided. There is no use being a Vedantin or a *bhakta* in name only, because there is no such thing as a Vedantin or a *bhakta* before God. These are names that we have coined for our own convenience. When we stand before God, what are we? We cannot say, "I am a Vedantin, I am a philosopher, I am a devotee." We are no such thing, as we can bear no appellation before God. When we approach and begin to practise the system of yoga, we should approach it as we would approach God Himself in all the possible simplicity in our make-up.

When we are a student of yoga, we are neither a man nor a woman, because before God we cannot be a man or a woman. When we are a student of yoga, we are not a tax collector or a government worker or this or that official, because before God we cannot be any of these things. Our height or weight, our profession and our name or form make no difference to us when we stand as a unit of aspiration in the practice of yoga. The yoga student is a unit of aspiration, and not a human being. We are not Mr. So-and-So—we are not a person, really speaking. It is not a person that is approaching God. If that were our attitude, we would not approach God at all. God does not look upon us as a person of this kind or that kind. We are a simple spark of the divine flame, and it is this spark that tries to unite itself with the universal conflagration of divinity. That is yoga.

Again, caution has to be exercised in our minds when we approach yoga, namely, that



we do not practise it merely as an adherent of a school of yoga. Do not say, “I am a *hathayogin*, *rajayogin*, *bhaktayogin*, Vedantin, *kundaliniyogin*,” and all this. These are all just jargon of the schools, which will simply lead us astray. Do not say, “I am practising this kind of meditation, that kind of meditation.” These are all merely advertising slogans of the marketplace, and these are not going to cut ice before God. We have to be humble, and we cannot rely on name or advertising in the practise of yoga. We cannot approach this mystery of yoga so easily, in the same way that we cannot approach the mystery of creation or the mystery of God so easily.

Honesty and simplicity are the watchwords of yoga practice, because it is easy to misunderstand yoga and slip out of the golden mean of the practice. Yoga is a golden mean between two extremes. Because it is easy to slip on a precipitous path, we have to place our feet with great caution if we are walking near a huge precipice or slippery ground, lest we should fall down. In the same way we have to walk this path of yoga, which is a subtle and sharp golden mean between two extremes. As the poet John Dryden has said it somewhere, “Genius and madness look alike, a thin partition divides them both.” Genius to madness is near alike—this side is genius, that side is madness. A hair’s breadth of partition lies between the two realms, and such is the hair’s breadth partition between success in yoga and failure in it. If we rise in yoga, we will rise to the top. If we fall, we will be in the nether regions. This is what yoga will do to us.

It is a subtle, golden mean and not a broad highway on which we travel while closing our eyes. It is a very, very narrow path. In the Kathopanishad it is very beautifully said that the path is sharp and subtle like the edge of a razor. How sharp is the edge of a razor? We cannot see it with our naked eyes—so sharp, subtle and pointed is the edge. Such is this path of yoga: subtle and difficult to observe with the naked eye, because it is a very subtle medium between the extremes of approach. For example, we have the great extreme approaches of idealism and realism in philosophy. Yoga is neither of these. It is neither the idealistic approach nor the realistic. It is neither a subjective approach nor an objective, and in true yoga we are neither going to be a *bhakta* nor a Vedantin.

We are something different from both but yet combining both the elements in us. Whenever we try to practise yoga, we should place ourselves before the Creator of the cosmos. “What am I before Him? That I am even now.” We are an unnamed, formless unit of spiritual longing. With this attitude we have to practise yoga. The two extremes of approach of the objective and the subjective are obstacles in the practice of yoga, because creation is our object of study and not the external world. The world is not external to us, as creation is not external. As we are a part of creation, when we study creation, we study it as a whole.

Therefore, in yoga the study of the universe is not the study of an object outside. From the very beginning of the practice of yoga, it is a system of harmony—ethically, physiologically, vitally, psychologically, intellectually, spiritually and socially. Yoga commences its practice with the resolution of conflicts with society, and then it tries to solve the apparent differences between our present level and the higher levels of life. If we have any misgivings about the society around us, we may not be a good student of yoga. Before we step into the path of yoga, we must be clear that we have no enemies in the world, nor also too many attachments. Is there any person whom we hate from the bottom of our hearts, or is there any person who hates us from the bottom of his or her

heart? This will be a kind of social conflict which will tell upon our emotions one day or the other. “How I hate to look at that person.” Would we make such a remark regarding any person in the world? That is not proper. Before we try to take to the first limb in yoga, we should resolve this conflict first, because we cannot kick the world outside and then go to yoga. The world will come with us, wherever we go and at any level.

It is not the world as such that is of much consequence; it is rather our thoughts and emotions connected with the world that mean much. What will trouble us later on is not the world of physical objects but the relations of our thoughts and emotions with the objects. Our intense love and intense hatred are forms of emotions which have taken the shape of their corresponding objects outside. The harmony between the personality and society outside is the first step in yoga. We may call this the ethical or the moral discipline. The moral discipline is nothing but an attempt to maintain a harmony between our personality and society outside.

We should not be conspicuous in society in any manner—especially a student of yoga should not become conspicuous. We should become simple persons who may not be noticed too much by other people, either positively or negatively. Do not try to become a focal point of all eyes, because that would be another kind of psychological extreme into which we might fall. If society hates us too much, or if society thinks too much of us, that would not be good for us as students of yoga, because this again is a social extreme with a psychological reaction. We would then be thinking about that which thinks of us—this is a truth of psychology. We create a conflict between ourselves and society in many ways, on account of which we are mostly not at peace with ourselves. We are kept in a state of psychological suspense on account of unwanted circumstances of society around us.

The solution for this would be either to change society around us or change ourselves in conformity with the existing laws of society. There are two kinds of people in the world: one type wants to change their atmosphere and another that changes themselves. We are welcome to change society if we can; but if this cannot be done, we will have to change ourselves according to the norms of society. When we go to Rome, we should be a Roman; otherwise we will be made a Roman by the Romans. We can choose any of the ways we like according to our capacity and understanding, but if we cannot do either—if we cannot change our atmosphere outside and we also will not change ourselves—then we are not going to do well. We are going to have difficulties. We cannot digest our food and we cannot get good sleep, because the atmosphere is in conflict with us, and we are in conflict with it. The yoga system has found out a technique of establishing moral harmony between the personality and the society outside, and these are usually known as the *yamas* or the restraints of the moral sense. *Yama* is a restraint. The restraints of the *yamas* are a moral control exercised over the personality of the human being to render its relations with the outer world harmonious.

Love and hatred are the two strings with which we are connected to life. If these connections were to be snapped, there would then be no connection between us and the world. If we achieve a condition where we neither love anything nor hate anything, we become something different from a person. However, we retain our consciousness of personality on account of the loves and hatreds that we have for things. Either we cannot get on without certain things or with certain things. We have something to do

with the objects of the world which seem to be drawing our attention positively or negatively. Earlier I tried to suggest that a student of yoga should not live in an atmosphere where tempting objects are plentiful, because these objects will constantly attract the attention, and one would be consistently thinking of these objects. If the objects of sense are engaging our attention too much in such places, it is better if we change our locality. We should go to some other place for some time—for a few months at least. Sometimes we are emotionally connected with some other persons or with certain objects such as property or possessions we have, and we are thinking only of these.

Sometimes we are emotionally disturbed by imagined circumstances. One old but very rich man came to me once. His problem was very peculiar. I had been told that he did not get proper sleep and had some anxiety. I asked him, “What is your difficulty; why don’t you sleep?” “I have got great worries,” he said. I replied, “You are a well-to-do person. You have no monetary difficulties, I believe. Your health is all right, so what is your problem?” He said, “My difficulty is that by God’s grace I have plenty of money and lots of property, but my children are spendthrifts, and naturally when I die, they will waste all this money. This is my anxiety. After my death they are going to squander this wealth.” This is an example of someone worrying unnecessarily about imagined circumstances, and such anxieties are an example of how our thinking gets distracted.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

### THE LAWS OF PROPER CONDUCT

The moral code is the placement of oneself in the position of others. This, in one sentence, is the whole of the moral code. While this takes a purely psychological shape in the ordinary obedience of people to the moral law, it takes a little more difficult form when it becomes yoga morality. I have mentioned something about this distinction between ordinary morality and yoga morality on some other occasion. The moral sense which yoga requires of us is more personal than merely a conformity to social rules. It is not human society that we are taking with us when we enter into the portals of the practice of yoga; we take ourselves as representatives of humanity, as symbols of mankind as a whole. The whole human nature gets concentrated in us when we enter into the realm of the practice of yoga.

In the Srimad Bhagavad Gita for example, Arjuna represents mankind in its essence—not merely one individual in the historical past. The student of yoga is the quintessence of mankind, and he is not just one human being facing God. When we, as seekers of truth, students of yoga, stand face to face with the realities of the universe, we represent or symbolise the whole of mankind, and the entirety of human nature gets reflected in us. We become an exemplification of universal human nature and whatever be the final end of mankind will also be reflected in us at that time.

As a centre of humanity, in the practice of yoga we place ourselves before the mystery of the cosmos. It is not Siva Kiekenes practising yoga, or Swami Shankarananda or Swami Krishnananda practising yoga—there is no such thing. It is a unit of concentrated human nature that faces the might of the cosmos, and here the whole of nature reflected in the microcosm gets related to nature in its macrocosmic aspect. It is nature studying nature. “The proper study of mankind is man,” is a famous line of Pope, the great poet. When we study ourselves or try to know ourselves, we try to know the nature of that of which we are a symbol or a specimen. The study of ourselves is not the study of our individuality or of our personalities. “Know thyself” is the dictum, but what is this “thyself”? It is not a person who is studying himself. It is the nature behind the personality which becomes the incentive for study, as well as the object of study. The whole universe gets reflected in us in its aspect of microcosm. Thus, in yoga morality we find a necessity to rise higher than mere conformity to law and rule.

#### THE YAMAS AND NIYAMAS

The yoga system has two layers of the practice of morality. These are called the *yamas* and the *niyamas*. While *yama* is a kind of restraint voluntarily imposed upon oneself—underline the word “voluntarily”—in order that one’s personality may be set in tune with the regulations of society outside, *niyama* is restriction voluntarily imposed upon one’s individuality, rather than the outer personality. While *yama* has a social connotation, *niyama* has a purely personal connotation.

The practice of the *yamas* becomes a necessity on account of inescapable relations with human society. We cannot but have some sort of relations with people. Even a saint has some sort of connection with the outer world, what to speak of a beginner in yoga. Our

difficulty with the world, for all practical purposes, is our difficulty with people outside. The astronomical world does not trouble us so much; it is the human world that becomes our concern. Our pleasures and pains are more related to the people around us than the mountains and rivers or the solar system. The *yamas* then are a kind of adjustment of values of oneself in relation to human society outside.

There are various stages of the adjustment of oneself with reality. There are at least seven stages of preparation in yoga, at least seven stages of meditation and seven stages in the transformations that take place in the process of meditation. If we know all these, we will have studied the whole of yoga. The seven preparatory stages, especially according to the school of Patanjali and accepted by the other schools of yoga also with a slight modification of import, are respectively: adjustment of oneself with society which is *yama*; adjustment of oneself with the needs of one's personality which is *niyama*; adjustment of the body which is *asana*; adjustment of the *pranas* and the senses which is *pranayama* and *pratyahara*; adjustment of the mind which is *dharana*, and adjustment of the intellect which is *dhyana*. Then come the more complicated and the wider adjustments which we will look into a little later on.

Gradually, the mind is sublimated rather than withdrawn in these processes of self-adjustment. There is no such thing as a pure withdrawal in yoga. It is not a withdrawal of ourselves from society, or from the objects of the world that we are called upon to do in the practice of yoga. The question of withdrawal arises only when there is a connection. Most people, especially immature people in yoga, think that we are required to disconnect ourselves from human society. But something more than a mere disassociation is implied in these stages of adjustment. The connections which we have with the outer world are not merely mechanical links, such that we could snap them at our will. It is not an iron chain that connects one person with another person in the world. If that would have been the case, we would have snapped that link at one stroke, and there would have been no relation between us and the others.

However, the relation that we seem to have with people outside is not such a mechanical connection like one with an iron chain or a rope. Our relations with people and also with the other things of the world are a little more fundamental and vital. Hence, it is so hard for us to disassociate ourselves from society. Try to do it, and see how hard it is! If we are tied with a rope, we will easily snap that rope and go away, as there is no difficulty in doing it. But we cannot so easily disconnect ourselves from our relations with people around us, because we have certain personal relationships with various things in the world. If suddenly we were asked to snap these relations and go a thousand miles away from that place where we have things constantly with us, there will be a tremendous upheaval in our thoughts and feelings. We have been internally related to these things, and not merely outwardly. Our connections with people outside are internal, not outward. We are secretly related to things in a manner invisible to the physical eyes, and these relationships are purely personal. They cannot be seen from outside, except when they manifest themselves in concrete action. The yoga system has instituted a very methodical technique of not merely snapping ties, which would not be a wise step, but a sublimation of these ties.

The moral code of yoga is also a rule of sublimation of personal values. We know what sublimation is, as distinguished from disconnection or separation. To sever our affection

from an object is different from not having affections for an object—we know the difference. Snapping affections, that is one thing, but having no affections is another thing altogether. Yoga wants us not to snap affections, but to have no affections. The foundation of psychological analysis has been laid already by carefully seeing that, because of the light of understanding, affections do not rise at all in the mind. Once they arise it will be difficult to get disentangled from them.

The affections can become harder than iron chains, because our personal ties with things are internal in nature and are a part of ourselves moving to the object, as it were, and to snap the ties would be like snapping a part of our own bodies. It is as if we were cutting our own limbs when we sever our affection for things. There have been uninitiated, untutored students of yoga in India, even in Rishikesh which is famous for the practice of yoga, who have not properly understood the implication of the moral involvement in the objects of the world and the emotional connections that people have with the outer world. These untutored students may live an isolated life in huts and caves, but there is no use living in huts or caves. We are not going to be freed like that so easily, because our bondage is within us and not outside. We carry our bondage into the cave and into the huts.

Affections are not always hidden from view, but they can be hidden. We cannot understand what affections we have for the things of the world because of our being habituated to certain formalistic ways of thinking. We have our usual meals every day, our chit chat, our good sleep, our recreation and our walks—what do we lack? In these circumstances of ease we cannot study ourselves, because the mind is accustomed to these normal ways of thinking and acting. Because of an enthusiasm for the practice of yoga, when we try to practise what we call detachment, we think that detachment should be a sudden stopping of all these routines. There are people who have made certain routines of daily life out of the canons of yoga morality. They will not speak for certain hours of the day, they will wear only one or two pieces of cloth, and they will restrict their diet and live in isolation. These are all very good and are even necessities, no doubt, but there is something more needed to make these routines meaningful.

We should study the lives of many students of yoga and even yogis and saints who have passed through this struggle. They had to undergo hard periods of internal upheaval because the mind was merely withdrawn but not properly sublimated. Withdrawal is another kind of suppression, and suppression and substitution are the methods that we usually employ, rather than sublimation. It is difficult to know what sublimation is, though we have heard this word very many times. We mostly substitute, if not suppress, but neither of these is going to help us much.

### **SUBLIMATION, SUPPRESSION AND SUBSTITUTION**

To suppress something is to act forcefully by the power of will, driving into the unconscious the impulses that seek manifestation outside in the world. To substitute would mean to give to the mind something quite different from what it is seeking, with the notion that the mind will forget the original longing. We know that children start crying because they want a toy, but when we give them a sweet, for as long as the sweet is there in the hand they will stop crying. But when the sweet is eaten, again they will remember the toy and start crying. With intervals the children start crying again and again for the same object. Though there is a temporary cessation of the crying, because

some other thing has been given to them which has diverted their attention, the crying will not stop.

Likewise are our feelings. Sometimes they seem to stop their cry when we give them something else, and we have been trying to do this, without much benefit. What we need in our relations with our minds is not merely curtailment, but education, and yoga is a system of education. An uneducated person cannot be satisfied in any way whatsoever. This sort of person may look satisfied, but he will again be craving the same thing, and it is difficult for us to understand the ways of thinking of that person. The mind that is uninitiated is uneducated. An example of this sort of mind might be a coiled spring which when pushed down stays down, but once the pressure is released, the spring pops right back up again to its natural position.

The process of sublimation is a combination of analytical understanding and concentration of mind on higher values. The moral consciousness implies not merely an attempt at the weaning oneself away from the clutches of the lower nature, but also the regulation of the laws of the lower in terms of the laws of the higher. In every stage of the practice, the higher comes into play and exerts a tremendous influence. We live by hopes, we know very well. If hope is not present, we will not be able to live in this world. "The next moment will be better for me," is the feeling that we have in our minds, whatever be our suffering. Whatever be our agony and anguish, we always have a feeling that the next moment would be better than the present. Though there is no rational ground for this feeling, we are given this hope in our hearts. It is so deeply implanted in us that it is a fundamental belief that keeps us alive in this world. Otherwise we would have been dead and gone by this time.

The hope that we entertain in regard to the betterment in the future is an instance of the determination of the lower by the higher. This is the way of sublimation. It is so powerful that it is able to keep us alive. Suppose we know that we are definitely not going to succeed in this life and that we are going to fall down at every step and be crushed. In that condition we would not be able to live in this world. But we do not think like that. "That will not be my fate," is an unconscious feeling of every person. "I shall be better, for some reason or the other." This is the symbol of a higher determination in the lower aspects of life, and when it is consciously practised it becomes real yoga.

Therefore, yoga is a conscious determination of the lower by the higher, whether it is in the practice of morality or in the practice of meditation. The *yamas* therefore are certain restraints we impose purposely on our own selves and which are not imposed on us by someone else. The restrictions that we deliberately impose on our own selves, with an understanding of their necessity, are for establishing a harmony between ourselves and the world outside. There are certain avenues of thinking and action by which we come into conflict with people outside. We may speak certain things which may not be necessary, and this may bring conflict. Many a time not saying anything would be wiser than saying something. These are moral situations which people experience almost every day.

There are various avenues of this expression of thought and action by which social conflict is created, which should be obviated by the practice of the *yamas*. Love and hatred are the primary channels of self-expression through which we express our partiality to things. Partiality, we know, makes us small-minded. We are not respected

in society if we are partial, because to be partial is to ignore some sections of society in preference to certain other sections. The ignored ones will not like that. “Oh, this is a partial gentleman,” which means to say he likes a section of society and he does not like another section. The ignored aspects will have a similar attitude towards him.

### LOVE AND HATRED

The strings of love and hatred which mean so much to us in our practical lives are primary obstacles in the practice of the sublimation of values. Love and hatred take certain peculiar shapes, and when they take a concrete form in the world outside, they may take the shape of pampering one thing and injuring another. Affection can get intensified and then harden into concrete forms. On one side there is pampering, on the other side there is the intention even to harm. Anything that is going to be a hindrance to our affection becomes an object of our hatred, and we take vengeance against it.

First, the vengeance is in the thoughts. “Let it die,” may be our feeling. “Let it be killed, destroyed, perish. Let it go, the earlier the better,” may be the prayer in our hearts if something is going to obstruct the expression of our longings. In our own minds we start internally cursing things which obstruct us, though we may not express the feelings outwardly. We may even admit to ourselves, “How rigid, how stupid, how nonsensical,” and all that, but when the feelings become more *tamasic*, we may pick up a weapon and attack. Thought, speech and action are the gradual expressions of both love and hatred. Where there is love there is an extremist attitude of over-pampering, and where there is the counterpart of it, namely hatred, there is an anti-social attitude.

By engaging these two strings of love and hatred, we end up cutting the ground from under our own feet. Such a person cannot live happily in society and becomes caught in suffering. There are various subtle as well as gross forms of the expression of this entanglement which are different for each person. These complications must be analysed in the context of the morality of yoga. Love and hatred are concerned with the extreme forms of self-expression, and they may become not only undesirable to human society but even injurious in certain cases. There are also other forms of conflict which arise on account of our peculiar attitudes toward people.

Uttering falsehood has also something to do with the emotions of love and hatred. We tell a lie on account of a false notion in our minds that lies will succeed. What we want is not truth or falsehood, but success. Truth and falsehood become only instruments for the achievement of success. “If truth succeeds, well, I shall tell the truth; if lies succeed, why not tell a lie? Because what I want is success.” The means is not so much important as the ends—that is what people think. The end is success, and to tell a lie is again to come into conflict with the well-being of others in society. It is a kind of deception that we practise. Deception means an action contrary to the good of certain people, in the interest of certain others. The interest may be our own personal pleasure or satisfaction, or the satisfaction of some people concerned with us or circumstances connected with us.

Personal love and personal hatred are one form of emotional conflict. The other side of it is the involvement of emotion, positively or negatively, in persons and things connected with oneself. Sometimes in villages two women may be taking water from the same tap. These village ladies are not usually properly educated and they may speak



inappropriate words to one another, which creates a misunderstanding between them that can end in a big battle in the whole village. Using the water tap becomes an occasion for battle, and this type of situation is more common in villages, because the people are in closer contact. People start chatting as a diversion for their minds, and then someone says something inappropriate, and then the argument goes on intensifying itself into very undesirable forms. People who are related to these women end up fighting, while the women who started the argument return quietly to their homes.

Our emotions are not constrained within our own personalities; they take external shapes, move outside to other persons and things, and involve themselves in tremendous complexity. It is not that only things immediately concerned with our personality alone will disturb us—anything can disturb us. Anything that is happening will disturb us, though we are not really concerned with it. We will become so sensitive due to the wandering of emotion in this atmosphere.

These forms of love and hatred which extend their field of activity beyond the personality into the immediate society outside become the causes of the uttering of falsehoods as a normal routine of daily life. There are people who will never tell the truth. Whatever they utter is falsehood, and it becomes so natural that there is no prick of conscience anymore. The conscience gets accustomed to the uttering of falsehood, just as there are some people who are constantly sick and who take that condition of illness as a normalcy of their body. A little temperature is so normal that they do not know what a normal temperature is. This is especially the case in backward areas; people are always sick—they always have some headache and some slight temperature. They are never normal in health, and this is normal for them.

Likewise, we get accustomed to a kind of morbid attitude and we suffer internally on account of a subtle tension which these abnormalities create in our minds. While there are various injunctions given by the teachers of yoga to free ourselves from the entanglement in emotions with the objects outside, five at least are regarded as prominent. These are called the five *yamas*, mentioned in the system of Patanjali. These are elaborated into many more canons in other texts of yoga. We will not go into too much detail concerning these instructions, because all these elaborations finally boil down to these five instructions.

Our concern with society is fivefold, and so it is that morality is fivefold. The *yamas* are an internal adjustment of ourselves with the people outside in the world in a healthy way, and it is necessary that we should study the implications of all these five ways properly. Patanjali mentions that we are likely to injure people, we are likely to utter falsehoods, we are likely to be incontinent in our nature, we are likely to appropriate things which do not belong to us, and we are likely to accumulate unnecessary wealth. These are the things which are so normal to us—perhaps every one of us has seen this facet of life one day or the other and had occasion to ponder over it. We do not deliberately injure or harm people, but sometimes we feel it is inescapable or unavoidable if our interest is to be served. We harm people or have a tendency to injure the feelings of people on account of a feeling that, if that is not done, my interest is not going to be served. It is a question of accepting defeat or holding on to success.

Personal interest is the primal motive behind this retaliation of the ego in regard to

people outside, which means to say—very important to remember—we want to make other people our instruments and use them to serve our own ends. “Other people should be the means, I shall be the one being served.” That is the meaning of self-interest. “The other people are nobodies to me. I am not concerned with them; they are not going to serve my interest. If they are indifferent to my interest, I will be indifferent to them, and if they harm my interests, I will take vengeance against them.”

This is the essence of self-interest. People may possibly be either indifferent towards us or against us, and we have a similar attitude towards them. From this it becomes clear that our relations with other people are purely a relation of give and take. “If you give, I will give. If you take, I will take.” It is a business affair that we establish with people rather than a proper understanding of human nature. We do not respect human life adequately and have no sympathy for people when we utilise them as instruments in our pleasures. This takes the form of slavery of servants, subjugation of employees, wars with nations of hideous proportions—all originating from this simple psychological fact of our desire to use others as a means for our own advantage. The attitude of using others as a means and oneself as an end is the cause of the breaking up of social rules.

We should remember three interesting tenets discovered by the philosopher Immanuel Kant in regard to ethical laws, which have so much in common with yoga morality as to be almost identical. The first tenet is: “Never use another as a means; respond to all people as ends in themselves.” The world is a kingdom of ends rather than of means. If we are an end, why should not others be an end in themselves? Is it not logical to conclude this? Please tell me in what way are one person is different from another person. What is the reason for regarding ourselves as different from another? In what way are we different? It is proper to regard another person also as an end, just as we regard ourselves as an end. If we regard other persons as a means, why should we also not be a means? We should never use the personality either of another or of ourselves as a means. We should not sell others or sell ourselves. We must use the personality of others respectfully—as well as our own, of course. One should not insult another person by making use of them as a kind of means to some ulterior selfish end. The world is a kingdom of ends. Use the personality of all human beings as an end rather than a means. This is one law.

The next law has to do with how to know what is right and what is wrong. Kant says, “It is very easy to understand. If we would like our attitude to be imitated by everybody in the world, then that attitude is all right.” Suppose we tell a lie, and we think it is all right to let everybody in the world only tell lies and to let no single person tell the truth. Will it be all right? Then lies will not succeed. Lies succeed because there are some truthful people in the world, and theft succeeds because there are some people in the world who do not steal. We must consider for ourselves whether our conduct can be imitated by everybody in the world without exception. If we say this same action by everyone is all right, then our conduct is all right. If we think it is not all right, then we are not all right. This is the way to judge our conduct, says Kant.

The third law states that morality does not come from outside—it comes from inside us. If we do not want it, nobody can give it to us. The moral sense is autonomous not heteronomous, meaning that it is not a mandate or an order from somebody else. It is something that we feel as a need in our lives. If we do not want the moral consciousness,

nobody can give it to us, as it cannot come to us from any other source. We are the source of morality and not somebody else, and it is we who want to be moral and not somebody else—this is the third law. These are exactly the principles of the yoga morality, expressed of course in a different language and different style.

To use everybody as an end rather than as a means is put beautifully in a verse of the Mahabharata. “What is not good for you, you should not do to another.” It is another way of expressing the same truth of Kant. We should not use anyone as a means. As we are an end, others also are an end. That which is contrary to what you would like for yourself should not be done to another, and not only to people outside but also our own selves. The immoral attitude arises on account of wrong understanding or ignorance, which is called *avidya* in Sanskrit. Wrong knowledge which we entertain in regard to the world outside is the cause of our involving ourselves in this mess of moral confusion. Inasmuch as we have to live in human society for the practice of yoga, Patanjali and all the other teachers of yoga feel that it is necessary to maintain a harmony in our relations with people. The five canons of morality mentioned by Patanjali are five ways of establishing harmony with the external human atmosphere. Yoga is the system of a graduated establishment of harmony in the different levels of being. Social harmony, personal harmony, vital harmony, sensory harmony, mental harmony, intellectual harmony and spiritual harmony are the various levels of yoga practice.

## **CHAPTER SIXTEEN**

### **QUESTIONS THAT ARISE**

I would like to pause here and give some answers to questions that have arisen. The gist of one question is whether love for people is compatible with yoga practice. The doubt also arises as to whether love for people is itself a way of contacting Reality. I do not think that a detailed answer to this question is necessary, because this subject has been touched on in an adequate manner in our classes. There is no such thing as contacting Reality with another, because Reality is not 'another'. That which is other than us is not Reality. That which is real can never be 'another', and this is very important to remember. That which is outside us and other than us shall always remain alien to our nature. It is also a psychological fact that anything that is totally different from us cannot become a true object of our love. There is no such thing as 'loving another'. It is just a misnomer. Wherever there is an apparent affection or love for another, it arises on account of a misapprehension of one's relation to another.

There are two aspects of the factor of love. One is internal, another is external. That which is the rational cause behind the very possibility of affection is different from its outer form or shape. The confusion between the inner cause and the outer form is the reason behind the failure of all loves in the world. We have seen that lovers have not succeeded in the end. They always ended in some kind of sorrow. The reason was that they could not reconcile the outer form of love with the inner makeup of it. Its constituents are never visible to the eyes, and we see only the shapes that it takes outside. In all our affections and loves, we imagine that our heart goes to an object outside. We are concerned with the form, the shape and the object-ness of the object in all forms of affection. But we do not have time enough to think as to why we should love at all. What is the harm if we do not love? Who is the loser? Is it true that we love another for the sake of another?

There have been many people who have held the opinion that we love others for their own good. "I love that person or that thing for its own benefit." Is it true that we are looking for its benefit and its good? If that had been the case, it is really wonderful, and it should be so. If our love for another is for the benefit of another, nothing could be more praiseworthy than that attitude. But is it a fact? Are we honest in holding this opinion? On a careful analysis we will find that this is not the fact and we are only masquerading our selfishness in the form of a so-called interest in the good of others, because we will find that when love is not received back in an equal measure, when there is no reciprocation of love, our love vanishes into the winds.

Just imagine a circumstance where nobody loves us, rather everybody positively hates us. Will we have as much affection for people as we professed to have? It is impossible to love where love is not reciprocated, and such a love which is not reciprocated takes the form of hatred. Sometimes the best friend becomes the greatest enemy. It is difficult to tackle such an enemy, because of his having once been a friend. In our epic stories we have the instance of Vibhishana against Ravana. Nobody could have been a greater friend to Ravana than Vibhishana, but he became the biggest foe because he knew thoroughly all the tactics of Ravana.

When love becomes hatred, nothing can be more dangerous—not even an atom bomb can devastate us so vehemently as love turned to hatred. The wonder is, why should love become hatred? It is a contradiction. Can love become hatred? If love can become hatred, it cannot be called love. If today it is not love, it was not love even earlier. Love that has become hatred today could not have been love yesterday. Yesterday also this ‘love’ was a hidden hatred, and it was outwardly taking the shape of affection. It is political affection, we may say. In one sense, all our affections are political—they are not genuine. They are political in the sense that they will be withdrawn when they are not reciprocated.

This is the psychological truth about our affections and loves in the world. But there is a greater truth hidden behind it. Why do we love? The reason behind it is that we do not recognise Reality as being expressed in the object of our love. The question earlier was whether Reality can be contacted through love for people. Reality cannot be contacted through love for people, though Reality is the reason behind our love for people. The reason is that our own Self is immanently present in the object, so it summons us. “I am here!” We are calling ourselves in another form. The Infinite is summoning the Infinite in all affections. It is we who summon ourselves in the object or through the form of the object when we love an object; otherwise, love would be impossible. Where we are not present, love is absent—remember this. Love is present only where we are present. If we are not there, love is also not there.

This is the philosophical or metaphysical, as well as the selfish analysis of love. Individually, when we are present, it is selfishness. Universally, when we are present, it becomes divine affection. Both these are true as a form of affection. So, is Reality involved in our love? Yes, because our true nature as a universal consciousness is the ultimate reason behind our being attracted towards objects of the world. Otherwise, attraction would be impossible. This is not only true about human affection. Even the cohesive force of chemical elements and the gravitational pull of the planets are explicable only on account of this universal force of attraction existing in things. In the material realm it is called cohesive force or gravitational pull, chemical reaction, etc., but at the psychological level it is called love. In a spiritual realm it is called Self-realisation. All mean the same thing, ultimately. In that sense we may say we are contacting Reality in love.

This is feasible from the theoretical and metaphysical point of view. In practice though, the fact is different, because in practice what happens is that we do not contact Reality—we contact only the outer form of it. One form of it as the subject comes in contact with another form of it in the object. Two forms collide in love. Though the collision may be occasioned by an internal reality, which is the common substratum of both, the reason is something and the effect that it produces is something else. The forms which come in contact with each other in affection are under a misapprehension when their loves unite with each other, as they may not recognise the uniting Reality that stands as the basis of that affection.

If we are in a position to recognise the immanent cause behind this love, we can contact Reality. This is called universal love which is what one sees in the saint’s love for humanity. This is wonderful, but this is only a possibility and not a practicability for all human beings in a general sense. This is because generally, when we love a person or an

object, we forget the immanent reality in it and we go after only the form outside. If name and form are to be cast aside, and if love is to be recognised as it is in itself, then love becomes experience—it is no more called love. It is God's love for the universe, of Spirit loving Itself—the Universal recognising Itself. The saint's love for mankind and for the whole world is love of the Self as universality. In that sense, contact with other people, communication with others and affection for things are another form of universal divine love. Only if we are saints or sages can we love at this level, and in all ordinary conditions we are misguided and forget the immanence of Truth. We go only for the forms, in which case we will be failures in life.

### IS BRAHMACHARYA REALLY ESSENTIAL FOR YOGA?

Another question that arises in the mind is this doubt: "Is *brahmacharya* really essential for yoga, or can we get on without it?" The question arises perhaps on account of a subtle longing in the mind to continue enjoying the pleasures of life, although yoga promises many more wonderful things. "Why not have the pleasures of the world also, together with the pleasures of Truth?" That may be the subtle desire. Desires are very subtle, and it is difficult to understand them. We cannot know what is happening to our own minds when we think certain things. Is *brahmacharya* necessary for yoga, or can yoga be practised without *brahmacharya*? We cannot be a *yogin* without being a *brahmacharin*. It may be pointed out that *brahmacharya* is different from one's living a married life or not. It is quite different and has a different connotation altogether. A married person also may be in the position to live a life of *brahmacharya* under certain given conditions, and an unmarried person may not be able to live a life of *brahmacharya* under certain given circumstances. *Brahmacharya* is not 'marriage or not marriage'. It is an inner attitude of the mind and a discipline of desire. We may be wondering why it is that *brahmacharya* is emphasised in yoga—what is the purpose behind it, and why is there so much emphasis?

The reason is that *brahmacharya* means the conservation of the energy of our personality. In yoga, especially in its aspect as meditation, our mind is supposed to be tremendously powerful. A weak mind cannot concentrate—we know it very well. The subject of *brahmacharya* has to do with the energy of the system. We have a vital energy in our whole personality, pervading every pore and every cell. It is difficult to distinguish this from mental power. The power of the mind and the power of *brahmacharya* are indistinguishable. We may say even that one is the expression of the other.

Energy is supposed to be incapable of being lost. We know the law of the conservation of energy—our physicists say that the sum total of the energy in the cosmos is the same, and it neither increases nor decreases. So also is the sum total of energy in our personality. This is true, but what happens to the wealth of a country, for example? The sum total of the wealth of a country may be said to be the same—it never increases, it never decreases. My money may go to you, your money may come to me, and it may go to a third person, but the money never goes out of the country. Wherever it may be, it remains within the land. The country neither becomes rich nor poor—it is the same. But people may be suffering due to lack of money, while others are enjoying the benefits of great wealth. We know the unequal distribution of wealth that may take place in the same country, but the nation as a whole is neither poorer nor richer.

Likewise, we may say, something happens to the energy in the body. The sum total may be the same, like the sum total of the wealth of the nation, but individually, in the practical manipulation of affairs, we find that the energy gets channelled in certain directions, like the channelisation of economic power. If my wealth goes to you, I will be sad and you will be happy, but it makes no difference to the country whether I gain or you gain as the country is neither richer nor poorer. But even though the general, theoretical sum total may be the same, practically it affects us. The wrong channelisation of energy is what is to be prevented by the practice of *brahmacharya*. The different senses—the powers of sense—which work through the sense organs are the avenues of the channelisation of force. Just as there are individuals in a country among whom wealth can be distributed equally or unequally, the energy of the system may be distributed equally or unequally among the sense organs. Sometimes it gets centralised in one sense or two or three senses. If this is so, then we feel a lopsided development in our personality. There is an unequal distribution of energy in the system when there is a lack of *brahmacharya*, just as there is unequal distribution of economic power in a country.

The yoga system emphasises *brahmacharya* for the sake of the maintenance of balance in the system. There should not be an unequal distribution of any kind of force in the body. Otherwise, the mind will lean in the direction where there is an excess of the distribution of energy. The mind will think in the direction of that centre to which the energy has been directed in a larger proportion. The energy gets concentrated in a particular direction when the mind drives it in that direction for its own purpose, and its purpose is the satisfaction of an immediate need or an urge.

Yoga is not very much concerned merely with immediate needs—it is concerned with ultimate needs. If we concern ourselves too much with immediate needs alone, we may lose sight of the ultimate need. A good governmental system cannot close its eyes to its ultimate needs and look only to the particular interests of people. The general good of the whole nation is the concern of the government—not merely your needs or my needs individually. However, many a time the truth of this gets lost, and the mind gets lodged in certain objects due to its immediate desires and longings. Wherever the mind is, there the energy also is. This fact can be amply demonstrated in certain practices of meditation.

For example, people who meditate on the centre of the eyebrows or any part of the body above the neck too much may feel a kind of headache. If one concentrates too much on the *ajnachakra* or the point between the two eyebrows, one will find a kind of headache slowly creeping in. The reason is because the mind is there. When the mind is there, the blood also rushes to that spot. Where the blood rushes, the energy increases, and one will have a headache. The very same thing happens when we love an object outside. We so much get identified with that thing, and we pour out our energy and affection along with everything else, so that the object becomes our temporary self. We cease to be ourselves—we become something else. The practice of *brahmacharya*, therefore, is a scientific and a psychological necessity and not merely an ethical question.

Sometimes it seems that social ethics torture people unnecessarily. It is not so. *Brahmacharya* is not an ethical principle merely; it is a scientific necessity, based on a psychological truth. *Brahmacharya* enables people to defend themselves from harm, to

protect their energy and to integrate their personality rather than to allow these to be disintegrated. We know how immensely necessary it is to integrate our personality rather than disintegrate it. The forces that keep our limbs intact are the forces of *brahmacharya*. The forces which keep us healthy are the forces of *brahmacharya*. The forces which enable us to concentrate our minds, retain memory and have good attention are the forces of *brahmacharya*. The forces that give strength to the body are those of *brahmacharya*. Finally, of course, it goes without saying that these energies combine to establish such a balance and harmony in our system that *rajas* and *tamas* cease and *sattva* reveals itself. *Sattva* is another name for balance of force, and it is in this state of balanced forces that Truth gets reflected.

#### **CAN THIS SYSTEM OF SPIRITUAL HARMONY BE INDUCED BY THE INTAKE OF CERTAIN MEDICINES OR DRUGS?**

“Can we induce this system of spiritual harmony by the intake of certain medicines or drugs?” is the next question. It is not possible. When we take a strong dose of coffee or tea, or perhaps when we smoke a cigarette, we seem to be energised, and it looks as though we are in a state of mental concentration. When we take a strong dose of coffee we will find, for a few minutes, that our mind is concentrated. But it is only for a few minutes, and then the concentration lessens. The reason for this rush of energy is not from concentration of mind but due to the stirring up of the nervous system. Drugs act upon the nerves and not so much on the mind. Inasmuch as the mind is connected with the action of the nerves, it looks as though the mind is influenced by the action of the nerves.

Suppose the person to my left pushes me. The impact of the push from my friend on the left may be communicated to my friend on the right. I am not actually pushing the person to the right, but the push that I received from the left causes me to contact the person on the right, and the right also receives the push. But the person on the right is not influenced, though the push has been felt. First of all, there is no actual psychological influence on the person who receives this push, though he feels the push physically. Second, that person who has received the push may give another push back to keep his balance. This the mind may do, and it will do this. The intake of any drug, narcotic or any kind of stimulant—even a cup of tea—such a simple thing as that gives a push to the nerves. The nerves push the mind, and it looks as if the mind has been influenced. The mind will immediately react. It may give a push back to the nerves, and when it does, we feel a debilitated condition of our system.

After the effects of a heavy dose of a narcotic have worn off, we will find that we have become physically weak. We were not strong during the drug experience; the strength was only a temporary feeling that had been artificially induced. The mind gives a push back because the push was given to it involuntarily. If I had wanted to be pushed, of course then I may keep quiet, but if I do not want to receive the push and you unnecessarily push me, then I'll retaliate by giving you a push back. The mind is not prepared to accept the push. Even a monkey does not want to be taken unawares. Immediately he will make faces if someone goes near him and he is caught off guard.

Therefore in the intake of drugs—including narcotics, pharmaceutical preparations, etc.—the action is directly upon the nervous system and the cellular constitution of the body, and not on the mind. The mind will retaliate against the stimulation that it has



received from the intake of drugs; and secondly it will not be really influenced, because influence is different from a push. We know the difference. I can influence someone and convince him to do some work, but if I try to push him to do something, that is another thing. Sometimes we are compelled to do a thing on account of the force that is exerted upon us, but it may be against our own will. If however we are convinced internally, then we will do the work more satisfactorily and joyously than under compulsion from outside. The mind will not concentrate when it is compelled to concentrate. Nobody will do anything under compulsion. This is a general law everywhere, applicable to everyone. People may appear to do a forced activity, but it will be mechanical action and not an organic action. We are concerned with living forces and not merely with dead facts.

The mind is not ultimately our concern in yoga, though we may take it for granted that the mind is influenced to some extent by drugs, etc. Consciousness is different from mind, and in yoga we can never influence consciousness, not even with the mind. Even if, for the time being, the mind can be influenced to some extent through drugs, that concentration of the mind is not yoga. Concentration of the mind in yoga is to bring about another condition altogether, which is Spiritual-realisation.

The question may arise again as to whether we can enter into the infinite bliss of Reality through these inducements of mental concentration brought on by drugs. The answer is that 'we' cannot enter the Infinite, because who is entering the Infinite? May I ask this question: who is it who is putting these questions? Mister So-and-So, Jacob or John? So, we want to enter the Infinite? It is impossible. Only the Infinite can enter the Infinite—not you and I. Anything that is external to infinitude cannot enter the Infinite—not drugs, and not even the mind if it is external to the Infinite. There is no such thing as entering the Infinite, because there is nobody outside the Infinite who is to enter it.

Then what is it that we call the Realisation of the Infinite in yoga? It is realisation, not entering—we must remember the difference. Realisation is different from entering. We realise that we are inside a room. We are already there, so there is no question of entering the room. Entering is a question that arises when we are outside it. When we are already there, we have only to be aware that we are there. The consciousness within us, the consciousness that we really are, is to become aware that it is consciousness. It is not the mind that enters the Infinite. It is not an individual that goes to God. It is not man that confronts the Maker. There is no such thing.

It is not one thing going to another thing, one man speaking to another person, and it is not a union between two things. The so-called 'union' which is yoga is only a manner of speaking; there is really no union. It is Self-realisation—that is the proper term, if we must describe the state. Self-realisation is the Self realising Itself as the Infinite, and not one man entering another person or the Self entering the Infinite. What is more, the Self *is* the Infinite, so the Self does not *enter* the Infinite. A doubt may still persist whether any artificial means can be employed in this Self-realisation? What is an artificial means? By artificial means, one perhaps thinks that it is any matter other than yoga. Can we become the Infinite or realise it or experience it or enter into it by any means other than yoga? If any other means is competent to make us realise the Self, then that is yoga, because any means that can enable the consciousness to rest in itself—by freeing itself from the so-called clutches of body, nerves, senses and even the mind—that is yoga.

My point is that drugs cannot do this, because if we do not want to have this experience, drugs cannot compel us to have it, and if we really want to have this experience, drugs are not necessary. We want a drug only when we do not want to do a thing. We cannot go to sleep, therefore we take a tablet. If we could get to sleep on our own, why would we want to take a tablet? The reason is that we want a push from outside. We want a cardamom mixture for digesting food because we cannot digest it ourselves, and we want a tablet to go to sleep, and we want someone to force us to get up and go for a walk.

This is the way in which most people live these days, on account of a kind of weakness that has crept into their systems. The body has become very weak; and the nerves, the senses and the mind are all very weak due to a depression and a mood of melancholy. A kind of frustrated feeling has entered into the mind due to which one cannot do anything for oneself. "I cannot even stand up." That seems to be the feeling of many people. What do we then do with ourselves? We attempt to drive ourselves with a force that is not our own. The force that is not ours should come to our aid and make us move. This is not going to help us, because the Infinite has no concern with another—not drugs and not with any other external influence. Yoga or Self-experience is an inner ripening of consciousness—a growth that is taking place within us. It is like growing up from childhood into adulthood. By using drugs we cannot suddenly make ourselves taller in one day. A sapling cannot become a huge banyan tree in one day by any amount of drugs.

Gradual growth is a natural process, and inducements of any kind, whatever be their nature, are unnatural. Lack of strength, lack of concentration of mind, and a subtle desire for enjoyment persisting within us are the causes for the obstacles mentioned just now. One cannot love two things at the same time. We either have this or we have that. We cannot have experience of the Infinite along with the finite within us. There is an unconscious feeling in people's minds that when we experience the Infinite, we are as individuals still there experiencing the Infinite. The Infinite is something regarded as some kind of objective reality, but it is not so. God is not an objective reality, and the Infinite is not an objective reality. It is a wrong usage of terms. What do we mean by 'objective reality', as if it were there outside us? It is not outside us. The very same inner experience of our own Self is the Infinite. We may call it objective in the sense that it is real, just as in common parlance we say something is an objective observation of facts—which means a dispassionate observation. In that sense, the Infinite is objective, but it is not objective in the sense of a thing outside us.

There is no individual 'I', and therefore there is no 'another'. It is the incrustation of desire for another that is preventing the consciousness from resting in itself. When the desire is absent, we enter into the Infinite automatically—there need be no doubt about it. Why worry about drugs, medicines, this, that and so on? There is no obstacle to our experiencing the Infinite except our love for objects, which means to say, those things which are artificially regarded by us as outside the Infinite. If this so-called 'outside the Infinite' is the obstacle, and if the Infinite alone exists, and we really believe it, we shall enter into it even today.

#### **WHERE DOES THE CURIOSITY TO KNOW REST?**

Another question which has come up is: "Where does the curiosity to know rest?" The question seems to be this one perhaps: "If everything is a manifestation of nature, from

where does the desire to know nature come about? Who knows nature, if nature is everything?” When nature is interpreted as everything, and if we really believe that nature is everything and there is nothing outside it, there is no such thing as someone knowing nature. The very doubt implies that there are two things—nature and someone who knows it. This is the Samkhya difficulty of the *purusha* and *prakriti*. There is no such thing as a knower of nature, because the moment that we suspect that there is a knower of nature, we do not believe that nature is everything. So we have created an artificial difficulty by raising this question. We either say nature is everything or we say there is something outside nature. We cannot say both things at the same time. If nature is everything and there is nothing outside nature, who is to know nature? Nature knows itself.

But I can understand the reason for this doubt. The reason is, nature is somehow or the other felt to be an unconscious body outside, and there is a feeling that nature cannot know because it is material. In this formulation the knower must be outside, but where does the knower rest? If the knower is regarded as a centre of consciousness, which seems to be the fact, and if nature is regarded as inert matter outside the knower, then there is no question of consciousness resting in nature. The implication is that nature is outside the knowing consciousness. However, this is not the truth. When we speak of nature in yoga psychology and philosophy, it includes all things, and even the so-called matter outside becomes a configuration of Spirit. Again we go back to the analysis we made in our study of perception. Consciousness, which is the knower, is immanent and transcendent—both in the subject that knows and the object that is known. Nature, which is regarded as the object, is again a vehicle of the very same Spirit, and when Spirit realises its immanence in the object, nature shall cease to be. There will be no nature; there will be only Spirit. This, once again, is God-realisation.

When there is attention, where does the attention rest? It rests in the *chitta*, which is that which entertains attention on anything. There are four aspects of the psychological organ: *manas*, *buddhi*, *ahamkara* and *chitta*. *Chitta* is the base or the raw material of the psychological functions. Just as we have ore in a mine out of which we get the minerals, the *chitta* may be regarded as ore. When the perception is not distracted and there is attention and concentration, *chitta* functions, and *chitta* alone functions. The question comes: “Does the *chitta* pervade the mind?” Just as the mind or the *prana* pervade the body, does the *chitta* pervade the mind? Yes, if we regard *chitta* as the cause and mind as the effect, we may say that *chitta* pervades the mind. The ore pervades the mineral, and the mineral is contained in the ore, as it is the basic material. The *chitta*, as the stuff of the psychological functions, operates through every expression of these functions, and so in that sense we may say *chitta* pervades them.

Sometimes we may identify this *chitta* with the unconscious storehouse of all impressions within, and it also pervades the expressions thereof. The articles of a retail shop may be said to be pervaded by the wholesale shop from which they came, because these articles of the retail shop originate from the wholesale shop. The wholesale storehouse is the source from which some articles have been taken to the retail shop. In this sense, the mind, the ego and the intellect may be said to be ‘retail’ expressions of and pervaded by the ‘wholesale’ within, which is the *chitta*.

These are questions that some students have raised. It is necessary that one

contemplates the ideas that have been given here. One must meditate on the implications rather than merely the words. Sometimes one has to read between the lines, because everything cannot be taught in a short while. Yoga is a very vast subject—so vast that one may not even be able to learn it fully even in twelve years. Very little can be learned in the space of one short course, and therefore doubts of certain kinds may continue to persist. These doubts will not disappear simply by listening to lectures. They will go only by meditation and concentration.

May I suggest a method? When you go to bed, you must go in a state of concentration of mind. The last thing before going to sleep should be meditation on your day. You should not be engaged in some activity and then go straight to bed. The last thing of the day should not be work, but rather meditation. When all the routines of the day are completed, then you should close your eyes, drop your energies into a concentrated focus, meditate on the implications of the lessons rather than the words and feel confident as a result—and then go to bed. Some of the doubts will get cleared in sleep, because you are natural to yourselves in sleep, and your own *chitta* will answer our questions. Nothing can be a greater guide to us in our lives than meditation. There are three prescribed processes in yoga which are called *sravana*, *manana* and *nididhyasana*. We hear first, reflect over the lessons afterwards, and then deeply and profoundly go into them in the third stage. After we have heard or read these thoughts, we should reflect over them. That is called *manana*. What we hear or read now is called *sravana*. *Sravana* means, “hearing attentively”. Then reflect over what has been heard, revolve these ideas around in the head and ponder them deeply, which is *nididhyasana*. May God bless you.

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

### WHAT MEDITATION IS

In our efforts at meditation we are likely to get bored and tired after a few minutes, and the very thought of having to sit for meditation may frighten many minds because of certain feelings which the mind cannot explain properly. We have been accustomed to a certain way of thinking, and it is hard for us to get out of this rut of the processes of thought with which we have been born and with which we have lived our lives. A very strange phenomenon of our minds is that we cannot think except in terms of work, duty, function or activity. When we sit for meditation, the sitting also seems to us to be a kind of activity in which we have to be engaged. That is why we get frightened. We do not like to do work if it can be avoided. We do work only when we are unable to avoid it—otherwise we will not do work. This is a very plain fact of life. Nobody will do work unless one is compelled, and the rare moments of time when we voluntarily do work are those occasions when we are going to be positively benefited and satisfied by that work.

Now, what is meditation? First of all it is a task, or at least that is how the mind will take it. If we are asked to meditate, that means we have been asked to do something. Meditation is therefore a 'doing'. We do not like any kind of doing, first of all, but there are occasions when we like the doing, when it will bring us some satisfaction or some advantage. Now, will meditation bring anything? If it is merely a work that I have to do because I have been asked to do it, then I will not do it—unless of course my boss threatens to fire me. Meditation, even in its higher stages, looks like a kind of work that we have to do.

So it is that, whenever we try to sit for meditation, we complain that we have no time, because for doing anything at all we need time. All work requires time, and meditation is work for us. That is how the mind takes it, and so we have no time to engage in this practice. Are we happy that we have to sit for meditation, or do we take it as a kind of engagement in our day? That is how we have to analyse the situation in meditation, if meditation is to become successful. If meditation is a kind of work that has come upon us, we cannot meditate because nobody likes to work, and therefore nobody would like to meditate either. It is difficult to imagine that meditation will bring something positive. We are told about it, of course, in the scriptures, and those people who are regarded as *yogins* also speak about its importance and necessity.

But what do I feel? "I cannot understand this. I will just have to take their word for it, that is all." That is how the mind will speak to us. If many people say that meditation is good, I may also think that it is good. But my heart may not acquiesce, because I cannot be really happy merely because I have been told that I should be happy. Someone can go on telling me, "Be happy!" but how can I be happy merely because I get this instruction? Happiness cannot come just because somebody asks us to be happy. In a similar way, I cannot sit for meditation with satisfaction merely because someone wants me to do it. If this is the attitude of the mind, meditation will not be successful.

We have to meditate—that is the first and foremost thing to remember. Point number one: we have to meditate, and nobody else can do it for us. Number two: we cannot meditate merely because somebody else asks us to do it—even if it be our Guru or a

teacher, it makes no difference. We are not going to meditate merely because we have been asked to do it, because the will resents any kind of pressure. The act of meditation, if at all it is an act of the mind, is wholly voluntarily and never an object of mandate or compulsion. Please remember, meditation is not an action or a work. Merely because it is thought to be a kind of activity or work, we many a time resent it somehow. In such a case it would be better to go for a long walk and have a look at things rather than sit with closed eyes, not seeing anything.

We like activity which gives freedom to the nerves and the mind, and not activity which locks up the activity of the mind. If the process of meditation has not been properly grasped in its inner implications, it will not be successful. It has not brought joy to the heart, and when we come out of meditation, we have not felt anything different. We have only spent an hour of time—that is all that we seem to know. We sat one hour, but what have we gained? That we cannot say. We cannot gain anything, because we have gone to the practice with a mask on our face—the mask of prejudicial thinking and the mask of thinking in terms of activity, work, function and duty.

We do not know anything except work. “What do you do for work? What does he do?” These are the ways in which we measure the circumstances of a person—so if a person does not “do” anything, he is nothing. No one else would want to be associated with someone who does nothing. This is how we think and how we have been taught to think. Unfortunately, this is not the only way of thinking and perhaps it is not the correct way of thinking. We are something in addition to what we do. Meditation is concerned with what we *are* and not with what we *do*, and what can give us more satisfaction than the fact that we are something?

Do we want satisfaction because of doing something or because we are something? We know very well, all our actions are associated with our being. The actions proceed from us and they rebound upon us—pleasurably or otherwise. In the field of causation it is called ‘karma’, and in the field of ethics it is called ‘pleasure and pain’. When the actions of our being do not produce reactions of any kind, then action becomes meditation. Action is not differentiated from meditation when action ceases to produce reaction. Actions which produce reactions are worldly actions, and these give us pleasure and pain. But the meditational activity which will not produce reaction of any kind—because it is a movement of being within itself—will generate a joy which is not in the form of a reaction.

### **BEING CONTEMPLATING BEING**

Generally, our pleasures and satisfactions are of the form of a reaction that has been set up. We do something and a reaction is set up—that is called pleasure or pain. Meditation on the other hand is a kind of function of the mind which absorbs all reactions into itself. The character of being rather than doing is maintained throughout in the process of meditation. It is being contemplating being in meditation, not being expressing itself as action. We are concerned with ourselves in meditation and not with anything else. Even where some other factors seem to be associated with us in meditation, these factors are to be so identified with us that they cease to be external to us. Even if it be a meditation on a concept of God—whatever be our concept of God—that meditation would become successful only when that God of our meditation is vitally connected with us in such a way that He cannot exist independently of us, and we

cannot exist independent of Him.

When an object of meditation stands outside us as unrelated to us and as something with which we have no inner connection or contact, that object of our meditation will always cause distraction to the mind. The object will be among the many things in the world demanding exclusive attention, but at the same time it is capable of giving rise to a reaction from the other objects on which we are not meditating. The thought process in meditation is wholly integrational. It is cognisant of the positive in the form of the chosen ideal and also the negative in the form of the ideas that are excluded in meditation. Objects that are different from the chosen ideal generally stir up a reaction. This is why there is a jumping of the mind in meditation. Attention on one thing and inattention to something else which we believe is also equally existent is the cause of the movement of the mind away from the chosen ideal.

There are two methods of approach. One is to also associate the other things vitally and internally with the chosen ideal in meditation. The other is to take at once all things into our consideration at the same time, so that the many objects of the world become only various shapes of one object in its completeness. There are at least two or three factors involved in successful meditation. The first is that the object of meditation should not stand apart from us, as if unconnected with us—like a cow or something which we see outside. We cannot meditate like that, because the object of meditation must have some sort of inner relation with us. That is one thing. Second, the object of meditation should not create a tension between itself and other objects excluded from the thought of meditation. It should be internally connected, not only with us, but also with the other things of the world with which it has to be harmoniously set.

The third point is that we must have a longing for the chosen ideal. Our heart should move towards it. We must love the object of our meditation. It should be our *ishta*, which means in Sanskrit 'the beloved'. It is an *ishta*—we love it so much that nothing can be so attractive as that; it is like God for us—a *devata*. So, the object of our meditation is called *ishtadevata*. Thus one chooses the ideal in meditation and integrates the mind with that object. One should establish an inner relationship with it as well as other things in the world, and love it wholeheartedly.

If one takes to the practice of meditation, one will begin to notice certain responses. The mouth may get dried up, the nerves may get tense in the beginning, or a slight numbness of the body and insensibility of the extremities may occur. Certain characteristics are akin to the condition immediately upon going to sleep. Of course, in sleep we cannot feel this, but in meditation we are conscious of what is taking place in the body. The saliva in the mouth will diminish slowly and there will be a dryness of the mouth due to concentration. The nerves in the beginning will feel tense, and then afterwards there will be some relaxation. There may be a slight numbness, especially of the feet, then a numbness of the whole body—particularly the sense organs. They will appear to get shrunken. Lastly, we will feel as if we have been infused with some force. In the beginning it may be like touching a live wire. Some energy is creeping in—not strong like a live wire, but mild. Then we will feel that a sort of strength flows through our nerves. This will be felt only if the concentration has been good; otherwise we won't feel it.

These are all stages of feeling, and there are many such stages. Later on, after this

feeling of a creeping sensation through the nerves and a deadening of the physical system, the meditator will feel a joy. We do not know from where it comes. Sweetness is the word that we can use for this type of joy. We will feel a kind of sweetness in the system. Everything will look sweet inside—like honey. There is a section in the Upanishads which compares the state of a particular meditative consciousness to a flow of honey. Like that we will feel honey is dripping. It won't drip from any particular part of the body, but we will feel a kind of sensation of sweetness like that of honey. Strength and sweetness and delight—all we will feel together. Power, sweetness and delight will all come together in the state of proper concentration.



## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

### THE TENDENCY TOWARDS THE COSMIC BEING

We saw that the practical side of yoga is founded on moral and personal discipline. As a matter of fact, this process of purification and training is as important as anything that follows. On analysis it was discovered that the process of preparation—the setting in tune of the equipment—is the essential prerequisite of the practice. The practice of yoga is impossible for unpurified instruments. It is not that anyone can practise yoga, because the practice is not undertaken by a person or a personality in general, but by a condition of mind. It is our mind that practises yoga more than anything else, and that mind should be prepared for the necessary transformations that yoga requires. It was thought that in the process of alchemy that iron could be converted into gold, but wood could not be converted into gold. In the same way, it is not so that all minds in whatever condition are to be regarded as capable of this practice.

It is said that there are three kinds of disciples: the gunpowder type, the wood type and the plantain stem type. We know what gunpowder is. To set fire to it takes very little time. In a second after the match is lit the gunpowder catches fire. Wood takes a little more time to catch fire. We may have to blow hard on the wood to catch the flame gradually. Sometimes we have to pour kerosene on it, and so on. A little effort is needed to make the wood catch fire, while gunpowder requires no such effort. But the plantain stem will never catch fire—however much we may roast it, it will remain cool.

These three comparisons are supposed to be exemplary of the three types of yoga students—the first class, the second class and the third class. The first class is the one who immediately catches the point of teaching. At once, like fire that ignites gunpowder, the mind that is purified receives the instruction. Not only does it understand what is said, but it also catches the spirit behind the teaching. The students who are of the wood type require hard blowing, being told again and again many a time—sometimes for years. But then there is the plantain stem type which will not understand anything. They may be taught throughout their lives, but nothing will enter the brain. These three kinds of students mentioned in the analogy as gunpowder, wood and plantain stem are the *sattvic*, *rajasic* and *tamasic* types of disciples. Even among many students of the same class we find a distinction.

It is more difficult to catch the import of the teaching of yoga than its outer implications. It is more difficult to catch the spirit of yoga than the meanings of the arts and sciences that are studied in colleges and universities. We know the difficulty about yoga—it does not merely give us information, as is the case in history, geography, physics, chemistry or biology. Yoga does not give us information about things, and this is the difficulty with it. Yoga is not a study *about* something; it is a study *of* something. A study of something is the study of a thing directly and not merely gather facts connected with it.

All our studies, generally speaking, are facts related to a thing, so it is indirect knowledge that we gather in colleges. This is information, facts and related circumstances rather than the very substance of the object concerned. In this system we become no wiser after our education, and life remains as complicated as before. Conversely, the spirit of yoga infuses itself into the mind of the student from the very

beginning. We have to be, at least in one sense, a *yogin* from the very outset. We do not become a *yogin* merely at the end. Even at the first step we are a *yogin* in one degree of its understanding and practice, because whatever be the step that we have taken in the practice of yoga, whatever be the stage—even if it be the most initial of stages—we will realise that the whole of us has gone into it.

This is the speciality about the learning of yoga, as distinguished from other types of learning or branches of knowledge. The whole of us is in it. It is not just understanding or feeling that merely react in the study of yoga—it is us as a complete personality. This is something very difficult to understand. We have not been initiated into these ways of thinking, and we do not know what it actually means. What do we mean by the whole of personality? We have never been taught this. We have always been taught to understand, to act, to do, or to feel and react. But for the whole of our personality to keep in unison with everything in the world is something untaught and un-understood by us.

### PROCEEDING WITH HUMILITY

As a matter of fact, we find that the whole of our being cannot be in unison with anything at any time. We give only partial attention to things, and never in our lives have we seen the whole of our being set in unison with things. This means that we can never appreciate anything wholly. There is only a partial appreciation of things. There is no use merely listening, trying to analyse intellectually, or reacting sentimentally. This is the case with learning in the world, but yoga is quite different. The practice of yoga is not a function of the intellect, it is not a function of the emotions or the feelings, and it is also not a kind of action that we are doing in this world. It is altogether different from what an ordinary person in the world can conceive.

Yoga requires a completely new type of approach to life, a new way of thinking into which we have to be initiated—free from all prejudices of the past. We have to set aside all our old ways of thinking, and we have to be reborn altogether, as it were. Saints often say that we have to become like a child—reborn into a new world altogether—forgetful of all the old complexities and memories of the previous life. We become a clean slate when we become students of yoga, otherwise the old impressions will be there to blur and mar the impressions newly created by the study. We should never come to this practice as a ‘wise person’. This sort of wisdom is of no use because, as a matter of fact, the wisdom of the world becomes a hindrance in the reception of this new wisdom of yoga.

When a student approaches a master, he doesn’t go like a learned person. The learning has to be set aside first, because this learning is not going to help us in any way—it is rather going to hinder. This prior knowledge becomes a kind of preconceived notion with which we approach a subject, as if we knew it already. This ‘as if’ is a dangerous attitude. When we approach a master of yoga or a teacher, we must go with an open heart and an open mind and open intellect, to receive rather than to react. We are not supposed to react to the master or the teacher. Our duty is to receive, because the capacity to receive is a greater virtue in a student of yoga than the exhibition of learning.

Suffice it to say that all learning is accumulation of information *about* rather than *of* a thing, and this knowledge is not of any utility to us. It helps us as a means of approach to

the various things of the world, but it does not help us to live. Yoga is living rather than acting, understanding and reacting. This life of yoga is a life of our total personality. Again I have to emphasise this aspect, lest we should forget it, because it is very essential. Right from the very beginning up to the pinnacle of yoga, it is the whole of our personality that undergoes the process of training, and not our minds, brain, intellect or feeling. These functions of the psychological organs are, after all, functions; and they are functions of something—we must know that. But this something of which these are the functions is what studies and practises yoga. The very background of the psychological functions is the substance of our personality.

We should not identify ourselves with the thinking process as if we are that. We are not a process, first of all. How can we say that we are a process of becoming? We are not, and we know it very well. So no process—even if it be the process of thinking—can be identified with us. We are different from thinking, understanding, feeling, action and reaction. This ‘we’ which is the presupposition of these functions of the psychological organ is what is going to practise yoga. This is hard to understand. This simple thing is difficult enough for the mind to grasp, because this is a new thing that we are hearing and an entirely novel way of approach—not merely to the things of the world, but to our own selves. Up until this time we have been under the impression that we are thinking beings.

Aristotle said that man is a thinking animal—but he is an animal, after all. This is very interesting, this definition of Aristotle. The human being seems to be an animal, though he is rational. We exhibit this animalistic character many a time. But there is something in the human being which is different from rationality, because rationality is a process and the humanness in us is not a process. We can never believe that we are merely a process. It is beneath our dignity to see ourselves only as a kind of process of transformation or change. We may be the perceiver, the observer or the experiencer of a process, but we cannot be merely a process. Earlier in our studies, we discovered that we are a centre of focused consciousness beneath the so-called process of rationality and psychological functions.

Through a careful and regular practice of this understanding, the great moral canon of yoga will become a part of our personality. The moral life becomes a spontaneous expression of our being, and yoga morality ceases to be a struggle. Morality becomes a difficult thing on account of our incapacity to understand our relation to things. People are unmoral, amoral or immoral due to a psychological difficulty in which they get involved. This difficulty is purely due to lack of understanding. We have been taught the wrong knowledge right from the very beginning, and we are brought up in a circle of society which only caters to this erroneous approach to things. To be right and good should not be very difficult. To do wrong should be difficult, really. How is it that it is so difficult to be good? Very strange and ironic indeed.

How is it that people regard immorality and an antisocial attitude as easier to practise than goodness of behaviour? We can imagine how far mankind has moved from its centre, that the wrong appears to be easy and the good appears to be difficult. This itself is enough indication of how far away we have traveled from our own self. We are moving about in a dreamland with blindfolded eyes, and that is why ugliness looks beautiful, and wrong takes the shape of the right. Morality, which is nothing but the practice of the

right, is an expression of what we truly are. The expression of our true personality or nature in life is called morality. Why should we need to read many books to know what morality is? To act according to our true nature is morality; to act contrary to what we are is immorality.

### CHARACTER CONSISTENT WITH OUR TRUE NATURE

There is no need to study in detail the many words that the yoga teachers use: *ahimsa*, *satya*, *brahmacharya*, *asteya*, *aparigraha*, *saucha*, *santosha*, *tapas*, *swadhyaya*, *ishwarapranidhana*, etc. These are all many terms which describe a single attitude, which we are called upon to manifest as a spontaneous ray emanating from our nature. If yoga ends in union with our own spiritual being, it commences with a demonstration of our character consonant with our true nature. Right from the beginning till the end, yoga is consonance with our nature. Wherever we find that we move away from ourselves, we become a worldly person. To judge ourselves and judge things in terms of what is not true—in terms of accessories and associates rather than the principle—would be immorality. Morality does not merely take the shape of the recognition of our true nature, but it is also the recognition of a similar nature in other people.

There are two aspects of the practice of morality. The first is judging from the standpoint of our true nature, rather than from a view based on illusions, and the second is judging others also as beings similar to ourselves. There are no 'adjectives' in this world. Everything is a 'noun', in the sense that all persons and things are substantives in their own status. We know in grammar what a noun is, as distinguished from an adjective. A noun is also called a substantive. A substantive is what is qualified by something else, and that which qualifies a noun is called an adjective. That which stands by its own nature, that which has its own status, and that which is an explanation of its own self is known as a substantive. It does not need a qualification to explain itself, but to enlarge its scope of meaning an adjective can be added.

We try to do the same thing in our practical lives. We act as substantives and use others as adjectives. When other persons or things in the world mean something to us, then we are using ourselves as a noun or a substantive and others as an adjective—they should qualify us. To use the world as a kind of qualification to the self is to utilise it for one's purposes, and this is the beginning of immorality and unrighteousness. To regard ourselves as normal and others as subnormal is the commencement of all antisocial attitudes. What makes us think that we are normal and others are not normal? It is not a fact. Maybe there are others who are superior to us in understanding and experience, or at least they are equal to us. The moral consciousness is therefore an expression of a twofold attitude in life, and this is the spiritual, psychological and the philosophical background of the *yamas* and the *niyamas* of Maharshi Patanjali.

The two attitudes I mentioned were, on the one hand, where we judge ourselves independently and not in terms of qualifications, and we judge others as we judge ourselves. This seems to be the meaning behind the great saying, "Judge not, lest ye be judged." We should not judge others, because we can also be judged in a similar manner. If we say that so-and-so is this and that, then we can also be said to be this and that. Why not? We cannot take the position of a judge and others merely as subordinates, because just as we judge, so too will we be judged.

Yoga morality is simple to understand. People have been frightened many a time by the words *ahimsa*, *brahmacharya*, *satya*, etc. One should not be frightened of these words. These ideals are necessary because they are the fundamental things of life, and if we truly recognise what is good for us, we will not do anything contrary to it. The good is that which is in conformity with our intrinsic nature. What our true nature is, we have tried to understand to some extent in our lessons. The body, the sense organs, the psychological functions and those objects and persons related to these functions from outside are all adjectives—they are all functional qualifications to something else which we are at a deeper level. When we stand by this true nature of ourselves, we stand as a unit of moral expression.

### DHARMA

In Sanskrit we use a term called *dharma*, a word which we might have heard many times. *Dharma* is not religion, as it is often translated—it has a different connotation altogether. *Dharma* has much to do with morality and is often identified with morality or moral behaviour. Yoga morality is the principal *dharma* of the student of yoga. The term *dharma* is very interesting and something which we have to understand. It is a Sanskrit word which simply, etymologically means a quality, a character or a property. *Dharma* is a property, a characteristic and a necessary concomitant of an existent nature. That which necessarily follows from the very being of something is its *dharma*. Something which should automatically and necessarily follow, like a corollary flowing from a theorem, could be said to be *dharma*. If it does not necessarily follow, it is not *dharma*. Sometimes by reasoning we may come to some conclusion, but that is not *dharma*. By legal arguments we do not deduce the *dharma* of a thing. It spontaneously follows, like the breath of our personality, like the light of the sun, the liquidity of water, the heat of fire or the weight of material substances. This is the crux of religious philosophy and the principal teaching of religions, which is why many a time it gets identified with religion. The way in which we have to conduct ourselves in life in conformity with the Reality of life is *dharma*.

We have another interesting set of terms in Sanskrit: *satya* and *rita*. These are two terms which would be beneficial for us to remember. These words occur in the Vedas, and the Vedas are the oldest scriptures—not only of the Hindus, but of the whole world. In the Vedas we have these two important words: *satya* and *rita*. Now, *rita* may be identified with what we generally know as *dharma*, and the controlling factor behind *dharma* or *rita* is *satya*. While *dharma* may be the necessary conduct which should follow from something, that something from which it follows is *satya*. I hope that you understand me. *Rita* or *dharma* is something that follows necessarily, and that from which this follows necessarily is *satya* or Reality. We may call it Truth, if we like. Reality is *satya*. The characteristic of Reality is *rita* or *dharma*. *Dharma* is a later innovation of the meaning of the term *rita*. The original Vedic word for *dharma* is *rita*, but later this new word *dharma* was coined to make things a little clearer.

*Dharma*, or the characteristic of Reality, has a very wide connotation, and it is this which determines moral conduct in life—particularly in yoga morality which is the foundation of the practice of yoga. I shall not tire of saying that we will succeed in yoga only if we know what yoga morality is, and without it there will be no yoga. The original meaning of the term *rita* is cosmic order. The regularity of the universe and the system

according to which the world works, or the law that seems to be inexorably operating everywhere—that is *rita*. We always see the sun rising from one particular direction. It never changes the way of its movement. The seasons rotate in a particular fashion. The astronomical peculiarities and the laws operating in the stellar regions—we may say the law of the astronomical universe which has a tremendous influence upon our own bodies, personalities and all society—may be said to be the outcome of *rita* or the cosmic order of things.

Our conduct in life cannot be detrimental to or even deviating from the cosmic order. There is a system or an order set up in the cosmos as a whole, just as there are laws of a government which are applicable in a country. We are not supposed to deviate from this order but are to necessarily abide by it. Our conduct in life necessarily follows from the cosmic order, and if the order of the universe is one manner, our conduct cannot be another. When due to our own egoism, we go contrary to the cosmic order or the law of nature, we know the reactions—we suffer. Whenever we go contrary to the law of nature or the law of the cosmos, we have many difficulties such as physical illness, nervous breakdown, sensory debility, mental aberration, lack of memory, social conflict and even battles and wars. All these can be attributed finally to man's egoistic deviation from the cosmic order. Any attempt at abiding by this order would be tending towards not only the health of the body, personality and of society, but would also take us nearer to the Reality of which the cosmic order is only an expression.

That we are required to follow a rule of morality ensues from the indivisibility of Reality. We may be wondering why this moral law should be there at all. Who invented this? It has not been invented—it is there. It is there, because something is there. There is something, somewhere. We cannot say that nothing is there. That something which seems to be somewhere, which cannot be denied at any time, is demanding allegiance to its nature. That something which is somewhere seems to be everywhere—to our own misfortune sometimes. We do not like policemen standing everywhere. Likewise, many a time we seem to be afraid to hear that something is everywhere. What kind of thing could it be? We do not like something to be everywhere. We want to be alone somewhere, but that is not possible in this world. The world is made in such a way that we cannot be alone. Everywhere somebody is seeing us. Even in the darkest corner of the nether regions this presence will be seeing.

I would like, by way of digression, to tell a story and to give some relief to the mind from understanding such difficult concepts. There once was a saint called Kanaka Das, who was lowborn according to the Hindu caste system. Though the people did not look upon him with due respect because of his so-called low birth, there was another great saint who wanted to teach the public that there was something in this man that was far superior to the traditional rules of caste. The saint gave a plantain fruit to everybody and said, "Eat this where nobody sees you." All the disciples went to some corner where nobody saw them and ate the plantain. Kanaka Das however held this plantain in his hand and looked up in all directions for half an hour, for one hour, for two hours. He returned with the plantain to the saint and said, "I cannot eat it in a place where nobody sees me, because everywhere somebody seems to be looking at me." The others thought, "This is a crazy fellow—he cannot find a place where he can eat a plantain without being seen. Why not go to a nearby room and eat it?" But he alone said, "Everywhere I see some eye gazing at me, and I cannot eat this plantain where nobody sees me." He then

explained who was seeing him. This description of the Absolute is given in a few verses of the thirteenth chapter of the Bhagavadgita. Such a description cannot be found anywhere. There are only a very few verses, and we can commit them to memory, if not in Sanskrit then at least in an English translation. We will find who is seeing us everywhere, and why it is that we cannot be alone in this world.

### **THE COSMIC ORDER**

There is an indivisible something which is at the background of the laws that operate. The government is not merely a set of laws—we know that. The laws are formed on account of a necessity felt. That necessity is something prior to the framing of the laws. A good statesman will tell us what the government actually is. It is not persons, for all the officers put together do not make the government. It is not the president, prime minister, the ministers or the governors that make the government. It is not the constitution of the country that is called the government. There is something else, prior to all these formalities and formulations, which only the statesman's keen insight can see. The very presupposition of the set-up which we call government in ordinary language is the rationality behind the governmental system.

Likewise, there is rationality behind the laws of the universe. It is this rationality that determines not only natural functions such as the seasons, the sunrise, etc. but also the growth of our bodies. From childhood we have grown to adolescence; now we are adults, and later we will become old. All these processes, including the biological evolution, the bodily reactions of hunger, thirst, sleep and so on—everything conceivable, all rules and regulations, needs and necessities—are explicable only in terms of this cosmic order which is an expression of the indivisibility of things. We may be wondering, what could be the law of an indivisible substance? We ought to think for a few seconds as to what it could be. The indivisible something can express itself only in terms of indivisibility.

To explain this expression of indivisibility, one could say that it is a tendency to integration. That which refuses to disintegrate is Being. The very definition of Being is that it cannot be disintegrated at any time. If it can disintegrate, it is not Being. That which keeps itself in an eternal balance and will not brook any interference from outside, at any time, is Being. When such an indivisible Being which cannot be interfered with expresses itself in space, time and externality, it draws things towards itself. The tendency towards Being is the cosmic order, and that also is morality, that is righteousness, and that is goodness. The tendency towards Being is the definition of morality, and any kind of tendency to disintegrate or to deviate from our Being is the opposite to it and is un-morality. The tendency to move towards the centre is morality. The tendency to run away from the centre is immorality. To integrate is morality, and to disintegrate is immorality.

Anything and everything has this tendency. It may be the smallest incident of our workaday world, it may be the tiniest action that we perform in our day-to-day lives—it makes no difference. It may be the gigantic movement of a star in the heavens—it makes no difference. All these are governed by the same law and in the same manner. What we call the force of gravitation is nothing but this tendency to Being. A chemical reaction is nothing but this tendency to Being. One element mixing with another to form a third element is tendency to Being. This tendency to Being is explicit in the astronomical universe as gravitational pull, in the chemical world as reaction, and in our own

personalities as the biological urge, and in our psychological world as a dissatisfaction with everything in the world and a longing for more and more.

These are expressions of the very same law that operates everywhere. The substance that is incapable of division cannot also allow division in any of its expressions. Any division is intolerable in life, whether it is in family or in our own personalities. When it is in the personality, we call it schizophrenia; and if it is in a family, we call it misunderstanding or discord. If this division is found with a nation, we call it a revolt. If it is in the whole world, we call it war. But all these mean the same thing—a tendency of the unit of expression to move away from what keeps it in unison. This is the philosophical explanation of the moral law and its scientific basis.

*Satya*, which I mentioned earlier, is the indivisible Reality, and *rita* is the expression of this Reality in the space-time world. The expression takes place in many levels. In the material world it is cohesion, gravitation and chemical reaction, and in the biological world it is an urge. In the psychological world it is longing, aspiration and a discontent with the present situation. These are all the variegated expressions in the material, biological and psychological levels of the very same law. It works in the moral level as well as in the spiritual level, as we will see. All the world is governed by one law, because Reality cannot be more than one. The moral law therefore is the same as the physical law of gravitation, only working in a different realm for a different purpose. Conversely, when we dissipate ourselves we tend towards a wearing out of our bodily cells, a weakening of the nervous system, a debilitation of the nerves, a weakening of memory, etc. This is all contrary to yoga, because yoga is that conscious tendency of the mind to integrate. When we consciously tend towards integration, we are practising yoga, and when we cannot do this—when we move hither and thither like a fly that moves in different directions with no apparent purpose whatsoever—then we are earthlings bound to suffer. The cosmos is a unitary Being and we are an integral part of it, and we tend towards it. Every part tends towards the whole, and this is the simple intelligible explanation of yoga morality.

### THE PRACTICE OF MORALITY

I do not wish to go into details as to the various terms of the moral canon enumerated by Patanjali in his *sutras*. I wanted to give you the crux of the whole matter and the presupposition of the practice of morality in yoga as the foundation for that practice. We ourselves can appreciate why morality should be the foundation of the practice of yoga. Personal moral integration and discipline of personality constitute what are called the *yamas* and *niyamas* in yoga. We should be morally pure and personally disciplined. Patanjali gives various descriptions for this practice, and he wishes to take us gradually from the outer to the inner.

He tells us therefore not to hurt or harm others, not to speak pointed and barbed words to any person, to speak sweetly and positively, and to help others if possible—or at least to do no harm if it is not possible for us to help. He also encourages us to conserve energy through *brahmacharya*, not to take things which do not really belong to us, and not to accumulate things which are not necessary. These are the canons of morality according to Patanjali, which are called in Sanskrit: *ahimsa* (non-hurting), *satya* (truth), *asteya* (non-stealing), *brahmacharya* (conservation of energy) and *aparigraha* (non-covetousness).



One of the disciplines is contentment (*santoshā*), which means never to grumble, never to be in a melancholy mood, and never to curse fate and God, but rather to be joyous and buoyant in spirit—to be in a position to skip and jump at any moment. This is contentment, and this is a necessary discipline that Patanjali teaches students of yoga. *Saucha* is purity both internally and externally. External or bodily purity comes about through bathing and external cleaning of the body and the clothing. Internal purity comes about through right thinking. Contentment or *santoshā* comes about on account of this practice of purity. These observances constitute a kind of austerity or *tapas*. *Tapas* means austerity. We look with awe upon a person who is a *tapasvin* (one who practises austerity). We have heard of people who practise *tapas* and attain tremendous powers. Power is nothing but the energy that is released out of our personality on account of the control of the senses.

We cannot be powerful if the senses are extroverted and we indulge in the pleasures of sense. The so-called powers of yoga are nothing but our own energy released, like atomic energy that can be released. The energy is hidden in us, but we waste it and dissipate it through sense enjoyments. When we practise *tapas* in its form as sense control, power comes automatically. Our thoughts assume a tremendous force; our speech or the words that we utter become true. Non-indulgence of the senses is *tapas*. This makes us powerful like a thunderbolt, strong in our personality, in our speech and in our thoughts, because the mind has become very powerful in concentration and meditation. This is *tapas*.

To enable the practice of *tapas*, to enable sense control and to give us certain positive suggestions in the practice of this discipline, we are asked to follow another technique, which is the daily study of a scripture of yoga. This is called *swadhyaya*. This does not mean just reading some book in a library. If we pick out some random book from a library and read it, this is not *swadhyaya*. '*Swa-dhyaya*' means 'Self-study', that is, study pertaining to the true Self. *Swa* means 'Self' and *adhyaya* means 'study'. That which is spiritually beneficial and intellectually disciplined, enabling a control of oneself may be regarded as *swadhyaya*. The study of such books as the Bhagavadgita, the Upanishads, the Sermon of the Mount from the Bible, *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas Kempis, the Dhammapada of Buddha and such texts may be taken as guides in our *swadhyaya*. We should not have too many books in *swadhyaya*—otherwise our minds get distracted. Later on it will be profitable to take to only one kind of concentrated study. We should not read a hundred books, because they will sometimes create doubts. *Swadhyaya* is then one of the disciplines described and is considered to be as important as our physical exercises, *asana* or *pranayama*, and also as important as our daily meal or bath.

*Saucha*, *santoshā*, *tapas* and *swadhyaya* (purity, contentment, austerity and sacred study) are four of the disciplines. The fifth one prescribed is self-surrender to God. This is partly a discipline of *bhakti* yoga and partly a discipline of every yoga. Self-surrender implies a recognition of the omnipotence of God. If God is omnipresent and omnipotent and omniscient, we cannot but surrender ourselves to Him. It follows again as a *dharma* or a necessary corollary from the very nature of God. If God is omnipresent, we cannot but be an integral part of Him. This recognition of our being an integral part of God—integral means inseparable—this recognition itself is an act of self-surrender. We cannot any more remain a different or isolated being. We cannot any more think as a person

unconnected with Reality. We cannot think except in terms of the cosmic order of God. We cannot but be moral. We cannot but practise *rita*, because *satya* is there determining it in the background. Though there are many stages of the practice of surrender of self to God, the essential meaning of it is the voluntary recognition of the omnipresence, omnipotence and omniscience of God. That which automatically follows from this acceptance, namely, that we cannot even exist independent of God—this is self-surrender.

These disciplines, *yamas* and *niyamas*, which are the first rungs in the ladder of yoga, are two of the accessories to the practice of yoga. I have said that there are at least seven accessories altogether, along with seven stages of meditation, and seven transformations of the mind that one undergoes in meditation. These I will try to gradually touch upon in later lessons. Try to remember all these points, because all these things that I have spoken on are like small bricks. If isolated bricks are taken out from the baking oven and thrown pell-mell here and there, they will serve no purpose. But these bricks that we have brought forth can be joined together to constitute a beautiful building, so that all will come together to comprise necessary units in the building of the edifice which is the practice of yoga.

## CHAPTER NINETEEN

### PROPER ASANA

The practice of yoga proper commences with what is known as *asana* or a posture. Students of yoga have been engaging their attention on this subject in manifold ways. Often the essential point involved in this limb of yoga has been missed because of certain erroneous notions. It is true that *asana* is one of the limbs of yoga, and when I say it is a limb, that means that it is an essential part of yoga. A limb of the body, whatever be the limb, is essential to the body. To state the purpose of the practice of *asana* is also sufficient explanation as to how the *asana* has to be practised, to what extent it has to be done, and the manner in which it has to be practised.

We know very well that all yoga is an endeavour to introduce balance into life. Every limb of yoga, therefore, is an aid in the achievement of this end. Whether it is *yama* or *niyama*, whether it is *asana* or any other organ of yoga, its purpose is single—the introducing of a system of harmony or balance into life. Anything that is contributory to the working out of this process is regarded as a limb of yoga. As a matter of fact, the limbs of yoga are not merely seven, eight, nine or ten as we might have heard—they can be many more. Any factor in life that can contribute to the maintenance of balance may be regarded as a limb of yoga. It may be a social factor, a personal factor or a remote factor—even if it be remote from the point of outward observation. If the factor has any kind of relationship, even remotely, with maintaining a balance in life, it can be regarded as a limb of yoga. Social conduct at certain times can also become a limb of yoga. Anything that concerns us and anything that affects us has to be taken as a necessary limb of yoga.

Among the many limbs of yoga, *asana* is an essential and integral part of the practice. It is supposed to be practised because of the balance that it can ensure in our systems. All the *asanas* are supposed to bring about a system of harmony in the physical level and later in the other levels that are vitally connected with the physical. All the *asanas* have this single purpose. Whatever be the position that we occupy, these positions should be helpful in maintaining the balance of the nerves. Ultimately, the aim of all this effort is to bring about a balance in thinking. The thinking process is in an imbalanced state on account of its having to confront objects of sense every day. The mind, when it is thinking of an object, is not in a state of balance. Anything that is thinking of something else is out of balance. All states of consciousness that are centred in another object are an imbalanced condition of consciousness.

Many may know very well the aphorism of Patanjali where he says, “Yoga is the establishment of consciousness in itself.” Normally, consciousness is never in itself—it is always in another. It is in some other person, some other object, and something that is longed for by the mind. This is called *samsara*, earthly existence, mortal life, etc. The imbalance of consciousness, brought about by its movement towards an object outside, is what is contrary to yoga. The attempt in all the limbs of practice is to bring the consciousness back to its original state.

This cannot be done immediately, or at one stroke, because there are various stages or layers of the entanglement of consciousness. Our consciousness is tied to objects outside

by various strings which are internally manipulated by thoughts. It is not that consciousness has taken a sudden jump towards the objects. There is a gradual condensation, as it were, of consciousness into material levels, and then it is that consciousness is lodged in objects of sense. There is a descent, to speak metaphorically at least, because consciousness cannot descend or ascend. But to make it clear for the purpose of explanation, I may say that there is apparently a kind of descent of consciousness into the mental level, and an identification of consciousness with the processes of thought. When thought gets identified with consciousness and vice versa, we take thought for ourselves and ourselves for the way of thinking.

There is a further descent of the consciousness through the mind to the sense organs and the powers of sense, then a descent to the *pranas*, and after that a downward descent to the nervous system and further down to the body and its related objects. This is a kind of involuntary *avatara* or incarnation of consciousness, we may say, where it has in some way or other come down from its universal, ethereal and transparent level of Self-existence to the lowest, bifurcated and isolated world of objects, which do not seem to have any relation among themselves. This is the highest imbalance possible that we can conceive of—where the consciousness has come down to such a level of physicality, earthliness and difference that it is no more in its own original state. We cannot even imagine that it could fall into that condition. It is somewhere far removed from where it ought to be and where it really is.

#### THE TUNING UP OF CONSCIOUSNESS

The consciousness has come to the physical level; that is what is very important to remember. Therefore we have to start the tuning up of the consciousness, back to its true state starting from the physical level itself. We cannot suddenly jump to the highest level when consciousness has already sunk into the material realm—so much sunk that consciousness does not seem to be there at all. Today we have behavioural psychologists who think that consciousness is only an offshoot of matter. We have fallen to such a level where matter has become the mother and consciousness only its child, while the truth is quite different. Matter has become the lodgement of consciousness, and the identification of thought with the material vesture has been so intense that we have forgotten the very possibility of the existence of an independent consciousness. We take matter itself as the original state of things and the reality, and consciousness as only a kind of offshoot.

This is where we are standing today in the material realm. Therefore, the tuning up which is yoga has to start with the physical body at the objective level. From this comes the necessity for the practice of *asana*. There are eighty-four *asanas*, although some people say there are eighty-four *lakhs* (8,400,000). But whatever be the number of *asanas*, it makes no difference how many we practise, just as it does not matter how many medicines we take—the purpose is all one. We may take a tablet, we may take a mixture, we may take an injection, we may put a plaster, or we may do anything—all these have the single purpose of healing the wounds of our system and to make us healthy.

So are the *asanas*. They may be eighty-four or eighty-four *lakhs*, whatever be the number, the purpose is single—to bring about a physical balance. We know that when a physical balance is introduced into the body, there is a sympathetic influence exerted on

the internal layers. There is a tendency towards further internalised harmony by the practice of the external, bodily *asana*. This influence may not be felt immediately, because the consciousness is so far inside the inner make-up of the person. There are at least five bodily sheaths or vestures, as we were told: internal to the physical there is the vital and the sensory, behind that is the mental, then the intellectual, and then the causal. Beyond all these is the true state of consciousness.

We cannot immediately exert an influence on consciousness by the practice of *asanas*, though we may be able to exert an influence sympathetically and by a remote process. So it is that *asana* is essential. Yet *asana* practice is not all, because it cannot do all things that are necessary for us, though without it we find it hard to go deeper. It is the first step that we take in tuning up the bodily system. In every *asana*, the purpose is to set up a balance in the cellular or the organic make-up of the body, and this is why the practice of *asanas* even helps the digestive process, the circulatory process and the breathing process. All the metabolic functions begin to go in a very smooth and cooperative spirit because of the harmony which is introduced.

Health is harmony, and therefore *asanas* ensure health. But it does something more—it tones up the nerves. Toning up the nerves is also a kind of introduction of balance into the system. Wherever there is balance, there is a toning up of the system. We feel a kind of strength. Wherever there is balance, there is strength, and wherever there is imbalance, there is a feeling of dissipation of energy. So it is that the yoga teachers insist on the practice of *asana*. If we place our body in an awkward position, this awkwardness sympathetically gets conveyed to the inner levels of the body, which becomes an awkwardness of the nerves, of the sensory powers, of the mind and so on. Though the body is not directly connected with the spirit, as I mentioned, it is indirectly connected. One thing is connected with another; one link is connected with a second link, the second with the third, the third with the fourth, and so on up to the hundredth link. We may say that the first is connected with the hundredth, though it is far separated.

The body is connected with the spirit through the linkage of the various vestures of the body. We may call them *koshas*—the five *koshas* or *panchakosha*. There are five kinds of vestures, of which the physical is the outermost. This manipulation of the physical system, therefore, does not immediately tell upon the mind or the spirit, but it tells upon the nerves and the bodily vibration. The *asanas* help in producing a system of vibration in the body. The *asanas* are not merely bending or twisting—they are aids in creating a force in the body. We help ourselves in creating a vibration.

This is the more important aspect of the practice of *asana*. The vibration, which may be said to be an expression of the energy of the system, is not usually felt on account of the distractions of the mind and the tortuous postures we generally assume in our physical system. For example, when we are seated in a balanced pose, we allow the energy of the *prana* within to flow rhythmically through the channels of the nerves, just as one may allow a rhythmic, free flow of water through different channels which are placed on level ground in a field. If the fields are low, the water will rush down like a torrent, and if the fields are elevated, the water will find it difficult to reach that level. If the fields are all at one level, there is a free and noiseless movement of the waters through the channels which connect them.

*Asana* practice is therefore a noiseless practice. We do not allow or do not wish the

energy to rush through the nerves like a torrent, as if water were poured down from a higher level. Jerks and sudden twists of the body are avoided in the *asanas*. Thus, *asanas* are different from ordinary physical exercises, where sudden movements are made by the body. We are poised in the beginning and poised during the period of practice, and we come out with poise after the conclusion of the practice. There is a tremendous difference, as if poles apart, between the practice of *asanas* and physical exercises. We should not combine extremely strenuous physical exercises with the practice of *asanas*—one day we would play sports and the next day we would do *sirshasana* or *savasana*. This is not recommended, because we are giving an unnatural exertion to the body when it is not prepared.

There is no meddling with the inner system in the practice of *asanas*. The practice is also a kind of education that we give to the muscles and to the nerves. Education is not given by a whip or a rod; it is rather a very smooth growing process. We do not grow suddenly from one foot in height to six feet. Slowly, nature evolves in the form of growth of the body. For example, we cannot know that we are growing up every day, as the growth is so smooth and harmonious. Likewise is the educational system of the *asana* practice. We do not put any overexertion in the *asana*, and there is no fatigue of any kind. We should not say, “Oh, I am tired.” That is then not so much *asana* as it is exercise. We do not feel fatigue in the practice, because it is a system of education. In true education we cannot be tired, because it is only when we stuff our minds with facts beyond their limits that we get bored with learning. But in a very carefully thought-out process of education, we will find that learning is a joyous process. So is *asana*, so is yoga, and thus the limb of yoga which is *asana* gradually brings about a system of harmony.

#### **EASY, COMFORTABLE AND NOT DIFFICULT OR MONOTONOUS**

I would like to confine myself to the specific postures necessary for the practice of meditation alone. These postures are supposed to be few, and ultimately the posture is one. The definition of a posture for meditation is, “that one which is easy and comfortable; not tortuous, difficult or monotonous”. One should not feel the need to constantly release oneself from the *asana* while sitting in meditation. It is up to us to choose a posture. Whatever is convenient for us may be taken as our posture, and by “convenient” I mean in the sense that we can remain in that posture for a protracted period. The purpose of the meditative pose therefore is to ensure maintaining a position of the body for a long period—as long as possible. When the pose is convenient and to our satisfaction, naturally we will not have to change the pose constantly. We change the pose only when it is not convenient.

However, the lying pose is not considered to be one recommended for meditation, although it is a very convenient pose and one which one could maintain for a long period. The lying pose is not supposed to be a suitable pose for meditation, because of the possibility of the mind entering sleep. The mind may go to sleep if the body is allowed to be lying down in the position of *savasana*, for example. Though *savasana* gives rest to the whole system, it may give so much rest that it may even bring about sleep, but rest should not lead to sleep in this case. It should be a conscious resting which does not result in sleep.

Hence, the teachers of yoga thought out a position of the body which may be midway

between standing and lying. Standing is not convenient, because a part of the mind will go to the maintenance of balance of the body while standing. If we should not think of the legs, even unconsciously; we might fall down, and this is why we cannot stand and sleep. Though a person may not be actually thinking of the legs while standing, a part of the mind is concerned with the legs, so the whole of the mind would not be engaged in the object of meditation. Nor is it convenient to lie down. If we lie down, we may sleep, and if we stand, we may fall. Therefore, the seated posture is supposed to be most convenient, as it is midway between the two extremes of standing and lying down.

While the sitting posture is regarded as convenient, still certain restrictions are imposed—restrictions in the sense that the sitting pose should ensure harmony of the limbs. When we sit, we typically do not know what to do with the hands. For example, while standing the two hands are hanging on both sides. What do we do with them when we sit? It is very difficult to know what to do with the hands. People go on touching this, touching that, and scratching and playing with the nails and so on, because they do not know what to do with these two hands. Therefore, the limbs also should be harmonised in the sitting posture. While the pose should be one of harmony, the limbs also should be held in a harmonious manner.

The extremities, such as the toes and the soles of the feet along with the arms and legs, ought to be properly held in meditation. The extremities should not be exposed in the sitting posture, because the posture is meant for meditation, and when the extremities are exposed—for example if we stretch our legs or leave our hands open in two directions to the right and to the left—what will happen afterwards is that the energy that we may be able to generate in meditation may leak out through the extremities. We would then feel a kind of awkward sensation through the extremities, a kind of creeping sensation like ants crawling, and we will not know what is happening to us. The advice is that while we are seated, we also lock up the limbs. The legs and the hands are both locked, and the locking of the legs is done in certain postures like the *padmasana*, the *siddhasana*, the *sukhasana* or the *swastikasana*, as they are called. These are four of the important sitting postures for meditation. In these postures we lock up the extremities of the legs, so that the extremities touch our main body, and at the same time we lock the hands. We might have seen pictures of Buddha sitting for meditation—one palm on the other, or fingers locked so that the hands and the feet are both locked. In this manner we ensure the circulation of energy within our own system. Whatever energy is generated in our system will not leak out in concentration.

Whenever there is a concentration of mind, an energy is released in the body, and this energy should not leak out through the extremities. The leaking out of the energy may take place not merely by the opened extremities, but also by our being seated on a conductor of electricity. It is advised that we should not sit on anything metallic or on bare ground, because the earth is a conductor of electricity. It acts as one of the poles of electric conduction, and so we are not to sit on bare ground. Originally, in ancient India, people used to purposely sit on poor conductors of electricity such as deerskin, tiger skin or a mat made of *kusa* grass. In the Bhagavadgita there is a statement that we can sit on an *asana* with a grass mat or a deerskin with a cloth spread over it, which means to say that we should not sit on a good conductor of electricity. Our concentration is helped if the earth and our body are not in close contact.

Many other factors also are to be taken into consideration in sitting for meditation: the weather conditions, the atmospheric condition, the height of the place and the elevation of the seat. The seat should not be, as was just advised, on the ground which is accessible to insects, etc. "*Natyuchitam natinicham*"—neither too high, nor too low says the Bhagavadgita. We should not sit on a pole or on a pillar or on the edge of the fourth storey, for example. But at the same time, the seat need not be too low or just on the ground, because we may be annoyed by certain insects, or some such thing may disturb our attention. If the seat is too high, we may even fall because of the consciousness being withdrawn.

To repeat, the seat should be neither too low nor too high, and it should not be a conductor of electricity. We should not be directly in contact with the earth, and the extremities of the body should be locked. Then, the further instruction is that we should be seated in a pose. The pose prescribed is one where the trunk is erect. Erect, however, does not mean a stiffness of the spine. We should not be stiff in our sitting posture, because the purpose of the *asana* is to allow us to finally forget the body—not to make us intensify the consciousness of the body. Remember very well, when we are sitting in a pose we are not to be made more conscious of the body than otherwise. We should not be so fixed on the notion, "I am in an *asana*". That would mean that the *asana* is not easy and comfortable. If we are sitting on an easy chair, for example, we will not be thinking too much of the pose, because it is very comfortable. Such should be the comfort and lack of stiffness that we feel in the *asana*.

The prescription that the trunk should be straight is for the particular reason that when we are bent forward, backward or to the side, the nerves in the spine also get bent and twisted. We know that this spinal column is like a trunk of a tree and the nerves are like branches that radiate from it in all directions. We can understand then the effect on the nervous system as a whole if the spine is bent in any way, namely, that there will be some kind of twisting of the nerves. They will be concentrated too much in some places and will block the movement of energy. The spine should be therefore straight, without making us overly conscious of it and without our exerting too much to be straight. It should be a normal and spontaneous posture, where we do not exert to be straight in this position, where the spine is straight and the nerves are allowed a free flow of energy.

### **THE FREE FLOW OF ENERGY**

When the nerves are freely released and are not tense in any manner, the energy within—the *prana*—flows slowly and rhythmically. We will find that this occurs even without our practising *pranayama* or regulation of the breath. We should not think of the breath but be simply seated in a harmonious posture. By remaining in a posture for a continuous period, we will find that our breathing naturally becomes slow. The breathing is slow because there is an easy flow of the *prana*. The sudden movement of the *prana* is the cause of heaving and gasping when we are out of breath. When we run about, jump or climb high, our breathing is much more taxed. It is a kind of fatigue, because we have given more work to the *prana*. The *prana* gets disturbed not merely by climbing, jumping or running, but also by an awkward position of the body. The *prana* which is constantly moving through the tubes of the nerves is to be given free expression. This is the purpose of the *asana*.

The *asana* has a higher purpose, which is to allow a free expression to the *prana*. When



the *prana* moves through the channels of the nerves, the movement should not create any noise and there should not be any friction. There should be no conflict or opposition in the free flow of energy through the nerves. That is why we are seated in a posture with the spine straight. Yoga teachers tell us that when *asana* is perfect many things follow automatically, such as control of the breath. We need not worry yet about the higher limbs of yoga. If even the pose is perfected to a satisfactory extent—if we can be seated in this posture for three hours continuously for example—we may be said to have mastered *asana*, which means to say we have mastered our bodies. Then it should be no problem for us to do *pranayama* or to handle the breath.

The parts of the body which generally bend are the neck, the waist and sometimes the back, so these three parts of the body are supposed to be kept straight. The neck should not be bent, the back should not be bent, and the waist should not be bent. These three should be kept in position. More than being kept straight, it is a question of keeping them in position—position in the sense that they do not twist the nerves in any part of the body. It is difficult to be seated like this, because people who are accustomed to hard work never have time to sit, and this introduction of the art of sitting is itself a great difficulty in the beginning stages. The mind and the senses also exert some influence on the bodily posture. Worried minds and disturbed nerves will not allow these postures to be practised properly. If we are thinking too much about a problem or some question that we have not solved, and something is annoying us and worrying us too much, in that condition of the mind we will not be able to sit for the *asana*. We may not even be able to sit at all. While the outer can exert influence over the inner, it can be the other way round also—the inner can exert influence on the outer. While the poised condition of the body tones up the nerves, the senses and the mind, the disturbed mind and the disturbed senses can distract the cells of the body, so that we can become physically sick.

We know the relation between mind and body—they are so organically connected. It is therefore necessary that in our *asana* for meditation we not merely sit in a pose and in a calm posture, but also keep the mind calm. It is difficult to say which limb is first and which limb is subsequent in the practice of yoga, though for purposes of explanation we say the body is first, the senses afterwards and the mind is later, but they all come together in a single action when we actually start the practice. We cannot be merely a body first, the senses afterwards and the mind later on. It is not so, as we are all these things at the same time. The moment we become conscious of ourselves, we are conscious of all things at the same time—mind, senses, *prana*, body, etc. We cannot be a body first and senses afterwards. This is only for the purpose of explanation and understanding.

Yoga is not merely one limb for ten years, another limb for ten years, *yama* and *niyama* for ten years, and then one goes on to *pranayama* and so on. If this were so, then all the years of our lives would not be sufficient. That is not what is intended, because despite our efforts we cannot be perfect in every limb in every way. All the limbs and all the processes have to be taken into consideration together. Later on, through a deeper understanding of all the limbs, a graduated analysis of the limbs through study and through continued practice, they will come together. We practise *yama*, *niyama*, *asana*, *pranayama*, *pratyahara* and *dharana* all together—not one after another on different days.

Thus, the organic link between the body and the inner layers is also to be taken into consideration in the practice of *asana*. A successful posture for meditation therefore also involves subdued senses and a tranquil mind. We cannot just do *asana* as some sort of physical exercise when the mind is highly harassed by problems of the world. We must know that *asana* also is a yoga and is an essential part of yoga, and yoga is sacred. We cannot just take it as a kind of hobby or a work or a business which we can take up or cast away. If these postures which promote the physical balance of the muscles and the nerves are continued for a longer time, we will begin to feel a sensation in the mind of its getting relieved of the clutches of the body. This is the beginning of our success in *asana*.

While normally we feel that we are bound to this body, harassed by the body, or even enslaved by the body, in a successful posture maintained in this way—even if it be just for an hour—we will slowly begin to feel a kind of indication that we can be free from the clutches of bodily needs. We will begin to feel a sensation of freedom of various kinds—freedom from even a sensation of hunger and thirst, and freedom from the usual pains and itchings of the body. Freedom is happiness. Whenever we are in a position to express a little freedom, we will feel happy and joyful. Even in the position that we are maintaining in the body, we will also feel a kind of satisfaction. *Asana* brings us satisfaction because of the freedom of the nerves and the senses gradually felt inwardly. The purpose of these postures, the meditative pose particularly, is to bring about a consciousness of one's freedom from the body's grip.

#### **EFFORTLESSNESS**

One of the aphorisms of Patanjali mentions that the *asana* in meditation should be free from the consciousness of effort. The *asana* should be effortless, as we should not be exerting overly much to be in this posture. There are two prescriptions of Patanjali in this connection—effortlessness and an infinitude of feeling. These suggestions are given by Patanjali to help the maintenance of the pose for a long period. We cannot maintain a consciousness of effort for a long time. For example, we cannot go to sleep merely through effort, because we are effortless when we go to sleep. The tense nerves will not allow us to sleep, and people who are thinking too much cannot get sleep. Effortless posture is what ensures the freedom. That is to be achieved in the *asana*. Wherever there is freedom, there is also effortlessness. Freedom and exertion do not go together. We do not work like a beast of burden when we are practising yoga or maintaining the *asana*.

In light of this, how does one maintain this position? It is quite inevitable that after a few minutes the body will start tiring, and we will feel a sense of irritation in the legs, and the mind will start wandering from place to place. The yoga teacher Patanjali gives one very interesting and suggestive instruction. The awkwardness of the body and the bending or the drooping are due to a distraction. If there were no distraction, we would be able to maintain the pose. He says, "Try to think the Infinite, if you want to maintain *asana* or a balanced pose of the body."

To repeat, the suggestions given are to be effortless and are intended to maintain the thought of the Infinite. It is not just a matter of actively willing oneself to not think of the body—the practice must be effortless. We should not even think that we are sitting in a pose. One should think something else—but what is that "something else"? He says it

is the Infinite. If we think about the body when we are in an *asana*, then we will not be able to remain in the *asana*. Do not think of the body in the *asana* while in the prescribed pose—that is effortless. Patanjali says further, at that time one should think the Infinite. What is the Infinite? Who can think the Infinite? No man can think the Infinite, but for the purpose of this practice, the Infinite may be taken as anything beyond which we cannot think. We can go on thinking one thing, two things or a hundred things, but no matter how many things we think at the same time, all those together do not yet comprise the Infinite.

Let us look into the possible process of thinking. Take for instance all the people sitting in a hall. If we think of only one person seated there, we will get distracted, because there are other persons sitting nearby, and the mind will go to those other persons. Then all right, think of all the persons in the hall. Then the mind will start thinking of a dog that is outside. Well, include the dog together with these people on whom we are thinking. Then we think about a tree nearby. Think that tree also. Do not allow the mind to exclude any object that comes to it—let it grow tired of thinking. Whatever thoughts come to the mind, maintain them and do not leave them—which means to say, give the mind whatever it wants.

Then we will start thinking of the Himalayas—all right then, think the Himalayas. Let us see how far the mind will go. Think all the people in the hall, everything that is outside the hall, the trees, the mountains, the rivers—then it will go to the sky. Think the sky also, think the stars, think the sun and think the whole world as far as we can. What else can we think, let us see! Give the mind more thoughts and tell the mind, “Have we been satisfied now? Are we going to think something more? If we have something more, think that also.” Let it think as much as possible; feed it until it is vomiting. Do not allow the mind to get free from any object. Then it will say, “I want that.” Give it that. Now the mind will have been given so many objects to think that it has nothing more to think. Then it will keep quiet, because it has reached its infinitude of thinking.

Infinitude means the last, or the furthestmost end of thought. How far can the mind go? This is the psychological infinite, though not the metaphysical or spiritual Infinite, of course. This psychological infinite is something that we are introducing into our minds for the sake of maintaining balance, because the mind remains in a state of balance when it does not think any particular object. When it thinks of an object, it is no more in balance. Among the many ways which we can try in the maintenance of mental balance, this is one method. Let the mind think all things as much as possible—all things at the same time. It is like taking a large meal to our fullest satisfaction until the stomach bursts. We eat and eat until the body can accommodate no more, then we will not ask for more food—it is enough.

This is an example of the psychological infinitude of thinking, which is given as one of the suggestions. If we try to think all things at the same time, we will see what happens to us. We must experience it to know what it is. We start thinking anything, and there is nothing which is beyond the scope of thinking. We may travel mentally round the whole world. If we go to the skies and do not leave anything, what then happens to the mind? See, it will not think afterwards; it will be fed up. It will be so much fatigued that it will not think anything.

I'll tell you a story which I read in a book. I was very amused by it and found it very

interesting. There was a very great and wise Swami who had an *ashram*. He wanted to teach some lessons to his disciples about how to control the mind. There was a cow in a nearby village. It had the habit of kicking if anyone went near it. Nobody could milk it or even touch it. So the Swami used to take a stick, and he slowly touched the cow's legs, and it would immediately give a kick. He touched it again, and again the cow gave a kick. He touched it a third time, and again it kicked. One day this Swami never left the cow—he sat there and went on touching the cow, and the cow went on kicking, kicking, kicking—for one hour, two hours, three hours. The disciples said, “Maharaj, please go and take your meal. We will do this work for you.” So, the Swami let the disciples do the touching, and he went and had food. After he was finished with the meal, again he went back and started touching the cow with the stick. The whole day he went on doing this, and he would not allow the cow to keep quiet. Finally though the cow had been kicking so many times for hours together that it just got fed up, and afterwards there was no more kicking. The cow just stopped kicking then and there.

The Swami said, “Now you see, my dear cow, you will not kick hereafter.” For the whole day it had been kicking, but now it did not do it anymore. Very interesting. He said, “This is what we also have to do to the mind. How long will it kick? Let us see. It cannot kick forever. At some point it will get tired and it will not kick anymore.” This story illustrates some of the very interesting things about yoga meditation—and there are many more things. They are humorous things, but great practical things as well. Sometimes we may have to catch a hold of the mind, sometimes we have to threaten it, sometimes we have to feed it, and sometimes we have to educate it—so many things have to be done. In this manner, by thinking the infinite psychologically and by a process of effortlessness, the meditative pose will be maintained.

## CHAPTER TWENTY

### THE RIGHT CHANNELISATION OF ENERGY

The *asanas* are often combined with certain other exercises, called *bandhas* and *mudras*. These accessory exercises are supposed to help to fix oneself in the practice of *asana*. All these are physical exercises no doubt, but they have the power to exert an influence over the nerves and the *prana*. By 'nerves' we are not to understand merely the visible passageways of the physical system. They are subtle channels of force, and these are said to also have a counterpart in the subtle body of our personality. It is difficult to say where the physical body ends and the subtle body begins. This physical body seems to fade away in a very indistinct manner into the subtle body, and in turn the subtle body solidifies itself gradually into the physical body. There is no sudden jump from the physical to the subtle, or the subtle to the physical. It is a gradual or ethereal transition that cannot be seen with physical eyes. The *asanas*, *bandhas* and *mudras* are certain postures of the body by which the subtle nerves, called the *nadis* (through which the *prana* moves), are kept in a particular position.

I have mentioned the way in which the body may be kept in position, but I mentioned only the general characteristics of poses that are to be maintained in *asana*. Again, the concept of *asana* infers a maintenance of a balance of the nervous system; but something else also can be accomplished with these postures. The energy may be kept in balance, it is true, but it also can be directed or channelled in certain ways if the necessity arises. This can be done internally as well as externally. When it is directed externally, it is coupled with concentration. The mind, the *prana* and the vital force all act together in the focusing of energy to any particular spot external to the body. We shall not concern ourselves so much with externalisation of energy, because that is outside the pale of the practice of yoga, although it is also done for certain purposes. The more important thing is internalisation of the energy rather than allowing it to go outward—to centralise it in particular parts of the body, especially in the astral system.

This art of the centralisation of energy in particular parts of the body has led to the science of what is called *tantra* yoga, and sometimes called *kundalini* yoga as well. It is also concerned with *mantra* yoga or the chanting of religious formulas. The whole technique is one of internalisation of force. Just as energy may be dissipated by the fixing of the mind on objects of sense, it can also get stagnated in the body by disuse. There are people who are not constantly thinking of sense objects, and though we cannot call them sensuous people, their minds are nevertheless stagnant and they are not active in their mental process. The mind is bad enough, whether it is in an act of fixation on the objects of sense or if it is doing nothing.

The purpose of yoga is to so adjust the mind so that it neither fixes on a sense object, nor does it get stagnant or lodged up in the body because of a lack of action. To be stagnant would be *tamas*, to be thinking of a sense object would be *rajas*—but both are equally bad for yoga. What we need is *sattva*, not *rajas* or *tamas*. To think of an object is *rajas*, and not to think anything is *tamas*. *Sattva* is a third condition altogether, which is different from thinking and non-thinking. It is a transparent mood of consciousness, and it is the purpose of yoga to awaken more *sattva*. The particular systems of yoga

called *tantra* yoga, *kriya* yoga or *kundalini* yoga engage themselves in the channelisation of energy. This is a very important aspect of these yogas.

While in all forms of meditation there is channelisation of mental force, in these yogas there is a particular type of channelisation which distinguishes itself from other types of yoga in the following ways. One, these forms of meditation are internalised rather than externalised. Two, this internalisation is restricted to the bodily organism rather than focused on the universal whole. The belief of these techniques is that the knowledge of the microcosm is as good as the knowledge of the macrocosm. If we have a knowledge of ourselves, there is no need to worry about the world. Let the world be made of anything, it makes no difference—provided we know what *we* are made of.

### THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DIFFERENT YOGAS

These yogas concern themselves with the individual rather than with the cosmic, because of their notion that it is pointless to worry about the cosmic when it is enough to concentrate one's attention on the individual—which is a copy of the cosmic. The body is a specimen of the universal, and within it the whole universe is hidden, just as a tree is hidden in a seed. If we can know what is contained in the seed of a banyan tree, we can know what the tree is made of. Though the tree is so large, its essence is hidden in a small seed. So tiny is the seed, but it can contain within itself the large expanse of the banyan tree. In the same way, this microcosmic individual is identical to this wondrous cosmos. This is the philosophical foundation of *kundalini* yoga and *tantra* yoga, and many other yogas are akin to it. They start with certain positions of the body, and they lay much emphasis on *asana*, *bandha* and *mudra*. Emphasis is laid on these because in these specific techniques of yoga the individual is believed to commence with the physical body. Everything that extends from the physical on up to the spiritual is taken into consideration.

As a little digression I might mention the distinction between *hatha*, *kundalini*, *jnana* and *bhakti* yoga. The difference lies in the fact that the *jnanayogins* or the philosophically minded people believe that consciousness can transcend everything that is below it, and the proper manipulation of consciousness is all that is necessary. From this philosophical point of view, if consciousness were to properly adjust itself, it could then adjust everything in the world. Intelligence directs everything in the world—thought precedes action. The bodily organism, the nervous system, the sensory powers, the *prana*—all these are slaves of consciousness, and they will just do what consciousness says. Where the consciousness is, there the senses are, there the *prana* is, and that will determine the state of the nerves and the body. Our health, our position, our mental state, whatever we are and whatever we have is entirely dependent on the state of consciousness in which we are lodged.

Consciousness is everything to the philosopher and the *Vedantin*. It is consciousness that has become everything by a sort of gradual condensation of itself. The body, the nerves and the senses are not independent of consciousness. Therefore, when we touch consciousness, we have touched the whole world. When we understand consciousness, we have understood not only our own selves in our integrality, but the whole universe outside. Therefore there is nothing to think and nothing to learn in this world except consciousness, and when we know it, we have known everything. It is a rationalistic approach of the intelligence, analytically and synthetically. This is the essence of the

*jnana* yoga process.

*Bhakti* yoga differs from *jnana* in the way that it emphasises feeling rather than understanding. Wherever our feeling is, there our power also lies. Whatever we say or do with feeling has effect. There is no use merely having understanding with no feeling, and we can transform anything in this world by intense feeling about it. Our blessing or curses come through a channelisation of our feeling, and not from our thinking. To contact God, what is necessary is to feel the presence of God. There is no use in our being told that God is so big, so large, and so wonderful—it makes no difference to us. The question is, do we feel His presence? Can we love Him? Can our hearts go to Him?

If our hearts are elsewhere, our yoga is nothing, says *bhakti* yoga. Where our love is, there our hearts are, and there our whole being is. Whatever be our rationality, it will not help us if our hearts are elsewhere. There are people who are very learned, but their understanding or learning is not in the position to go hand-in-hand with their hearts, because their hearts are different from their understanding. The *bhakti* *marga* feels that where feeling is absent, everything is null and void. There is no means except affection to contact God, because in this world affection succeeds where nothing else will succeed. We cannot control anything in this world when our love is absent. Nothing whatsoever can come under our control if our love is diverted from the object of our supposed control. This is the psychology of human living, and this can be applied also to our relations to God. Whatever applies to the world applies to God also. If love succeeds in the world, love will also succeed with God. God sees our hearts rather than our brains.

But the *hatha*, *kundalini*, *kriya*, *mantra* and *tantra* *yogins* emphasise something different, though they do not deny the validity of the points stressed in *jnana* or *bhakti* yoga. The *shakti* yoga philosophy, called *tantra* in India, is a very vast subject, which even today is not well known to the West. One learned man named Sir John Woodruff has done great research in *tantra*, but he has been the only Westerner who has taken interest in this subject, and for the most part *tantra* is a completely closed book to the West. However, not just to Westerners but to almost everyone, *tantra* has been something unintelligible. People do not know what this *tantra* or *yantra* means. They think it is all rubbish and nonsense—but it is not so. *Tantra* has assumed a bad name due to its not being understood by people and by its being propagated by untutored people. The people who have been talking about it are those who have understood little about it.

It was the intention of Sir John Woodruffe to unveil this mystery to the extent possible, though I don't say in its entirety, and it has done much good. The whole difficulty was that the *tantric* texts were all in Sanskrit and were not to be found in any other language. What is more, the Sanskrit in these texts is so enigmatic and couched in such symbolic and metaphorical language that one cannot actually understand what is meant there by a mere reading. Such was the secret of the *tantras*. The philosophy is akin to the Vedanta, with both placing an emphasis on the organic relation between the body and the world.

The difference between the Vedanta and the Saiva as well as the Shakta Vedanta (*tantra*) is that, while they both accept the unitary existence of God which is a common point both for the Vedanta of Shankaracharya and the Vedanta of Saivism and Shaktism, the difference between them is that some sort of necessary is laid by the Saiva-Sidhanta

(these are terms referring to certain schools of philosophy) and the Shakti doctrine on the vital relationship between the human organism and the organism of the world outside. *Tantra* believes that consciousness (*chit*) is everything, but that there is something in the world also, and one has to rise up to the level of universal consciousness called Siva by a graduated evolution from matter to Spirit. Therefore, in this philosophy one cannot ignore matter—it goes without saying. We cannot set aside matter as long as matter is one of the stages of the evolutionary process. There is nothing unintelligible, unimportant or ugly in the world, according to *tantra*. Everything can be converted into something beautiful, a significant and necessary means in the practice of this art of contact with God, provided we have a purified understanding.

Matter is not dirt; it becomes dirt only when it is out of place. Matter is not ugly; it looks ugly only when only a part of it is seen, and not the whole of it. Any part of our bodies may look ugly if seen only in part, but not when seen as a whole. We may be very beautiful persons, but if we look at ourselves with a microscope, we will not look so beautiful. In the microscope we will see only partially and not wholly, and therefore all the beauty vanishes. It is the case with all things in the world. It is our way of looking at things that is mostly responsible for our evaluations about things.

So we should not say anything negative about the nature of things—they are all right. *Tantra* and *kundalini* yoga believe that there is nothing ultimately wrong with things. That which is wrong seems to be the way of looking at things. In homeopathy a similar thing occurs. The belief is that like attacks like, like cures like. This is the difference between allopathic medicine and homeopathy. The opposite factor is used in allopathic, but the same thing is used in homeopathy. “That which can harm can also cure,” is not only the philosophy of homeopathy but also the philosophy of *tantra* and the scriptures and the arts akin to this line. The world is neither good nor bad to us—it can be good or bad according to our relation to it.

The philosophy of *tantra*, *hatha* yoga and *kundalini* yoga assumes the necessity for a proper utilisation of the energies and materials available in the world for a higher good, rather than despising it with a kind of renunciation. We do not condemn it by renunciation, because the world is not so bad as we think it to be. The world appears to be bad on account of our not properly appreciating it and our not being able to understand it or put it to use. The world is like a flood. We can harness the waters for hydroelectric purposes, or the waters may flood a village if they are not properly channelled. So are the universal forces—they can inundate us and devastate us if they are not properly directed. If however they are harnessed properly, they can be used for great good.

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF MORALITY**

The *tantra shastra*, which emphasises these techniques of *asana*, *bandha*, *mudra* and *pranayama* together with concentration, has been regarded as a dangerous technique—especially these days, because of man’s being what he is. We know human nature—it is easily susceptible to temptation. To the sensuous mind, the philosophy of the omnipresence of God is of no use. The mind can use this philosophy for the effacement of all values and the ultimate destruction and self-inundation of the practitioner. These techniques of *tantra* and *hatha* also lay stress on moral equipment, and we will find



*yama* and *niyama* mentioned first. In the Hatha Yoga Pradipika we will find *yama-niyama* mentioned first. In the *raja* yoga of Patanjali, *yama-niyama* is mentioned first. When we read the philosophy of Sankara, we will find the *sadhana-chatushtaya* mentioned first. We will read the *bhakti* yoga *shastras*, the Narada Bhakti Sutras or the Srimad Bhagavatam, we will find the moral equipment mentioned as very, very essential.

There is no yoga worth the name without moral purification, and the dread of *tantra*, *hatha* and other yogas will come to a person who is morally impure. Otherwise there is nothing dreadful or fearful about them. People handle fire, dynamite and machine equipment that are so dangerous to a child, but are safe if they are scientifically organised and operated. A person who does not know how to use dynamite may be afraid even to touch it. These *tantra shastras* are like powerful dynamite that can explode at any time, but it can explode for good as well as for bad. It is like atomic energy, which can be made into a bomb to destroy people or be used to provide incredible power.

These practices are becoming more and more unintelligible to people these days on account of people's asking for quick results without doing anything. Well, we can have a quick result even by invoking the devil—there is no doubt about it. But we know what will happen to us, and we will repent later on. So do not ask for quick results. There is no use in anything happening immediately—let it happen properly. What is important is not the quickness of the result but the efficacy and the rectitude involved in it. All the yogas are wonderful systems. There is no comparison among them. We cannot say that one yoga is superior and another is inferior. They are all wondrous techniques of self-adjustment with the cosmic. Whether it is *tantra*, *hatha*, *kriya*, *jnana*, *bhakti* or whatever it is, it makes no difference. We can reach God, the Absolute, through any of these methods; but we are likely to mistake the fundamental insistence on proper understanding of the technique and the moral purification necessary. These two are very important in all the yogas. A very correct understanding of the techniques along with a moral purification is very, very important.

If we go on meditating for years together without knowledge of the technique, we will not succeed. Our technique of meditation may be wrong, and then we will complain that there is no result. The knowledge of the technique is as important as moral purification, and vice versa. These yogas, as I mentioned, take account of the physical body, the nervous system and its counterpart, the macrocosmic. The *raja* yoga system of Patanjali does not go into the details of these various implications of *asanas*, *bandhas* and *mudras*. Patanjali rather is particularly concerned only with one pose of the body, suitable for a particular kind of meditation. But for your benefit I am mentioning something which is not in the *raja* yoga system. Those physical postures are to be combined with *bandhas* and *mudras*, together with a direction of the *prana*, combined with concentration of mind.

All these go together—*asana*, *bandha*, *mudra*, *pranayama dharana*, meditation and concentration—and all get combined in a single act in any limb of this yoga. The physical body is the emphasis in *hatha* yoga and all the yogas except for *bhakti* yoga and *jnana* yoga. This emphasis is to be regarded as a necessary one for obvious reasons. We cannot get over this body-consciousness easily. There is no use saying, "I am not the body, and I

have no body.” We know that we have one, and our catch phrases do not necessarily help us. It is not verbal affirmation that is necessary; rather it is an affirmation of the feeling that is necessary.

We always feel that we have a body, though we may go on saying that we do not have one. This is a handicap to our progress. *Hatha* yoga techniques take account of the bodily organism. Concentration, though it is necessary and is the pinnacle of yoga, can be done together with certain bodily adjustments. *Asanas*, *bandhas* and *mudras* are nothing but bodily adjustments to facilitate the higher purpose of concentration. I may mention a few of these techniques of *hatha* yoga. I said earlier that we should be seated in one *asana* for the purpose of meditation. Together with that, one or two of the *bandhas* or *mudras* may be practised. The well-known combination of *asana*, *bandha* and *mudra* is that blend of poses called *dhyana asana*, meaning any pose in which we may be seated for meditation; and a *bandha* called *mula bandha*, together with another called the *jalandhara bandha*, a third one called *uddhiana bandha*, along with a simultaneous concentration of the *prana*—all these are recommended.

However, these processes will not yield much result if two qualifications are not fulfilled: one, if we have not sublimated our sensual desires, at least to an appreciable extent, if not wholly; and two, if we have an ulterior motive behind these practices. This ulterior motive would be where we want something through this practice—something in the sense of a power to be harnessed for our personal selfish good or in order to harm someone. This sort of motive implies that the mind is not wholly pure. The second qualification is implied in the earlier one, namely, purification of mind.

It is just like education, as I mentioned earlier. Education is not the art of earning a livelihood. There are some villagers who think that if they have enough land and property that there is no reason for their children to be educated. “When there is plenty of land, property and money, why should there be education?” they ask. They may feel that education is only needed in order for someone to earn money, and in their case there is no need for their children to get an education in order to earn. But education is different from learning how to earn. Education is the art of broadening the outlook of life and not just learning how to get more money.

Unfortunately, most people think that the education one gets is only for the purpose of getting a job, and otherwise there is no use of education. Through education one is getting “fixed” in life, they would say. “Are you fixed?” people ask. By “fixing” they mean that one is able to earn. That is the reason why people think that education is not necessary if one has plenty of wealth. Big businessmen may train their children in only keeping accounts, making leases and running the business. Landholders may teach their children only to cultivate their fields and for reaping and harvesting, which is good no doubt—but it is not education. The mind will not be broadened, polished or regenerated. Education, as we know, is a process of the regeneration of the attitude in life rather than a way of getting on with things in the world.

### **YOGA AS AN EDUCATIVE PROCESS**

Likewise is yoga an art and an educative process. Getting something in yoga practice is not the purpose. What is it that we want to get, after all? What is this that we are hankering after through yoga? What is it that we want, and what do we need? What do

we lack in life? It is a thorough misunderstanding with which many people approach the art of yoga, and so they do not succeed. We approach yoga like children or fools, having no idea as to what it actually means. Many people take it as a hobby. Others are brought into the practice by an emergency they cannot cope with. “Oh God, if You are there, please come and help!” This kind of prayer may be good in some way, but it will bring nothing. How difficult is it to understand the implications of the approach to yoga. It is just like undergoing a process of impersonal education, which itself is an end and not a means.

A broadening of the outlook of life is an end in itself—it is not a means to some end. Our knowing what life is, is itself a great achievement. As a matter of fact, this itself is God-realisation. Whatever people say of God and the Absolute is nothing but the fundamental spiritual implications of life, and there is no God outside life. This is what yoga really means. Yoga is God-realisation. Yoga is the realisation of the values of life, and therefore yoga is an end in itself. We cannot get something for ourselves through yoga; we must let this idea go.

Without understanding this, people with certain submerged desires practise *asanas*, *pranayama*, *bandhas* and *mudras*, and as a result they get into complications and become tied into knots. There are various kinds of psychological knots in which we get entangled. Thus, there are people who get lost. I will mention some of the dangers of *hatha* yoga when it is practised at the higher *kundalini* and *tantra* yoga levels if the practitioners are not properly fit for undergoing it. If we meet people who have been studying and practising yoga for years, we may come to know their difficulties. If we have a private talk with them, and if they are ready to tell us the truth, we will be taken aback by the problems and difficulties that one has to meet in the practice of yoga. Yoga is not just a matter of coming and going somewhere. A person once visited here from San Francisco and said, “I’ll just get liberation and go back home!” He thought liberation was something one can purchase from somewhere, and that he could go back to San Francisco afterwards. I said, “Very good. You can have *mukti* (liberation) and then you can go to San Francisco and show it to others!”

Well, this is an example of how people remain simpletons in these very serious matters, and essentially learn nothing. Finally they begin to feel that there is no God, no religion and nothing of this kind, because they cannot get it so easily. We need not only good students of yoga these days, but we also need good teachers to tell us what it all actually means. There are many teachers who merely say, “Yes, come, come, I will tell you,” but they do not teach anything. A good teacher may not talk to us at first, and we must be prepared for that. To come into relationship with him may be a hard job, because goodness and appropriateness of understanding in matters of yoga is at the same time a great achievement in the stage of dispassion, and the dispassion of a *yogin* is something difficult to understand.

If we read the lives of great saints and *yogins*, we will know how difficult it was for them to get knowledge from their Gurus and what tests and periods of training, hardships and untold difficulties these students had to undergo. Many times they became discouraged, gave up and went away. This happened to many; it can happen to anyone, and it continues to happen. We are frightened by the very enormity of the difficulties and the complexities of the practice. We begin with an initial enthusiasm in yoga, thinking that

it is just a matter of making a good attempt, and then it becomes difficult—like a child studying physics or chemistry, for example. It is a very difficult science, and one cannot just commit everything to memory. Then the study goes on with more and more complicated fields like relativity, quantum physics and so on. The student doesn't know what these are, and would rather leave the study than try to go on to learn more. So it is with yoga. Goodness and appropriateness of understanding in matters of yoga are great virtues in the practice and are achieved through calm dispassion. The dispassion of a *yogin* is something difficult to understand, but must be learned in order to progress.

Given the nature of these difficulties and the fact that we are likely to be led astray, having a Guru is emphasised very much. If a Guru is nearby, like a physician is near to a patient, one sees that the patient is eventually mended somehow and then cured. The patient cannot understand himself. A Guru is like a physician for the student, and for some period at least the student has to be under the supervision of a Guru who is physically present. Some imaginary or mental Guru may be all right for some time later on, but not in the beginning. As long as we have a physical body, we are physically conscious, and we have physical difficulties, a physically visible Guru is necessary for some time. We may think it is a superfluous thing, but it is not so.

We will find later on how necessary a Guru is, because we will be led astray, we will suffer from illusions, we will see certain things and experience certain things which we will mistake for achievements, and we will get into difficult tangles. We may have physical complications, physiological disturbances and psychological entanglements, all of which may come upon us if we do not properly adjust ourselves morally and ethically under the guidance of a competent Guru. The *pranas* sometimes get locked up in certain centres of the body by a forced pressure exerted on the body by *asanas*, *bandhas* and *mudras*. When the *prana* is locked up in a particular way, we may feel pain and we may mistake this pain for the rising of the *kundalini*.

However, let it be remembered that the rising of the *kundalini* is never painful. Anything good cannot be equated with pain. The vision of God is not a pain, and the rousing of the powers within is not a pain. The pain comes only when the *pranas* are sidetracked and get centred in unwanted parts of the body. *Kundalini* yoga, which necessitates the practice of *asanas*, etc. also touches upon certain aspects of concentration on what are called the *chakras*. I would like for everyone to listen to me carefully, because all this is difficult to understand. The *chakras* are whirls of energy in the astral body. Remember that they are whirls of force and are not physical substances which we can touch. They are not merely anatomical parts in the physical body, though the physical anatomy has some connection with these whirls of energy within. These whirls of energy are nothing but the ways of the movement of thought. Finally, the energy which is called *kundalini* is nothing but mind lodged in a particular level.

Some people have the notion that the *kundalini* is something like a snake inside us. There is no snake inside us, and we cannot open a part of the body and see this *kundalini*. It is the mind itself locked up, coiled and whirling in a particular fashion in a specific centre of the body. As we are ourselves limited by the mind, we cannot see this centre with our eyes. The *chakras* are not physical objects—they are forms taken by the way of thinking itself. As we cannot see our own minds, we also cannot see the centres—but they can be experienced, and they can be realised. They can be contacted internally

through feeling, empathy and realisation—but not through seeing as people generally see objects of perception.

### MISGUIDED PRACTICE

While this is one aspect of the matter, another important aspect needs to be discussed. Through an incorrect understanding of the proper method of centring of the *prana* in concentration, a *pranic* centre may suddenly get stimulated through this misguided practice. The higher centres do not get stimulated in this sort of practice—the lower centres get touched. As a result, certain powers, one may call them lesser gods, are invoked. In the *mantra shastra* or the science of *mantras*, there are certain incantations with which one can invoke the lesser divinities. But these lesser divinities do not help us; they only cause us trouble. The lesser divinities, which are the presiding deities of the lower *chakras*, get invoked by the passions, desires and force of will through which the concentration is practised. Once these powers are evoked, our simple desires assume large proportions.

Only if we have seen *sadhakas* (spiritual aspirants) who have been practising for a long time will we know how they behave and what difficulties they have. One of the first things that one sees in the practice of *sadhana* is that small things can assume large proportions. What would ordinarily be of little consequence appears to be very important, and the *sadhaka* will go on thinking about it too much. This happens sometimes to *sadhakas*. One would be wondering, “What is happening to this person? Why is he worrying about these silly matters?” But it is not silly to that person; in fact, it has become very big. Hence, one of the important transformations in concentration, when it is done by an unprepared mind, is the magnified proportion assumed by small things or events. The person cannot be tolerant and becomes intolerant of everything in the world. He cannot tolerate a person near to him nor does he want a person to look at him. All these will happen in certain stages of practice.

They are not normal, healthy conditions. They are no doubt unnatural conditions which may supervene in the case of unprepared minds taking to yoga. The person will be restless, suspicious and will be looking down upon others and being critical of everything. “There is nothing good in this world. Everything is ‘at sixes and sevens’, everything is bad, and everything is nonsensical. This person is like this, that person is like that,” they will say. These things will loom so large in their eyes that they cannot bear to take one step. Once the centres of the lower level get stimulated, these sorts of unnatural conditions of attitude may occur. But another difficulty also gets created, namely, the intensification of desire. A small desire may become very intense—for example hunger. The person will become ravenous in eating food. While normal people will take only a little food, the *sadhaka* will eat much more, because the appetite has become intensified.

What is more, the affections may become abnormal, even morbid. If one starts loving a thing, one will love it inordinately. The love can be directed to simple things—like a walking stick, a cloth, a water pot, a small hut or a small, torn book. All these may become objects of affection, and the person will hug them without knowing why it is happening. Desires assume morbid proportions—morbid because they are no longer healthy reactions. Anything taken to excess has to be called morbid, for what else can we call it? Therefore, in love as well as in hatred one may become excessive. When one

hates, it is to the extreme, and when one loves it is also to the extreme. These are due to the stimulation of the lower centres, especially the *svadhishtana chakra*. This is the centre of desires, especially sexual desire, and it is here that people often get stuck. They are always in the second *chakra*, and they do not go to the third. Though they think that *kundalini* has risen in them to the *sahasrara*, it has actually not happened. The *kundalini* has not gone beyond the second level, and yet they become inordinate persons—excessively critical and sentimental. Neither do they like others, nor do others like them. This is what one realises finally. This is very unfortunate, and everyone has to guard oneself against these excesses of central stimulation. We should therefore not try to stimulate the senses in this manner by force.

I have a reason for going so deeply into this. There are people who think that these techniques of stimulation of the *chakras* are one of the yogas, and they go on doing them intensely for hours together. There is nothing to be gained with that technique, but we must be ready and prepared so that we do not get led astray. Again, I suggest that we must have a Guru. We cannot rely on books and texts—they will not guide us, because they cannot speak to us. The difficulty with books is that books cannot speak to us. They will only tell one thing, just like a parrot that goes on repeating the same thing. That is what a book can do—it cannot tell anything other than what is written there. But a Guru can, because he is a living being, and the knowledge that comes from him is living knowledge. With the help of a Guru we can concentrate our minds on these practices, and they will help us. *Asanas, pranayama, etc.* are good, but they are good only when they are done with a purified mind, with no ulterior motive, and under the guidance of a preceptor.

There are many other restrictions also imposed, such as diet, atmosphere and environment, because all these influence the system. If we take stimulants and practise *pranayama*, there will be contrary results. The atmosphere and the climatic conditions should be suitable—neither too cold nor too hot. We must live in an atmosphere of calmness, tranquillity and non-disturbance. With these methods we may practise these techniques of *bandhas* and *mudras*, coupled with *asana* and *pranayama*. In practising this beautiful combination, the central nervous system gets stimulated. The central nervous system is controlled by a particular channel called the *sushumna*. The *sushumna* is supposed to be a vital energy moving through an astral tube in the spinal column. In Sanskrit this is called the *meru danda*. This has also a cosmic counterpart, called the Meru mountain in the Puranas.

If we read the Puranas of India, we will read wonderful descriptions of the seven worlds, the seven planes of existence, the seven oceans and many other things. These seven planes of existence are the cosmic counterparts of these seven *chakras* within. If we touch the inside *chakras*, we touch the outer world also. It is something like operating a switchboard. When we put on the switch, many other things also are connected. A particular *chakra* within is like a switch, a plug which we can use; and when we touch it, something corresponding to it is also stimulated.

We will find that when we undergo internal change, certain changes take place externally also. Very gradually we will find certain external transformations taking place in the atmosphere. People around us will start thinking about us differently, they may speak to us in a different way, and conditions will change. Something which we cannot

understand will take place gradually when internal transformations take place, because of the connection of the microcosmic with the macrocosmic. Hence, there is no individual yoga, personal yoga or selfish yoga. All yoga is cosmic. When we touch our own higher selves, we have touched the whole world. We must give up this idea that yoga is yours or mine, or individual or unconnected with society—there is no such thing. There is no such thing as individual yoga—all yoga is universal. There is no such thing as the selfish yoga of some individual person. This being the case, the yoga of concentration on the individuality should proceed onwards to an understanding of the universal counterparts of individuality, and thereby also to a greater level of moral purification.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

### THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS WITHIN

We have been discussing the relations which the *asanas*, *bandhas* and *mudras* have in respect of certain psychic centres of our bodies. These exercises are in the end expected to stimulate these forces within, so that the whirl of energy may become a straight current. The whirls of energy called the *chakras* are to be straightened so that there may be a free flow of the current of energy. These whirls called the *chakras* tend in different directions, and it is these varying tendencies which distinguish the one *chakra* from the other. They differ from one another, not only in the direction of their movement, but also in the intensity of their motion. Physicists tell us today that one object is distinguishable from another due not only to the number of electrons which constitute the object, but also to the velocity at which the electrons move. In a similar manner, we may say the *chakras* are distinguished from one another by their intensity as well as the direction of the motion of the energy of which they are constituted.

The essence of all this *sadhana* is therefore the disentangling of these whirls or currents of force, which are like knots. The untying of these knots corresponds to the process of yoga, especially in the *kundalini* path. The knots have to be slowly disentangled, stage by stage, with due consideration of the intensity of the force. The lower the centre, the slower is the motion of the *chakra*. We may say it is denser or more opaque, so that in one sense at least it is not responsive to the processes of thinking—much less to the light of consciousness within. The lower the *chakra* with which the mind gets connected, the slower is the thinking process and the lesser is the light from within that is revealed or manifested through it.

The lowest is what is called the *muladhara chakra*, and there are many others above it. This is the densest, the grossest and the most earthly region in our physical system. When the mind gets lodged in the lowest *chakra*, we are conscious only of physical bodies and objects external to us, and we are intensely desirous of these objects. Physical desires and physical passions are the characteristics of the identification of the mind with the lowest *chakra*. So gross does the mind become in its association with this low centre that people who are in this level may be said to be animal men or savages. So gross is their way of thinking that they cannot visualise anything except in terms of physical bodies and physical relationships. Their desires are purely physical, they have no intellectual enjoyments, and they cannot appreciate art or beauty. All that they can see is gross physical bodies, their own as well as objects outside. This is the fixation of the mind in the lowest *chakra*.

The higher *chakras* are stages of the gradual disentanglement of the mind. The characteristic of the higher *chakras* is that the desires get purer, more ethereal and less involved in physical objects. The purpose of the yoga exercises we have been studying is to unlock this energy, release its knots, and enable it to flow in a particular direction. This function of the unlocking of the force, the release of energy, and the enabling of it to flow freely is done not only by the direction of the *prana* with the help of the exercises, but also by another method which is the recitation of *mantras*. The path of *kundalini* yoga, as well as *hatha* yoga, is very much connected with the path of *mantra*



yoga, and the one is indistinguishable from the other. There is a network of three practices in one school of thinking, which goes by the name of *mantra*, *tantra* and *yantra*. This network of practices involves the recitation of a formula (*mantra*), the performance of a rite or a ritual (*tantra*), and the worship or concentration on a particular symbol or diagram (*yantra*). These are all especially connected with the school of thought called the *tantra*. The particular feature of this method of approach is the continued repetition of a *mantra* or a formula which helps enhance the results that follow out of the exercises. There is a beautiful combination of many methods—*asanas*, *bandhas*, *mudras*, *pranayama*, *mantra japa* and concentration of mind. It also includes certain forms of worship which are in the beginning external, and then in more advanced stages, purely mystical or inward.

The *tantra shastra* is a very vast field of study. The *mantras* are of a special significance in this path of yoga, because these recitations have a direct impact upon certain parts of these *chakras*. If we have seen diagrams of these *chakras* in any text of yoga, we will find certain letters engraved on some parts of these *chakras*, often pictured as the petals of a lotus. The *chakras* are compared to a lotus that has blossomed. The flower blossom has certain petals of varying number, and the lotus flower is nothing but the sum total of all the petals. Many petals make the flower, so also the petals of a *chakra* make up the parts of the whole *chakra*. *Mantras* help in opening and directing each petal separately, one after the other or sometimes simultaneously, just as we may wake up a sleeping person by touching his limbs part by part. When a person is asleep we may touch the head, touch the chest, touch the hands or touch the feet—and then the person wakes up from sleep. The *mantras* help in touching, manipulating and stirring the petals of the lotus, and the sleeping energy is supposed to rise by the very repetition of the *mantra*.

#### REPETITION OF THE MANTRA

What is this repetition, we may wonder? It is itself a very great science. It is not merely the sound that we make that is the recitation of the *mantra*. As a matter of fact, it has nothing to do with the making of a sound. It is the release of an energy by means of *vak* (speech). Speech is this energy when it is expressed. Energy is released in expressions of every kind—speech being the most important. The power of the word is tremendous. The word is not merely the characters that we write on a paper. That is only an external symbol for the sound and the force that is signified in the symbol. An algebraic formula, for example, is different from what it signifies. The formula that we write on a blackboard is only symbolic and is only a memory device to help concentrate the mind on something significant. An equation in mathematics is only an aid in recalling a fact. The fact involved in the formula or the equation is different from the formula itself. If an equation in algebra is committed to memory, we are enabled to remember a significance that is hidden in the formula. Likewise is a *mantra*. The words which apparently constitute a *mantra* are only aids in memory and aids in generating a particular type of force in our system. Every *mantra* is a locked-up force and is indicative of a particular type of force. The bundles of energy need not be of a similar character. The *mantra* represents a symbol or a bundle of energy which can be released at our will.

We might have all seen fireworks at some point. Especially in India, we have beautiful fireworks released during festivals like Dipavali. The constitution of a particular type of firework is such that when it is set on fire, it takes a particular form. Those who have

seen it will know what I mean. Sometimes this firework will take a circular shape when it burns, sometimes it will shoot out like stars, and sometimes it will whirl about in various beautiful patterns. All these can be seen merely by igniting the particular bundle of energy inside. The ignition is common to all, but the way in which they get released is peculiar to each bundle of energy. Likewise, the repetition of a *mantra* may be a single process, like the striking of a match with which we set fire to the energy that is in the firework, but the effect that is produced is different in each case, on account of the inner constitution of that firework.

The *mantra* therefore is like a firework, and the *mantra* can be ignited through constant repetition. When it is set on fire in this manner by repetition, it takes different shapes. It shoots up, it whirls, it bursts—or it may calmly and coolly exert an influence. It can construct or it can destroy. Like atomic energy, the *mantra* is useful for purposes of construction as well as for destruction. The *mantra* is like an atomic force—neither good nor bad—and can be used for any purpose that we like. The chanting of the *mantra* is therefore a pressure that we exert on gunpowder that is bundled up in a certain structure. When we exert too much pressure or bring about a friction upon the gunpowder, it bursts forth in a particular fashion. The repetition of a *mantra* is nothing but an influence that we exert on the energy that is hidden in the *mantra*.

The *mantras* are manifold, just as we can have various forms of fireworks. Each has a pattern of its own, so we can choose any *mantra* we like, according to the purpose for which we wish to recite or chant it. The spiritual aspirant's motive behind the recitation of a *mantra* should be wholly spiritual. We are now concerned only with the spiritual aspect of the practice of yoga, which is the ultimate good. The inner *chakras* are to be released by bombardment, as we may call it. The *mantras* act as bombarding principles which impinge upon the *chakras* and rouse every petal of the *chakra* within. One goes on hammering on the petals, as it were, by the repetition of a *mantra*. The constant hammering rouses the energy part by part. There are certain *mantras* which are connected with the entire *chakra*, and there are certain *mantras* which are connected with certain petals alone.

According to the type of initiation that we received from our Guru or master, we will be told how to tackle these and what sort of *mantra* we have to repeat. The specific *mantra* is given according to the stage in which the mind is and the evolutionary condition of the consciousness. We should not meddle with these without understanding them. The correct recitation of a *mantra* is therefore important, and we have to be initiated into the *mantra* by a competent teacher. The teacher alone can know our minds, and this is done by a careful analysis, and through that analysis the proper *mantra* will be given.

The lower *chakras* are disentangled first, and gradually the forces become calmer and calmer in their action. In the beginning they become tremendously active, so much so that we may find it difficult to harness them properly, but later they become calm. The mind is often portrayed in Buddhist psychology in certain diagrams as a wild bull being tamed—a very interesting thing. Especially in Zen Buddhism, we will find these techniques of taming a wild bull. It is true that the mind is a wild bull. We cannot touch it, we cannot go near it, and we cannot even look at it. It will attack and try to gore us with its horns. Later on, by gradual application of different techniques, the bull becomes so calm that we can even ride on it. In the beginning we cannot even look at it, because it

is so ferocious. Later on it becomes a vehicle for us to sit on. So is the mind—a wild bull which we cannot touch in the beginning, because it controls us rather than we controlling it. Man is a slave of the mind in the initial stages, and then he becomes the master of his mind. The recitation of the *mantra* is a way to release the psychic energy that facilitates this mastery.

The methodology of the repetition is also very important. The recitation of a *mantra* is not easy. It is not just mumbling something, but rather a very scientific process. We should not only pronounce the characters correctly with proper emphasis and intonation, but also our hearts should be in it. Our feelings also contribute to the effect produced by the recitation of a *mantra*. If our minds are elsewhere, the effect may not take place. But there are certain *mantras* which are like fire, which will burn even if we do not know that they are inflammable. Even if we unconsciously touch fire, it burns our fingers. Likewise, there are certain *mantras* which will produce immediate effect, even if we are not properly thinking of them—provided of course that we chant them regularly and with method. However, if our thoughts are actually engaged with the chanting, then the *mantra* will be instantaneous in its action.

The letters of a *mantra* are symbolic of certain constituents of force, and when they are joined together they produce a reaction—somewhat like chemical reaction. If acid and alkali are mixed together a reaction takes place; otherwise, if they had not been mixed together, we would not have known anything about the reaction. If we have acid in one hand and alkali in another hand, apparently there is no reaction because they do not come into contact. However, when the two are mixed, immediately there is a release of force.

#### ASPECTS OF THE POWER OF THE MANTRA

Every letter of a *mantra* is like a particular chemical molecule, and when these molecules are mixed, immediately there is a reaction. There are contraries in chemical principles, and there are others which can combine without sudden reaction. The letters of a *mantra* are like chemical principles, which when chanted combine into a single force. The production of an effect from a recitation of a *mantra* may, to the surprise of the reciter himself, look quite different from the form and the nature of the *mantra*. For example, milk can become curd by an internal change of constitution, and the effect may look in its nature apparently quite different from the cause. The *mantras* were “seen” by a *rishi* (sage, seer of the truth) in their original forms—they are not just inventions of some mind. They are presided over by a power which is called a divinity or a *devata*, and there is also a *rishi* to whom the *mantra* was revealed.

There are three factors in every *mantra*. One is the Seer, called the *rishi*, the second is the deity or the potency inside called the *devata*, and the third is the energy that is automatically released by the combination of the letters in repetition. The *mantra* itself has a power of its own—that is one thing. The potency inside it, which is called the *devata*, is the second thing, and the thought of the Seer to whom it was revealed is the third thing. In the repetition of a *mantra* we always remember the *rishi*, just as when we read a book we acknowledge the author and pay a kind of reverence to him or her. Then we contemplate the potency behind the *mantra*, which is also the meditation on the *devata*, and then we chant the *mantra*.

Some of these *mantras*, though not all, are like dynamite. They can explode in our faces, or they can be used for good purposes if we know how to handle them. That is why the initiation aspect is very much emphasised in the recitation of a *mantra*—particularly certain types of *vedic mantras* and *bija mantras* in *tantra*. There are two kinds of *mantras* which require initiation with a great caution: the *mantras* of the *Vedas*, and the *mantras* of the *tantra* with *bijas* or symbols. The other *mantras* are not dangerous, and their results accrue only after a long time. When a particular *mantra* is repeated in these manners, there is an impact produced on a particular centre of thinking which is the *chakra*. The *mantra* has to be chosen for us according to the level of our thinking, because that *mantra* which we recite has an immediate connection with the *chakra* in which our minds are located at present. If we take up a higher *mantra*, it may not have any effect because we have not reached that stage. If the lower one is chosen, that might cause a descending to a lesser level. A proper prescription is therefore necessary. Therefore, both *hatha* and *kundalini* yoga combine these aspects of *asana*, *bandha*, *mudra*, *pranayama* and *mantra japa* for the rousing of the force within.

Sometimes it may so happen that the repetition of a *mantra* for a protracted period brings about certain experiences, primarily physical and physiological in the beginning, and later on certain psychic visions and sounds may occur. These experiences may come to the *sadhaka* as a kind of obstacle, because it is difficult to know what is happening. In certain of the yoga texts like the *Svetasvatara Upanishad*, we are told what experiences will follow through a methodical practice of these techniques. One of the precepts of yoga is that one should not pay attention to the experiences. The experiences are passing phases, and they are not proper objects of concentration. It is similar to the convalescing period of a patient, where the patient has different kinds of feelings on different days but they are all passages to normal health which will eventually come. Therefore we are not to concentrate our minds on these because tastes may change, feelings may differ, and so on. Likewise, the different experiences in these practices are passing transformations—physical, physiological and psychological. They should not be made objects of concentration, and the lights and the sounds are not to be thought about. Sometimes they may be pleasant and sometimes they may be disturbing, because this process of the release of energy is sometimes moving forwards, but then sometimes there may be a step backwards. This backward step is actually a tendency to go forward again with a greater jump.

There are moods of various kinds which may come upon the mind of a seeker due to the internal transformations that take place. One should not worry about these moods, because the external moods are nothing but the expressions of our internal feelings which rise primarily from the lowest recess, which in Sanskrit is called *para*. There are four stages of the manifestation of this *mantra shakti* or energy, and in Sanskrit they are called *para*, *pasyanti*, *madhyama* and *vaikhari*. *Para* means the supreme, unmanifest form, but we will not feel any apparent or tangible result when the effect is placed primarily on the *para*. It is difficult to say what these *para*, *pasyanti*, etc. really are. They are stages of the manifestation of this energy, and in the psychological language of modern times we may compare these stages to the unconscious level and its gradual manifestation step by step to the conscious level.

When the *mantra* energy is inaudible and even intangible, not palpable, unintelligible and incapable of being felt in any manner, it is supposed to be a stage of *para*. When it

slowly rouses or wakes up into action, and there is only a tendency to rise—although it actually has not risen—it is supposed to be the stage of *pasyanti*. The middling stages, called *madhyama*, are neither gross nor subtle. It is this stage that is supposed to be the *anahata* stage. Mystics are of the opinion that the *para* is comparable to the lowest recess at the base of the navel in the astral body. A little above it is the *pasyanti*. The *madhyama* is near the heart which is the seat of the *anahata* sounds (the sounds which are internally produced by the movement of the *prana*, and not by contact with things). Later we have the *vaikhari* or the grossest form of the energy, which comes out in the form of speech or the *mantra* that is uttered.

It is the instruction of the texts of yoga that when we recite a *mantra*, it should rise from the navel and not merely in the throat. It is not just a muttering through the lips or a slight sonorous sound that we make in the larynx—it is rather a force that we feel right from the deepest levels in the navel itself. Especially in the chanting of Om we will feel, if it is done properly, how the effect is felt in the navel, and then slowly how the energy seems to rouse up into a sonorous expression in the chant. This is the case with every *mantra*, which means to say that our whole being should be set in resonance with the recitation. Our *mantra* should be in tune with our own being, and vice versa.

The whole *mantra* is a vibration. All the *mantras* are forms of vibration which ultimately merge in the supreme vibration of *pranava* or Om, which is supposed to be the highest of *mantras*. Just as all rivers commingle in the ocean, all *mantras* may be said to be merged in the supreme *mantra* Om. It is the highest. The vibration that is produced by the chanting of Om is supreme, and all other *mantras* join it, because Om is an indeterminate *mantra* and therefore has no particular shape. While all *mantras* other than Om have particular forms of expression, Om by itself has no particular shape or form. It is indeterminable and its object is not any particular *devata* or deity, but the universe as a whole. The *mantra japa* techniques therefore lead finally to Om *japa*. God or *Ishwara* is supposed to be designated by Om.

As I said, while every name has a corresponding form, Om by itself has no particular form. Particular *mantras* have particular deities, but Om has no particular deity. It is general, and so it attracts the general force of the cosmos. It will not produce any effect immediately, because the general effect that will be produced later will be of such a nature that when it comes, we will feel as if the universe were coming to us from all sides. The *mantras* that we choose in our *japa* should therefore be *sattvic*, in the sense that they have relevance to the *pranava* or *omkara* (Om). If we take to *mantras* which have the power to produce immediate results, we are likely to get locked up in the concentration on these objects of the particular *mantras*. Temptations are not infrequent in these stages. The chant of a *mantra*, therefore, is possible only after a proper choosing of the *mantra*. We should not chant just any *mantra* according to our whim or fancy. Just as meditation needs an initiation, the *japa* of a *mantra* also needs initiation. By a beautiful blend of these methods—repetition of the *mantra*, concentration of the mind on the meaning of the *mantra*, the direction of the vital force or *prana* towards a centre, combined with physical exercises called the *asana*, *bandha* and *mudra*—a very good effect on our centre can be produced.

#### EVOLUTIONARY NOT REVOLUTIONARY

I have to repeat again that these centres are not objects of perception, but are subtly

involved in our own personalities. When these are influenced, our whole system gets influenced. We change with the *chakras*, and it is not merely the *chakras* that change, as if we were merely the observers of the change. We are nobody outside—we are the *chakras*. When there is an impact produced on the *chakras*, it is an impact felt on our whole system, and we receive the impact. It is a self-transformation that takes place, and not only an objective transformation in the sense of an external thing or substance getting influenced by our force. It is not us exerting an influence on something else, but an influence which is exerted on our total being. One has to be very cautious in meddling with oneself, because the process of the release of force should be evolutionary and not revolutionary.

Then, there are difficulties of various kinds, and aberrations of many types may take place. People get into obsessions of various kinds, and they also have physical disorders if the rousing of the energy is forced by the power of will. Yoga is not merely exerting the force of will—it is the sublimation of the will into the understanding and feeling, which then lead further to intuition or integral vision. In spiritual perception what functions is not merely the will or the understanding or the feeling, but the blending of all these together in a flow which goes by the name of spiritual vision—*sakshatkara* is one of the terms used to describe it. When we see objects through the eyes or think through the mind, then it is perception or cognition. When our total being begins to see, it is called intuition. However, our whole being is never in tune with things at any time, and therefore intuition is unknown to us. A part of our being begins to vibrate with the objects, but our whole self is not in consonance with the things. The gradual ascent from one *chakra* to another is an ascent from sensation to perception, from perception to cognition, and from cognition to intuition. When we rise from *chakra* to *chakra*, we also have nobler and nobler perceptions and grander visions of reality, which are inclusive of the lower features and more universal in their character. This rise brings power, together with knowledge and joy. Strength, understanding and happiness get combined when the mind releases itself from the clutches of the lower centres and goes into the higher.

This process is gradual and evolutionary, as I said. There is no jump from one *chakra* to another, but rather a connection from one to another. The *chakras* tend from one to another. In certain texts of *hatha* yoga we will find the *chakras* portrayed as rings apparently unconnected with one another, except that there is a rod in the centre—which is the spinal column—and that rod passes through the many rings. The *chakras* are however not unconnected rings; they have an organic connection with one another. Thus, when the release of energy takes place in one *chakra*, immediately it is sympathetically felt by the other *chakras* in a certain proportion of intensity. Our whole body is an organism, and no part of it can be completely isolated from the other. If we have an injection of a medicine, we can sometimes feel the working of the medicine throughout our system in an instant—proving that we are an organism and not a machine. The *chakras* are organic links of our body, and so to touch one would be to touch all, though in varying degrees of intensity.

Remember this: we touch ourselves in the touching of the *chakras*. We handle ourselves in the handling of the *chakras*. We deal with ourselves in dealing with the *chakras*. This is also a very important thing to remember. We are tackling our own selves in these forms of meditation and not something like the *chakra* of someone else. It is not so—we

are not dealing with another business—it is *our* business. It is not like the business of the world which we can throw away, but it is something vitally connected with us, which cannot be distinguished from our true being.

Many a time we forget this fact, and we are likely to look upon the *chakras* as external things, just as we look upon the body as outside us in some way. So much externalised is our way of thinking that we think God is outside us, the world is external to us, and the *chakras* are also external to us. Everything is external to us. It is difficult for us to believe for a moment that we are involved in everything—in other persons, in the world, in God, in the *chakras* and in all things. There is nothing in which we are not involved in this world. We cannot stand outside and be an observer of the things of the world. Such a thing is not possible. This is more important to remember in the case of meditation, because the forgetfulness of this fact and an illusory notion that we are observers, standing apart from the objects of meditation in yoga, brings us difficulties of various types.

We can imagine how serious a matter it would be to deal with our own selves, and if we proceed wrongly we will be out of order and out of tune. It is not something else outside—it is not some *chakra* that is going out of order—but we ourselves. This is the importance, the significance, the difficulty and also the glory of this practice. All these details I have mentioned in connection with the extended practices of *asana*, which is a limb of yoga, though all these details are not necessarily mentioned by Patanjali in his *sutras*, and apparently they are not connected or concerned with the system of Patanjali. I mentioned them only as information to enable those who are so inclined to be able to take to these detailed techniques of *mantra japa* and the practice of *kundalini* yoga, etc. Included therein is a word of wisdom combined with a word of caution.

The practice of *asanas* is therefore a very important limb of yoga, and this is associated with the movement of the *prana* within. This is because the *asanas* are vitally connected with the nervous system inside, through which the *prana* moves. The *asana* and *pranayama* therefore go together, as the one may help the other. In fact, the stage of *pranayama* is supposed to be next above the stage of *asana* in the system of Patanjali. We move one step higher when we concentrate our minds on the regulation of the vital force. Just as the practice of the *asanas* is an effort at bringing about a system of harmony in the physical body and the nervous system, *pranayama* is an attempt at harmonising the vital energy within. The vital force is that which moves our limbs and also our breathing process, inspiration and expiration.

The respiratory process may be said to be the outward form of the inward movement of the *prana*. The way in which we breathe will give a hint as to how the *prana* moves inside us, and indirectly, how we think in our minds. The method of thinking has a tremendous influence on the movement of the *prana* in the nervous system, and that is indicated in the way in which we breathe. Whether we gasp or heave a breath when we find it difficult to breathe, whether there is quick breath or slow breath, whether there is deep inhalation or shallow inhalation—all these are the things that we can observe when we breathe. The inhalation and the exhalation are supposed to be harmonious and without jerks.

Just as the *asana* practice should be harmonious and without jumps, jerks or twists, so should be the practice of *pranayama*. We should not be frightened about this method of

*pranayama*. It is nothing but a simple form of breathing which has to be done normally. The instruction of this science of *pranayama* is simply to breathe normally instead of abnormally. The other variations of *pranayama* that we generally read in texts are only to help this normal breathing. By normal breathing, what is meant is the enabling of the *prana* to be equally distributed in all the parts of the body. Very rarely do we take a deep breath, as we breathe mostly in a shallow manner. A deep inhalation is unknown to us, unless we are exhausted, tired or worried. Sometimes we sigh with a deep breath, but normally we breathe shallowly. The breath becomes slower and slower when the thoughts also become less and less intense. For example, when we are about to go to sleep, the breathing becomes slow. When we get up from bed after sleep, the breath becomes more active.

The process of meditation, being a tendency to still the mind, has some resemblance to the symptoms that occur during sleep. Many people combine certain aspects of sleep with the aspects of meditation—especially in *samadhi*, as it is called. Deep meditation has certain characteristics of sleep, though it differs from sleep in the very important factor that we are conscious in meditation, while we are not conscious in sleep. The characteristics similar to both are that there is a slowing of breath, a natural withdrawal of consciousness from objectivity, a more intensified feeling of self-consciousness away from other-consciousness, and a tendency to feel relieved and happy. These we feel both in deep meditation and in sleep.

#### **MOVING NEARER TO OUR SELVES IN SLEEP AND MEDITATION**

We feel relieved when we move nearer to our selves, and this happens both in sleep and in deep meditation. The farther we are from our selves, the lesser is our happiness and freedom. In waking life we are very much disturbed because of too much thinking about the objects of the world, and as a result we think less about our selves. So much engaged do we become in the works of the world in waking life that we do not have the time to think that we even have an inner life. But in meditation as well as in sleep, the consciousness gets withdrawn—in one case deliberately, in another case unconsciously. The inward withdrawal towards our own Self is what causes the slowing of the breath, the lessening of tension and a feeling of satisfaction.

That is why we are compelled to sleep every day. The distractions of the world are such in their intensity that we cannot tolerate them for a long time, and we cannot go without sleep for an extended period. The reason is that distractions are unnatural to the Self, and the Self cannot remain in unnatural states for a protracted period. The consciousness of the world outside is highly disturbing to Self-consciousness, but for various obvious reasons we get entangled in objective perceptions. But this is after all an entanglement, and it is not natural, and we cannot be in unnatural states for a long time. We cannot tolerate this disturbance caused to the Self by objective perception. There is a compulsive withdrawal forced upon our systems in the form of sleep. Every day we have to sleep, otherwise the body would perish.

In the sleep condition we refresh our system, not by eating food or by taking tonics, but by merely getting tuned to ourselves. We become strong when we are attuned to our selves, and we become weak when we are out of tune with our selves. Our strength and weakness do not only depend upon the diet that we take or the exercises that we practise. If that were the case, we could go on doing them without sleeping. One finds



that nothing provided by the other forms of sustenance is comparable to the joy and the power that we derive from sleep. That we want to come into contact with things for the sake of happiness and acquisition of power in the waking life only goes to prove that we are under an illusion and the truth is not known.

In every effort of the mind to come in contact with things outside, it is trying to seek the 'within' in the 'without'. The mind tries in a state of confusion to find the joy of the within in the objects without. We may say that in all states of objective consciousness, we are not in a normal state spiritually speaking. Because of this abnormal condition of perception in which the mind gets involved in waking life, it tries to make the best of things. In this attempt of the mind to seek the joy within in the external forms, it only gets tired and finds nothing. It is this fatigue that makes it come back to the Self, but it does not know what happens to it in sleep, because of the impressions of desires that are covering this consciousness.

What makes us unaware of things in sleep is the layer of desire that acts like a dark screen upon our own Self, which we have not been able to touch in the waking life. The unfulfilled desires lying embedded in our own Self within, layer upon layer, are what the psychologists call the unconscious. However, there is no distinct unconscious in our Self apart from our own desires. When we get ourselves locked in this unconscious level, we are in sleep. Though we are proximate to our own Self, we do not know that to be so. But in deep meditation, which is a conscious withdrawal of the mind from external consciousness and contact, it goes to the very same state of internality—but with a greater sense of freedom. This is the aim of the process of concentration, for which *pranayama* is the preparation. The purpose of *pranayama* is to bring about this cessation of distraction of breath, which has again a connection with a higher state called *pratyahara* or withdrawal of objective consciousness. One limb of yoga is internally connected with another, and we will find when we touch one we have touched the other, so that *asana*, *pranayama* and *pratyahara* are regarded as the outer court of yoga—all to be taken together at one stroke.

## **CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO**

### **TO REST IN WHAT WE TRULY ARE**

All that we have studied leads us to come nearer to our own selves in both the aspects of internality and externality. This is the sum and substance of the yoga teachings. To deviate from our selves, whether in the capacity of our internal consciousness or in its outward expansion, would be to be in world-awareness. Questions, problems and difficulties are entanglements of consciousness in processes which are imagined to be external to itself. Nothing can be external to consciousness, and yet we can develop a notion of externality to consciousness. It is the notion of externality that causes bondage, and the whole process of yoga is thus a conscious withdrawal from this notion of externality to a blending of its internal and external nature. In this blend there is neither the internal nor the external.

That there is something outside us is again a notion of consciousness. All the limbs of yoga are attempts of the entangled consciousness to disentangle itself and to gradually rise above the notion of its externality. The more we cease from the notion of the external, the more we tend towards the universal. The universal and the internal would be realised to be the same thing in the end. This is why we are told that God is within us and that the Kingdom of Heaven is within. How could a kingdom be inside one's person? A large body or an empire cannot be inside one's heart. Yet it can be, because the meaning is that the universal is the same as what is inside. Because the universal is another name for consciousness, it is incapable of being externalised.

This we will realise to be the essence of the yoga teachings, and to reach this, to realise this and to experience this, we practise the limbs of yoga. The various paths of yoga are variegated attempts at coming to the same point of experience. The emphasis is not so much on the yogas, but on the aim of the yogas. The emphasis is not on the forms or the shape of practices, but on the spirit behind them. We will realise that all yoga is one. There are not many yogas, inasmuch as it is a name that we give to the tendency of consciousness to merge into the universal, which again is identified with supreme subjectivity. God is the supreme universal Subject. The implication of it should be clear. One should meditate on this great universal internality.

## **CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE**

### **THE UNIVERSAL AND THE INTERNAL ARE ONE**

All these stages of the development of our thinking are to be regarded as necessary steps in the practice of yoga. One cannot even for a moment forget the background of our earlier method of analysis, even if we have reached the last stage of its understanding. I am reminded of a small boy in a primary school. He used to get up in the morning and tear off page after page of a textbook, and when he was asked why he tore off the pages he said, "Because I've already read it!" Every day one page would be torn out of the book, and he had only a few more pages left. The idea of this little child was that once a page had been read, that page need not be in the book, and it should be torn out.

This should not be the case with our studies. We cannot forget the lower stages, because there is no such thing as 'lower' and 'higher' in a development or process. The higher is only another name for the sublimation of the lower, and the higher is constituted of the substance of the lower. The foundation is all-important in a building, and the foundation is always there as long as the building is there. One cannot remove the foundation just because the superstructure has been built over it. This is an important caution that we have to give to our minds, because when we reach the last stage of yoga we have a bird's eye view of the entire process that we have undergone. We do not just cling to one stage alone as if it were all. In a way though, one could say it is all—in the sense that it includes everything from the lower realm. Our present physical condition includes all that came earlier; it transcends the earlier stages but does not exclude them.

Our investigation began with the social situation, which has led us to the inquiry into the deeper implications of experience and the methods employed by objective analysis by science, which led to the return of consciousness to itself on account of the difficulty in knowing the essence of things by a purely objective study. Later came the further discovery of there being a being-consciousness within us. Further still came an analysis of perception in which we discovered a connecting link between the subject and the object, which not only links the two but also transcends them. These analyses then planted our feet on the portals of the practice of yoga, and it is on this foundation that the practice of yoga rests. It is from this point that we will proceed with our investigation.

There is no such thing as practice without understanding. There are some people who think that there is no need to study, think, understand, etc. "We just want to do things," they say. But what do they want to do? There is no such thing as doing without a preceding stage of understanding and a grasping of the techniques of the practice. As a matter of fact, practice is nothing but the resting of the understanding in itself. Practice does not merely mean running around on our legs or grasping something with our hands. We should not make the mistake of imagining that practice is something physical, bodily, or a movement of the limbs. Practice is a habituation of consciousness to a particular way of thinking and an inseparability of this way of thinking from our actual living. That is actual practice. This adjustment of our thinking and consciousness includes the physical as well as all the higher levels. After the philosophical and psychological analysis, we came to the moral step which was too important to ignore.

We also discovered that the consciousness of morality—the ethical sense—is a very important foundation in the structure of the practice of yoga, because the moral consciousness is that character in us which exhibits our capacity to adjust ourselves with the nature of reality. When that capacity is absent, we will not even be able to practise yoga, because the practice is dependent on that capacity, and the capacity is judged by our moral consciousness.

It is like a needle in a compass which tells us where we stand. Our moral sense is the indication of our personality and the stuff within us. When the stuff is not there inside, we will not be able to do anything. From a physical, philosophical and psychological analysis we go to the moral sense, and then we come to the actual practice, which is the true attunement of personality to Reality. We came to an understanding of the necessity to adjust the microcosmic level to its macrocosmic aspect, which is the purpose of the practice of *asana*. I also mentioned the extended form of the practice of *asana*, *bandha* and *mudra*, including a touch of *pranayama*, which tend towards deeper practices of *kundalini* yoga and *hatha* yoga. With this foundational knowledge we go deeper into the implications of the meditational aspect of yoga, which true yoga really is. Before we go further into the internal realm of yoga, I may mention that very few people actually seem to be in a position to understand what they are doing when they practise yoga or meditation. Even in advanced stages of understanding, doubts persist. Doubts will not leave us as long as we are in this world. They pursue us like hounds in a forest.

That is why I said to not forget the lower stages, from where we have risen. We should not forget our small beginnings, because they are very important in our larger achievements. Our so-called expanded states of consciousness arise from humble seed-like origins because it is that which will come to us as our true friend, guide and philosopher. We were simple beings originally, and that simplicity finally comes to our aid. In our essence we are simple and humble beings. We look large and complicated because of many artificial relationships that we establish with the outside world. Yoga wants us to disentangle ourselves from the artificial relationships that we have established. The first and foremost prerequisite of yoga is to divest us of all our false associations and allow us to realise our unitary being. I have mentioned this time and again: we must rest simply and humbly in what we truly are. When there is simplicity, there is also humility. While we stand alone, we are a simple, unitary and indivisible something. This simple, indivisible something that we are will be realised later to be co-extensive and co-eternal with the simplicity and the being of the cosmos. The world is simple, and we are also simple. There is nothing complicated about the world as it is, and this is also the case with us, honestly speaking. When we cast off all our psychological vestments, we are a simple being to understand—there is nothing difficult about it. We make our situations difficult by imaginations of various kinds.

### **BEING SIMPLE**

So is the world, and so are people around us—they are simple personalities. People around us, whether they are political beings or social personalities, are essentially simple. When we see them properly, we will realise that every person is very simple at the base. There is nothing complicated about any person in this world. “Oh, he’s a very difficult person!” There is no difficult person in this world. It is all very simple when we go to the deepest essence of a person. We are simple beings, the others also are simple

beings like us, and the world also is a simple affair. Yoga wishes to take us to this simplicity of substance ultimately by cleaning all the cobwebs that seem to be covering our faces, our eyes and our mental vision. These are all the networks that we have created by a complexity of thinking. All yoga texts emphasise a student's need for humility before the might of the cosmos. We are not asked to be humble and simple just as a need of the moral requisite; and simplicity is not merely an ethical edict or a moral quality—it is a scientific fact. Simplicity is not something that we try to become—it is what we are. Our complications are not what we are. There is no need to exert to be humble, for we cannot but be that. If we are anything else, it is an artificial covering that we have put on.

Yoga therefore is a simplicity of approach to the simplicity that is the cosmos, to the simplicity that we are, and to the highest simplicity that God Himself is. In one Hindi expression, God is called Bhola-Baba which, translated literally, means a simpleton. God is a simpleton, which is a humorous way of saying that He is so simple and therefore so easy of contact and approach. The difficulty of approach has arisen on account of the difficulty that we have created by our imagination about Him and also about ourselves. We unnecessarily imagine certain things about God, which need not be true to His nature. We also imagine many things about ourselves and consequently about other people and the world outside. These are all unnecessary things that we have created. This is why it is often said that we create our own prisons, into which we deliberately cast ourselves. Inasmuch as the prison is built by our own selves, it is difficult to get out of it.

This introductory approach is the preparation for the larger simplicity of meditation. I must emphasise that yoga, which is meditation, is the simplest of things that we can do. It is not a complicated affair. "Oh, meditation, who can do it?" Don't say that. To put it strictly, we have to do it, and we cannot do anything else. The spiritual attitude of meditation, which is the crux of yoga, is our contemplation on the simplicity of Reality. In this simplicity of approach we will realise that God, world and ourselves do not stand apart. The moment we create a tripartite division of God, world and soul, again we have created a complication which we should not have. In the simplicity of the ultimate kind, there is one unitary Being; and later on we will realise that God, world and soul are like the three legs of a stool or a table which is one. God, world and soul are only concepts after all, and not three realities divided from one another. From the multitudinous approach we go to the tripartite approach, and then further on we will realise a simple indivisibility. That which is indivisible is also the simple. In scientific terminology, when we call a substance simple, we mean it is not further divisible. 'A simple substance' means to say it is an indivisible substance. In earlier times people thought that atoms were simple substances. They thought they could not be further subdivided, but now we call something else—even smaller than an atom—the simple substance.

One does not actually know what a simple substance would be. When the simplicity of our substance vanishes and we are then no more a simple being, we then project further addenda and supports. If God depends on the world or the world depends on God, and we are hanging on the two, or if there is a relational set-up among the concepts of God, world and soul, they cease to be simple beings. We should not create a family reality. Reality is not a member of a larger family. If Reality is one of the members of a family, that family has to be organised by a larger Reality again, and this would be begging the

question. Finally we will find that there is a force uniting all things, and that force is Reality and not any member of a more diverse group. Yoga takes us towards this indivisible simplicity of Being through the apparently difficult techniques of *asana*, *bandha*, *mudra*, *pranayama*, etc.

The processes of the limbs of yoga are really meant to clear the path to this simplicity of realisation. Their importance lies only in their being helpful to us in clearing the way to this indivisible Reality. This is the reason why we practise the *asanas* and *pranayama* and the other techniques. Just as we take a broom and sweep our house to remove the cobwebs and clean the corners of the house, in the same way we do *asanas* and many other techniques to clear up the passage. Finally what we reach is the more simplified form of Reality. In the beginning it looks large, extended, complicated and forbidding. That is why in the beginning we are terrified even by the name of yoga. “Oh, it is not for me!” But we will eventually realise that nothing else can be for us—this thing alone is meant for us. The knowledge comes to us later when we know what it actually means. Nobody can be a non-yogin in this world, because nobody can afford to be out of tune with themselves. Thus, the preparatory stages of *asana* and *pranayama* constitute yoga, and they lead to the further techniques of adjustment and the supreme art of meditation. Towards that end we have been cleaning our path a little.

Instead of saying something new altogether, I will try to give a review of the past so that you may not forget what you learned earlier. Every day you have to recollect the memories of what you have learned already. This should be a very important step in your further studies. We have come now through these winding paths, as it were, to the need for an adjustment of the microcosmic with the macrocosmic which is yoga. The practitioner passes through the different levels, commencing with the physical level which we call the practice of the *asanas*, *bandhas* and *mudras*. Now we have further sets of layers through which we have to pass in the process of self-adjustment. We have to be adjusted to the microcosmic in every level of our being, not merely the physical. All that we are has to be adjusted. We cannot be in tune externally and out of tune internally.

Therefore, the *asanas* are not the whole of yoga. *Asanas* are one of the forms of physical adjustment with the physical forces in nature, but there is also a vital personality in us. This acknowledgement takes us to the practice of *pranayama*. We have seen that we have at least five sheaths. The five layers of our being are called the five sheaths, or the *koshas* as they are called in Sanskrit. We have the physical, the vital, the sensory, the mental, the intellectual and finally the spiritual. Again I have to emphasise that the higher stage is inclusive of the lower—transcending the lower but comprehending what has been in the lower. Thus the higher is not merely an isolated step, but all that has been below it. When we become a graduate, we have already included within the compass of our knowledge whatever we have studied earlier in the elementary levels. When we are fifty years old, our personality is inclusive of everything that has been already outgrown in our younger age. So is it with knowledge, so is it with yoga and so is it with everything that we do in this world in the evolutionary development and process leading to a more vital life.

#### **THE VITAL ALIGNMENT CALLED PRANAYAMA**

The further adjustment called upon is the vital alignment called *pranayama*. I do not

propose to go into the technical variations of the practice of *pranayama*. I shall be content to speak about what it actually is and why we should practise it, just as I tried to speak to the fundamentals of the practice of *asanas*. The word '*pranayama*' comes from a Sanskrit complex word—*prana* and *ayama*. The bending of the *prana* or the harmonisation of the *prana* is what it really means. We bend it flexibly in the direction we need, and this would be the function of the *pranayama* process. We must be aware that we breathe in different ways at different times. When we climb up the steps or run fast we breathe in one way, after a meal we breathe in another way, and when we go to bed we breathe in a different way. When we are anxious or in a state of emotional tension we breathe in one way, and when we are angry we are in a different kind of breathing process. All these examples show how external conditions can affect our breathing.

Our breathing process does not merely connect itself with our internal psychic functions, but it also has an impact on the physical system. If we are terribly upset, we may have no hunger that day. We might say, "I don't want to eat anything; I am very much bothered." Our botheration is such that even our hunger has gone. The physiological functions have been affected so dramatically that one is thereby able to recognise the organic structure of the system. The body, the *pranas*, the mind and the senses together are all internally related to one another.

Hence, the process of *pranayama* has a relation to *asana* physically and externally, and it also has a relation to the mental condition within. The breathing process, which is ordinarily irregular in people who are very busy with the things of the world, has to be set right. The setting right of the breathing process means the setting right of the power or the mechanism which is impelling it from inside. The *prana* is different from breath, just as the hands of a watch are different from the structure within, or the electrical force that drives a motor is different from the structure of the motor itself. We may say the breathing process is the motor activity, and the propelling force within is the *prana*. The energy within is the *prana*. It is difficult to translate this word into English, as there is no equivalent in English for the term '*prana*'. In all the yoga texts we will find the word '*prana*' repeated again and again without an English equivalent. It is not breath and it is not even energy in the ordinary sense—it is impossible to define what actually it is. Suffice it to say, it is the precondition of any kind of motion. If motion is a possibility, and if there is such a thing called kinetic energy or dynamism in any manner in the world, it has a predisposition. The predisposition to any kind of dynamism in the world is *prana*.

It is the predisposition and not merely the action of the *prana* outside that has to be set right. The regulation of the breathing process alone is not *pranayama*. There is a predisposition behind the breathing process, and when that tendency within is not set right, outwardly controlling the breath is not going to help. *Kumbhaka* (retention of the breath) and other things are a failure when the disposition within is different from this effort. We cannot convince a person of something that the person cannot understand, because the person's brain and understanding are predisposed to something different from what we are saying. The tendency or the predisposition is to be taken into account before we try to touch the *prana* in any manner. Just as there has been a caution recommended in the practice of the *kundalini* or *hatha* yoga techniques, especially in their advanced stages, a caution has to be exercised in the practice of *pranayama*. It is

very important. One should not go to excesses in the practice of *pranayama*.

This caution is very important in the practice of the regulation of the breath, because we must know whether we are predisposed internally to the regulation of the *prana* or not—otherwise we should not meddle with it. Our disposition within is a complex of a psychological nature and is very important. What is our tendency? If our mind is too full of desires, if our inclination is towards intense activity, if we have been suppressing this urge for action through a desire for yoga meditation, and if we are boiling within with energy to be expressed in some way or the other—we should not do *pranayama*. Otherwise, it would be like trying to build a dam across a rushing river. The river will not be manageable if we try to block its raging flow, and it will break its bounds one day or the other. The rushing river is like our energy within, which tends towards something and which has an impetus of its own in a particular direction or destination.

We need not try to build a dam across such a river. What we are to do with the river is to see that it becomes calm before a dam is built. When there is a torrent and the river is in spate, one cannot build a dam across it. Our tendency to action, the action and its fulfilment are all the forces of the *prana*. These will indicate how forceful our *prana* is. It is easier to build a dam across a lake rather than across a river that flows. The dam would be more easily placed in position by an expanded lake rather than before a moving river. Mostly our energies move—they are like rivers and not like standing lakes. When the water of the river widens its scope, its force also becomes less and less.

In the mountain regions one will find that the rivers are rushing rapidly; but when they reach the plains, they become calmer. See the Ganges—if we go higher to its source, we will find it makes a lot of noise as it rushes rapidly through gullies and ravines. Now it has come to Rishikesh but still it is not calm, and we can be drowned here by the current. The river goes further to Haridwar, then to Saharanpur and so on, and then it becomes calmer and calmer until it reaches the plains. Near Bihar it will be like an ocean. Though it is so deep and expanded, it is not rushing. The *prana* is something like this river which has a tendency to rush, on account of the slope of the ground through which it has to flow. If we bring it to the plains, it is calm.

Our personality is like a mountain or a hill over which the *prana* rushes down. We have not become a plain yet, and so we heave, gasp, run and so on. We are not at ease with ourselves, which means to say the *prana* is not at peace. We cannot keep quiet even for a few minutes without talking to someone, and without getting up and seeing something in order to be satisfied with ourselves. This is an external symbol of the condition of our *prana* within. What we do daily will tell us how our *prana* works. If every ten minutes we have to get up and see something, that would mean that we are *rajasic* in nature. Can we sit alone for a day without seeing anyone? Try this one day. Do not go out of the room, and be alone in the room. The whole day we can be in the room just seeing what our minds will tell us that day. If we feel like a fish out of water, then the *prana* inside is also like a fish out of water—it will not be well. One should not do *pranayama* in this case. The inner predisposition of our personality will be the touchstone of the condition of our *prana*, and this must be discerned before we undertake the practice of *pranayama*. This caution is to be given, because if we don't understand this simple affair, we are likely to go wrong in the technique and press too hard. We may even have excesses telling upon our physiological system, in which case *pranayama* will not do us



any good if we are not prepared for it.

### PRANAYAMA FOR EQUILIBRIUM

*Pranayama* implies a proportion of *sattva* in our bodies and minds. *Sattva* means the tendency to equilibrium. Just as I said, we can try and test ourselves by sitting alone in the room for a day. Our response will tell us how *sattvic* we are. *Rajasic* persons cannot sit in one place—they will be writing something, looking in different corners, putting one thing in another place, taking it from that place and putting it in a third place. Our pencil is here; we lift it and put it there. We take it from there and put it here. Why do we do it? It means to say that our minds are not calm—otherwise we could let the pencil be wherever it is. The actions outside are expressions not only of the thought within but also of the way of the working of the *prana*. We have to be more cautious in dealing with the *prana* than even with our minds in meditation. The reason for this is that the *prana* is directly connected with our bodies, whereas the mind is connected with the body through the *prana*. When the *prana* gets out of order, it may do more harm than a mind that is not able to meditate. In the beginning, therefore, the process of the control of the *prana* should not take the form of the retention of breath. We should never try to retain our breath in the initial stages of the practice of *pranayama*.

The first things we do should be the most initial things. Generally we do not take a deep breath. If we just think of our breathing process a little bit for a few seconds, we will realise that we typically breathe shallowly. We neither inhale deeply nor exhale deeply. We are too much excited—that is why we cannot inhale or exhale deeply. The first thing would be to try deep inhalation and deep exhalation. It has nothing to do with retention—do not even think of that just yet. Sit in a well-ventilated room, or in the open if the air is warm. Take a deep breath, and after that, breathe out. If we do merely this technique of deep inhalation and deep exhalation for fifteen minutes, we will feel that we are tremendously refreshed. It has nothing to do with retention—again, do not think of retention just yet. Deep inhalation and deep exhalation continuously practised for fifteen minutes at least will give us a refreshing feeling within that we will like to experience daily.

The first step then would be only deep respiration. The second stage would be to prolong this process from a few minutes to a lengthier period. Remember that this should be done in a well-ventilated room, or even better, in the open. It should not be done in cold air, or in the very hot air that we have for example in Rishikesh in June. It should be warm air—not too chilly nor too hot. The breathing should be very calm and very slow, with no engagements in our minds. If the train is whistling to leave and we have to catch it, we should not sit on the platform and try to start our breathing practice—our minds would be lost in the whistle. We must have no engagements of this kind when we sit for deep breathing.

Everything should be done with a sense of immediacy and with attention—then we can sit for it. The other factor that is to be remembered is that this should be done preferably on an empty stomach and not after a heavy meal. When the stomach is empty, when the air is fresh and when our mind is not engaged, this breathing exercise should be started. We will see how refreshing this becomes and how our health improves. This practice can even prevent illnesses of various kinds. We need not call this *pranayama*—it is a big word. Let us simply call this deep breathing exercise. Let us not go for big words or

technicalities. Deep breathing exercise—yes, that is sufficient. Practise daily in a calm atmosphere and with a calm mood, and this will drive off many of our sicknesses. Sicknesses may not come at all, so it may not even be a question of driving off diseases. We will be immune to many of the illnesses to which people are prone. We will have a reserve force within us, and we will have enough strength to prevent the absorption of toxic matters from outside. *Pranayama* therefore commences with this simple technique. The reason behind the practice is the harmonisation of the *prana*, just as *asana* was the process of harmonisation of the muscular forces and the nervous energy. The physical equilibrium was established through *asana*, and now through *pranayama* we try to establish the equilibrium of the vital energy within.

### EQUALISATION OF THE VITAL ENERGY

The necessity for the equalisation of vital energy within arises from the fact that it is usually not distributed properly in the system. The *prana* is not usually equally distributed in the system, just as our thinking process is not usually harmonious. We always think certain particular things, and therefore the *prana* is particularly directed in certain corners of the system. People who are prone to too much thinking have their energy concentrated mostly in their brains, and their physical health may become comparatively weak. We can see it in our practical lives. People who do a lot of intellectual work—writers or others who do mostly sedentary mental work—often do not have vigorous physical health. This is possibly due to inadequate intake of fresh air and shallow breathing, and then driving the energy mostly to a particular part of the body.

The energy of the body needs correction because it has not been equally distributed, on account of particularly directed thinking. Just as the practice of the *asanas* was a correcting process of the muscles, this process corrects the disordered flow of energy. Whether it is *asana*, *pranayama* or the higher processes of thinking, the aim is to equally distribute the energy—physical as well as psychological. The equal distribution of energy becomes possible when it is prevented from moving in any given direction. The mind is the reason behind the energy moving in particular directions. Excessive thinking of sense objects, or even of any particular object for that matter, would concentrate the energy in that direction, and all the force would tend towards that object of our thought or affection.

People who are given to too much love or too much hatred are also not healthy in their systems, because here again, the energy is driven in certain directions. Any excess in any kind of activity—physical or psychological—is not good for the system. All yoga is harmony and the golden mean of action, and not tolerating excess of any kind—neither to the right nor to the left. We move equally in all directions, as it were, when we practise yoga. We have no preferences of any kind, and all things are all right. That should be our mood and attitude later on. Whereas before we would say, “This should be like this, and this should not be like that,” these notions will slowly vanish. The *prana* is regulated towards this end of harmonising the thought without any tendency in any particular direction.

I should say something about this *prana*, so that we may know how to regulate it. The *prana* is an energy which is supposed to channelise itself through the tubes of the nerves. The nerves are so many in number that we cannot even count them. They are everywhere in the body—there is no part of the body where we cannot find a nerve.

Wherever we touch the body, there is a nerve. They are thousands in number, and we can say the whole body is constituted of nerves. Therefore, everywhere there is *prana*, which means to say everywhere there is life force, so that any part of the body that is touched tells us that there is life there. *Prana* is everywhere.

This *prana* which is moving through the nerves is not equally distributed—from the point of view of yoga at least. In the same way, ordinarily we appear quite healthy, but actually, from a very strict medical point of view, there will be something wrong with our system. The doctor examines us, and the doctor will tell us that there is something not all right, though we may for all practical purposes look all right. Similarly, with the *prana* and our life system, things look all right for all practical purposes, but for the yoga purpose at least there is something not all right. That something wrong is that we breathe alternatively through the nostrils, and that there is no concentrated attention of energy. The alternate breathing is supposed to be a kind of disturbance.

In one of the aphorisms of Patanjali, we will find that he says that one among the many obstacles in yoga is alternate breathing—he calls it *svasa-prasvasa*. Alternate inhalation and exhalation through the nostrils is regarded as an obstacle in the practice of yoga. We may be wondering how this could be an obstacle. It is an obstacle because alternate breathing in this manner also creates a kind of alternate thinking, in terms of opposites—love and hatred, like and dislike, subject and object. Just as there is alternate motion of the breath, there is alternate motion of the thought system. Yoga does not want us to think in this alternate way—swinging from object to object, or from pleasure to pain, or love to hatred. The breathing process, as I mentioned, is an indication of the way in which we are thinking—they are mutually related. Therefore yoga thinks that by a particular kind of manipulation of the breathing process we can advantageously affect the *prana*, which is driving the breath in this manner.

Gradually the mind is also enticed away from its usual discursive way of thinking, and it is concentrated in such a way that it does not swing from subject to object or from emotion to emotion. This is done by an easy technique which goes by the name of *kumbhaka*. It is a retention which has to be achieved in a very cautious manner—not merely by holding the breath, but by educating the movement of the *prana* so that it ceases its alternate activity and becomes calm of its own accord. “Of its own accord” is very important—it should not be by force. When the mind becomes deliberately calm of its own accord, it tends to cease its irregular activity. The cessation of this irregular activity is what we call *kumbhaka*, which many people try to do forcefully by holding the nostrils closed. The beneficial effect I mentioned cannot be achieved like that.

Yoga is more a growing from within rather than an imposing of things from without. Yoga is an inwardly growing evolutionary process. In every step of yoga these important aspects have to be remembered. Hence, I emphasise our predisposition as an important factor which must be taken into consideration in the practice of *pranayama*. A gradual diminishing of the activity of the breath means a diminution in the activity of the *prana* within. This process can bring about a gathering of energy which makes us strong physically, and which also brings about the concentration of the mind, which is the next higher step.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

### THE HARMONISATION OF MIND AND BREATH

It will be observed that we hold our breath during any act of concentration in our daily lives. When we are walking along the edge of a precipice, we hold our breath. When we climb a tree, we hold our breath. Perhaps when walking on a tightrope, the circus performer also holds his breath. When we are about to do something which requires our total attention, or at least most of it, our breath is automatically held. It is not that we are deliberately doing *pranayama* here, but our breath is suspended of its own accord. This shows the mutual relationship between thought and the vital force. It is impossible for the mind to concentratedly pay attention to anything when the breath is heaving like a bellows. When we concentrate while listening to a lecture, we hold our breath. When we gaze at an object with awe-inspired wonder, we hold our breath.

All these are instances in life which demonstrate the relationship of *prana* with thought—and vice versa. All acts which need total attention of our whole personality draw up our energy together with the thought. Attention is another name for the concentration of our whole being. Wherever there is attention, the whole of us is there. In this form of mental attention, it is not merely the breath that is suspended, but all the sense organs as well. We cease to see, hear, smell, taste and touch at that time. When we are concentratedly looking at something or gazing at an object with attention, we will not hear sounds unless they are very loud. We may not even be able to see things moving near us or persons walking around us in this concentrated state. In this instance, the concentration of the mind, the cessation of the function of the breath, and the withdrawal of the senses all take place together.

Hence it is that in one single effort of yoga preparation, *pranayama*, *pratyahara* and *dharana* take place simultaneously. It is towards this end that the practice of *pranayama* is practised, as it is an essential limb in the concentration of the mind. One of the aphorisms of Patanjali says that the connection of the vital energy with the mind is such that the stoppage of the breath, even for a few minutes, would bring the mind to its normal condition. There are agitations of force which affect the mind, and these agitations are called “tendencies to pleasure and pain”. Intense exhilaration and intense grief are the two points between which the mind roves in its usual activities. In both these functions of the mind, the vital energy is carried along together with the mind.

If a bird is tied with a thread to a peg, and the thread's connection with the peg is broken, the bird carries the thread wherever it moves because the thread is connected with the bird and not with the peg. Likewise is the mind's relation with the *prana*. The oscillation of the mind is the same as the vacillation of the *prana*, and it is impossible for the one to function without the function of the other. Oftentimes a comparison is made between the relationship of the two and the relationship between the inner mechanism of a watch and its hands. The mechanism moves the hands, and the hands themselves have some sort of effect upon the mechanism working within so that when we hold the hands, the mechanism is suspended within for the time being. In the same way, if we stop the mechanism, the hands cease moving.

## THE RETENTION OF BREATH

A deep exhalation and retention is what Patanjali prescribes in one of his aphorisms to bring about a balance in the thinking process. Intense agitation of the mind caused by any external factor can be brought to a cessation, temporarily at least though not permanently, by deep expulsion and retention of the breath. If we do not want to think something, we can expel the breath and hold it, and the thought will cease to operate. The teacher assures us that if this process is repeated for a few minutes the mind will get accustomed to this cessation of function, and the agitation will cease. Any kind of extreme in thinking will be rectified by exerting a pressure on it through the operation of the *prana* in this practice of expulsion and retention. The retention can also be done after inhalation, and not merely after expulsion. The retention is called *kumbhaka* which means 'holding or filling' in Sanskrit. *Kumbhaka* also means 'a pot', and filling something as if filling a pot is *kumbhaka*. We fill ourselves with the force of vitality in the practice of *kumbhaka*. The filling is done either after deep inhalation or after deep exhalation—both these are important means of *pranayama*.

There are four types of *kumbhaka* described in the aphorisms of Patanjali. One is, as I mentioned, expulsion and retention. We breathe out, deeply and calmly, and hold the breath for a few seconds. Breathe in deeply and calmly again and hold the breath again for a few seconds. These are twin *pranayamas*—internal *kumbhaka* and external *kumbhaka*. The third type is the *kumbhaka* that is practised by alternative breathing, which means breathing in deeply through the left nostril, then holding the breath and then exhaling through the right. This coupled process of inhalation, retention and exhalation is supposed to be one round of *pranayama*. Easy, comfortable *pranayama* it is called—*sukha-purvaka*. This *pranayama* is easy to practise when it is done together with this alternate system of breathing. This is the third type of retention, along with the others that are coupled with expulsion and inhalation.

The fourth one is the most important of all, and it is this which is of consequence in the yoga practice. This is supposed to be the culmination of *pranayama*, and it is generally reached by some sort of training in the other three processes. The earliest stage would be expulsion and retention. Then the next stage would be inhalation and retention. The third would be alternate breathing and retention. Through a graduated practice of these one has to gain control over the breath. The fourth one, which is regarded as more important than all others, is called *kevala kumbhaka*, or automatic suspension of breath, and it is not attended with inhalation and exhalation. If we are suddenly taken unawares by something which we did not expect, we hold the breath without inhalation or exhalation. We do not know what is happening to the breath. It just stops, that is all. The mind is suspended in its function at once, because of the unexpected arrival of an event. Suddenly thought stops and breath stops. In concentration of any kind, the retention that follows is of this kind.

The *raja* and *jnana yogins* especially lay stress on this type of *pranayama*. As a matter of fact, they do not otherwise lay stress on *pranayama* at all, as this higher form follows automatically in the wake of concentration. The emphasis is more on concentration of mind than on the retention of breath as a lower process. When our interest in anything is immense, our concentration also is comparatively great. When we read a book with tremendous interest, our concentration on the subject is such that our breath will slow

down automatically, and *pranayama* is automatically practised there. When we are to appear for an examination and there are only fifteen minutes till the bell rings and we are trying to remember some passage quickly, we will be earnestly turning through some pages. Our concentration on the theme would be such that we will not be listening to anything nor seeing anything at that time other than the crucial theme. Our minds are on the subject in such concentration that our breath also is there. When the breath and the mind go together hand in hand, neither function. The *kevala kumbhaka*, or the automatic suspension of the breath, is coupled with the act of concentration of mind, and it is difficult to say where one begins and the other ends. They are like two parallel lines moving side by side, starting together, moving with the same speed, and ending also at the same point. *Kevala kumbhaka* and the stoppage of the mind are parallel movements of a single force.

Here we may be reminded of the great controversy concerning the body-mind relationship. Materialists and behaviourists contend that the mind is controlled by reflexes of the body functions—going even to the extent of saying that the mind is only an excretion, as it were, of bodily energy. The idealists contend that the body is regulated and operated upon by the thought force, rather than the other way round. The debate has led to philosophical disputes with both arguing for two different points of view or angles of vision, one emphasising the mind and the other the body. Neither of them led to definite conclusions, because the fact seems to be that the one is not dependent on the other, as these schools seem to think.

It is not true that the body is entirely the master of the mind as the realists, materialists or the behaviourists think. Nor is it true to go to the other extreme of the idealists, in saying that the mind is entirely the master of the body, and the body would do whatever the mind says. There is no such total dependence of the one on the other. They seem to be moving in a parallel manner towards a destination common to both, like two legs walking, where we cannot say which determines the other. We cannot say that the right leg is the master of the left or the other way round. The two walk together symmetrically towards a purpose common to both. There seems to be a purpose transcending the movements of the legs, and it is this purpose that keeps the movements of the two legs in balance.

Likewise, there seems to be a higher purpose regulating the body and the mind. It would not be wisdom to think that one of them is the master of the other. The two are regulated by a single tendency, and this tendency is purposive and teleological, as the philosophers tell us. This realisation is important in our consideration of the practice in yoga. In all philosophical discussions people take either this side or that side, and it is difficult to encompass all sides at the same time. This is why philosophy has not helped mankind much, because the philosophies ended only as theories, schools of thought, doctrines or arguments. We have big books on philosophy, but finally we are told nothing conclusive although so many things have been said. To shift the arguments and to organically relate them to a systematic whole is a hard thing, because that requires a mind which can see through to the substance of the different arguments and into the good points and the necessary connecting links of the different sides of the discussion. This process, albeit difficult, has to be employed in our understanding of the relationship between mind and body.

This mind-body relationship has also led to debate between *hatha* yoga and the *raja* and *jnana* yoga schools. Just as in the West we have the difference between behaviourism and idealism in psychology, so too do we have the same debate between the *hatha yogins* and *jnana yogins* here in India. *Hatha* yoga emphasises *prana* and the bodily system more than the mind, whereas the *raja* yoga and more pointedly the *jnana* yoga emphasise the mind and the reason more than the body and the *prana*. The one says that the body and *prana* control the mind; the other says the mind and the reason control the *prana* and the body.

### PRANA AND THE MIND

Neither of these need take much of our time, because these are viewpoints, and we know what a viewpoint means. It is only a picture of one side of a complete whole, and we should not look at anything from only one side. It is difficult to know the nature of any substance by referring to it by a few characteristics alone. In medical science and psychology it is seen that mental illness can affect the body, and bodily illness can affect the mind. We are supposed to be psychophysical organisms, not merely bodies or minds. We are an organic structure of body and mind taken together and not merely a mind thinking in the air without a body. Nor are we a body lumbering like a cart without a thought within. Hence, it is necessary to understand the proper relationship of *prana* and mind. In our study of yoga practice, attention should be given to the importance of *prana* as well as to the mind in their intrinsic relationship rather than their outer manifestation. It is the soul-force within us that acts as the relationship between the body and the mind. We have a soul, apart from the thinking process of the mind and the breathing activity of the *prana*.

This should not be missed in our study of yoga. Of course, to define the soul is such a difficult thing to do. Some peculiar something is this soul that we are, such that it expresses itself as thinking on one side and activity on the other side. This is the reason why when one side is touched, the other side also is automatically touched. To touch the right arm would be equal in effect to touching the left arm, because the communication will be conveyed through the system of the body. This is the reason why *pranayama* helps in concentration of mind, and why concentration of mind has an effect on the cessation of the breath. One acts on the other, and when we carefully consider the matter, we will realise both go together.

Any attempt at the harmonisation of the breathing process will not be a waste. There is no need to go to excesses on either side, as I have already mentioned. There are *hatha yogins* like the grammarians in Sanskrit, who go on studying grammar throughout their lives without actually learning the literature. Likewise, our lives may go only towards the practice of *pranayama* alone, and this would be a mistake which we should not commit, because *pranayama* and *asana* are not ends in themselves. They are supposed to help us in the practice of true yoga. May I once again mention that all the limbs of yoga are to act together in a concentrated focus, right from *yama-niyama* onwards, because yoga is the total effort of the whole system in which all the limbs of yoga get concentrated. *Yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana*—all get focused in one concentrated energy when we practise what is true yoga.

There is a difference between the rungs of a ladder and the limbs of yoga, though many times we are told that the limbs of yoga are like rungs of a ladder. When we climb the

second rung on the ladder, we do not continue to touch the first rung. The first rung is over, so that when we climb the higher rungs, the lower rungs are no longer touched by our feet. But this is not so in the case of the limbs of yoga. The rungs in the ladder are not organically connected, because they are mechanically fixed and thereby unrelated to one another. The limbs of yoga are not mechanically disconnected, but rather organically related. In an act of concentration or meditation, all the limbs of yoga take part at once. To give a humorous example, it is like monkeys attacking. When they attack, all attack together. They do not come one or two at a time—they come in a group.

Likewise, there is a deliberate mustering of all the forces which constitute the limbs of yoga. The whole soul practises yoga. In this attempt at the total concentration of the personality in yoga, it is difficult to say which limb is more important than the other and which is subsidiary to the other. The logical arrangement of *asana*, *pranayama* and *pratyahara*, in that order, is only for convenience in understanding and for ease in practice. It does not mean that they actually have to be arranged in that order.

The process of *pranayama* in yoga is a technique of the harmonisation of the vital energy through the simultaneous employment of the intermediary process of *pratyahara*, or the withdrawal of the senses, leading to a harmonisation of the thinking process. As I mentioned, in deep concentration the senses may stop functioning temporarily, and the breath also is held. When we enjoy a beautiful landscape when the sun is about to set, our whole attention is there, and we do not hear sounds or have sensory relationships to anything else. The breath also is temporarily held. *Pranayama*, *pratyahara* and *dharana* are the three terms used in Sanskrit, and mean respectively: the retention of the vital force, the cessation of the function of the sense organs in respect to their objects, and the concentration or attention of the mind. All these go together.

While a position in an *asana* can help in the concentration of the mind, there are occasions when interest is sufficiently intense that this concentration can take place in other poses also. Sometimes when we go for a walk, we will be deeply thinking something and we will not know that we have reached our destination. This must have happened to many of us. We just reach our destination—that is all we know. We do not know that we have been walking at all, because the concentration is so strongly focused on the theme that is occupying the mind. The concentration of the mind is not necessarily connected with a particular posture of the body, though we may choose a particular posture for practical convenience in the earlier stages.

As a matter of fact, in concentration of mind we forget the existence of the body itself, so that we do not know what posture it is occupying. It all depends upon the interest. Most important of all things is interest, which takes various forms such as love, affection, concentration, etc. Interest is paramount in yoga, just as interest is paramount in every field of activity in life. Where there is no interest in anything, there is no success. Interest depends, at least to some extent, on understanding. When we do not understand a thing, we cannot also have an interest in it. Through this laborious process of the analysis of the techniques of yoga, we have tried to bring our minds up to the point of grasping this important conclusion, namely, that the limbs of yoga, as well as the organs of the body and the mind—all of these in their totality—approach the total which is Reality.



It is not a part moving towards the whole. We do not know what is moving towards what. The whole rouses itself into the consciousness of the whole, which is symbolically stated in a famous *mantra* that is daily repeated: *Purnamadah, purnamidam, purnat purnamudachyate*—The whole is moving towards the whole, the whole has come out of the whole, and when the whole has been removed from the whole, the whole only remains. Such is this movement of the whole towards the whole in yoga, where the motion also is a whole, that which moves is a whole, that to which the whole moves also is a whole—everything is whole. No partial question arises here.

The practice of *pranayama* is also an organic process; therefore, it is not merely a mechanical act of the breath. The organic relationship of *pranayama* to *pratyahara*, which is the next step, is very interesting. Just as *pranayama* means the harmonisation of the vital energy by manipulation of the process of inhalation and exhalation, and which tends toward cessation, *pratyahara* means the very same act of the harmonisation of the sensory activities. It is not simply a withdrawal, as we have perhaps been told. It is an equilibration of the forces of the senses. All yoga is harmony—there is no withdrawal or expulsion. It is not projecting something or withdrawing something as much as it is a harmonising, which may appear to be a kind of withdrawal. Withdrawal of externality is harmony. In the so-called withdrawal in *pratyahara* or the abstraction of the sense powers, what happens really is the channelisation of mental energy through the senses is harmonized, and there is no further channelisation. The streams of the water reservoir are prevented from moving in different directions, and the waters fill the reservoir to its brim, filled to overflowing.

Our mind is like a reservoir of energy, and it has streams—five streams at least. The sense organs are streams of force. The *prana* is the propelling inclination of force which sends this energy to the channels of sense. The mind, the senses and the *prana* are thus connected. If the mind is the reservoir, and if the senses are the channels through which the water of the reservoir flows, the *prana* is the inclination that is needed for the water to flow through the channels. The *prana* therefore is the propelling energy. If there is no inclination, the water will not flow. The inclination towards an object of sense is the work of the *prana*, the channelisation is the senses and the force is the mind. The mind supplies the motive behind the activity—both of the *prana* and the senses.

It is difficult to find an equivalent in the English language for what is meant by the ‘psychological organ’. It is something which has in it the seed of the forces of activity—not only of the mind but also of the senses and the *prana*. This psychological organ is something which is unitary in us that works as mind, senses and *prana*. On the one side it is the activity of the force of vitality; on another side it is the senses trying to cognise and perceive things, and on another side it is the thinking process. Very few students of yoga would find it easy to practise this *pratyahara* of the whole psychological organ. They may hold their breath through force of will and by holding the nose, but they cannot hold the senses so easily. The senses are turbulent and impetuous in their movement. They find their way out, whatever be our effort in controlling them.

### **SUBJUGATION OF THE SENSES**

More difficult than *asana* is *pranayama*, and more difficult than *pranayama* is *pratyahara*. We will find that the higher rungs are more difficult to attain than the lower ones, so that we may be perfect in *asana* but not in *pranayama*. We may be a

little adept in *pranayama*, but not in *pratyahara* and *dharana*, because the higher things that we have to reach in yoga are more and more invisible and out of physical control. They become ethereal and more pervasive in their activity. That which is more pervasive is also more difficult to subjugate. The senses are difficult to understand. We do not know what a sense organ means, so how can we control a sense organ? Why should we control the sense organs—and even if we try, what are the means that we are to employ? Doubts of this kind may also occur to the minds of students of yoga. “What on earth am I going to achieve by this withdrawal, and into what am I going to withdraw?”

‘Withdrawal’ means withdrawal of something, by something, into something. What is this ‘thing’ into which we are going to withdraw? Where does it finally land us after all? This difficulty which is of the nature of a doubt will also create a lack of interest. We know what will happen to us if we have no interest—nothing will be achieved. Therefore, in the stages of yoga from *pratyahara* onwards, the understanding should exercise itself in a more predominant manner than in the earlier stages. While some sort of success can be achieved up to the stage of *pranayama*, there are very few who can achieve success later on. We can maybe hold our breath, but we cannot control the senses, because the reason is diversely directed.

We are brought up in such a way in human society, right from our childhood, that we have been taught to think in terms only of the senses. To now revise the way of thinking and sensory activity is a Herculean task. It requires a new education altogether, which we are trying to have nowadays when we seem to be too old to learn anything new. The old impressions of our early upbringing, from childhood onwards, have an impact on our present way of thinking, and again and again the old mind starts saying: “What are you doing to me?” The new child is unable to answer these questions of the old mind within. “Just keep quiet; don’t pursue this,” says the old mind. Many times we listen to this old whisper, because it is rare that we can completely hush this inner voice of the habituated mind which has been our way of thinking since childhood.

After all, what would be the effort that we will have to put forth in the practice of yoga, and for how many years? We may practise for a few months or maybe even two or three years, but it is nothing compared to the number of years that we have lived in this world. We have been living in this world for so many years—right from childhood—and we have been thinking wrongly during all that time. We have been believing that this way of thinking is the right thing, and now after one or two years or maybe just a few months, we have been trying to think rightly. But the whole habit will not go away so easily, because the emotions are especially turbulent. They will not listen to us at all, and it is the emotions that regulate the workings of the senses.

This is very important to remember. Our logical arguments are not going to help us in any manner, because the senses are not going to listen to them. Logic may appear to have some effect on the senses, but logic is ultimately of no help if it is not connected with the inner feeling. There is a story related to this. One of the young Muslim rulers who lived in India had a very good spiritual teacher, and the teacher taught him wonderful things of the heavens, the philosophy of creation, and many mysterious things of the world. As he had learned everything, the young ruler was declared to be a master of philosophy—very learned in the sacred lore of Islam and the general

philosophy of those times. The young lad listened to everything and studied the whole of philosophy, but yet he had not fully understood things with his whole heart. The master returned to his own home, and the student wrote a plaintive letter to him. "My revered Master, I am grateful for all that you have taught me. You have taught me many things, but you have not taught me one single useful thing! For instance, I do not know how to attack an enemy's fort, how to occupy my throne for the longest period possible, how to outwit my opponents, how to regain what I have lost in this material world, or how politically to manoeuvre armies. You haven't taught me any of these things." This reliance on logic rather than wisdom was the way of thinking with which the lad was brought up, and the mysteries of the cosmos did not seem to help him at all. He had heard all these great truths, but his previous erroneous way of thinking kept him from fully understanding them, because he was stuck in his old way of thinking.

### THE HEART AND NOT JUST THE LOGIC

This is exactly the way in which the mind will receive teachings when they are presented in a logical form. There is a beautiful saying of Pascal: "The heart has a reason which reason does not know." The heart has a logic of its own, and the inductive and deductive processes of the schools of logic are alien to the logic of the heart. Whenever we listen to any logic, we say, "Yes, yes, but..." This "but" will not leave us at any time. The "yes, yes" response is the logic of the head, while the "but" is our heart speaking. There will always be a "but" for every thinking that we do in this world. It is this "but" that prevents us from successfully practising *pratyahara*. Just observe—we have an objection for everything. We never listen to anything wholly, nor can we agree with it completely. When I say "we" here, I mean by that our emotions. The heart speaks a language of its own, and the language of the heart is the most powerful of expressions. The intellect will be a failure in this attempt, if the logic has not touched the heart. The logic has not done its work if conviction has not become feeling. Intellectual conviction will not help us in yoga. It is this difference between the activities of the heart and the head that has been the cause of the failure of many students in their practice. We feel something and start thinking another thing altogether. That which we feel is our life, and that which we think is only an outward expression of our personality.

The *pratyahara* process therefore is not only an external expression of our personality, and it is not only an intellectual or a physical function. It is a function of emotion which is the driving force in our personalities. That which drives us to do anything in this world is emotion. Where emotion is absent, then everything cools down. Emotion supplies us with the necessary warmth of life. Where emotion is absent, either this way or that way, life is cold, insipid and without any significance. When we speak from our emotions, we speak with force. When we run, we run with force. This we do whether we like a thing or dislike a thing. We express our vehemence with force, and we also express our wonderment with force. "How wonderful!" or "How stupid!" Both we will say with force. This force comes from the emotions. Where emotion is absent, we have no force, and we become a cold, dead object.

Hence, emotion is not a bad thing, because it supplies the power. However, we also know what power means—it can be used for a proper and good purpose or for a destructive purpose. As emotion is an amoral something which is necessary in us, and it can be diverted either to this side or that side—like a double-edged sword or like fire.

Can we say fire is wholly good or bad? No one can answer this question. We cannot say fire is good or bad. It is good if it is used for cooking our meals or warming ourselves in winter, but it is bad if it is used to set fire to somebody's house or to devastate cities.

Force is neither good nor bad. It is an amoral energy of the universe. Emotion is the manifestation of force in our personality, and this force usually works as sensory activity through the function of the *prana*, as we have seen. This is both the difficulty as well as the necessity in the regulation of the activities of sense. For this purpose we have to analyse the structure of our interests and our emotional relationships, rather than try to philosophically analyse the structure of creation or the concepts of logic in philosophy. In *pratyahara*, the subject of analysis and understanding is our emotional relationship with things and the hidden impulses towards satisfaction of any kind. The necessity for *pratyahara* arises on account of our feelings for satisfaction in things other than in the objectives of yoga. As our satisfaction is diverted to things other than the objectives that we seek in yoga, the need for *pratyahara* arises.

We know very well that we can wean ourselves from anything—but not from an object of satisfaction. There is nothing in this world which can attract us so much as that which satisfies us. There is nothing which we want except that which satisfies us, and if the objects of sense can satisfy us, nothing can be more difficult for us than to wean the mind from this satisfaction. Hence it is that in *pratyahara* we are always at a dead end, and we cannot move further. Most students of yoga are stuck here, and they cannot go further. When people have unintelligently tried to control the senses through *pratyahara*, the attempts have not ended in success. They ended in tensions and complexes of various kinds and also in difficulties which later began to harass them in many ways—all because emotion was regarded as an unimportant factor in human life. The mechanical process of the subjugation of the senses was employed as they tried to sit with force in a particular *asana* or tried to hold the breath with force. We may employ some force in things, but we cannot employ force in the control of the senses, and it is un-wisdom to try it.

Through the stage of *pratyahara*, we come to the threshold of the mind. That is why the difficulty is greater here than with *asana* or *pranayama*. While in the earlier two stages of *asana* and *pranayama* we were a little removed from the mind and mental processes, we are now coming to the borderland of thinking itself, and we are touching the vital points of the mind when controlling the senses. We will realise to our surprise that *pratyahara* is a very interesting subject of study, and it involves many minor processes of analysis of mind in its emotional aspects. When we touch *pratyahara*, we have touched our own weak spots. That is why we would not like to touch it, either in ourselves or in others, if possible. We know what a weak spot is—a spot which we would not like to touch. Now we are about to touch it, and when this happens we are completely in dismay, and we do not know what to do with ourselves. But it has to be done one day or the other, and hence it is that in *pratyahara*, we may take a little more time to understand and tackle the situation.

But once a step is taken, it has to be taken firmly. There is no use hurrying forward in trying to control the senses. “Today I’ll control the eyes, and tomorrow I’ll control the ears.” We cannot do that and think that five days later the senses will all be controlled. This cannot be achieved, because all the five senses work together. There is no such

thing as controlling only one sense. The five senses are like five holes in a vessel through which the contents will leak out. If we plug one hole, the force through which the expression will manifest itself elsewhere will be very vehement. We should not try to plug these holes one after the other. We have to deal simultaneously with them, and for this a very sound technique has to be employed—which should be our next subject of study.

## **CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE**

### **HOW THE SENSES FOOL US**

We know one would not deliberately drink poison, even if one were very thirsty. But by mistakenly taking it for something else, one may drink it. The senses are like unintelligent but obstinate children who do not know what they are after. Like moths flying into the flaming fire, taking it for a source of beauty, the senses go for the objects. It is not destruction of any kind or a catastrophe that the senses want, but it is a misjudgement of values that takes them to the objects of sense, for their own repentance later on. The senses are not sufficiently wise in their analysis of the nature of the objects acting as their counterparts. The senses are bad guides for us in this world. They cannot see properly, so how can they guide us in this world? It is unfortunate that we take the senses as our guides in the world, and even a master scientist takes the senses alone as the directive agency. This is the reason why there is a relative inconclusiveness as regards scientific discoveries; and every day there is a new discovery, so that we never come to any final conclusion because we never reach the last point of our destination. The senses see the world in a way that does not really correspond to the true composition of things. The structure of the universe is of one kind, and the senses behold the world in a different way altogether.

We know very well that action is always guided by a kind of knowledge or understanding. The activity of the senses is totally dependent on the way in which they behold the things of the world. As we see, so we act, and if our seeing is not proper, our action is incorrect. Based on that incorrect perception, our action would lead us to difficulty. "Oh, I never thought it would be like this, and I have got into trouble." This is our complaint many a time in the world. The thing is that we cannot understand the situation properly, and yet we rush headlong into it and go deeper into the mire, from which we cannot easily get out.

The senses are misdirected agencies of the human being, and they behold the world in a way which is compatible with the structure of their own internal organism—but it is not correspondent with reality. The structure of the senses need not necessarily correspond to the nature of reality outside, and there is no correspondence between the inner constitution of the senses and the nature of reality. This is why many people have thought that the world that is seen by the senses is an appearance or a phenomenon. There are many philosophers who have concluded, after a careful analysis of the situation, that the world of sense perception is phenomenal and not reality. Immanuel Kant of the West is one, and in India we have got the Vedantic philosophers who have come to a similar conclusion, namely, that the world that we see with our senses is constituted of phenomena rather than the things in themselves, or objects or realities in their own essences.

The reason why we are in a world of phenomena and not in a world of realities is that we see things in the context of a world of sensations. The world of our experiences is a world of sensations. The world of our experience is a world of senses. What reacts upon our senses is the counterpart of sensations rather than the actual objects themselves. We are generally told by materialist psychology that the objects are seen by the senses as

they are in themselves. We come in contact with reality, according to behaviourist and materialist psychology. But the sensations which are responsible for our perceptions of the objects are as important a factor in our knowledge in the world as our hasty conclusion that we actually are coming into contact with the things of the world as they are in themselves.

What really happens to us seems to be that we experience a kind of reaction of sensations rather than the objects themselves. As a boomerang may turn back upon the thrower, the sensations react back upon us. For example, what impinges on the retina of our eyes in visual perception is not an actual contact of the eyes with the objects as they are in themselves, but the reaction produced by something present outside, something—we don't know what it is—which sends our sensations back to us. This is a world of reactions set up by sensations or psychological actions. Action and reaction constitute this world. We are not in a world of objects in themselves—we are in a world of sensations which are psychological actions setting up a reaction. The reaction is brought about by the sensational activities on account of the incapacity of the sensations to contact reality.

Just as a ball may rebound back to us when it is cast against an impenetrable wall because it cannot pass through the wall, the sensations come bouncing back to us and bring with them an illusory conviction of having discovered something in its reality. They have touched something, no doubt, but they cannot tell us what it is. A blind man may touch something—he is no doubt touching something factual—but he cannot fully describe what he has touched. Likewise are the senses. They contact reality in some kind of blindfolded fashion, but they cannot describe to us what they have touched, just as we cannot know what has happened to us in a state of deep sleep. The senses are under a misapprehension in the waking condition similar to the misapprehension found in a state of deep sleep.

### **MISAPPREHENSION OF THE SENSES**

While *rajas* is the cause of our misapprehension in waking, *tamas* is the cause of the misapprehension in deep sleep. We are in both the conditions of waking and sleep in a comparatively similar state of misapprehension. The sensations cannot contact reality, though they seem to be floating on the surface of something which must be real. Reality should presuppose appearance. It is quite intelligible and reasonable to suppose that. If there were no reality, there could not even be phenomena. Why is it that phenomena seem to be alone the content of our experience rather than reality? 'Phenomena' is a name that we give to the sum total of the reactions produced by sensations of all people everywhere in creation. This understanding takes us to the difference between subjective idealism and objective idealism, but that is not our subject today. The essence of the matter is that reactions set up by sensations come upon us carrying with them a kind of erroneous message concerning the objects they have contacted. They have contacted something, but they tell us something wrong about it. They tell us, "We have touched something real," but we know there is a difference between sensation and actual contact with the reality. Physicists would tell us that reaction is nothing but an electrical repulsion produced by the contact of two poles of electricity. The positive and the negative seem to be responsible for this electrical repulsion which is caused by sensations.

Sensations are of five kinds, as we know—visual, auditory, tactile, olfactory and gustatory. Now these can be explained in terms of a simple phenomenon of contact with objects, and are nothing but a kind of repulsion of the atoms that constitute objects—subjectively as the body, objectively as that which we seem to touch. When we touch a table, a stone, a wall or any kind of hard matter for example, what seems to be taking place, according to our physicists at least, is a kind of repulsion between the two constituents in the form of the object touched and the fingers that touch. The fingers are constituted of electrical forces, and the object touched also is constituted of a similar force. There is a kind of repulsion taking place between two sensations, and it is this repulsion that goes by the name of tactile sense. When we say, “I have touched an object,” what we mean really is that electrical repulsion has taken place in our fingers on account of its coming in contact with something which the senses cannot ultimately discern. This phenomenon of repulsion is actually our touch. Incidentally, if a particular nerve centre is stimulated in our body, we may feel the similar sensation of touch, even if our fingers are amputated. Biologists and physicists will corroborate this fact. We need not have any hand at all—it may be amputated—and yet we will have a sensation of touching something if the particular nerve centre is stimulated. It is this stimulation of the nerves that is telling us that we have touched an object—whether we have really touched an object or not.

We may feel pain after having hit our heads against a stone in the dream state—though there is no stone in the dream condition and we cannot hurt our heads by hitting against the dream stone. Yet, we can feel a sensation of trauma, bleeding and agonising pain in the dream, which is nothing but a sensation that is produced in our minds. A sensation, which is merely an abstract occurrence in the mental realm, can create an experience of a hard reality. We can appear to come in contact with it and suffer agonies as well as pleasures. If this can happen in dream, this can happen in the waking state also. This is what we learn on a very strict and impartial analysis of the process of perceiving through the senses.

The senses cannot understand all this. They are deluded creatures. They are hypnotised by the continuous action and reaction produced by sensations—continuous in the sense that they take place from birth to death. From the very time of our entering this physical realm after our birth till our passing away from this world, we are in a realm of these sensations, and we cannot know anything else. Inasmuch as we have never been initiated into any kind of knowledge different from this sensational one, we think that the sensory world is the true world, and we mistake sensations for realities.

”There are no objects,” our analytical thoughts may proclaim, but the senses cannot believe it. They say, “We touch, we taste, we see. How do you say that there is no world?” Well, what have we touched truly speaking? As I said, according to this present analysis, we do not touch anything—we have only sensations. We do not see anything—we have only visual sensations. We do not hear anything—we have only auditory sensations, and so on. A fivefold network of sensations is what we call the sensory experience. It is this that we are so attracted to in this world, and this is our so-called world experience. How can the senses understand this when they are hypnotised by this totality of sensory reactions? Yoga psychology goes deep into this analysis and tells us that we are deluded, we are madcaps, and we do not understand what is happening to us. There is a great famous verse of Bhartrihari: “Having drunk the liquor of deludedness, the whole world



has gone mad.” The whole world seems to be filled with crazy people, because they do not know what is happening to them as they are so much wedded to sensations, and sensations are mistaken for contact with reality. We want this, we want that, this object, that object, this person, that person, this thing, that thing—all through an interpretation of the senses. The mind acts like a handmaid to the senses, and whatever report comes through the senses, erroneous or otherwise, is taken for granted by the mind, and we are led further into delusion.

If our ministers and our heralds misguide us, what knowledge can we truly acquire? There cannot be proper administration if the heralds we have employed in the form of the senses daily tell us things that are false. We are misguided totally and we are fooled—one could even say that we live in a fool’s paradise. The world deludes us, and we are never happy. How can we be happy in a world of misconceptions? Here commences the philosophy and the analytic psychology of *pratyahara*, which is our object of study. Why should we withdraw our senses? Well, the senses are fools, and it is better that we withdraw them. This is a simple answer. The senses are not proper guides for us. Why do we employ them to do our work in this world? They will try to harm us, and they have already done enough harm. Now it is high time that we draw them back.

Ambassadors in foreign countries can sometimes act wrongly, in which case they will be recalled by their governments. “That is enough—come back. We will replace you.” These ‘ambassadors’ that are the senses are unfortunately not true friends of ours, and it is high time now that we withdrew them. This is *pratyahara*. Now we know what *pratyahara* is and why we should do it. Why should we withdraw the senses? Earlier I posed the question, and now I am giving the answer. It is better that we withdraw them; otherwise, there will be more difficulties. What we have lost is gone, but at least we need not further be at a loss. The senses cannot help us because of this difficulty inherent in themselves. They are in difficulty, and how can we be helped out of a difficulty by them?

### YOGIC PSYCHOLOGY

Yoga psychology is very broad, very deep and very interesting in its study. These are not things to be studied in a few days. One will drink this psychology like nectar if one comes to know it fully, and one would never leave it afterwards. The search will become very delicious if one goes very profoundly into its depths. Well, the point to understand is that the process of *pratyahara* is necessary as a requisite in truly understanding ourselves. Else, we will be in a fool’s paradise—which this world is. The psychology of yoga is described by Patanjali in a few aphorisms as an implication of what I have said just now. Though he doesn’t go into such detail and he uses a cryptic language, it is plain that he teaches that we mistake the unreal or the untrue for the real and the true.

Buddha, the great teacher of phenomenology in India, came to a similar conclusion. “The whole world is on fire,” said Buddha. It was a Buddha alone who could declare this. “The whole world is on fire, and I cannot step foot on it even for a few seconds. It is a burning pit of coals,” he said. Buddhist psychology is very interesting, but we cannot easily understand why he says this. I would like you to read some of the books of Rice-Davis which give very good English translations of some of the dialogues of Buddha. “The whole world is fire,” said the Buddha, which means to say, fire of sensations. Some people think that Buddha’s philosophy is a philosophy of the momentariness of things. All these are nomenclatures for a simple teaching of the transitoriness of things, as

Buddha taught. So transitory, tantalising and shifting are the senses that we cannot rest on a single aspect of this experience as being permanent. “Never for two consecutive seconds can we step in the same water in a river,” said Buddha. For two consecutive seconds we cannot step into the same water in a river, because it moves.

The flame of a lamp is of a similar nature—it moves. Though there is the appearance of a steadiness in a lamp, there are countless individual events which make it look like a continuous motion. It is similar to a motion picture—so is a flowing river, and so is this world. Though we have the illusion of looking at a continuous object as it is in a cinematographic film, we never see a single picture. It is rather a continuous motion, and we cannot catch up with the speed of the frames through our mind or our eyes. We mistake motion for stability. That is what Buddha taught. “My dear friend, we are mistaking motion for a solid substance. This world is all in motion.” This is what the ancient Greek philosopher Heraclites also taught. In one sense, the Heraclitian philosophy of the Greeks is similar to the Buddhist psychology and the philosophy of the East. The fire principle came in Heraclites also. “The whole world is cosmic fire,” said Heraclites.

The whole world is fire, the fire of motion. They call it fire merely as a kind of analogy to tell us what actually is the situation. We know what a fire is—something intolerable which we cannot bear even for a second, and so undesirable when it becomes a conflagration. The momentariness of things, as Buddha taught, is not so simple a matter as to be just laughed away or ignored. It is a very serious matter. The transitoriness of things is such, says Buddha, that we cannot exist as a being even for two continuous seconds. It is all becoming—a process and a process and a process, running and running with tremendous speed. There is no fixed stable object which we can call our own, so when can we catch an object in this world?

There is another wonderful philosopher by the name of Alfred North Whitehead, who came to a similar conclusion as Buddha. What Buddha called “momentariness” or “transitoriness”, Whitehead called “process”, which means to say that the world is in a state of universal ingression. One thing enters into another like waves in the ocean—even more powerfully than waves would do. With tremendous vehemence one thing rushes into another thing, one thing moves into another. There is a flood, as it were, of the cosmic forces, and we cannot find a single static object here. In the movement of the universal flood, can you tell me where there is one static wave? Nothing is static. In a moment, a wave has rushed into another wave, and there is a dashing of the two together to form a third, and we do not know where anything is in this flood of universal force. Such is the transitoriness of things that we cannot know which thing is where. In a world of this nature, we still want an object for enjoyment. Can we get one? We are fooled again, as Buddha says, and as all the great metaphysicians of the world say. This is also what we are learning through Einstein’s theory of relativity. There is no such thing as a solid object—it is all ultimately a relativity of perception. Where there is a relativity of things, there is no solidity of an object.

Yet, the senses tell us that there are things. There is a good meal, there is a beautiful object, there is a friend, there is a bank balance, there is a house, and there is this and that—so many things are witnessed to by the senses. Well, we are not going to be wise people through this knowledge. We will be taught a lesson one day, if we are going to

believe the senses when they tell us something, when it is not really there. Without saying exactly what *pratyahara* is, I am once again describing its preconditions. We would then understand what *pratyahara* entails and why it should be done. The world is deceiving us every moment, and it cannot do anything else. It cannot be our friend, because it cannot be stable. How could an unstable friend be called a true friend? Every moment he changes his mind—can we then truly call him a friend? Such is the network of objects in the world. We may say that something exists for a few seconds, for a few minutes, for a few days, sometimes for a few months and years it may be so—we may see it as a stable concrete object. Someone may ask then, “Why do you say that everything is transitory?” For this, the answer comes only from Whitehead—nobody else has given the answer to it. Why is it that we see a solid object, even if it is not there?

The reason is the comparative or relative similarity of a set of forces working within our bodies and without in the objects outside—with both forces moving in a single-pointed direction. For example, when two trains move parallel to one another with a similar speed, a passenger on one can see two trains at the same time—his own train and the one running parallel. It is similar to the way we can see an object. If, so to speak, the observer and the object are travelling at the same speed, the observer can come into contact with the object. But to continue the example, the moment one train increases its speed, or moves back or moves in a different direction, the passenger will not see the other train. Now, this happens in the world with objects. When somebody dies we call it bereavement. “Our friend has gone, and we have lost him.” These things we say when the other train moves in a different direction. The velocity of the other train in which we are not sitting, the direction of the train, and many other things of which the train is made can change. The changes can be so very instantaneous that we may not see the train at all. The discontinuity of the perception of an object by a subject can be traced back to various factors—one of them being the difference in the motion of the constitution of the object, the other thing being the complete dissolution of the constituents of the object.

In a cinema for example, we enjoy a picture only when the picture moves in a particular speed. If the speed is increased, we will not see clearly, and if we see a film where the speed is tremendously increased, we will not see any picture at all. If the speed is slowed down terribly, then also we will not know what is happening, and we will not be able to see the picture properly. We will get up and leave the theatre. The beauty comes in only when the speed is equivalent to that which is appreciable to our eyes—not more, not less. This is the case with everything in the world and in every type of satisfaction. If it is more, we do not like it, and if it is less, also it is not good.

The speed of things is something which the senses cannot see. Just as our eyes cannot see the speed of a film, the eyes cannot see the speed of the constituents of objects. This is because of the dissimilarity in the constitution of the senses and the way the objects are constituted at any given moment of time. The time factor also comes into play. At any given moment of time, when there is a conformity between the senses and their corresponding objects in the velocity of their constitution, there is perception of a so-called solidity, stability or reality of a thing. However, when the speed of things changes—it can take place without our knowledge for reasons we cannot know—then we cannot see the objects. There is a dissolution of a thing, called *pralaya* in Sanskrit. There can be a destruction of solar systems and stars in space and a colliding of objects

into disintegration. Many other unbelievable and undesirable occurrences can take place in the world, as they often do to our surprise.

### THE DAWNING OF DISPASSION

“What is happening in the world? We cannot believe it,” we say many times. Today a man is a high official; tomorrow he is a pauper. Today he is a pauper; tomorrow he is a high official. Today it is an ocean; tomorrow it is a desert. What is this wonder? We are surprised. “What is this world?” A time comes for us, for every one of us, when we exclaim with a sigh, “What sort of world is this? I cannot understand it.” Well, the world will tell us one day what it is, and this day has to come for everyone. Then it is that true *vairagya* (dispassion) comes. “Oh, I’m sorry. I never thought that the world is like this. I thought it to be something else.” Sometimes we tell people, “I never knew you were like this,” and now we will have to say to the whole world, “I never knew you were like this.” As I said, a day for this comes to everyone in his life. Everyone—you and I included. This time comes when we truly see the world as it is, and only then do we become a Buddha, a Christ, a Sankara or a sage—and not before. Otherwise, without this realisation, we are Mr. So-and-so, this and that, and so on. A time has to come for us to become a Buddha and see things as he saw; then we will also exclaim as the Buddha exclaimed, “Oh, fire is everywhere!” The eyes are on fire, said Buddha, the ears are on fire, the sensations are on fire, and the world is on fire, which means to say that they are all vehemently throbbing, pulsating and moving in a direction which they themselves cannot know. There is at the same time a mutual reactionary movement of one thing moving towards another. This is why many people say the world is an organism, where one thing moves into another thing like the cellular action of our own physical body.

Such is this world, says yoga psychology and philosophy. Do we understand where we stand, and do we know now what we are asking for? We are asking for death and destruction when we are asking for objects of sense. We are asking for our own doom when we say, “I want satisfaction through the senses.” Do we want our own doom? Withdraw the senses, says yoga. *Pratyahara* is a necessary condition of our knowing our true nature—knowing the true nature of things, knowing the Absolute, and knowing the *Atma*. It is the senses that drag the mind to the reactionary centres called objects, which entangle the mind and make the mind believe in their reality. The mind then goes for these objects to achieve a so-called satisfaction, then gets reactions of various unpleasant types, and then repents later on—not knowing what has happened.

We are likely to complain in regard to causes whose nature we cannot know. Something is happening, and we complain of something else. This is what the senses tell us, and the mind believes the senses. Hence, in *pratyahara* there is not merely an exercise of will, by the force of which we try to block the avenues of the senses, but also an intelligent blossoming of our understanding. The understanding helps us in knowing where to exercise the will and why it should be exercised. The will is nothing but the determination of the understanding, and when the understanding becomes firm, it takes the form of what we call volitional activity or will. When the understanding decides something, it is supposed to be the will working. It is understanding alone taking a decisive step when there is an action of what we call will or volition.

There is no such thing as will apart from understanding. “I am determined to do this,” may be the intent of the will, but this is nothing but an expression of a type of

understanding gained through either the sensory activities or by a natural process. In *pratyahara*, understanding and will come together. We cannot make a determination unless we understand a thing properly. We should not have misconceptions about things. A good student of yoga who is in this stage of *pratyahara* should be a good philosopher having insight into the structure of things in their essence, along with a deep conviction as to the veracity of this insight. After a very subtle and acute penetrating analysis into the nature of things through understanding, the understanding has to settle itself. "Well, now I have seen that this is so. I understand, and now the mind will not go to objects again."

Here comes what yoga calls *vairagya* or dispassion for things. "Ah yes, poison has been mixed in my meal today. I have seen it. I am not going to take my food." When we have seen poison being mixed in our meal, will we eat it? Only without knowing about the poison would we eat the food. The senses swallow things without knowing what is truly happening. A child may touch a cobra coiled up in the corner of the room, not knowing what it is. But knowingly will we touch a coiled-up serpent? The objects are comparable to the cobra, and when we apprehend their true nature, we will not go to them. "Oh yes, this is so, I am sorry, I will not go to them again."

*Vairagya* or dispassion automatically comes upon us when understanding dawns. Philosophical dispassion is a general spontaneous outcome of a philosophical wisdom that arises in us. We can only then call ourselves true philosophers, and not before. We do not become philosophers by reading a few books on metaphysics. A philosopher is one who has woken up to the wisdom of life and has understood the nature of things. Here one becomes a true philosopher, and then dispassion should arise automatically. *Vairagya* is not something that comes merely by being taught about it or by a mandate from someone else. It is an understanding of what the world is in itself, and the senses will not go to the objects after that. We need not tell them, "Don't go." We will not go and fall into a pit once we have clearly seen a pit in front of us; we will not deliberately drown in a river; we will not fall into burning flames, and we will not drink poison wantonly. So also the senses will not go to objects deliberately for their own destruction.

They do not understand, because they are stupid children. They are to be educated and taught the lessons of life by psychological means, which is a better and easier way than being taught by nature's whip or by way of repentance. When we do not honourably learn the lesson of life, we are taught by the kicks that nature gives and the blows that we receive from the world some time or the other. Yoga psychology does not want us to receive kicks from nature. It is better we do not go near a violent man, and it is wisdom for us to keep him at arm's length or to try to handle him with courage and strength. Either we do not go at all near him, or we know how to handle him.

Such should be our lives in the world. *Vairagya* in the beginning is therefore a tendency to not at all go near things which will harm us. The higher stage of *vairagya* is to handle them properly, even if they are boisterous and kicking. These are the two stages of dispassion. In the beginning one should not try to control things, because they will give us such a kick that we will not go near them again. The wisdom would be not to go near until we gain sufficient strength. Weak persons should not try to handle powerful forces. The earlier stage of *vairagya* should not be one of a headstrong attitude of living in the midst of things. "Oh, I am a mental *sannyasin*. I can live in New York." But we cannot

be a mental *sannyasin* so easily, though there can be a possibility later on. In the beginning we should be away from it. We should not jump into fire unless we are properly clothed in protection which can shield us against the burning flames.

I am again reminded of the famous saying of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa: "It is true that fire can burn up *ghee* (clarified butter). Any amount of *ghee* can be burnt by flames, but if the flame is only a small spark, and one pours tons of *ghee* over it, the fire cannot burn the *ghee*." It is our duty therefore to build up the spark into a huge conflagration, and then one can pour *ghee* into it, and the *ghee* will be easily consumed. The seeker must become a conflagration of power, and only then can he hope to try to swallow up the world of attractions. We are now only small beginners in the study of yoga, and we cannot say, "I can stand the world. I'm a mental *sannyasin*." We cannot be. We cannot encircle ourselves with tempting objects and then take liberties with objects of sense. It is very important to remember: never take liberties with the objects of sense, and never say, "I have a strong mind, I can withstand all these." Many people have said it, and then they found that they were in fact not wise.

### TESTS ONE MUST FACE

When we are not tested, we look like strong persons, but then when we are tested, we fail. Tests will come from within as well as without. One of the difficulties of yoga is the period of test through which we have to pass. Sometimes it is nature's test, and God too will test us. Various kinds of tribulations will come to us through which we have to pass. Yoga is a very hard job. In the Upanishad we are told it is like walking on the edge of a sharp-cutting razor, as it were. This is the yogic path. We cannot take it as a joy in the earlier stages, because it is a very tough thing. This dispassion which is necessary in the practice of yoga has to come to us, and we should not take it for granted. It has to be cultivated so carefully and so tenderly—like a harvest in a field, or like a plant in a garden, or like a mother cherishing a baby in her womb—then yoga becomes a powerful means of action in the world. In the beginning we have to tend it with caution. Our *vairagya* is a treasure, but it is not something that will just fall from above. It cannot come so easily, and no one should have the foolishness to imagine that one is detached from the world—no one can be. A day will surely come when we will discover that we were not wise in thinking that we were so detached.

We do not always find ourselves in trying circumstances, and as a result we imagine that everything is just fine. But again to quote a famous saying of Sri Ramakrishna, "We can know ourselves only when we are surrounded on all sides by tempting things, and we have every avenue to satisfy our desires." When there is hundred percent freedom given to us, and nobody can check us in any manner whatsoever, and all the things that are necessary for us are also available to us—what will we do at that time? That is our nature. When nobody will allow us to do anything, then we might say, "I have *vairagya* and therefore don't want anything," but only because we cannot get it. When we can get a thing, when it is within our arm's reach and when there is no obstacle whatsoever, what will we do? Will we say no? If we can say no at that time, then we can be said to have dispassion. When we cannot get a cup of milk on the top of Mount Everest, we may say, "I don't want milk," but only because there is no milk there. We can easily say then, "I don't want it." Many people also seem to be detached because they may have plenty of these things. When we have plenty of money, we can say, "I am detached from money,"

but when we do not have one cent in our hands we will know whether we are attached to it or not. If we have access to things and we choose to not pursue them, and in that condition our minds are quiet, calm and poised—then it is that we have dispassion.

This example touches on two other varieties of *vairagya*. There is the *vairagya* of not having a thing and the *vairagya* of not wanting a thing. Not having it is not *vairagya*, but not wanting it is in fact *vairagya*. We should not have a taste for the object—the taste should go. The taste can go only if we can think as Buddha thought, as Patanjali thought, and behold things as the sages of yore and the masters and adepts of yoga beheld the things in the world. If we can see things as they saw them, then we will not have a taste for things. *Vairagya* is not a physical detachment merely, but an absence of the taste for things on account of our understanding the nature of things. This *vairagya* is the precursor to *pratyahara*.

An important and often-used term in yoga is *vairagya*. Various stages of *vairagya* are described in the yoga analysis. At least four stages are mentioned—the first one being the searching attitude of the mind. “Where lies the mistake? Something is wrong somewhere. Where is this wrong thing located, what is wrong, and what is the cause of my suffering?” This attitude of inquiry is the first stage of *vairagya*. The second stage is the detection that the objects of sense are the sources of trouble. “Oh, these are troubling me and annoying me every day. I should be away from the objects of sense.” The third stage of *vairagya* is, “Oh, I am sorry, there is something more involved in my difficulties. Sensations seem to be misleading me, but the objects themselves are neither good nor bad. The sensations which are erroneously reaching me are the causes of my trouble, and this erroneousness is to be tackled. When I understand them properly I will not have difficulties from objects.” This is the third stage of *vairagya*. Then comes the fourth stage when we are able to decide, “These sensations are controlled by a way of thinking. The mind is to be finally rectified. If I can change the attitude of thought itself, then the sensations will not react upon me as they do.”

Recognising that the mind itself is the source of trouble is the final stage of *vairagya*. Instead of complaining about things, when true *vairagya* dawns we will start inquiring into our own nature. This is called lower *vairagya*, according to Patanjali. The psychological detachment of the mind from the objects of sense is the lower *vairagya*, but the higher form is the vision of God. There we see God’s presence in all things—divinity, resplendence and smiling faces in the whole field of the cosmos—with beauty, plenty, abundance and joy throbbing and pulsating everywhere. God is then speaking through every nook and corner, and when this grandeur is beheld, we will not be attached to anything in the world. This is the higher state of *vairagya*. With an understanding of these processes, *pratyahara* is to be entered into.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

### SEEING THROUGH THE DELUSION OF DESIRE

We have been studying the psychological character of the practice of *pratyahara*, and there are certain psychological reasons behind the need for the withdrawal of the senses. The satisfaction which the senses seem to bring us is not really satisfying. No one is satisfied through the senses. Every day we have the same hunger, every day we have the same type of needs. Every day we go on bathing and bathing, and still the body is dirty, as it can never become pure. Whatever is our need of today is also tomorrow's need, and endlessly the same needs continue. Not only this, desires get intensified when they are fulfilled. This is the speciality of the satisfaction of any sensory desire. The weaker desires become strong when they are pampered. As a consequence of their satisfaction, the senses crave for a repetition of the enjoyment. The cravings become so clamorous that, like a parent with many naughty children, life itself becomes difficult and one would not know in the end what to do with them.

The consequence of the satisfaction of desire is further desire—contrary to what we expect. What we expect out of the fulfilment of a desire is satisfaction, but what really happens is further desire for the same satisfaction to be repeated endlessly. Where is the satisfaction if the craving is never going to come to an end? Endless are the avenues of the expression of the senses. This is the reason why we cannot satisfy them permanently. What the senses seek is a permanency in their joy, but like the depths of the ocean which we can never reach, the senses cannot reach the depths of desire. They seem to have no end at all. We go on plumbing deeper and deeper into the desires through satisfaction, and we will not find any end for them.

We may be wondering why it is like that. Why should it be that the desires seem to be endless? They seem to be endless because ultimately they are rooted in an eternity of Reality. They spring from an eternity of background within us, and they crave for nothing but the Eternal. Due to their diversification in the world of space and time, they go astray like rivers that get lost in the desert. Yet, the origin of these desires as well as the destination of these desires is Eternity. The propelling force is ultimately Eternity, and that which summons them to satisfaction is also the Eternal. They seem to have an eternal impetus and an eternal craving. Though this is the original presupposition of the rise of all desire, the way in which they work is in actual fact temporal, contrary to the character of Eternity. There is therefore a conflict between this eternal urge within and the nature of the enjoyment through sense in the temporal world. The urge is infinitely pressed forward, an infinitude of urge is felt within for enjoyment, and no limit for satisfaction or joy could be present in this context of eternity.

Yet, ultimate fulfilment cannot be achieved. Final fulfilment is impossible to achieve because of the playing out of these desires in the context of the diversity of things in space and time. The infinitude of urge is because of the principle of *Atman*—the universal divine reality that is at the background of all things—that is pressing the urge forward. The propelling force is the universal within us, but when it is manifested through the mental and the sensory level, it becomes a channel which is scattered in different directions.



## THE ANXIETY ASSOCIATED WITH DESIRE

The temporal and the eternal come together in the fulfilment of a desire, and this is the reason that with every desire we have a conflict within us. The conflict between the eternal and the temporal goes on like this. The eternal never allows us to keep quiet, and we are always asking for more and more. On the other hand, the temporal does not satisfy us at all. We are in this *samsara*, as we call it, which is the world of unending desires which seek for eternal satisfaction. Yoga psychology contends that the consequence of the fulfilment of a sensory desire is dissatisfaction and not satisfaction.

Another reason mentioned is that we are always anxious when we are able to fulfil a desire. "Will I be able to fulfil this desire or not?" is a question that we raise even prior to our attempt to satisfy it. "Can I get this? How can I get it?" is the idea harassing us always. We may not get sleep for many days until the desire is about to be fulfilled. Anxiety precedes satisfaction, but then anxiety continues with satisfaction. "Oh, how long will this continue? I must not be robbed of this satisfaction!" When the satisfaction goes, we know where we are. "Oh, it has gone. I am dead," and the heart sinks.

Where do we stand then? In the beginning we were unhappy, in the middle we are unhappy, and in the end also we are unhappy. This is what desires do to us. The anxiety attending upon desire is another reason for our withdrawal of the senses in yoga. The third reason mentioned is the impression created by the desires—*samskaras* as they are called. *Vasanas* is another word used in a similar way. Every desire when it is fulfilled creates an impression in the mind, and impressions are like a groove formed on a phonograph record. We know when a groove is formed, it is capable of reproducing the very same impulse for satisfaction again and again. With a record album we can go on replaying the song again and again once it has been recorded in the studio.

The *samskaras* are grooves formed in the mind by the experience of a sensory satisfaction. These grooves are permanently there, and they go on replaying the 'tune' again and again, so that we will never forget the memory of our enjoyment. These memories persist through life—even through many incarnations. Unfulfilled desires buried inside us in the form of impressions or grooves formed in the mind are the reason for rebirth. They do not enhance our well-being—quite the contrary. The repetition of enjoyment is insisted upon, not merely by the conscious memories that we retain in our waking lives, but also by the unconscious impulses that may be within us on account of grooves formed without our knowledge.

Due to the undesirable consequences of desire, due to the anxiety that is attending upon every satisfaction, due to the *samskaras* or impressions formed out of desire, and finally due to the very structure of the *rajasic* and *tamasic* properties of *prakriti*, we have difficulties with these things. The enjoyment of sense is a temporary manifestation of what we call the *sattva guna* of *prakriti*. Where there is *sattva* there is satisfaction, where there is *rajas* there is distraction, and where there is *tamas* there is torpidity. Whenever we are happy, exhilarated, refreshed or roused into a mood of joy, a temporary manifestation of *sattva* is there in our minds. By *sattva* we mean a tranquil condition of the mind where the desires cease. The desires are like winds that blow over the surface of the lake of the mind, and when these winds blow vehemently, the waters are scattered hither and thither. When this happens, the lake of the mind is disturbed and we are disturbed, because we are the mind for all practical purposes.

When the mind is disturbed, we are disturbed. When we say, “I am not well, mentally,” the mind is oscillating due to the winds of distraction. Desire is *rajas*; satisfaction is *sattva*. What we seek is the cessation of *rajas* by the satisfaction of desire. That is why we seek satisfaction. *Sattva* is to predominate rather than *rajas* and *tamas*, and so it is that the moment we wake up from sleep—which is the condition of *tamas*—we are after something. The moment we wake up from sleep, we go running about for the satisfaction of a desire, which means to say that we do not really want to be in a state of *tamas* or *rajas*.

That is why we wake up from sleep and then go on running here and there to bring about a cessation of desire. We wake up from sleep because *tamas* cannot be our real nature, and we want *sattva*—not *tamas* or *rajas*. But how long can we have this *sattva* through an artificial means? The means adopted by the senses in acquiring this satisfaction by rousing this *sattva* within is very artificial. It is a makeshift contrivance and only very temporary. When a desire is about to be fulfilled, this is what happens. We may be wondering what is happening. “Why am I happy when I hug my object of desire—what is happening to me?” What is happening, if we clearly think about it, is that our minds are after an object. This means to say the mind has run after that object, which again means that we are not in ourselves. We are away from ourselves because of the desires in our minds. We have studied in our psychological analysis earlier that we are unhappy whenever we are out of tune with ourselves. In every condition of desire, we are out of tune with ourselves. We are in tune with an object, but out of tune with ourselves. In our apparent attunement with an object outside and in every form of the expression of desire, we are away from ourselves. Hence, we are agitated. Whenever there is a desire we are agitated, and the reason is that we are not in our centre. We are to put it properly ‘ex-centric’, and not ‘in-centric’. The mind is out from its centre and tethered to an object outside. That is why when a desire is working, we are terribly upset in our minds.

When the object of our desire comes closer to us, the distance between us and the object which is our desire gets shortened. When an object of desire comes nearer to us, we feel greater and greater happiness. If it is one mile away, it is something, but if it is half a mile away it is better. “Oh, it’s coming—wonderful!” When we see it, we cannot even contain ourselves. We run and embrace it and bring it near to us. When it is very near, the psychological distance between us and the object is shortened, because we are nearer to ourselves. We have been very far from ourselves on account of the moving of our minds towards the object. Now the object has come near, so the chain has got shortened, and we are nearer to ourselves.

Remember what is happening to us. When we are nearer to ourselves, the *rajasic* condition of the mind begins to cease. We are not in a state of *tamas* because we are awake, and while we are temporarily in a state of *rajas*, this unwholesome state is becoming less and less intense on account of the proximity of the object to ourselves. This is the explanation for why we feel happy when an object of desire comes near us. It is not because the object has come near, but because the psychological distance between us and the object has become less, which in consequence makes us become nearer and nearer to ourselves. This is the psychological truth of desire.

When the object is almost one with us, when we have the feeling that it has become a

part of us, when it is no more separate from us and is identical with us, the *rajas* has stopped completely. The mind has no work to do at that time. Why should it work—it has obtained its desire. The *rajas* has ceased; the psychological distance between us and the object has ceased. The mind has come back to its source, we are in ourselves, and we are absolutely in tune with ourselves. Immediately there is a rousing of joy from within. The joy has come not because of the object coming nearer to us or its being away—this has nothing to do with the joy. We have been under a delusion. The object has only acted as an instrument in ceasing our desire. The object has nothing to do with our happiness.

What has happened is that our *rajasic* psychological activity has ceased, and in the satisfaction of a desire we are mentally at one with ourselves—though not spiritually at one. The mind has come back to its source, the wind has stopped blowing, the waters of the lake are calm, the inner reality is reflected wholly, and then it is that we are in *sattva*. The reality which is universal is wholly reflected—though only for the flash of a second—in the calm waters of the lake of our mind, which is now undisturbed on account of the cessation of the wind of desire. Then we say, “Wonderful! How joyful and happy I am!” We are in ecstasy, because we are temporarily at one with the universal within.

But we cannot know what is really happening, because we are so deluded. We think the object contains the joy, though the desire has brought us nothing except by indirectly acting as an agent in bringing about a cessation of the *rajasic* activity of our minds. Due to our non-discriminating attitude and lack of understanding as to what is happening, we falsely imagine that the object is the source of joy. Again and again we long for that object, and we cannot bear separation from it. We weep when it is away, and we feel miserable when it is destroyed. All this is because the feeling of the mind is erroneous in its imagination that its joy is contained wholly in the object. Our sensory satisfaction is purely psychological and has no basis in fact. There is a kind of oscillation of the mind, working once this way and once that way, on account of the working of the *gunas* of *prakriti* in this mysterious manner—the rotation of the wheel of *prakriti*—*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. Again we must realise the need for the withdrawal of the senses. For all these reasons, *pratyahara* is called for, and thus *pratyahara* is absolutely necessary. The withdrawal of the senses is an absolute precondition of our attunement with the Universal—which is satisfaction really, which is bliss and which is Reality.

### **THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE SENSES**

All this is a difficult job. We have done some analysis and understood some truth about what is happening, but to come to grips with the mind, to handle the situation with iron tenacity, and to deliberately bring the senses back from their meandering to their own source is a difficult task indeed. The senses play tricks of various kinds, they will not easily be subjugated, and they will not yield to our analysis so easily. It may temporarily look like a success, but again the old *samskaras* will come to the surface and act upon the mind so violently that we will again go for the objects, in spite of our knowing that the objects do not bring satisfaction.

The senses have various methods of avoiding being controlled. These are what we call the defense mechanisms in psychoanalytic psychology. Defense mechanisms of the mind will not allow subjugation so easily. If we apply force, the senses will revolt. If we teach them, they will not understand, and if we tell them, “It is for your own good,” they

will say, “No!” These are the ways in which the senses will react when we speak to them. It is a very hard job, as I have said already. *Pratyahara* is a very difficult step that we are taking. While we may achieve some sort of success in *asanas* and *pranayama*, when we come to *pratyahara* we are at sea, as it were. Here it is that Guru’s grace helps—the proximity of a master, intense study and physical isolation from objects of sense. All these are aids in the practice of *pratyahara*.

When force is applied on the senses through will power for the sake of controlling them, they hibernate. We know what hibernation is. It is like a frog getting under the rocks in winter and never being visible. At this point there seem to be no senses at all, and it looks as if everything were all right. They will cease working when we apply force, but how long can we apply force? We know that no force can be applied perpetually in any field of life. It is a temporary action to which we take resort. We cannot go on pressing the senses, just as we cannot go on pressing anything in this world forever. When our pressure is released, immediately they will react against us, retaliate and take vengeance. They will come upon us with such vehemence that we will be taken unawares, and we will be in a worse condition than we were earlier. Earlier they were calm and quiet, working according to their own whim and fancy. Now they are angry. “You tried to suppress us. You wanted to destroy us. Now we will teach you a lesson.”

We will be in an awful situation when they take action against us in a vehement manner and take us unawares. This is the difficulty—we will be taken unawares. They will not give us notice: “Tomorrow we are going to attack you.” It is rather an attack without forewarning. Suddenly we will find ourselves in a difficult situation, and generally under pressure there will be a yielding to their force. In most cases, ninety-nine percent of the cases we may say, the person yields. The person may become a nervous wreck when the senses take action through retaliation and vengeance. The pressure that was exerted upon them will now rebound upon the person.

Starving the senses is no means of controlling them. It is said that starved snakes are more poisonous than well-fed ones. If they bite, they will go on biting. The senses are like cobras. When they are starved, they become terrible. While a kind of check on the senses is necessary and desirable, starving them to the extreme is very harmful. We will not be benefited by starving the senses. They will lie dormant. In Patanjali’s language, the senses have at least four different ways of working. While there may be many subdivisions, broadly speaking we may say that the senses have four ways of taking action. One way is sleeping or keeping quiet—like enemies who are not presently doing anything. When the enemy does not do anything, it does not mean that we are safe. Just because the enemies are not taking any action, saying nothing and doing nothing, we cannot be inattentive. I am reminded of a quote from a military commander. When his soldiers said, “After all, God will help us,” his answer to them was, “Trust in God, but keep the powder dry.” Very interesting! It’s exactly what we have to do in yoga also—trust in God, but keep the powder dry. Otherwise, we will be under a misapprehension that the enemy is sleeping and apparently withdrawn. It is not so.

In warfare there is a particular tactic called guerrilla warfare which means being suddenly jumped upon in an ambush. We will be going along in a carefree manner without any kind of anxiety in our minds, and suddenly we will find something jumping on us. This is guerrilla war, and the senses will do that. Patanjali knows all this. He has

put it in a very beautiful style in his own *Sutras*. The sleeping condition of the desire is not a happy condition for us. Many people say, “We have no desires. All the children are fixed, the pension is committed.” What, no desires? If the pension is committed and the children are fixed, it doesn’t mean that we are all right. We will be worrying ourselves inside, because the pension may fail and the children may not want us in the house. They will say, “You get away!”

The children asking the father to go away reminds me of a story, and I’ll tell this story just to divert our attention for a bit. It seems that when God created the world, He told man, “My dear friend, your life will be for forty years.” Man said, “My Lord, forty is too little. How can I enjoy life? So many things are there in this beautiful creation. Forty is too small a number.” All right. God called a monkey and said to him, “My dear friend, your life shall be forty years.” The monkey replied, “Oh, God, that is too much. Forty years’ load I cannot bear. Please make it twenty. We have to run about here and there fending for ourselves in the forests. Please reduce it to twenty.” God called the dog. “My dear friend, forty years shall be your age.” The dog said, “No, no, twenty will do. We cannot run about for our food here and there. Nobody wants us. They beat us wherever we go. We will be satisfied with twenty years.” Then He called the bull. God said, “Bull, your age shall be forty years,” but the bull also said, “No, no, no. We have to plough the fields and carry vehicles and all that. Twenty will suit us.” Man alone said, “It is too little, I cannot enjoy life in forty years.” God said to man, “All right. We take twenty of the bull’s years, twenty of the monkey’s, and twenty of the dog’s. So, sixty plus forty makes a hundred—your own forty which I gave to you, and twenty of each of these three animals which they do not want.” So, man was given a hundred years of life, whereas these animals only lived for twenty years.

Some people say that what man does is this: for forty years he is very happy, jumping here and there with jubilation, because it is God’s given age. The next twenty years he has to work like a bull as the head of the family, doing this and that. All this twenty years of working is because of the bull’s years which he has borrowed. Afterwards he will be taken towards the veranda of the house. The children will say, “We have got no place for you—go sit on the veranda.” He will be like a dog, because he has to pass the twenty years he has borrowed from the dog, so he will sit outside and watch the house because the children have married and do not want the old man inside the house. Finally the monkey’s twenty years come. He has to go away somewhere. He will not even be allowed inside the house. They will tell him, “Go be a *vanaprasta sannyasin* (in retirement and seclusion). Go to some *ashram*. You are not allowed even on the veranda, because you are a burden even on the veranda. Go to some *ashram*.” Poor man, he has to live like a monkey because he has to spend the monkey’s twenty years. This is what man finds by disregarding the advice of God of a full life of forty years. God said the other sixty would have to be spent like the animals. When we are not wanted, we may be thrown out. This is a humorous story, full of wisdom, which describes our predicament in this world.

The mind of man is the difficulty in all this, and the mind finds it hard to reconcile itself with Reality. The desires, which one attempts to fulfil in the prime of youth and in the hot blood of the strength of the body, refuse to finally be satisfied. There is a famous saying of a great sage and poet who said, “We grow old, but our desires don’t grow old.” The desires seem to be growing younger in our old age, and we do not have sufficient strength to fulfil these desires. The limbs become worn out and weak, and even if we

have a desire, we cannot fulfil it. Society does not want us, and we are turned away. We are not a productive person, we are a burden and we have no strength to stand on our own legs. This is the difficulty in old age, as an old person gradually becomes as helpless as a baby. Yet, desires do not leave the person. The body may be cast off, but the desires are not cast off. This is the cause of rebirth. Our circumstances with the desires are therefore very complicated and difficult to manage. For all these reasons, the senses have to be controlled when we are strong and not merely when we become old.

#### **THE FOUR TYPES OF DESIRES**

I mentioned this as a kind of digression in the context of the explanation of the various tactics which desires employ to avoid control. The four tactics mentioned in Patanjali's *Sutras* are 1) the sleepiness of desires, 2) the attenuated condition of desires, 3) the interrupted condition of desires, and 4) the expressed condition of desires. The sleeping condition is where we do not know that they exist at all. Here we have to be very cautious, because they are trying to germinate into action when the atmosphere becomes suitable—like the seed buried under the earth. The seed will not germinate at all until it rains and until the temperature becomes suitable. The seed of desire will be there, and when the suitable atmosphere is provided, it will slowly manifest itself.

The desires are not necessarily in the conscious mind. We will not know that there is a desire, and that is why we make the mistake of declaring, "We have no desires." We should not make such statements. It is difficult to know if we have a desire or not, because desires are in three layers: conscious, subconscious and unconscious. We can know only the conscious desires. We cannot know the other ones so easily as they are buried, and they come out only when there is no pressure from the conscious mind. When there is pressure of any kind, they won't come out, and they remain hidden below like snakes in a snake charmer's basket. When we lift the lid, slowly the snake raises its hood. Otherwise it stays hidden because of the pressure of the lid of the snake charmer's basket.

We are like snake charmers, the desires are like snakes, and we press them down with the force of social tension and moral rules. But when we lift the lid and they are released, we find Pandora's box being opened, and to our horror we find so many things that would surprise us. The desires therefore are not merely conscious; they can be subconscious and unconscious. Sometimes they are released in the dream state. Many times certain things come out in our dreams, and we can see what we are. There are other things which we cannot know at all. They are in the unconscious level; therefore it is useless to say, "I have no desires." We will know the falsity of this claim when we are in a deep state of meditation or when we are in a state of frustration, and we will know then that we have desires. When we try desperately to get out of a situation on account of difficulties and pressures from all sides, desires will show their nature. In deep meditation—not shallow, but very deep—we will know what desires we have. Especially when it is protracted, profound meditation, which is an activity of the mind to disintegrate the network of desires, then it is that the desires will know that they are being interfered with, and they will come out.

We are now going to investigate the stages of meditation, and we have to know what is going to happen to our minds and our desires. They cannot be kept there buried—they must be disintegrated. They must be cast aside by way of sublimation. This is what

happens to the desires in meditation. The desires refuse to yield to these techniques of meditation, and they prevent the action of meditation itself by remaining dormant or by interrupting the meditational process. When we have affection for an object but we cannot get that object, we may develop a kind of dislike for the object. A father may get angry with the son whom he loves most, but it is a temporary anger which is nothing but an expression of his love for him. He may strike his son, he may rebuke him, and he may say, "You get out of here!" But all these are expressions of the love that he has for his son.

This is an interrupted condition of desire. It appears to be like a quarrel between ourselves and the object of our desire. These quarrels take place many times in families, but they are not really quarrelling. They come back together again, like water that has apparently been separated by an obstacle. The interrupted condition of desire is the apparent expression of dislike for an object of desire, but it is apparent, not real. Our expression of anger is not real anger. It is an outward form, taken by our love for the thing.

When it is interrupted thus, it should not be mistaken for a cessation of the desire. There are some fathers who get angry with their sons. The son will be sent away, but then he will be called back. He will come back and stay in the house again. The father's anger was not however an expression of *vairagya* or dispassion. It was a frustration of his wish that made him express himself in that manner. When I thwart your wish, you may dislike me, and it is a thwarted wish that is behind this dislike. Anger and desire are reverse sides of the same coin. When they are not in a position to be expressed, they remain in a dormant condition for a long time. But given the opportunity, the desires will express themselves. When they cannot express themselves in a continuous fashion, they interrupt their working by intermittent likes and dislikes expressed in this manner. When we press the desires very hard, they may look as if their intensity is being lessened. In intense *sadhana*, the desires become thin like a thread that is about to break. But they can swell into overblown abundance when they are fed with sense food. The attenuated condition is again not to be mistaken for a real removal of the desires.

### **THINNING OUT DESIRES**

The three states of desire—dormancy, interruptedness and attenuation—are not really an indication of the destruction of the desires. They represent rather a tendency to hibernate, which is only a preparation for the full expression later of an intensified activity. The fullness of the expression of desire is to be prevented, because when they express themselves fully, we cannot control them. We can control a forest fire when it is in an incipient state, but when it has grown and become extreme and is burning up things everywhere, we cannot extinguish it with a bucket of water. Before it becomes a violent, all-consuming conflagration like a forest fire, it would be wise on our part to see that the desires are thinned out. By a repeated practice of yoga they are thinned out, and they are not allowed to later get fattened again. All these techniques are employed in *pratyahara*. In the Bhagavadgita we have a simple verse which states, in so many words, that when the mind moves towards the objects of sense, as many times as it tries to go outwardly towards the object of sense, so many times we must bring it back, as we control a restive horse with reins. Every time we have to call it back. It may go a hundred times, but a hundred times we have to bring it back, without impatience of any kind.

We should not get angry with our senses—we must understand them. They will again and again slip out of our hands, and as many times as they slip out, so many times must we go and catch them and bring them back. In this way, the mind may get accustomed to a new way of thinking. The old way of thinking will cease gradually after years of practice. We do not know when we will finally reach perfection. There should be no anxiety whatsoever about this. Do not be anxious. “Three years, four years, five years of meditation—nothing has it brought me. Is it going to yield any fruit after further meditation?” This may be our anxiety, but patience is one of the watchwords of yoga.

I will tell another story that may be helpful. We have in our Indian Puranic stories a great sage called Narada, who travelled to all the heavens. He went to Vaikuntha and met Lord Vishnu; he went to Kailas and met Lord Siva; he went to Satya Loka and met Lord Brahma—he went to all the gods. Narada eventually passed by a farmer and a gardener on one of his journeys somewhere. First the farmer asked Maharishi Narada, “Sir, where are you going?” Narada replied, “I’m going to Vaikuntha to Lord Vishnu.” The farmer responded, “Will you ask Him, when I will get *mukti* (liberation)” “Yes,” Narada said, “I will ask Him.” Then Narada met the gardener. The gardener made the same request: “Could you please be so kind as to ask the Lord when I will get *mukti*?” Narada answered that he would. So Narada went on to meet Lord Vishnu.

When Narada returned from Vaikuntha, the farmer queried him, “Did you ask for me?” “Yes, I did. The Lord said that you will have to wait another fifteen years for liberation.” “What,” the farmer said, “another fifteen years? So many years of *japa* and meditation I have done. Another fifteen years, and this is all that I have got!” Very wearily he went back home. Then Narada met the gardener, and the gardener asked, “Did you ask the Lord?” “Yes, I did.” “What did He say?” Narada replied, “The Lord said that as many thousand years as there are leaves on this tree, so many years you must live in this world before attaining *mukti*.” The gardener rejoiced, “So, after all, I am fit! Oh, wonderful! This means I will be liberated.” He was so ecstatic and the joy of God-consciousness possessed him in such intensity, that they say his sins were destroyed in a moment. He attained *mukti* then and there, and not after many thousands of years.

This was an analogy recounted by Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa in his talks to teach a lesson to the *sadhakas* who came to him. We should not say, “Oh, no, fifteen more years!” That is not to be our attitude. Our attitude should be that of that gardener who was so happy. “After all, I am fit!” That was enough for him. “I am a chosen one; I am not one who is damned. After so many of thousands of years, at least I am to attain *mukti*.” That was enough reward for him, and he couldn’t contain himself. His joy in God was of such an intensity that he was ready for *mukti* then and there. He did not need to pass through the cycle of so many thousands of years. But the farmer who could not bear even fifteen years condemned himself to live a life of drudgery and burdens. The *sadhaka* therefore should not be of a complaining nature as regards the fruits of yoga. Remember the great dictum of the Bhagavadgita: “Our duty is to act and not to ask.” Don’t say, “What has it brought me finally?” This is not our function. To be honest, what have we really done that deserves merit? This is the question we have to ask ourselves. Whatever comes out of this endeavour will come of its own accord. Why should we worry about it?

What will come, we know from the nature of the seed. What type of fruit the plant will



yield will be known from the seed that we are sowing. When we sow rice, we know what is going to come out. Why do we ask the question? Our work is to sow the seed, to plough the field, to water the field, to remove the weeds, to protect it from pests, and then we will know what fruit it will yield. But don't ask merely a silly question like, "What will it bring me? What will I get?" like a businessman asking what profit will come. Yoga is not a business, nor is it an economic transaction. It is a vital transaction, if at all it is one. It is vitality, it is a relationship with God, and we are asking nevertheless, "What will it bring me?" It is a silly question, indeed. The patience that the student of yoga should exercise has to be immense. Unending should be our patience in yoga. Don't ask, "How long will I have to bother?" There is no limit for it—we have to just go on bothering. Read the lives of saints—Saint Francis of Assisi, Saint Gauranga Mahaprabhu, Ramakrishna Paramahansa and many other saints—you will know what patience is, and what it pays and how it pays.

Patience itself is a part of the strength that we acquire in yoga. In the control of the senses we must be immensely patient like the *yogin* of Tibet, Milarepa, whose life we may read. How patient he was to even merely get an initiation, and how difficult it all was for him. The master would not even initiate him. So many difficulties we will have to pass through. These are difficulties of an internal type and an external type—physical, vital, psychological, social, political and many other things which will harass us from all sides. All these we have to bear if we want God. The abundance of God-realisation is the result of practice. Hence, the work of sense control has to be attempted in order to further the practice of yoga.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

### THE REMOVAL OF SORROW

As long as we live, externals will always continue to disturb us, whatever be our attempt at understanding them. As long as the breath is in the body, the difficulties will be there with us. It may be that we will leave the difficulties only when we leave this world. But we have to live in the world, and we cannot get out of it. There is no point in crying while we live when it's possible to smile instead. This is an art, as I should call it, because it cannot be called by any other name. It is the art of living with a smile rather than with weeping, because live we must and there is no other go. There is no point in weeping while living. We cannot find any meaning in a life of crying. One who sobs is the loser—not others who apparently cause the sobbing—so there is no advantage in complaining or crying. We gain nothing by that, but only make ourselves more miserable. Yoga has provided us with a means of approaching this question. This should be our point of meditation here. How can we obviate the harassment from externals? There is no apparent way, though there is one way which is a great secret of the path of yoga. It involves the placement of oneself in the location of the cause of the harassment, which produces a twofold effect. I am not proposing to describe this now, but only to say how to contemplate these circumstances.

The placement of our own personality in the location of the cause of the troubles will create an emotional calmness, because the external cause, instead of being a cause set against us, becomes a part of what we are. We cannot be harassed by our own self, we know very well. The cause, when it becomes identical with us, ceases to be a cause. Then the cause and the effect get identified. *The source of the problem is us.* We have to change our personality from the position of the effect to the position of the cause. To say briefly what effects will follow from this is that our emotions get calmed down, because the cause has become identical with the effect. The second effect that will follow is the cessation of the trouble. The trouble will not be there anymore. It will vanish because of the influence of our thought on the cause of the troubles. This can be extended to centres which presently do not cause trouble, so that they may not in the future become sources of trouble. In medical parlance we have healers and also what are known as prophylactic agents which prevent the onset of a disease. Being healed of a disease is one thing, but to prevent its coming to begin with is another thing altogether.

The placement of ourselves in the locality of the cause of trouble is like healing the wound or the illness. The simultaneous placement of ourselves in the cause of experiences which may be set against us would be like a prophylactic agent, so that the world will not be set against us at all. The world will be harmoniously attuned to our nature when we reach a state of spiritual awareness. This is called Virat in the Upanishadic language. In the beginning it is a psychological concentration of mind, a kind of telepathic effort that we are exerting on the centres of experience which impinge upon us externally. When it is deepened to a spiritual profundity, it becomes the Cosmic Being. This will lead us to God-realisation itself.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

### THE LEAP INTO THE UNKNOWN

With concentration and meditation, the flower of yoga begins to blossom. Just as in running a race, in yoga the very first step that we take before we start involves a concentration of our whole being. When we take part in a race, the very first intent is to become a concentrated whole. It is not merely the feet that run, as we know how much concentration is involved in even the very first step. What an amount of collaboration of the different parts of our system takes place in this enterprise. Hence, when the mind collects itself in concentration, it withdraws into itself the source of all energy from every part of the body, just as butter is drawn from every part of milk when it is churned. In the same way, after the milk has been converted into butter and then is eaten, the concentrated energy from the food is drawn up into every part of the body. It is also like a general recruitment that is ordered when an enemy attacks, and everyone is ready to take part in doing as much service to the nation as possible. Every part of the system is ready to take up its work. There is no other work for the system than contributing its might to the concentration needed to defeat the enemy. In fact, concentration is not merely an act of the mind—it is an act of the whole body, the whole vital force and the entire set of psychological organs. Nothing remains outside us there. Everything that we are is focused in concentration.

Hence, it is the most difficult step that the *yogin* takes—a most hazardous step, as it is a final jump into the unknown. It is difficult to understand merely through theoretical language what exactly concentration of the mind means in yoga. It is not just a closing of the eyes and thinking of a particular object. It is a throbbing of every cell of our personality in tune with the form of the object that we have chosen to concentrate on. When we play a musical instrument, every string begins to vibrate in unison with every other string, so that every part joins together to bring about a melody rather than a jumble of many separate bits. The many parts which constitute the sound process of the musical instrument join, blend and commune with one another so harmoniously that we have a continuous flow of music.

So is meditation. It is music, as it were, that our whole system begins to participate in—a song that the whole personality sings, a celestial music that emanates from our whole body. The whole life of yoga becomes a song or a melody, and all the jarring noises of the life of an individual commingle to form a harmony of body, mind and soul. Glorious is yoga when it comes to concentration and meditation. Nature begins to smile on our life, and we begin to shake hands with every bit of creation, as it were, when we enter this step in yoga.

It is not merely the whole energy of the system that is drawn in concentration of mind—something more than this takes place. We are in empathy with the whole of creation, and the world begins to support us. In *pratyahara* and the other lower stages, nature might apparently be in opposition to us. There was a lot of struggle up to the stage of *pratyahara*, and the senses were rebelling against the attempt to withdraw them from the objects of the world. There were a lot of difficulties. We had to fall and get up many times, and we did not know exactly where to stand. It is in the stage of *pratyahara* that

people either rise or fall. But when we take another further step, we are at the point of entering the edge of a great ocean.

It is as if we are in the delta of a powerful river where its force is concentrated. All the waters of the river render themselves forth at the delta, but while with most rivers the waters get dissipated into many channels in the delta, in yoga the waters are concentrated like the great Amazon River. The Amazon is a river in South America which is so forceful that it pushes the salt water of the ocean several miles away from the delta, and the seawater becomes sweet for some distance. In other rivers the water becomes immediately salty as the water moves into the ocean. Such is the force of a mighty river that rushes into the ocean concentratedly without getting channelised into variegated parts, as would occur with most rivers.

The concentrated energy of the mind is therefore not merely a thought functioning, as our mind might function in thinking of an object such as a mountain, a cow or some other created thing. The preparation in the concentration of the mind is such that we have summoned the forces of the whole body. Imagine that every member of the family is at one with us, every citizen of the government is at one with the government, and every man in the world is at one in his appreciation of human values. As it is done in the social field when a collective mustering of social forces is called forth for any purpose, so in yoga the forces of the body, the forces of the vital system and the forces of the psychological organs are set in tune with the forces of the world. The world no more stands in opposition to us. The world is not an enemy of the *yogin*. There might have been a state of tension in the earlier stages, but the tension was not caused by anything that was really wrong with the world. The tension came rather from an inability of the mind to set itself in tune with the world. It is difficult to make two clocks tick together. They always make two kinds of ticks, but in the practice of yoga the two clocks of the internal system and the outer world begin to tick very harmoniously. Then we will not hear two sounds, but one sound will be heard as if one clock were ticking, though there are two.

#### **AT ONE WITH THE FORCES OF THE WORLD**

Here it is that we are in tune with the world. Here it is that our bodily and vital forces get enhanced by the powers of the world from outside. We become weak on account of our estrangement from things. The world seems to be incapable of contributing anything to us—rather it seems to be unprepared to help us in any manner whatsoever, on account of our not being in unison with it. In this scenario, if we turn our faces to the East, the world is turning its face to the West. This is what happens generally in our day-to-day lives, so that the world never helps us, and then we complain that the world is bad. Well, it is advantageous for us to turn our faces in the same direction as the world's face, and then we see as the world sees, we think as the world thinks, and we move with the same speed that the world moves. When we are the world, then the forces of the world will be at one with our forces within.

In the state of concentration of the mind, we know where we stand and who thinks and who concentrates. It is not one human being, one man or one person sitting in a corner and thinking something. We know the difference between thinking and concentration in yoga. To think is to project our mind towards an external object and artificially associate the form of the object with the activity of the mind, although the object never really gets

associated with the mind. To think an object does not mean that the object has been fully absorbed into the mind. In the same way, the light of the sun shines upon an object, but the light does not necessarily become one with the object.

Exactly as the sunlight illumines an object without entering into the object, but merely pervades it from outside, so do our minds merely pervade an object of cognition or perception but never enter into it. Inasmuch as our minds never enter into the being of an object, we have no control over any object in this world, and we are not masters of anything. We always stand outside things, and on account of the world being outside us, we are not friendly with things. But in yogic concentration it is not so. What we are trying to do is not merely to think an object as in ordinary sensation or perception, but to commingle our thought with the forces of the object. The way in which the constituents of the object rotate or revolve should be in unison, at least to an appreciable extent, with the way in which the mind thinks. There is no use in two persons thinking in two different directions without any relation with one another—then there would be no agreement of thought. If I think something and you think another thing and we are along two different lines altogether, we will never agree with each other. If this is the case with the constitution of an object and the way in which we think, there would be no relationship between ourselves and the object we are thinking. This is what usually happens in thoughts of objects, so that we may be contemplating things but we may have no sway over the things.

What is the use of thinking we can control objects, when we cannot achieve it? We cannot achieve it, because we have absolutely no power over the objects. This is again because we are not in tune with them. The saying goes, “Birds of a feather flock together.” Likewise, the object and the mind should be “birds of the same feather”, then they will flock together—otherwise they will fly in different directions. When this flying in different directions occurs, then it is that we lose things, and we seem to never have anything that we need or want. Our wants remain unfulfilled, we are frustrated, and we start weeping that we cannot get what we desire. We cannot get these things because our minds are not in tune with the objects. To set the mind in tune with the nature of the object is the attempt at yogic concentration. Thus, the concentration of the mind in yoga is a very difficult step. How this mind is to be attuned to the object was the purpose of the detailed psychological and philosophical analysis conducted in the earlier stages. One might wonder why we have been taken through these meandering paths of psychological and philosophical analysis for the sake of concentration of mind. It is because we cannot concentrate the mind on the object unless we know where we stand in relation to the object. Why do we concentrate? What do we mean by concentration? This will be a question which we cannot easily answer.

The answer can be given only if we know our constitution, the constitution of the object, and the relation that exists between us and the things. For this purpose we studied the psychology of perception and the philosophical foundation on which the yogic practice is based. All the time we have been busy with understanding rather than the actual doing of the thing, because the doing is a simple effort, while the understanding is a more difficult thing. When the relation between us and the object is very clear to our understanding, then it is easy to concentrate the mind on the object. As I said, when yoga reaches this stage of concentration, it blossoms. We know what it means when a flower blossoms. It is a movement of nature. The seed was the origin of the flower, and

we know what time it has taken for the seed to reach the stage of blossoming. This blossoming has to yield a fruit—which is the spiritual experience or realisation. Much preparation is involved in bringing the seed to the stage where it blossoms into the flower. It has to be tended with great affection during the stages it will pass through, and it has to be tended for a protracted period in a proper atmosphere. Then it opens up its inner secret in the form of the flower.

The mind, when it concentrates on a chosen object in yoga, has opened itself up thoroughly and wholly. The inner resources of the mind come up for action in concentration. Up to this time, the mind was not in a state of action—it was merely imagining. In perceptual activity the mind is only imagining without actually coming into contact with things. Our thought of an object remains merely a dissociated activity of the mind, as it is not fully associated with the object. While in sensational perception the mind is dissociated from the object, in the concentration of yoga it is fully associated. It is like two people who walk together as friends at the same speed and reach the same destination at the same time. The world and the mind must go together. When the world and the mind think alike and work together in the same state and towards the same destination, the mind is ready for meditation. Here it is that the mind begins to overcome the barriers of personality-consciousness. The awareness of personality—the body-consciousness as we call it—is the movement of the mind within the location of the body and the inability of the mind to get out of the limitation imposed by the bodily encasement. It is not merely mind in this ordinary psychological sense that concentrates.

Yoga, especially the yoga of Patanjali, uses a word called *chitta*. It is the *chitta* that concentrates. It is the *antahkarana* (fourfold internal instrument of mind, intellect, ego and subconscious mind) that practises concentration. In Western psychological language mind generally means one function of the internal organ. Here, in the process of yogic concentration, it is not merely one function that is active, but all the functions set together. It is like all five fingers grabbing an object, two feet walking in unison, two people thinking alike, or any of many other examples that can be given of unitary action. We are in a state of concentration when the functions of the thought, of memory, of will, of understanding and of feeling all mingle together to form a concentrated focus. Our minds—as understanding—are then present in the perceived object, our powers of will are there in the object, our affection is there in the object, and our whole attention is there in the object. This *manas-ahamkara-chitta-buddhi*, as the functions of the internal organ are called, are all one in this practice. This unity of the psychological functions is called the *chitta* in the language of Patanjali. We also call it *antahkarana* or the internal organ. But having said all this, we have in fact only one psychological principle within us. There are no such things as *manas-ahamkara-chitta-buddhi* as separate capacities.

These are all various names that we give to the different functions that the mind performs—like a person who may be a judge, a collector, a minister and many other functions which may all be performed by the same person. The various forms of nomenclature do not separate the person. The person is identical with himself. Likewise, the functions alone are not independently the psychological organ—it is all these put together. It is a self-identical principle, and it is this total principle which we call the psychological organ that practises concentration. The feelings about the object are the

same as the understanding of the object.

Here, philosophy and religion come together. There is no separation between metaphysical analysis and religious consciousness or devotion. The understanding and the feeling are one. We appreciate the object wholeheartedly, and at the same time we understand it thoroughly. Only when these two functions come together can we really concentrate. There is no concentration where the heart is absent or while the will alone is functioning. Remember therefore that concentration is not an action merely of the will. The heart and the will—together with the understanding—stand with one another focused on the form of the object. However, it is not merely this. The concentration becomes so very intense that the spatial distance between the mind and the object also gets obliterated.

### **CONSCIOUSNESS ENVELOPING THE OBJECT**

When consciousness envelops the object completely, it floods not merely the location of the object or the form of the object, but it also becomes a continuous flow from the subject to the object. It becomes a flood of consciousness which inundates not only the subject and the object, but also the process that seems to connect the one with the other. There is a continuously flowing stream of consciousness from the thinker to the object that is thought. There are certain unavoidable factors involved in the process of concentration. There is a thinker of the object, there is an object that is thought, and there is the process of thinking. Along with this there is a simultaneous effort of the mind to prevent the entry of thoughts that are not conducive to the concentration of the mind on the chosen ideal.

This fourth aspect of the mind begins to function unconsciously and simultaneously with the positive act of concentration. When I want to see an object, I do not want to see anything nearby. This not wanting to see something extraneous is one action of the mind, simultaneous with the action of wanting to see something. The thought of a chosen object, while it involves concentration of the thought on the object, requires also a setting aside of extraneous thoughts. Therefore, the negative process is the avoiding of extraneous thoughts, and the positive process is the entertaining of the thought of the chosen object. These two functions take place simultaneously.

We have been accustomed to think in a dualistic manner, because we do not think all things at the same time. Whenever we think something, we think only one thing, two things or a few things—but not all things at once. The other things are excluded from the purview of the mental operation. In concentration then, four factors are involved: the thinker, the object thought, the process of thinking and the exclusion of sources whose entry are completely and deliberately avoided by the mind. In the beginning it may involve a little bit of exertion. We may feel ourselves to be in the same position as a student sitting in the hall when a final examination is handed to him. He doesn't know what exactly is on the paper, and so he is a little bit anxious and nervous. In the same way, in this commencement of the process of concentration, a little bit of nervousness and anxiety may be present, but they will pass away. The nervousness and anxiety are due to not being aware of what is going to happen. The future is unknown and nothing is clear—that is why we are anxious. But if our preparation has been well thought out, we need not be anxious. The student who has read his homework very well need not be anxious about the examination, because he knows everything. Let every question be put

to him—he is ready to answer because he knows that he knows.

In the same way, the yoga student is to be confident about the understanding of the nature of the object. We should not enter this process of concentration or *dharana* with a doubt in the mind. Everything should be clear. With a doubt in the mind, no concentration is possible. We must have a thorough logical understanding and conviction as to the efficacy of this step that we are taking. We should not be in a position to be shaken up by the world's logic. We should not therefore have many Gurus or read books which will disturb our minds, nor stay in places which are not conducive, nor place ourselves in a position to be affected by the opposition of things. Our arguments should be stronger than anybody else's. We must be like a very good lawyer who is confident about what he is saying. There may be many other lawyers opposed to him, but so what? He must be confident that he knows more law than anybody else. With such confidence we must enter the field of concentration of mind.

There are people in the world who will disturb our minds by telling us things contrary to what we seek. They'll say, "You're not all right; you're stupid; you are on the wrong path; go on some other path; go to some other Guru," and so on. There are also people who denigrate the whole path, saying that it is all nonsensical. This will be people's logic, and we may find ourselves susceptible to it. If we allow this, then we will achieve nothing. There is yet again another kind of logic which will speak from inside our own selves. This is harder to face than the logic of the opinions of people around us. The mind's logic is more powerful and difficult to face than the logic of people outside. The mind has a logic of its own, and it will counteract our arguments. There are two stages of the mind—the lower and the higher. We may be wondering, "Who is it that is speaking from within?" The mind can act like a double-edged sword. When the higher mind which uses *sattvic* logic takes to the act of concentration, the lower mind with its contrary kind of logic will be put down.

We should read the sixth chapter of *The Light of Asia* by Edwin Arnold. It is very interesting to read how the mind in its lower form will have its own logic, and what difficulties Buddha had to pass through in meditation, and what temptations exactly came to him. It is very beautifully described by the poet in this chapter. The mind's logic is formidable, and the lower mind many times draws our attention wholly, and we are sometimes fully engrossed in the lower mind, and we cannot stand apart from it. We speak the language of the lower mind.

This is when we sink down to the lower level, and then we say, "I think so." When we say, "I think" with the total reliance on our own lower selves, we only mean that we speak the devil's language for the time being. We cannot stand apart from it, and we cannot know who is really speaking. It is like being a possessed person. The lower mind and the personality get mixed up, and we speak the language and the logic of the lower mind many a time when we become weak in our will and understanding. Do not be under the misapprehension that once we are motivated to undertake concentration of mind that we are always safe. We can also fall back, and there is a possible retrogression. The fall may be with such a thud that we don't know what hit us. But we have to raise ourselves up again through the power of our will. The fall may be not merely due to our weakness of understanding, but also due to the force—we may call it the psychological gravitational pull—of the lower mind. Just as there is physical



gravitation, there is also mental gravitation. The mind attracts just as physical bodies attract. The mind can pull us down to its own level of desire. The lower mind is nothing but a way of thinking in terms of sensory objects, while the higher mind is the mind thinking of reality. When the mind begins to sing the old song of its love for the objects of sense, then we are in the lower mind.

### OVERCOMING DOUBTS

Again and again, doubts will harass us. "What is all this? Why should I not go elsewhere?" We begin to be involved in specious arguments, which are apparently logical, but faulty in their essence. These are specious arguments when we argue like a very wise person, but inside we are hollow, and what the mind speaks comes from this hollowness. We know about the temptations of the Buddha and Christ. We know what Satan told Christ. "Come, I will make you the Lord of all these things, and you can convert these stones into bread," and many other things to which, of course, Christ turned his back. We have to be in a position to turn our backs against these temptations of the Satan who is inside us. He whispers to us in a friendly tone, and this Satan seems to be our friend rather than our enemy. So very loving does he apparently become that we cannot see him as someone trying to do us harm. There is though no actual Satan apart from the longing for the objects of sense. These desires take the form of Satan outside and the temptations from within. When the mind gets involved in these old habits of thinking, concentration becomes weaker. So many times we may be thrown back out of the concentrated state, as if we had walked right into an electromagnetic field. We will be kicked, and we will fall backwards.

Again we have to take courage and walk with added strength. From where does the strength come? Where does this added strength come from when we are kicked back, and we cannot walk forward? The strength has to come by the force of understanding and the application of will. Many factors come to our aid here. The good deeds that we have done in the past, the cumulative force of our good deeds done in this very life in the form of *sadhana*, the power of the mind of our own Guru who initiated us into this technique, and God's grace finally will all assist us. All combine in helping us in the mental act of concentration. As I mentioned, the whole world becomes friendly when we are intent on realising this ideal which is the soul of the cosmos. But as important and as interesting as the concentration of the mind is, just as important is also the caution that we have to exercise in seeing that we do not fall back into the old ruts through which we have already walked. This is a very important aspect of the matter. The more we concentrate our minds, the more we will feel a kind of temptation from inside. All this is because the desires have not completely been wiped out. The desires will not leave us until we enter into the state of spiritual absorption. They will be there in some subtle form or state.

As I said, there are certain aspects of thought which we need to avoid in concentration, and these things are the desires. The aspects of thinking which we tried to obviate in the enterprise of concentration are the voices of the desires of the lower mind. We do not want them to speak, and we try to hush them up. The question is, how are we to hush them up? The fourth aspect of concentration that I mentioned is the action of the mind in setting aside certain thoughts. It is the effort of the mind to set aside the voice of desires, the voice of obstruction, the voice of non-cooperation, etc. But how are we to

deal with it, and what exactly are we going to do? Setting the desires aside is not a solution. We can try to set them aside by many methods: by a force physically exerted through the power of will, or by promises we can sometimes employ such as, "Friends, don't clamour just now. I'll talk to you later on. I'm busy now." If a creditor comes to us, we may say, "I'll talk to you a little later," but we cannot simply get him to go away like that. We can apply force, "Don't talk, keep quiet," which is one way of negotiating or, "Please wait, I shall see you later," or "What do you want? Take it and go so that you do not come again." But whatever we may say, the creditors are not so easily turned away, because what they want is so much more than what we can give. All our attempts at asking them to silence themselves will likely end in failure.

We have to know their weakness and then tap them at their source. We cannot handle an enemy so easily. An enemy is attacking, and if we try to tell him, "Please, go back," he is not going to listen. Nor is he going to listen to our promises. He is up and armed to demolish us totally. He has come for that, and he is not going to listen to our words. These methods of substitution, cajoling, promising or even threatening will not suffice with these desires. When we come to the stage of concentration of mind, we have to take a very decisive step with these things, and this step can be taken only by going deep into this problem, so that it may not arise again. The problem should not rise again, if we dig deeply into the roots of the disease.

The desires have weaknesses of their own, and desire is another name for weakness. When we touch the weak spot of anything, it comes under our control. Appeal to reason does not always succeed, but appeal to sentiments may sometimes succeed. We have to go into the vital content of desire, as these are the weaknesses of desire. Do not argue with them, as they will not listen, because they too have a logic of their own. They may appear to be subdued, but will rise again after a few days. The foolishness of desires consists in their not being aware of what they are asking for. They apparently seem to be very shrewd and wise in their asking, but truly speaking, their wisdom is hollow, and they are stupid in what they ask for.

The work of the yoga student with his desires is like the function of a physician with a patient. There is no use for the physician to do whatever the patient wants. The physician's work is something quite different. The physician will not ask the patient, "What exactly do you want to take for treatment? May I give you this?" Rather, the doctor knows what the matter is and what needs to be done. The yoga student is therefore like a physician with patients, but in this case the 'patients' are the desires of the mind. They have to be treated for their illness, as all the desires are sick patients. They are the unhealthy part of our mental world. They try to create annoyances of various kinds, and many times we do not know how to deal with these sources of annoyance. It is true that in the state of concentration our main purpose is to pay attention to the positives and not to engage ourselves too much with the negative aspects. But while the negative may be ignored while it is calm and quiet, we cannot completely ignore it when it starts screaming and shouting. Suppose we are singing a melodious song in a prayer hall, and a hundred people start shouting outside. We will not be able to continue our singing. First we must stop their shouting—whatever the reason for it may be. But if only a few people are muttering something, we will not mind—we will just raise our voices a little more. But if the clamour is too much, we have to stop it.

## THE DESIRE, THE OBJECT OF DESIRE, AND OUR SELVES

This is an analogy for what must happen in concentration. Though our positive step is one of attention to the chosen ideal, simultaneously we have to be also conscious of the negative aspects. I have mentioned some of these steps that we have to take while discussing the *pratyahara* process. I have tried to outline briefly in the earlier lessons of *pratyahara* what to do with the desires and what desires really mean. The desires are not outside us, so we cannot treat them as we treat people outside. These desires are not only not outside us, they are also not outside the objects that we see. Again to give the example of a triangle, one may say that the desiring subject, the desire and the desired object are like three points of a triangle. They are all connected by the lines drawn from one point to the other. When we touch one part, we have touched all the parts. The desire, the object of desire and our selves are organically one—hence we cannot ignore any aspect of the question. The desires seem to be formidable and difficult on account of the involvement of this three-part structure of which we are a part. When we try to solve this problem of desire, we have to solve a threefold question: what is desire, what are we, and what is the object? All these three questions have to be answered at the same time, because the three are connected with the desire. We may say the desire is the relation, and we know how important relation is in respect of the subject and the object. It is what brings the subject in connection with the object.

When the one part of the link is touched, the other links receive the vibration of the touch. The process of desire—for it is a process and is not a thing hanging somewhere in space—is a process of the mind. Mind itself is desire. When the desire speaks, one part of the mind begins to speak, and when the mind in this condition begins to speak, it speaks in the context of an object. The language of the lower mind—the desireful mind—is the language of the form of the object. It speaks in terms of the object, and all its talk is an appreciation of the object. We often have persons or things which we like very much and which we want to praise. Sometimes, when there is no opportunity provided to render that praise, we indirectly bring these praiseworthy subjects up in conversation somehow or the other and begin to say something good about them.

So also is the mind which is desireful of an object. Somehow or the other the mind will bring that item into consideration in its daily activities. The object of desire is therefore the form which the desireful mind has taken within itself. I am trying to give some indication as to how to tackle all these desires. Empirically speaking, the object is outside, and it is not a part of our bodies. But specifically because it is not a part of ourselves, that is the reason why we are hankering after it. If the object had been really a part of us, then there would be no need of asking for it. It is outside us, and therefore we want to make it a part of us.

The mind, with a light of consciousness reflected in it, casts itself into the mould of the object. The mould is nothing but the shape of the object. We mistake the mental mould of the object for the object itself, and we wrongly love the object, which means to say that we love the form taken by the mind in terms of the object. Our love is mental—it is not physical. The psychological mould is the shape which the mind has taken in terms of the object. The consciousness that pervades this mould and which has taken the form of the mould thinks in terms of this form of the object. Thinking is itself in terms of the forms. One may say, in some sense, the thinking itself is a formation. Inasmuch as

thinking is conscious, consciousness apparently takes the form of the object, and we appear to be one with the object—psychologically at least, though not physically. Inasmuch as consciousness is our true self, when it enlightens the mould of the mind in terms of the object, we do not know how to contain ourselves in this ecstasy of longing. Consciousness tries to exceed its limits and pour itself into the mould of the mind in terms of the object. We want to become the object, and we cease to be this person that we are now. We want to be that thing itself. This is what happens in all desires, affections and loves. One experiences an uncontrollability of emotion and an exceeding of the mental limits in love, so that there is convulsion of various kinds felt within the mind. Here it is that emotion takes possession of us.

What we have to tell the mind is, “Dear friend, the object is so far from us, and it is physically different from us.” It cannot become a part of us, and we are misguided. We are stupidly imagining that the object can become a part of us by merely associating consciousness with the mould which the mind has taken. We are loving only the shape of our own minds. It is a psychological content that is attracting our attention, really speaking. We are purely in a mental state, as physically nothing has happened. The object of our love is not aware that we are loving it. What has happened to us, really? There are people who are crying for certain things in the world and cannot sleep. The thing that is asked for or loved may not even be really connected with the person that longs for it, and physically therefore there is no relation. But an apparent psychological relation is established through imagination. All love is imagination of emotion—an unnecessary tumult that is being created inside. First of all there is no point in merely loving a psychological form, which really is what happens in all forms of love. Even if we temporarily come into the physical proximity of the object, we are still not in possession of it. We think we know what it is to possess things, but the possessions cannot come under our control. The physical disparity of nature is such that one thing cannot be the property of another thing in this world. Nobody can possess another thing. Each one is independently itself, even if it is inorganic matter.

We cannot possess gold and money—it is not ours, because it is outside us. How can we call it our own? It is only psychologically ours. It may be in a bank which is thousands of miles away, but we nevertheless feel the affirmation of possession. Physically it is so far away and unconnected with us, but the mind says, “It is mine.” That is all. However, even if a thing is near, we cannot truly say that it is ours. Physical proximity is not possession, as I mentioned earlier. The mind is unnecessarily worrying itself in all desires and loves. All desire is worry, annoyance and vexation, and there is no point in entertaining it. Thus is the mind to be taught a lesson by recognising the consequence of the diverting of the higher light of the higher mind into the lower chambers of the heart.

Concentration becomes easy when this analysis goes on, along with a positive attention of the mind on the chosen ideal. Hence, in the four aspects I have mentioned, at least the one dealing with the sublimation of desire has to be emphasised here. The aspects of the mind—the thoughts which harass and distract us and which introduce themselves unnecessarily—are to be sublimated in this manner and not merely thrown out through force of will. We will see how strong the mind becomes when we have sublimated these desires, and the vitality of the mind is no longer encumbered by them. That part of the mind which was engaged in the setting aside of negative thoughts is now able to summon even that part of itself into the positive context of attention. When the

distraction ceases, the mind becomes strong.

In the higher states of concentration the need to prevent or avoid something does not arise, though in the beginning stages it is there. In real meditation the threefold unitive process of thinker, thinking and the thought of the higher are working together without any difficulty. We do not need to set anything aside in this refined practice—we include everything here. All forces become ours, and we don't have to use any kind of negative force to avoid certain things. Instead, we bring all these forces together for one purpose. In authentic meditation all will speak with the same voice in the same language and will want the same thing. All the aspects of the mind will think alike. Thought, emotion, understanding and will all begin to function for a common purpose. When this takes place, true meditation occurs. Meditation thus is supposed to be an organic continuity, and not merely a mechanical form of concentration. It is not merely a quantitative total of concentration that makes meditation, but a growth of concentration into a transcendent process, in which the efforts of concentration lead to a larger harmony of the mind.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

### THE DISENTANGLEMENT OF THE PERSONALITY

As we might have observed from an analysis of the mind and experience in general, the central aim of the practice of yoga is an ultimate disentanglement of the personality from the various types of psychological clutches in which it is involved. It will be realised later on that the practice is not so much the achievement of anything that is presently unattained, but rather a discovery of an essential nature and a realisation of a status quo which has always been there. The practice therefore is a concentration of consciousness towards its gradual freedom from complicated involvements in the various levels of manifestation. The entanglement of consciousness is the crux of the whole matter, and the returning of the consciousness to its own self, and its resting in itself, is the definition of the ultimate purpose of yoga.

This is to be attained by a very slow, methodical and graduated process. Concentration does not mean a sudden withdrawal of consciousness from something. A sudden step here will not be of much advantage to us. Many of us may know of the fort of *satyayuga*, which is a very complicated stronghold described in the Mahabharata war. This fort is very intricate, involved and difficult to enter, such that a hero could venture to penetrate it only at the risk of his own life. This analogy of the fort corresponds to the task of freeing the consciousness from its delusions and entanglements.

The consciousness has been entwined in a whirlwind of motion so that we cannot extricate it from these apparent paths without the tremendous caution exercised in skilled practice. It is difficult at the outset to understand the many layers of being through which the consciousness projects itself until it finally reaches the earth level or the physical state of experience. We have been told that there are five layers of this kind. These layers are the encasements of the soul, or in Sanskrit they are called the *koshas*, which means literally a kind of sheath—like a scabbard of a sword. But while a sword can be pulled straight out of a scabbard, consciousness is not so easily freed from these encasements. It is not a simple affair to draw consciousness out like one would draw a sword from the scabbard, as consciousness has been organically involved in the encasements. To give a very crude example, it would be as difficult to extricate the consciousness from these clutches, as it would be to remove our own skins from our bodies. Theoretically speaking the skin could be peeled off, but yet we know for obvious reasons how impractical it would be. The thing that we have to remove and that from which we wish to extricate ourselves has become so much a part of our own personality and being. When we try to free ourselves, it may appear like a veritable death for our personality. It is for this reason that yoga practice appears so difficult.

In terms of the metaphorical language that is often used, it is a dying to one's own self for the sake of being reborn into one's true Self. Many other such analogies are given to make out what is supposed to take place in the disentanglement of consciousness from the meshes of empirical experience. The practice of yoga has to do all this, and the effort commences with the art of concentration, which we began to study earlier. The practice of the concentration of the mind, which leads to meditation or *dhyana*, is therefore not a mechanical action of the will whereby we merely fix our attention on some chosen

object. It is a more difficult technique of a vital and organic nature where we deal with ourselves rather than with an object of concentration located externally. To touch the object of concentration in yoga would veritably mean a kind of profound engagement with one's own experience. We are not so much concerned here with objects that stand mechanically unrelated to us in the world, but those things which are organically related to us. I have mentioned the example of a triangle, and how the thinker, the process of thinking, and the object thought are related to one another like the three points of a triangle. The example is given to point out the relationship that exists between the thinker and the thought, the meditator and the meditated upon, and so on.

The object of our perception is not an extraneous something and is not so estranged from our personality as we imagine it to be. The difficulty is that usually our perceptions are wrong and do not touch on the vital nature of truth. The object of perception is vitally connected with us in the sense that it is a living part of our being. This is the reason why we cannot so easily get rid of it. It is related to us in a very mysterious manner—so mysterious that it cannot be explicit to the common perception of the senses. While the object appears to be something outwardly, it is something else inwardly. This is the case with every type of relationship in the world—more so in the case of emotional relationships. Finally we will realise that when we fathom the depths of this relationship between the thinker and the object thought, the relationship between the two becomes more and more intimate.

While at the surface it appears to be an isolated object standing external to the thinker, in the deeper stages of concentration, the relationship between the two seems to narrow slowly until it reaches a point of union, wherein the two become indistinguishable. It is towards this end that we slowly move through the path of concentration or meditation. The two points located on either side of the base of the triangle later on converge at one point at the apex of the triangle. Likewise, the apparent distance between the thinker and the object thought in ordinary perception and cognition gets narrowed down gradually in concentration. It looks as if the object were coming nearer to us and we were going nearer to it.

#### **QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH OBJECTS**

It is not merely a proximity of the one with the other that gets realised in the art of concentration. Something of more consequence takes place. Apart from the proximity of the object with the subject, the inward relationship of the two is realised. These are the two factors to be considered—the distance and the nature of the relation. The one may be regarded as the quantitative appraisal and the other as the qualitative one. Quantitatively speaking the relationship becomes one of lesser and lesser distance. Qualitatively speaking it becomes one of more and more living relation between the subject and the object. The object becomes more and more friendly with us, more sympathetic towards us, and more related to us—inwardly rather than externally. A time will come—and has to come—when the object will be in the end indistinguishable from the process of our thinking and our own selves. I began by saying that the consciousness is entangled in certain forms of experience, which is the subject of study and analysis in the stages of *dharana* (concentration) and *dhyana* (meditation). It is difficult for a novice to know what sort of entanglement is meant by 'consciousness getting entangled in experience'.

Let me give a few instances to make it clear. One of the ways in which our consciousness seems to be caught up is the necessity to think only in terms of the mental process. Due to this erroneous manner of thinking, the processes in turn get involved in certain other misleading conditions of experience. We are so much accustomed to these illusions that we take them for facts which are not to be questioned. When we get habituated to a thing, we don't think anything about it, just as we don't think about the sun rising and setting. We don't bother about the matter, though we may vaguely be aware of the importance of the sunrise and sunset. If the sun were not to rise for a few days, we would realise its importance! We know that we have two eyes, but we never think of the eyes, so much identical are they with us. We don't feel the need to think that we have got two eyes, but we will have to think of them when we have a pain in the eye.

Similar is the case with the entanglement of consciousness. Normally speaking we cannot realise what our difficulty is, because of our habituation to the bondage we are in. We have been born into a state of bondage, and we die with the bondage. A slave born with the consciousness of slavery takes it to be the natural state of living, and he cannot imagine that there is another state which is freedom. He lives as a slave, and he dies as a slave. Our bondage to the sensory apparatus and the conditions of empirical experience is such that we mistake it for freedom, and we go about thinking that we are fully free people. We have many slogans affirming our freedom in the world—not realising at all that we are in fact slaves bound very hard by the chains of certain factors of empirical experience.

One of these forms of bondage is consciousness having to express itself only through the mental process alone and there being no other apparent way of expression. When we are 'aware', we are only aware through the mind, and there seems to be no other way of being aware, so that our consciousness has become veritably a kind of process. Our being is only a becoming. Life has become mortal, and we are living a perpetual series of deaths rather than living in any ultimate sense of the word. There is only death and nothing but that in this world. This is the reason why Buddha began to teach the philosophy of momentariness, perpetual change and destruction. So very intense is this entanglement in the process of change that even the personality and the self of the being were denied by the Buddha. We cannot see this self except as a system of relations and processes. This conclusion has been arrived at because of the intensity of the involvement of consciousness in process.

There is a twofold process in which our mind is involved. The one is the identification of being with becoming, and consciousness with thinking. For example, our awareness that we exist—which need not be identified with a process of any kind—has unfortunately taken the form of a process. When we say, "I am", we mean, "I think". There was one great philosopher named Descartes who concluded, "I think, therefore I am." We somehow or the other deduce one thing from the other, and perhaps we cannot distinguish one thing from the other. Our being has been expressed only in our thinking, and if we cannot think, we seem not to exist, so that in deep sleep we seem to be non-existent. 'To think is to be' has been our attitude in life. But unfortunately for us, this is not a fact. 'To think' need not 'to be', and being is not thinking. This is one of the involvements of consciousness or being. The nature of being is not the nature of thinking—mind is not consciousness. Hence, to not be able to distinguish between consciousness and mind is one of our difficulties. This is one entanglement that I



mentioned, with the other one being the mind's entanglement in the external processes of perception. The primary entanglement is the one between consciousness and thought, and the secondary entanglement is the engagement of thought in certain contingencies of experience—space and time being the primary obstacles.

### **SUPERIMPOSITIONS OF IGNORANCE**

We cannot think except in terms of space and time. Our thought is localised and restricted due to the operations of space and time. We think in space and think in time—there is no other way of thinking. This is a bondage. Should we call it freedom that we are tethered to certain processes, and we cannot be free from them? We are in the double bondage of being identified with the process of thought, and the process of thought having been identified with the limitations of space and time. This is the condition into which our true state has apparently degenerated itself. We see ourselves only as mortal empirical beings trapped in this world of death and destruction. What else could it be? The world of space, time and causality is the world in which the mind moves and acts. The purpose of concentration and meditation is to free the essence of experience from these extraneous factors in which it seems to be involved. These are all very difficult things to understand unless we carefully contemplate them with great attention.

These are difficult because it involves new ways of thinking—ways to which we are not usually accustomed. We have been told to think in a certain way our whole lives, and now we have to rethink the whole matter. We have to remake our lives and think in a different way altogether. To think in terms of yoga is to think in an absolutely different manner altogether, and we are not to think like an ordinary man of the world. This entanglement is of great consequence, because as long as we take for granted that we are connected with these limiting agents of space, time and causal relation and the process of thought—so long shall we be mortals, and so long we will not escape the circle of birth and death.

What is birth and death? What is the process of transmigration? What is change? Our consciousness seems to be compelled to move in the processes of the world. When an object changes, the consciousness associated with it also seems to change, though the actual fact is otherwise. The body is a process concretely experienced by the mind on account of intense identification, and the consciousness identifies with the bodily changes, and vice versa. In Sanskrit we call this '*adhyasa*', or superimposition. There is such a kind of superimposition between the subject and the object—the processes of the object getting identified with the being of the subject. When there is such a drastic change of the object so that it is impossible anymore for the consciousness to cope with the change, that is what we call the death of the body. The mind then casts off its relationship with the external vestures, and this is what we call death, mortality or the destruction of the body. The cause behind this experience does not cease, and that is why there is rebirth. Rebirth is nothing but the mind's relationship with a new system of experience and its drawing towards itself certain conditions which are necessary for the fulfilment of its unfulfilled desires. Mind is the cause of birth and death, and it is the mind that is reborn and that then once again dies. All these experiences are ultimately mental.

This is what I have mentioned by way of digression. The essence of the matter is that

consciousness is entangled in a process of experience in a dualistic manner—first in its relation to the mental process and then with its relation to the external world. Both these are the causes of the bondage of the self. In the art of concentration we try to disentangle ourselves from the clutches of the experiences empirically created in this manner. Concentration is a very graduated process and not a sudden action of the will. It takes a long time, and when we sit with closed eyes for the purpose of concentration, for a while we will find that there are no results. This is because we will be thinking in terms of space and time and in terms of the mental process. Whatever be our thought, even if it is a thought of God, it will be involved in this limitation introduced by the spatio-temporal process and the process of the mind. We cannot think God—there is no such thing as that, because to think God would be to reduce Him to an object of experience. We bring God down to the level of a process when we think Him. There is therefore no such thing as thinking reality or understanding it through the mental process. There is no such thing as a psychological relationship with reality.

But there is a negative influence exerted by the art of concentration on the ultimate realisation, which is the goal of yoga. All *sadhana* is negative in the sense that it is the way of disentanglement, disillusionment, de-hypnotisation, untying the knots and so on. We are not going to create something new here. That's why I said that *sadhana* is negative. We are only to cast off the illusions, tear the veils, and clear the cobwebs. It is all negative action. What is there is already there in its essential, pristine purity. The essential consciousness that we are—which is the same as true Being—is vitally related to the objects of experience. Through an analysis of perception we came to know that there is consciousness immanent not only in the subject but also in the object. What we have to achieve through concentration and meditation is to melt in the crucible of concentration the network of relationships that are artificially created in perception and cognition. We must melt them in such a way that we will see things as they are in themselves. It is only by logic and inference that we have come to the conclusion that our consciousness is inherently and immanently connected with the object. In our perception we cannot perceive it, because we see the object standing apart from us. This is on account of the operation of space, time and the causal relation. The spatio-temporal relations create an artificial distinction between us and the object.

How can we cast out this limitation of space and time? We cannot do that easily, nor can we stand apart from the process of thinking. We have been guided by them for so many years—through so many incarnations—and now that we are told that we have to stand apart from them, we do not understand how it could be done. But it has to be done one day or the other, and with continued practice we begin to feel that it is a necessity. This transformation can be done by a gradual introduction of non-objectivity in our consciousness. While all our normal experiences are objective, yoga is a tendency to non-objectivity in experience.

*Dharana* is thus a creating of a tendency in consciousness towards non-objectivity. All objectivity is bondage, and all tendency to non-objectivity is a step taken towards freedom of the soul. The more external we are, the more entangled we are with objects. The more objective our experience is, the more our suffering in the world is. Consciousness has become so objectified that it has lost itself in the physical objects. We exist therefore almost totally in a physical world, which is the *bhuh loka* or earth plane, as we call it. Such is the descent of consciousness that it has lost itself, and we cannot

see consciousness apart from the objects. We are the objects, as it were. We hug them so affectionately. Our notion is that the body is 'I' and the object related to me is also 'I'. This only points out the intensity of our entanglement. We can realise how difficult yoga would be from the extent of our entanglement in objectivity.

The art of concentration is a retracing of the steps of consciousness from externality to internality. There are three stages: 1) the withdrawal from the external to the internal, 2) the rising from the internal to the universal, and 3) the identification of the subject with the Absolute. In the Absolute this triad of experience in the form of thinker, thinking and thought are brought together. It is towards this end that we are now slowly moving in *dharana*. We are now walking on very slippery ground, and so we have to look into these things with great caution and attention. If we miss a single point, we may falter. It is very difficult to think along these lines, but once we have learned the art of thinking in this way we will be thinking only in this way throughout our lives! Even while we walk, while we have our lunch, and while we take our bath we will be thinking in these terms. When this thinking becomes a habit of our minds, we become a perpetual yoga student—and not only in the meditation room. We will always be a student of yoga, and we will always be in a state of yoga. In our normal existence, we need not exert to think that there is a building or a tree standing in front of us. Do we exert, do we concentrate, or do we close our eyes? Do we put forth any kind of effort to know that we see a tree in front of us? It has become a natural part of our thinking. Just as natural as this should be our yogic way of thinking, if we are to be established in yoga. We should be incapable of thinking in any other way. When we open our eyes we think in these terms only.

When we succeed in concentrating the mind in this way of thinking for a protracted period, then we can say we are established in *dharana*. It may take many years—it does not matter. We will realise that the extent of time that is needed in the achievement of this way of thinking depends upon our intensity and the nature of our understanding of the process. If we erroneously practise concentration, it may take a long time, and even many years will not bring us any result. What is important is not merely the length of time in concentration, but the extent of our understanding of the technique. Do we understand the technique properly? Do we know what we are doing? If we are confident about it, then we will succeed—there is no doubt about it. But the confidence has to come, and the conviction has to be there. We have to proceed boldly in the path of yoga.

### **THE PRACTICAL PROCESSES OF CONCENTRATION**

We have now come to the practical processes of concentration, about which I have given this elaborate introduction, so that we may know what our goal is. I would request again that these things be carefully attended to, because this attention is what is going to help us in our daily yogic life. The first thing that we have to do in concentration is to learn to observe in a detached manner. When we observe a thing, we should observe it in a detached way—not as if it were ours or as if it were related to us in some way. We know an object that is in front of us has a status of its own, in the sense that it need not necessarily be related to us. It can exist even without relationship with us, and it is independent and has a status of its own. Just as we say every citizen of a nation is an independent unit, and every citizen has the same rights, likewise in this citizenship of the cosmos, we may say that in one sense at least every aspect of this creation has a status of its own. Can we observe an object from this angle of vision? Can we look at this

something in front of us in a detached way—not assessing a value to it, not saying something about it, not commenting upon it?

It is difficult to observe in a detached manner. Though it may look simple, it is very difficult to practise. We have never known what detached observation is, because we are always accustomed to have an opinion about an object. “Oh, it is like this; it is like that.” But can we think an object without making any comment on it, even psychologically? There should be no psychological commentary on the object of our perception. This would be detached observation of the object, which is the first thing that we have to learn in concentration of mind. To be able to evaluate the object from its own standpoint is detached observation. To think of it only in terms of what it means to us would be a relative observation. While an object may mean something positive or negative to us, it is something by itself free of any such opinion. This is the first step in concentration, whatever be our object chosen for concentration. We may choose the flame of a candle, we may choose a pencil in front of us, we may choose a dot on a wall, or we may choose a painted picture—it makes no difference. Can we look at it in a detached manner? Again, this is the first thing to be done: to encounter an object without referring it to us in any manner whatsoever. Let there be no such personal reference to us—it is as it is. To think an object from its own standpoint is detached observation of the object.

The second step in concentration is to think the object alone, and not to think of any other object. When we are engaged in concentration on a microphone in front of us, for example, we should not be aware of something beside it. The tape recorder is by the side of the microphone, but we need not think of it. Therefore, the first thing is to think the object as it is, independent of any relationship with us, and the second thing is to think it alone to the exclusion of anything else. We will find all these to be very hard jobs when we actually try to do them! We will not succeed. The mind will jump here and there. The mind does not know how to think without relations. This is the difficulty in concentration. To think in a concentrated manner is to think unrelayedly of the objects, but as we do not know what ‘unrelated’ means, we will not easily succeed in concentration of mind. It will take a lot of time, and it involves a Herculean task. Anyhow, the practice should begin with these techniques of detachment in observation and exclusiveness of concentration. This is the second aspect of concentration that we have to remember.

The third aspect is that the object chosen for concentration should be such that it should be able to engage our whole being. It should not be a silly trifle that we would not be eager to contemplate. We cannot keep a broken glass in front of us and start concentrating on it. Our mind will say, “What a useless thing you have kept in front of me!” It should be capable of engaging our attention. We must have a longing for it, and our hearts should go to it. We must see a meaning in the object of meditation, and it must have a significance for us. This is the third item that we have to remember in concentration—detachment first, exclusiveness second and meaningfulness the third. When I speak of this meaningfulness of the object of concentration, I am reminded of what is called the *‘ishtadevata’*. In yogic parlance we might have heard of this term *‘ishtadevata’* repeated many a time by *sadhakas*. *‘Ishtha’* means something beloved, something longed for, something which we cherish. Something to our liking is our *‘ishtha’*. *‘Devata’* means a deity. We may be wondering why we call it a ‘deity’. It becomes a deity to us when our whole heart is in it. When the parents have only one child, that

child becomes like a deity for them, and they go on thinking of that child alone.

What then is a deity exactly? The deity is not necessarily something in the heavens. That which engages our minds wholly throughout the day and night, which we love exclusively and which we are thinking constantly is our deity. To the miser, money is a deity. We may be wondering why we call money a deity. But that is in a sense what he worships. He cannot think anything else, and the whole heart is there. Therefore, anything in which the whole of our being is engaged may be tentatively called our '*devata*'. Though '*ishtadevata*' usually means the chosen concept of God in its original status, for psychological purposes we may take it to mean any kind of object exclusively chosen for concentration. The *ishtadevata* is of great importance, and I would like to say something about it, though many perhaps already know what it means. We have to choose an ideal—this is exactly what we mean when we say to choose an *ishtadevata*. We must know what to concentrate on. Can we discover for ourselves what we like? We shouldn't say, "I don't like anything", or, "I like all things". This is not a fact and is a glib way of speaking. It is not true that we like all things, nor is it true that we don't like anything. Both are not true, as we know that we do like certain things.

### HONESTY OF APPROACH

Here comes the necessity for a little bit of honesty in our psychological analysis. We must be very honest with ourselves. We should contemplate honestly in the silence of our own meditation room and go deeply into the fact of what it is that we like. It is a fact that each and every person is emotionally tethered to something or the other. This is something which we cannot escape, and we will know it especially when we go deeper into ourselves. There is something after which we will run the moment we see it in front of us. It is difficult for us to find out what actually it is. We could choose a concept or a form which is at least harmless, though it may not have much positive value. We see that in all these matters a guru is necessary. When we cannot understand ourselves, a guru will be able to know where our mind stands, and he will help find the path for us. Of course, we will have to open our hearts to him. Here comes the necessity for initiation also, and there is no yoga worth the name without initiation. We cannot just read a few books and then say, "I'm a *yogin*". Especially when we come to the crux of the matter in *dharana* and *dhyana*, initiation has its own important role to play. One could say there is no meditation and no japa without initiation. We must always know that there is someone superior to us, and a superior one may be taken as our guru. The necessity for a guru comes because of the guru's having had a larger experience in this path. He knows the pitfalls and the difficulties on the way, and he has been also initiated by some other guru, and he knows the technicalities involved in concentration. Hence, initiation is very essential.

There are many factors involved in initiation. It is not merely the wisdom of the guru that is of importance here. The power of the guru also has some effect upon us. The way in which the strength of the guru impinges upon us and works in us is called the '*shakti pata*'. The descent of the power of the guru is the *shakti pata*, and this is done by different types of gurus through various means, according to their own strength and experience. We cannot meditate merely by listening to a discourse. It is impossible, because our predilections vary and our temperaments are of different types. Though the general instructions for concentration and meditation may be similar for most people,

the subtleties involved are different in each case. Therefore, initiation has its own importance, and initiation in the art of meditation is essential.

The *ishta devata* is our object of concentration. While we try to understand what this *ishta* or object of concentration should be, we have to recall to our memories the purpose of the art of concentration. Why should we concentrate at all? This is the philosophical foundation of yoga and its psychological analysis. That's why we have taken so much time to understand what it means, and this understanding is a precursor to this practice. The purpose of concentration will be our guide in the practice of concentration. Again, why do we concentrate? We do it to go nearer and nearer to the universality of reality. 'Nearer and nearer' means to not suddenly try to jump—which would itself be impossible—but to proceed with caution and care.

We do not know how many stages there are. It may be not only the eight stages mentioned by Patanjali. There are many more stages of ascent, subtle distinctions, minor differences and marked stages of the practice of yoga. We have to pass through every stage, keeping our steps firm. Every step taken is a step towards the universality of being. Every step taken is a step from the external to the internal. Every step taken is a step from the gross to the subtle. Every step taken is a step from the material to the subtle. This is the whole of yoga, to put it in a few sentences. When we come to the practice, we will come to know yoga is actually a very simple affair—it is not very difficult. A lot of explanation may be needed to make us understand what it means, but once we understand it, it will be very simple. Concentration is a very easy and a joyous process. It is not a hard job that is thrust upon us by someone else. It is something we take upon ourselves voluntarily because of the joy it involves, because of the freedom it gives us and because of its necessity in our practical lives. In yoga we move towards God—we move towards the Absolute. It is difficult to understand what 'to move towards the Absolute' really means. How can we move towards something which is everywhere? What do we mean by moving? We can move to something which is somewhere, but this is something which is everywhere. How can we move towards it? It is not a physical moving through space and time—it is a movement of the mind, as it were.

What do we mean by moving from the dream state to the waking state? In one sense we may call it a movement; we have to move from the particularities of dreaming to the universality of the waking experience. What does it mean to move from the externalities of dream to the universality of waking? Whatever it may mean, it is exactly what is meant by the movement from the external to the Absolute. It is an internal process of the mind, not a physical motion in space. No movement of this kind is implied. In fact, we may remain seated in one place for an extended time, and this is exactly what we have to do later on in isolation and in seclusion. There is again no physical motion, but there is a tremendous psychological motion—if we call it a motion at all—taking place. A universal evolutionary process is going on in yoga, and yoga is the compression of the whole process of evolution into a shorter period of time. Ordinarily one would take aeons to pass through the evolutionary process, but the process can be compressed into a few lives or a few years in some cases. Yoga is deliberately accelerated evolution. When evolution is a mechanical process unenhanced by yogic practice, it becomes birth and death. We participate in yoga as an art in the adjustment of ourselves with creation as a whole. Creation moves to the rhythm of our thoughts in the practice of yoga.

The choosing of the ideal for the purpose of concentration of mind is therefore to be such that it is conducive to our movement from the external to the universal. We may choose our own object, but if this is absolutely impossible, we should go to our master. He will guide us as to how to do it. We have now come to the stage of *dharana* or concentration, which is itself meditation or *dhyana* in an evolved form. The bud becomes an opened flower, and likewise concentration becomes meditation. Many people think that concentration and meditation are related to each other as a part is related to the whole. While this may be somewhat true, it is not the whole truth. It is not true that many separate concentrations make meditation, though this is usually the definition of meditation given in certain texts. To some extent it is true that many concentrations make meditation, just as we may say that the many processes of growth involved in earlier stages of life constitute our present stage of life. But this is only scientifically speaking, and is not the whole truth, because we are not merely a total of parts. We have something organic and alive about us, and so also is the case with meditation. Meditation is not merely a total of many efforts to concentrate, but rather a growth of the process of concentration into something transcending concentration. In meditation we are in an altogether higher transcendent process.

## **CHAPTER THIRTY**

### **DETACHED PERCEPTION**

I have been discussing detachment in the observation of an object, and with this detachment true yogic concentration commences. In an observation or a perception, many factors—mental and sensory—are involved. Perception is not a simple process, but we generally take it for granted. In a similar way, psychologists will tell us that even to stand on two legs, hundreds of muscles have to work in unison. It is a surprise for us to know that so much activity needs to take place in the body to be able to stand on two legs. Everything is very complicated. All processes are interconnected, though they all look simple when everything goes as it should. Likewise, the perception of an object involves many factors. First of all, the object has to exist in order that the perception may be possible, as we cannot perceive a non-existing something. The object has to exist in space, and another condition which is implied by this one is that the object also has to exist in time. Not merely this, the object has to be related to something else in order that we may observe it or define it. Every perception is a definition of an object. We demarcate it from others and qualify it with agents by a dissociation of that object from everything else that is not that object. When we behold a cow, we can say that it is a cow merely because there are things other than the cow. If the whole world were filled only with cows, we could not know what a cow is. Every perception involves a segregation of the particular object from other characteristics.

There is an analytical process of dissociation of the perceptible object from other objects, and an apprehension which subsequently follows as to the location of the object as a definite something stationed in a particular form in space and in time. Then there is what we call a determinate perception of an object. We decide that such and such a thing is in front of us. These are logical processes taking place simultaneously in our minds. All these events occur so quickly that they appear to be instantaneous, but they all happen one after another and not at the same time. The quickness is such that we take it for a single instantaneous action of the mind. The object has to exist in space and time, and it has to be related to other things outside itself. Unrelated objects are not seen, and they cannot be conceived by the mind.

This relationship with the object in perception is twofold. The object has to be related to other objects, positively as well as negatively. It is positively related when we want deliberately to associate certain other characteristics with the object, and negatively when we do not want to associate the object with certain other attributes. In a judgement of a perception we immediately associate and dissociate characteristics with the object. We do not want the object to be associated with characteristics which we believe are not it. We also do not wish to dissociate the object from certain characteristics which we think are it.

This is the double mental process in perception taking place in every kind of perception or observation. The existent object is in space and time, and it is related externally to other objects and is also related to us as the perceiver or observer. This is a twofold relation: a relation to other objects positively and negatively, as well as a relation to us as the observer and perceiver immediately concerned with it. These are the initial



factors involved in perception. But there are certain other things also involved, namely, that the senses have to operate in the perception of an object. There would be no perception of the object without the functioning of the senses. Our senses have to operate specifically in relation to that particular perceived object. It is therefore not merely the operation of the senses that is necessary, but the operation of the senses in respect of that object. This is another factor involved in perception: senses working in connection with the object in front of us. Even this is not an exhaustive definition of perception. There are many other factors. The senses have to work, but the mind also has to function. If the mind is elsewhere, the senses may be looking, but they will see nothing. Open eyes may not behold even a nearby object if the mind is elsewhere, so the mind also has to operate.

All this is important, but there is something more that is important. Our consciousness must be sane and in a condition of wholeness in its relation to the mind. There should not be an aberration of consciousness. An insane person cannot see things properly, because his brain is out of order, and the consciousness is out of whack. An insane person's consciousness does not move along the proper channels necessary to see things in a healthy way. Consciousness should be healthily associated with the mental process, and it should not be out of whack. The mental process has to be connected with the sense organs; the senses have to be in relation to the object; the object has to be in space and time and also related to us and the other objects logically in its positive and negative character, and the object should be a real something and not a phantasmagoria. So many things are involved in the mere objective perception of anything.

Now, can we take each item step by step, stage by stage in its isolation, and not jumble them up together? A mind with an understanding of the whole process will not be satisfied with crude levels of analysis. A discerning mind knows every process and every bit of the continuum of perception. In the yoga meditation prescribed in the *Sutras* of Patanjali, we have to analyse these processes of perception one after another. These are the meditations of Patanjali, I should say. I do not want to use any Sanskrit term of Patanjali lest we become confused, therefore I am using only English equivalents in proper modern terms. The object is the concern in concentration and meditation—we know it very well. We are not concerned with anything else other than the chosen object.

#### **DETACHED OBSERVATION**

I want to investigate at this point how to observe the object. Can we take the observational process in its actual form, rather than in a confused context? The teacher Patanjali tells us that in ordinary perception we mix up so many factors, and then we see the object in front of us in a distorted way. We have to cultivate the habit of seeing an object in a detached or dispassionate manner at the outset. "Do not emotionally get ourselves involved in the object," is the first instruction, because emotional perceptions are not right perceptions. A mother cannot see her child properly, an enemy cannot see his opponent properly, and a businessman cannot see money properly, because they are emotionally connected with the objects which are their concern.

They evaluate things from their own point of view. 'From their own point of view'—this is very important phrase to remember. Our own point of view should not be active in a dispassionate perception. Our point of view should be from the point of view of the object itself, and that is called 'dispassionate perception'. This is of course difficult

enough to understand and practise because no one knows what it is to observe in this manner, but the habit has to be cultivated slowly by a placement of ourselves in the circumstance of the object of our concentration. Can we detach the object from our emotions? That is the first step in detachment. Can we cease to love or hate? This would be the beginning of our yogic concentration on the object.

The object may have some relation to us, of course, but can we think of it as having no relation to us? A man in the street has no relation to us, but when we see our friend, we see someone with a relation to us. There is a difference between seeing a passenger unconnected with us in a railway compartment, and seeing our own friend sitting beside us in the same compartment. We see the unrelated person and also the related person at the same time, but we know the difference between the two kinds of perception. The one is detached; another is attached. To detach the object from the pervading emotions is the first step in this stage of yoga. The mind pervades the object through the various functions it performs, and the crudest and the most difficult of them is the emotional aspect.

Emotion does not necessarily mean running to the object in excitement. Generally we understand by emotion a kind of upheaval of affection and hatred, but emotion does not necessarily mean that. It is an attitude, and any attitude is an emotion. It need not be an upheaval or a mood of our feelings. It may be a very calm, sober and fixed attitude, but yet it is emotional. The upheaval of affection or hatred is only a very fortified development of it. We are not really talking about that, as we know very well that it should not be there when we try to relate wisely with an object of perception. That there should not be even an attitude is something difficult to understand. The attitude is also an emotional one. Attitude is what is called 'evaluation'. Judgement, criticism, etc. are the different terms employed for defining the attitude that we have towards an object.

What is our attitude towards the object? Can we behold an object without an attitude towards it? This is detached observation. "It is like this, it is like that," is our judgement of the object. This judgement itself is an attitude. Our judgement of an object is not right, and it cannot be right at any time. That is why it is said, "Judge not, lest ye be judged", as our judgement is likely to be wrong. Just as we make judgements, so too are we likely to be judged to our own detriment by the other things in the world. That is why it is said, "Judge not, lest ye be judged." There is no such thing as a correct judgement, ultimately speaking. All judgements are false, because they are one-sided. All judgements are from the point of view of the human mind, human sensations and human attitude which need not correspond to the whole state of perfection. All judgements are defective, so we shouldn't say, "I make a correct judgement of things." Practically, from the point of view of utility and pragmatism, the judgements may look all right as an empirical judgement, or an empirical veracity or as finally true. But universal validity is something quite different from the empirical validity of things. Factual perception and judgement need not necessarily be universally valid. That which is not universally valid cannot be called right perception.

We are interested here in the ultimate factuality of things and not merely the empirical utility of things. We should not mix up utility and workability with universality. To repeat, in judging an object we develop a personal attitude towards it. Our way of understanding the object is the cause of our judgement of it. Remember that our

understanding of it is at the background, but is the understanding correct? Can we say that our way of understanding is the only way of understanding the object? Can there not be other viewpoints also? Patanjali has described these two kinds of judgements in his theory of the *kleshas*. He calls these *kleshas* or erroneous judgements 'afflictions of the mind'. They are afflictions because they are errors. They are wrong ideations which will bias our knowledge of things and will bind us to suffering of various kinds. Evaluational errors and factual errors are the two kinds of *kleshas* or afflictions about which Patanjali speaks. The evaluational errors are easily detectable, but the factual errors are difficult to judge and understand.

As educated persons we may be in a position to understand that our love or hatred for an object may not be justified. Though we may be inclined to love or hate, our conscience will tell us, "It is not all right, and I am not justified in loving it or hating it." This loving or hating is an evaluational error of the object. Any cultured person will be in a position to understand that love and hatred are not ultimately justifiable. To say, "A cow is in front of me," is not an evaluational judgement, because I don't love it or hate it. I am simply making a general statement that a cow is in front of me. But according to yoga psychology, even this is an incorrect statement. We think it is a cow, but we do not know what is actually in front of us. One may wonder why it would be contended that there is no cow present before us, when everybody agrees that it is a cow. However, everybody's judgement need not be the correct judgement—everybody could be wrong.

This is something more difficult to understand, and here we are in the arduous process of yogic concentration. The yoga psychology of Patanjali tells us that our judgement that it is a cow is itself not correct, let alone our saying, "This is my cow, and that is somebody else's cow." That is something worse. The judgement that there is a cow in front of us is not correct, and this is what we call a 'painless affliction', while calling it 'my cow' is a painful affliction. "My cow, somebody else's cow"; if we make such statements, we are in a state of painful affliction, but when we say, "There is a cow," we are in a state of painless affliction. It is painless, but it is nevertheless an affliction, as it is not correct.

I need not go into the details of the painful affliction, because in light of our yogic inquiry we are all in a position to understand that it is not correct. We can discern why we should not call a cow 'ours' or 'somebody else's'. These are crude ways of thinking. 'Mine-ness' and 'I-ness' are not good, as we have been told many times, so I need not go into the details of this. However, we cannot understand why it should be wrong to say that this is a cow that is in front of us. Here it is that we begin Patanjali's way of concentrating on an object. He says that even the factual judgement of the presence of an object in front is not correct, universally speaking, though it may be all right from a particular person's viewpoint. As I have said, the universal is something different from the particular, but we may wonder what the difference is. The particular is connected with a particular definitive character, while the universal is connected with all particulars. We can understand what the difference is. While the universal is at once related to all the existent particulars in the whole cosmos, the particular taken in its isolation and segregated-ness is not connected with other particulars. A single particular need not necessarily concern itself with other particulars. This is called 'selfishness' in ordinary modern language. When the particular asserts itself to the exclusion of the value of other particulars, we call it a selfish way of assessment of values. This is

generally what happens in every valued judgement.

But the universal cannot be selfish, because it is at once connected with all the particulars simultaneously. Now I will bring our minds back to what I said earlier. Our definition of an object like a cow is possible because we see a shape and colour in front of us, and then we give a name to it. Colours have taken a shape to which we give a particular name—in this case a 'cow'. If the colour and the shape are not there, we will not give it that name, and we will not say that a cow is there. We should also not rely too much on our sense of touch to identify the object. Our sense of touch is not in any better position than our sense of perception. Let us keep this subject a little apart for a consideration a little later. For the time being it is enough to understand that if the form had not taken a shape and if there were no colours present, we would not have called it a 'cow'. To us, a cow is nothing but a form which has taken a shape. Horns, legs, etc. are names that we give to a form that we see, which is nothing but a colour that we perceive. This is how we have to go a little deeper into the perception of an object. The cow, for all practical purposes of judgement, is not a substantial something. It is only a reaction of colour upon the eyes and a shape that seems to be associated with that grouping of forms to which we have given a name. The reason behind the shaping of the form is its location in space. If space were not there, the cow also would not be seen.

It has to also be associated with time, of course. The object has to be in the present, so that it may be perceived. It has to also be in space. Space, time, colour and the relationship of this colour with other colours by a positive and a negative association and dissociation are responsible for our judgement of the existence of an object like a cow. Can we know what a cow is, minus the associations and its spatio-temporal existence? This is where the first stage of meditation commences according to Patanjali. To associate something with relationships, with name and form, and with ideas is the usual way of perception. To conceive the object as it could be in itself—without any such associations with other particulars, without association with a colour or a shape and without association with our idea about it—is to contemplate it as it is in itself. The cow, as the object of perception, though it may not be related to us emotionally, is related to us perceptually.

This is the distinction between the evaluational and the factual judgement, as I have said already. We are not concerned with the emotional relationship of the mind with the object now. We are concerned with a more difficult affair, namely, the perceptual attitude itself, which is called the 'painless *klesha*' or affliction. It is an affliction because the mind is unnecessarily worrying itself about a situation that has arisen by identifying the situation with a substantial something. This series of relationships is perceived as a substantial object.

### **THE INSUBSTANTIALITY OF OBJECTS**

I spoke earlier about Buddha's analysis of things. There is no such thing as a solid object, said Buddha. The solidity is nothing but the location in space and time of a grouping of certain sensations. This was Buddha's definition of the substantiality of an object. Curiously, this is also our modern scientists' definition of an object. To our own wonder, we will realise that scientists today have a similar definition of a physical object as the one Buddha had. According to modern physics, the object is a spatio-temporal location of a grouping of sensations. Whatever the crude senses may tell us, there is

actually no such thing as a solid object. The five senses, including the tactile sense, provide the notion of the existence of solidity of an object. If our fingers can be repulsed by contact, we call something solid, otherwise, we won't know if anything is there or not. That something which is called the object of perception should be capable of a repulsion to our tactile sense. If the repulsion is absent for any reason whatsoever, we cannot know that the object is there. The capacity of the five senses to jointly act upon the mental operation is the reason behind our judgement of the factual existence of an object. All senses connive together to deceive us! It is not one sense that misleads us—all the senses tell us, “Yes, it is there,” and then we have to believe them.

If there are five hundred false witnesses who say the same thing, what will the judge do? He would think they are all correct. Witnesses may be large in number, but they are all telling lies, all of them, without a single exception. We go by lies merely because the majority says they are true. The majority that is the senses give us a similar definition of an object. The eyes see colour, the ears may hear sounds, the fingers feel a sensation, we taste it through the palate, and we smell with the nose. But what are these? They are reactions, but the mind plays havoc in making the judgement of the existence of the object based on these sensations. The whole thing is made worse by the mind's acquiescence in the report given by the senses. If the judge does not believe in the witnesses—even if they are five hundred in number—well, that is a one thing. But if he says, “Oh, five hundred are saying so, I think it must be correct”, then the whole judgement may go wrong, merely because the majority has led him to believe so. The mind is like an indiscriminate judge, which is convinced merely by the evidence of the senses. Law does not merely mean evidence. There are many other things involved in law, so we should not think that evidence alone is everything.

There was a poor man once who was executed merely because the evidence was against him, but in fact he had committed no crime whatsoever. The fact was discovered later on after he was hanged. The judgement went wrong due to wrong application of the law. Such things happen in practical life, and this happens to us daily with our senses, says yoga. Every day we are wrong. Everything that we see is an erroneous perception, because of a substantiality and factuality being associated by the mind with a grouping of sensations. Minus sensation we cannot know what an object is. We should not think in terms of things ‘out there’. The ‘out there’ is due to the operation of space and time. Sensations, when they are located in space and time, look like something out there in front of us. Space, time and sensations put together are objective perception. What Patanjali wants us to do in meditation is to dissociate the relationships of space, time and sensation from that which really is. Can we imagine what there really is minus spatio-temporal associations and sensations? Our mind will go giddy if we start thinking along these. We will start scratching our heads. This is the first step in meditation—the dissociation of the physical object from all the sensations, and even from space and time.

Patanjali doesn't want us to dissociate the object from space and time in the beginning—this step is taken a little later on. For the present at least, we dissociate our chosen object from relationships to other objects and think of it as something independent of the sensations we have of it. “Minus the fivefold sensations, what could the physical object be?” is to be our first question in the meditation on the object. In one *Sutra* in Patanjali's text all this is described, and I hope we understand what it actually implies. A

tremendous detachment cultivated toward the object is required—not merely emotionally, but also perceptually. I mentioned the detached observation of an object. We might have understood it to mean merely emotional detachment, but I'm going to say now that it is not merely that. It also involves general perception itself.

Apart from our cultivating the habit of beholding the object as free from the notion of 'I' and 'mine', can we cultivate the habit of beholding the object from its own standpoint? Can we place ourselves in the position of the object? Try to imagine for the time being the point of view of some external object—let's say a cow for instance. This is not just a question of seeing the cow—we have to imagine what the cow itself sees. Can we imagine the cow thinking itself as an independent something? Why should we be allowed to define the cow? Why should the cow define itself in terms of somebody else? Is it not something by itself? Is it a slave of its relationship with others? Does it exist merely because of a relationship?

### **INDEPENDENCE FROM CONNECTIONS**

Nobody would like to be told that he or she exists merely because of his or her relation with others. Am I not something by myself? What is this something that I am? What is this cow, thinking itself to be something independent of associations with others? What is the cow when it is not seen by anybody else? Nobody sees the cow in the whole of creation, but the cow may exist even though nobody sees it. What could be the situation or form when it is not beheld? Suppose the sun does not shine. There would then be no colour, and if nobody could see the cow, there would be no idea about it. When there is no object external to it, there may also not be any relations. Can we imagine the existence of a cow independent of its connection with other particulars? It is difficult to conceive what the circumstance of the object is, but this is how we have to concentrate in the beginning, says Patanjali. This will help us in clearing up the muddled way of thinking. It remains to be seen what actually will be realised by this way of thinking and meditation. But what we will realise now at least, is that we have cultivated the habit of concentration and also the habit of thinking without relating an object to any other thing.

We are not a father or a mother, we are not a brother or a sister, we are not a friend or a foe, and we are not related to any other person in this world in any manner whatsoever. What is our name? When we are asked what our names are, we give some answer, but who gave us this name? Somebody else did. Why do we depend upon somebody else? Why should we be subject to so much slavery? Somebody says that I have this name; therefore I am this name. Is it a good judgement to think so? Simply because somebody wants to call us by a name, we need not necessarily enslave ourselves to this name. Patanjali advises that we should detach ourselves from the name. If we are alone somewhere, why do we want a name? Nobody is there to call on us. We want a name because we want to be called by somebody. We want to be named, singled out and defined. Suppose we don't need to be connected with any kind of activity in the world and we are absolutely independent persons. Why would we want a name? Hence, this name is an unnecessary botheration of the mind. So deeply has this idea of name gone into our minds that we cannot imagine that we could live without it, but to live without a name could actually be so simple. Name is unconnected with us, and there is no connection of the name with us. We can imagine that we can be without name, provided

of course nobody else has any dealings with us. When I can exist alone—absolutely alone, unconnected with any other human being—then it is that I can be without a name.

### WITHOUT NAME AND FORM

Patanjali tells us it is not merely that we are without a name; we are also without a form! To our surprise, he is telling us that this is what we have to learn in the higher states of meditation. While it is easy enough to understand that we can be without a name, we may find it a little difficult to understand that we are also without form. He says that form is nothing but association. Our relationships with other things by colour and by space-time associations, etc. are ultimately responsible for a notion of the form of an object. Can we dissociate the object—whether it is a cow or our own self, it makes no difference—as if it were free from name and relationship? If this is possible, then we exist as we truly are without name and form. One is without a name because the name has been given by someone else, and one can exist without a name. One is without a form because form is only a bundle of relationships. A network of relations is the formation of the body. It becomes difficult for us to imagine that our body is not a form, because we have been accustomed to think in terms of sensations. We can sense the body; that is what confirms our bodily existence. How could we then say that it is not there? Whatever it may be, in the final analysis, we don't have a body; we only have only sensations. Instead of saying, "I have a body", we can better say, "I have only sensations of a body".

Similarly, we have sensations of other objects. Apart from our having to be without association of a name, now we find the necessity of accepting the fact that there can be existence without a form. Again I would like us to read the analysis of Buddha and modern physicists like Eddington and James Jeans. They said the same thing that Buddha taught. The sensations which are grouped together by a habit of the mind in terms of space and time are responsible for our assertions, "Here is a body and here is an object." Sensations, space and time, and the habit of the mind—all combined—create the notions of there being an object and there being a body. Habit has made this way of thinking so factual that we cannot imagine that there could be any other way of thinking.

Plato's description in the seventh chapter of *The Republic* of the people living in a cave would help us to clarify these ideas. People get accustomed to erroneous ways of thinking—this is what Plato tells us. We mistake shadows for facts, and we get accustomed to the illusion so much that we cannot afterwards see the facts. After a person who has cataracts has an eye operation, he will suddenly see bright daylight. He is surprised. "What am I seeing?" He cannot believe his eyes. He has never seen forms, and now suddenly he sees the world of reality. Likewise, the mind will see a flood of reality opening itself up to its vision, when it frees itself from sensations and the clutches of space and time. We have to start thinking along these lines in meditation.

In our practical lives we may find it difficult to think like this. In the later stages we can do this in our day-to-day practical lives also, but in the earlier stages we need to confine this way of thinking to our meditation room. We must try hard to dissociate objectivity from relations and sensations, and think of the physical object as it is. The two ways of meditation in the initial stages are physical observation of an object with relation, and

the physical observation of an object without relation. These are the first two stages of Patanjali's way of meditation. There are at least seven stages of meditation, but for now I am concerned merely with Patanjali's psychological process of meditation. It doesn't mean that this method is suitable to all, but I am trying to give an outline of different methods. If we like this method we can use it, if we don't like it, we can practise some other technique. This is a purely scientific way of approach and a psychological method of analysis of objects. The method employs the observation of a physical object with associations and the observation of a physical object without associations. This itself will take enough time for us to cultivate. It may take months, or it may take years to cultivate the habit of this kind of detached observation of an object.

If we are successful, we will find that we will never love or hate things. The whole world will look ideal to us. We will not be disturbed or upset by anything after this cultivation of thinking along these lines. Everything will look quite familiar, natural and expected. Nothing will be unexpected in this world. Nothing will take us by surprise when this habit of thinking is cultivated. It is relation-less thinking of a physical object of perception. In the beginning stages, this way of thinking may be cultivated in respect of an external object, and not with our own bodies. We need not attempt the same detached relationship to our bodies in the earlier stages of meditation. We will come to it a little later, because we are so much attached to our own bodies that we will refuse to analyse ourselves like this. It is a little easier to analyse an external object apparently unrelated to us. The first stages of meditation are connected with external concepts and forms, rather than internal ones. From the external we come to the internal. Therefore we should take a physically external object for our analysis and concentration.

What is that object? We can choose any object we like. In Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj's book *Concentration and Meditation*, we will find many such suggestions given pertaining to objects for concentration. We can take any simple object—our fountain pen, our pencil, a flower in the garden, a flame of a lamp, the moon shining in the sky, a resplendent star—whatever we like may be our object of concentration. We have to start thinking of these objects in terms of what it could be by itself, independently and unrelated to us. 'Unrelated' means not merely emotionally unrelated, but also perceptually and factually.

When we start thinking like this, it is not merely thinking—it is called meditation. We will have experiences of peculiar types in the initial stages of meditation. We will have super-sensible experiences. In every type of super-sensible experience, we will have a joy and a sense of freedom coming in the wake of this concentration. We will begin to gradually feel that we are getting released from the clutches of sense objects. Botherations, annoyances, etc. will be getting less and less. When we are free from the clutches of things, our annoyances will be less. We are annoyed, disturbed, harassed or emotionally disturbed by the objects when they are thought of as related to other objects and in relation to us in space and time. If we can think of them as unrelated, we will not only be free from psychological harassment from things, but we also gain a control over things. We will gain a kind of power over the objects, and the power may go to such an extent that our thought may affect the object. It may start acting according to our will, but our intention should not be to exercise any kind of control over the object. That would be a kind of emotion again interfering with concentration. The seeker should not go after powers. The powers may come, but we are not to worry about them. The



moment we think of them, our emotions are again there, and we will be defeated in the very purpose for which we have started. The control that we are likely to automatically exert over the object of concentration comes spontaneously. We are not to bother with these things and neither should we give them much thought. If we think of things in this way, we will immediately develop love and hatred, and then we will be frustrated in our attempts.

The concentration on the object is therefore for the purpose not only of understanding the real structure of the object, but also to gain a kind of inner intimacy with it. We will feel that the object is under our control, and we feel a sense of freedom from it and therefore a joy attending upon it. Wherever there is freedom, there is joy. We are daily harassed by something or other—knowingly or unknowingly. Even unknowingly we will be harassed, and we don't know what is happening. The very presence of things external to us is the cause of worry. Psychologists will tell us how things, merely existing, can disturb us. Not merely the objects connected with us—even objects unconnected with us can apparently disturb, merely by their existence around us. This disturbance has to cease through this method of concentration on physical objects.

## CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

### DISSOCIATING OBJECTS FROM THEIR CONNECTIONS

The first two stages of meditation are subdivided into four aspects in the system of Patanjali's yoga. The two have become four by a division of each into the determinate and the indeterminate forms of meditation, or in other words, the gross and the subtle ways of thinking an object. The ground that we have already covered actually includes both the determinate as well as the indeterminate ways of thinking a gross object. When an object is meditated upon, it ceases to be an ordinary object of perception. Our thinking becomes more scientific and dispassionate when the object before us becomes an object of meditation rather than merely a perception. There is a difference between perception and conception on the one hand, and meditation on the other. In the state of meditation, the mind is wholly present in the object—not partially present as in ordinary perception. In this whole-souled meditation on the object, all the external relationships with which the object seems to be connected are removed by an effort of the mind. The attempt is made to think in terms of the object independently, rather than in terms of definitions, characteristics, etc. These definitions always bear reference to other things different from the object itself. While in the earliest stage of meditation the mind becomes conscious of a necessity to divest the object from all its associations, in the second stage it actually does this dissociation.

Even the first step in meditation is higher than ordinary perception. It is different, because in ordinary perception we are not even aware that we are in confused state of mind. We are just confused, and we have no consciousness of our being entangled in the mental and relational processes. Meditation has already started when we become conscious that there is an entanglement, and we begin to behold the object with a more intensified sensitiveness and with a feeling to free the object from associations of any kind. The very first step in yoga is not actually achievement of freedom, but the feeling of an intense necessity for its achievement. The feeling of the necessity itself is the first step, while the achievement comes later on. Most people do not even feel the need. This is the difference between ordinary people and those who are treading the path of yoga. In one of the famous verses of the *Srimad Bhagavadgita*, we are told that even a desire for perfection in yoga is more than all the learning a person can have in the world. All learning is nothing compared to a longing to tread the right path. To actually tread it is of course much more important. In the first step there is a tendency of consciousness to dissociate the object from its relations. There is only a tendency, but an actual achievement has not yet taken place. In the second stage, the object is dissociated. The third stage is a little more difficult, because we are not accustomed to think like this. All this looks new and strange to us, but if we carefully consider this question, we will realise that it is the only proper way of thinking, and that our usual way of thinking is not the right one.

Sometimes when we are introduced to certain new things, we are taken by surprise, but that new way of thinking may be the most normal thing. This yogic way of thinking is in fact the normal thing, and our present way of thinking is abnormal. The third stage of meditation is to consider the very same object of meditation, not in terms of its name

and form, but in terms of its constituents. What is the object made of? The stuff constituting the object is our concern here rather than the formation of the object. The concern is with the essence of the object, says Patanjali. What are the essences of the object? What is an object made of? A physical substance in front of us is constituted of certain essential ingredients, and we are now to concentrate upon these ingredients rather than the outer composite structure. For example, our own bodies are not as they appear to be. We all know that they are constituted of certain minute elements. It is known nowadays that the human body is constituted of cell organisms which can be differentiated from one another. This body is not a compact, single unit, and this is the case with everything in the world. The physical form of an object is not its truth; the constituents appear to have taken a form on account of their location in space and time. We are now more concerned with the constitution rather than the outer form. Again, the constitution is a series of many layers. There are layers within layers constituting the formation of an object.

### THE LAYERS OF REALITY

We have layers of reality within us. Within the physical there is the vital, and then there is the sensory, the mental, the intellectual and the causal in our own bodily system. So also is the case with everything in this world, even if it is inorganic stuff. Today we knew well that physical objects ultimately are resolved into their atomic constituents. The pencil is no more a pencil to the scientist's eye—it is a composite structure of fast-moving atoms in a particular pattern. The pattern is the shape of the object, and the velocity of the subatomic particles make up the pencil—otherwise it could become something else. The number and the velocity of the constituents are said to make an object what it is. Some such analysis seems to have been made by ancient seers in yoga. They went deep into the root of the substance, and they discovered a power behind things. Things are made of forces—this was the discovery of the great seers. It may be a scientist of our modern times or the intuitional seers of ancient times, but they seem to have come to a common conclusion as to the inner stuff of objects. Things are forces rather than localised substances, and no force can be located in one particular part of space. A force always tends to merge into something else, and every centre of force has a tendency to commingle with other centres of force. The localities of objects slowly break their boundaries and commingle or even merge with other centres of force. The great philosopher Leibnitz was a philosopher of force, for instance. Centres of objects are centres of force—this was his discovery, which is again the discovery of our modern times. The force that constitutes the objects is the essence of the objects.

In India we had theories like those of the *Nyaya* and the *Vaisheshika* philosophers. Like Democritus and Thornton in the West, we had *Nyaya* and the *Vaisheshika* in the East, which concluded that atoms constitute the object. The yoga philosophy of Patanjali, which is mainly based on *Samkhya*, does not fully believe in the atomic philosophy of *Nyaya*, as Patanjali has his own philosophy. But for the time being we can say that Patanjali's philosophy has passed through these stages of discovery. The constituents of the objects are not merely atoms as we conceive them. For us, atoms are perhaps akin to minor sand particles. That is how a crude, uninitiated mind would imagine atoms to be. But they are not—they are in fact forces. Atoms are not minute particles like sand—they are rather forces.

The very thought of a force gives us an idea of how it is different from a solid object. Force is not solidity—it gives more an idea of liquidity rather than of solidity. It is difficult to conceive, but we will never think electricity to be a solid matter, because it is something flowing—maybe different from liquids—but nonetheless it cannot be conceived as a solid matter. Inasmuch as it flows, it is not solid. Like electricity then, we should not conceive of an object as a solid body. Forces flow, which means to say that they can outstrip the boundaries of space, which generally locates bodies in particular spots. In our third stage of meditation, we do not confine our attention merely to the formation of an object as a located body in space, but we go into the force aspect of it.

“*Tanmatra*” is the word used in Indian psychology for this force that is behind the physical form of an object. *Tanmatra* means “the essence of that,” literally speaking. The essence of an object is the *tanmatra* of an object. To better facilitate our understanding, I substituted this term by the term “force.” It is however not an ordinary force with which we are familiar in the world. It is supposed to be a manifestation of a cosmic force. The cosmic force is at the background of all individual centres of force as objects. Now we can see where we are going. The particular objects are slowly tending towards the universal—this is the object of yoga meditation, and this is very important for us to remember. We are slowly tending towards the universal in our meditation. By breaking the boundaries of physical locations, we are tending towards the force aspect of matter.

The isolated objects which apparently stood different from one another in the initial state now seem to be tending towards a matrix of connectivity, when they are looked upon as forces rather than separate units. We seem all to be more related among ourselves than we appear to be on the surface. To look upon ourselves as persons sitting in a hall with no connection between one another is to be only in the very initial stages of meditation. A higher state of meditation would be to regard each person sitting here as a force which extends to other centres, and which can merge into other centres.

Like billows in the ocean, every centre of force tries to mix with other centres. The individual centres have not united themselves, but there is the tendency of movement in that direction. This tendency becomes the object of meditation in the third stage of the attention of the mind. What do we find here then in this state of meditation? We don't find physical objects as we had earlier, but rather centres which long for a union with others, though they have not yet attained this union. These centres cannot anymore rest in themselves; they flow like fluid or like mercury that is trying to change its location. A universal affection seems to possess the centres. Each centre begins to love other centres as part of its own organisation. Each centre begins to recognise every other centre as a member of a single family. This is the difference between the initial stage and the succeeding stage. While we stood isolated in the beginning, now we tend to regard ourselves as a “fraternity” in the higher stage, because we recognise something common among ourselves. Where there is nothing common between us, there cannot be friendship. When there is something common between us, we start smiling at each other and would like to sit beside each other and talk to each other! We help each other when we are on the same ground of reality. We become intimate and inseparable friends when the thinking of the two becomes almost identical. There is almost an identity of character among the centres of concentration when the third stage of meditation is reached.

The essence or the force of the object is our concern. Yet, it is looked upon as a centre, which means to say we are thinking still in terms of space and time. The moment we regard something as a centre, the idea of space and time is very much present—otherwise we would not call it a centre. Even the idea of force cannot enter our minds if space and time are not implied in our thought. We have to go still further, to the fourth stage of meditation, where we contemplate the centre of force as free from the associations of space and time. Now we are in a very difficult mental situation. Nobody has thought like this, and nobody would easily be able to think like this. We have never known how to think a thing without associations with space and time. Patanjali does not actually prescribe a meditation of this kind. He thinks that these stages continuously follow when we have outgrown the earlier stages. It is difficult to initiate a person into the higher stages unless one has already passed through the experiences of the earlier stages. How could we be initiated into the non-spatial way of thinking? Such initiation is impossible and unknown. We have to be initiated into the lower stages, and then experience will unfold the possibility of there being something non-spatial. We ourselves will know how things truly are, and nobody need tell us that.

### **THE HIGHEST STAGES OF MEDITATION**

From the particular we have come to more and more generalised concepts, from the external we are coming more and more to the internal values and realities, and from more and more isolated aspects of thought we are coming to more and more intimate relationships. When we have reached the fourth stage of meditation, where we can conceive of this centre of force as independent of the association of space and time, we have reached almost a level of perfection in yoga. As a matter of fact there is no use worrying about higher stages. This is quite advanced, and this stage of concentration and meditation, if it is to be perfected to an appreciable extent, will make us an adamant personality. Many consequences follow after this meditation. Patanjali himself mentions these things, but there is no use merely reading what he says, as we have to experience it for ourselves. A very protracted period of time is required to reach these stages. Most people will find it hard even to peep over the second stage, because the difficulty lies in dissociating an object from its relations. That is, we have to think as a different person altogether. This is the difficulty, because we cannot start thinking as a *yogin* without extreme effort. We are no longer an ordinary human being when we start thinking like this, and so we have to remake ourselves first before we start remaking the object of meditation.

In the achievement of success along these lines, isolation of oneself in the form of seclusion is recommended. We cannot be in the usual humdrum activities of life and then practise meditation like this. If we are in the old atmosphere, we will be again and again driven to think only along the old lines. The same people meet us, the same work is done, and therefore we would naturally continue to think along the same old lines. No meditation is possible in the thick of the usual activities of the world. We cannot enter the world again unless we are well established in this new way of thinking. After we are well-guided, we may possibly once again start our normal work, as there would be less possibility of harm. We must be well-protected against the onslaughts of our old ways of thinking. So it is that in the beginning stages people live in isolation. It is not that we necessarily have to live like this until death, but in the beginning stages—or for some years at least—we have to live in this way until we are confident about ourselves. We

cannot prescribe a specific number of years for the seclusion, because it all depends upon our own strength of will and understanding. Some people may take a few years; some others may take many years. In whichever case it may be, the solitude is an essential in every case of practice. At least for two or three hours of the day we have to practise thinking along these lines: first of dissociating object from relations, then dissociating the physical object from external relations, next the thinking as the object itself would think, next contemplating the inner essence of the constitution of the object as it is located in space and time, and then contemplating it as it is, but free of space and time.

Here we are faced with a tremendous difficulty, because at least one philosopher has said that there is no such thing as thinking without space and time. He is right—there is no such thing as thinking without space and time, because to think without space and time is a contradiction in terms. Either we think or we do not think, but there is no such thing as thinking without space and time. When we start thinking without space and time we do not anymore “think.” We rather simply “are” something else altogether. In this case, thinking enters into a higher state of being—a different kind of being altogether which encompasses a different degree of reality. When the category of reality itself is transcended, the particular tends towards the universal in its internal depths. The consequences that follow in yoga meditation are an automatic sense of freedom from the control that others seem to exert upon us. Objects exert a control over us, people exert a great influence upon us, and we cannot move very freely in this world everywhere because of restrictions from people and things. There are restrictions even from nature, and we cannot just take liberties with nature. These restrictions get loosened a little bit as the limitations get ameliorated through the various stages of yoga.

We will be able to bear hunger and thirst with a greater confidence. As a matter of fact, the intense pangs of hunger are lessened, or at least there would be less of an agonising sensation. We will be able to bear it for some time. This is one of the things which Patanjali says will follow from the higher stages of practice. Hunger and thirst will be capable of being tolerated for a longer period of time than is the case with ordinary people. We will be able to be refreshed with slightly fewer hours of sleep. It is not actually necessary that we sleep for eight hours. With deeper meditation the mind gets more concentrated, and so it is capable of drawing enough energy and freshness from fewer hours of sleep. Not only this, natural forces—including human elements—begin to show a tendency towards fraternity. This tendency takes various shapes, but cessation of any kind of obstacles on our way and a positive contribution in helping us to advance on our way are two examples. Some of the yoga scriptures tell us gods themselves start helping us. The gods of the heavens and the angels will start looking upon us with a friendly eye. Perhaps God Himself will start smiling! If God starts smiling, the whole world will start smiling at once. God’s sympathy towards us is instantaneously and automatically a sympathy of the whole creation.

#### **SATURATED IN THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS**

Patanjali goes to the extent of saying that we get filled with truth when we reach the fourth stage of meditation. We don’t know what it means to be filled with truth. To be filled with truth, as he says, is not just to be filled with a mere idea of truth. It is not that we will merely be convinced with the idea of there being truth. Truth fills us! No one can

know what this would mean who has not yet directly known what truth is. Truth is not just speaking truth, it is not correspondence of an idea to a corresponding fact, and it is not truth in the legal sense. It is the very substance of reality which seems to fill our consciousness. All these seem to us to be words which have no meaning, because we do not know what truth is. Any amount of description will not help us unless we have started thinking along these lines and we have also started appreciating these values of a supernormal nature.

Our consciousness not only gets filled with the value of truth, but also righteousness begins to flow from us automatically. This is another thing which Patanjali says happens as a consequence of meditation. Our whole nature—our whole personality—begins to radiate righteousness wherever it moves. We will not do wrong. We will be incapable of doing any harm, and our very attitude will be one of spontaneous rectitude. Spontaneity is to be emphasised here. The sun does not exert a will to shine for example—it shines spontaneously. So also we need not exert our will to be righteous when we reach this stage of meditation. “I should do this, I should not do this,” will not be our way of thinking. There is no ‘don’t’ for the *yogin*. All his actions will be only ‘do’s’ rather than ‘don’ts.’ All his actions will be positive.

There is no restriction on him of any kind, because he cannot think except along the line of righteousness. *Dharma* becomes his nature. It is said that righteousness and virtue begin to be showered upon us like rain, says Patanjali. He calls this condition “*dharmamegha*.” “*Megha*” is a cloud, “*dharma*” means righteousness. Clouds of virtue begin to gather around us and shower upon us like rain. We are flooded with virtue everywhere. We get saturated with the consciousness of righteousness. Truth and righteousness are the automatic outcome of the establishment of the mind in this state of meditation. I once mentioned two terms from the *Vedas*: *satya* and *rita*. *Satya* means “truth,” *rita* means “*dharma*” or righteousness. While all this has heretofore only been a matter of reading, now it shall become a matter of practice and experience. Truth and righteousness are the manifestations of the cosmic reality as described in the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads*, and these very same astounding facts will become part of our practical day-to-day lives, so that man becomes God-man here—and no more a mere mortal. He is not merely a saintly person, but veritably a divinity moving on earth.

There are various stages of man’s evolution. In the earlier stages we think like animals—our way of seeing things is just like a cow seeing things or a dog seeing things. We run after things and run away from things in the same way as a dog or a cow does, and there is no difference. This is animal perception and is what we may call the general human way of thinking. Higher than the ordinary man’s way of thinking is the good man’s way of thinking. Higher than the good man is the saintly man. Still higher is the God-man. It is this God-man whom we call a *yogin*. When all this happens and when the fourth stage of meditation is reached, the *yogin* becomes a veritable divinity and like God moving on this earth, say the yoga scriptures. It is good that for now we do not say much about the higher stages of meditation, because it will all simply go over our heads. Even these small things which have been discussed appear to be beyond us. The four stages mentioned now are actually subdivisions made by Patanjali of two ways of thinking: the gross and the subtle. Here is made a fourfold division of the two stages, gross and subtle, in terms of the association and dissociation of space and time, and also in reference to the grossness and the subtlety of things. To achieve this perfection in these stages

themselves will take many years of practice.

Here it would be advantageous to make a review of certain of the conditions that are necessary to achieve this stage. I'm not speaking about new things, because I have said all these things already, but I'm only trying to recapitulate what has been said for our own advantage. It is not possible to come to these stages of meditation all at once. We try our best, and yet we will find that it is hard. We will get lost in this attempt, we will start fretting, and then we will not know what is wrong. What I am precisely trying to say is where we can go wrong and why we might fail in the attempt. They are simple things, but they are very important things. We will find it difficult to think like this and even more difficult to achieve any success in this, if we have not taken this as our vocation in life. We should not make this a kind of hobby just as if one might go sightseeing—see this place and see that place—and see yoga in the same casual fashion like one of the items of sightseeing. We will not get anything in this case. We will simply go out as we came in. We should not look at yoga as a hobby and employ a simple trial and error method. “Oh, if I get something, all right, if I don't get anything, then let it go.” This attitude also is not good, and finally we would get nothing. We must come to yoga wholeheartedly with a determination to achieve something and with a determination that we will not return until we achieve something. With this determination we should come to it. All the great sages and saints of the past did this. Buddha was one. “Even if my flesh should melt, I will not get up from this meditation seat until I find what I seek,” he said, and he found it with this determination.

We should not approach it with a suspicious mood or a critical attitude. We must approach it with an appreciative mood of understanding. No one would like to be approached by a person with a critical demeanour. If I speak to you with a critical attitude, then you would rather leave me and go away! Nobody likes to get criticised—even a stone would not like to be criticised, and it would repel our approach if we were to approach it in that manner! We may be critical in the sense of trying to understand with a discerning attitude, but not in the sense of merely rejecting. We have to remember that even stones can somehow sense our feelings. Don't think that they are insensible.

Animals of course are still higher. If we read the discoveries of Sir J.C. Bose, the great biologist of India, we will find what a plant really is. It “speaks,” it “weeps” and it “laughs,” he says, and it can feel as we feel though it cannot speak as we speak. We should not think that we can just deal with things as we like merely because they cannot speak. They have their own language, though it may not be in English or Sanskrit or any of our languages. What is language? It is a way of expression, and such a thing is found even in objects which we see as speechless and insentient. If we deal with objects, thinking that they are just nothing, then they will also treat us as nothing. The attitude of yoga should be one of absolute friendliness with things.

We want the help of our object of meditation, for instance. We want it to associate with us in the same way as we want to associate ourselves with it. We are not dissecting the object of meditation as a scientist does with a frog in a laboratory. It is not like that, but is quite a different matter altogether. As a living being we approach things which are also living. There are no such things as dead objects for a yoga student. Not even a stone is dead—it is vibrant with energy and force, and it can be harnessed if we like for certain



active and creative purposes. How can we call it death? Today we are told that an atom is not dead—it can burst cities if it is so directed. Dead things cannot do this work. This appreciative attitude, based on a tremendous understanding, is what brings success in yoga.

### **OVERCOMING VARIOUS DIFFICULTIES**

Apart from this, an even more important aspect is confidence in our own selves. If we have no confidence and if we are diffident, we will achieve little success. “I am not certain; I don’t know if I will get anything or not.” If this attitude is entertained, then with this attitude we will fail. Why do we proceed with a pessimistic mood? Why do we think that we cannot achieve success? The perspective comes on account of some weaknesses in us. We have certain small spots in us which obstruct our attitude of confidence. We come once again to the accumulation of desires within us which speak a different voice, and which may speak in a more empathetic and seductive tone than our yogic approach does at the outset. As we approach this subject of meditation with greater and greater intimacy and as we advance further, the difficulties will be more and more. They will be subtler difficulties, more psychological in their nature, and therefore more repulsive. In the beginning there will be only physical obstacles, but later there will be psychological obstacles. We will have rational difficulties, difficulties of conviction and difficulties finally of fixing ourselves in a position.

Every step that we take in meditation should be such that once we have taken a step we need not take a step backwards. It should be a well-considered step and well-pondered over. To again stress the point, when we take to meditation, we have taken a decisive step in our lives—decisive in the sense that it is going to be our profession, if one would like to call it so. Meditation is not going to be merely one of many objects in our lives. If we take it as just one of many objectives, we are likely to use it as a kind of means to some other end, as many people try to do, but they don’t get anything finally.

It is not easy to catch this object of our meditation. When we treat it as a means to an end, it will elude our grasp. So it is that we find ninety-nine percent of people failing in yoga—perhaps ninety-nine point nine percent. They will all fail because unconsciously they treat this as a kind of means to something else which they want to achieve in life. “What will I get from it?” If this is our attitude, we will go back home as we came. Yoga is not a means to an end, and our subtle intent of using it as a kind of means will be repelled by it. We will realise how difficult it is and how much sacrifice is needed. We have to cut our ego into pieces—it should not remain anymore when we go towards this end. We should stand as a unit of truth facing another unit of truth which is our object of meditation. We are in a world of ends rather than of means.

What is it to be in a world of ends rather than of means? We must approach the object of our meditation as an end and not a means. One can never try to use it as a means to benefit ourselves merely and thereby regard ourselves alone as the end. The object of meditation will escape our grasp if we approach it as a means rather than an end. This is the greatest sacrifice that we have to make in yoga; there can be no greater sacrifice conceivable in the world than to treat things as ends in themselves rather than as means. Here we would feel almost like dying. We don’t know whether it is worthwhile living in the world when we cannot treat anything as a means but only as an end.

Well, this is the difficulty that we feel in the beginning. Later on though we will experience an excessive joy; “Oh, this is the truth!” The help that we gain from persons and things when we treat them as ends will be more than the little lip sympathy that we receive from persons and things when we treat them only as a means to our own selfish ends. Let us therefore think rightly, and let us not delude ourselves. Let us not be under the impression that to treat things as ends would be to lose something valuable in the world. Quite the contrary, it is then alone that they will come to us. “Here is our friend,” they will say, “we shall go to him.” Like dogs licking our hands, everything will start “licking” us with friendship as it were, because we are treating them as we are treating ourselves. The opposite view leads to a more negative scenario. “Very well then. I will come to you, but if you treat me as a stranger and a servant or as a subordinate or as a mere adjunct to yourself, well, I shall also treat you like that.” It is simple psychology and a great scientific truth. If we remember these truths, we will have real success in yoga. To come to the point then, these four stages of meditation are difficult steps that we must traverse. One must know the difficulties in order to understand what I have been saying. We can imagine the difficulties in practising it, but yet it becomes easy by a continuous thinking on the same subject.

### **HELPFUL DAILY PRACTICES**

As I have said, at least for two or three hours we must be able to sit and think like this. Go for a walk; sit alone for some time. Can we think like this when nobody disturbs us? I don't know if any one of us can lead a life of seclusion in the sense of a *yogin* or a full-time aspirant, but we can go for a walk, and we can sit quietly for an hour in the morning and in the evening. Yes, I know that it is difficult to find time these days—it is a great problem. Everyone is lacking time, but there are certain ways of finding time. We will realise that when we carefully analyse our daily schedule. We waste our time in many ways, but we can reduce the time we spend in unnecessary activities. We need not meet people whom it is not necessary to meet. If it is necessary to meet them—okay, then meet them—but if it is not necessary, then don't meet them. Why do we meet people unnecessarily? We can at least reduce some time spent for this habit.

There are some people who can profitably reduce the time spent in the routine of lunch, dinner, breakfast, etc. Most of us go on eating several times. Sometimes we take tea at bedtime, milk and lunch tea, and this tea and that tea, and then something in the middle. These are all not necessary things. As a matter of fact they are very unnecessary things. Why do we take a tea at bedtime? We seem to need to stimulate ourselves to get up from bed, otherwise we can't get up in the morning, but in fact this bedtime tea is not necessary to aid us in getting up. We may take a mild breakfast in the beginning stages. I don't think that everyone in fact needs breakfast, but in the beginning we may need it. Afterwards, there is no need of eating anything till lunch. People will say, “Let's go have a cup of coffee or tea at 10 o'clock and enjoy ourselves,” but where is the necessity? It will not help us. This is waste of time when we have to think of it. This thinking itself is a waste of time.

There is no need of eating anything after lunch until our supper. We must think over honestly—is it necessary to eat anything? This constant eating will spoil our health and also disturb our stomachs. We need not go on eating all these things. We can reduce a little bit of the time spent in unnecessary things, as that is our interest here. Why do we

waste our time in all these things—they are not necessities. Take our lunch, take our breakfast, take our supper—these three things may be necessary for us, but to eat more than three times would be quite unnecessary, and we should rid ourselves of it completely in our yogic way of life. Going to films, etc. may be habitual for some of us, but that also we can give up. I don't think that many of us will go, but some may have the habit. Reading things which are not necessary is not helpful. If it is necessary, we can read it, but if it is not necessary, we should give it up. We should not go on picking up any random paper that we find anywhere and any book that is nearby. Why do we want to see it? We have a prescribed course of studies made for our own yogic way of living. This is called *swadhyaya*. Apart from this, there is no need of reading anything. Read constructive literature. One need not read things which are merely of an informative character, or things with a destructive nature. We would best read only constructive literature which will help us to build up our souls, otherwise, we need not read anything. Thus also we can reduce the unnecessary wastage of time.

Then a question about sleep arises—how many hours of sleep are needed? We should choose it for ourselves. Each person may have predilections, weaknesses, illnesses and so on, according to which the time of sleep may vary from person to person. We will find that we need not bother about it too much, because the extent of sleep necessary depends also on the condition of our health. We should try as far as possible to maintain good health, and then we will find that we don't need much sleep. It is some kind of sickness in us that makes us sleep a little more. We are often bored, worried and nervous for various reasons. We sometimes find ourselves to be in a weakened condition. There is some kind of deficiency in the whole physical system—aches in all parts of the body and various difficulties like sneezing and headaches in almost every person. These can be avoided by a regimentation of diet and a changing of the ways of thinking. One must understand that many of the sicknesses are due to wrong ways of thinking. We have many psychological difficulties, and that makes us sick. It may not make us sick in one day, but when there is a cumulative effect produced by these erroneous ways of thinking, we develop certain illnesses. We may even not be able to digest our food. Our stomach becomes weak as a result of wrong thinking for years and years together.

We will not know that we are in these physical conditions. We will think that everything is all right, but it won't be all right. We should always have a robust appetite—that is the sign of health. We should not be brooding whether to take a little meal, or not to take it after an hour. That means we are not all right. There was a medical man who used to say how we can test our hunger—that is to say, whether we are really hungry or not. How do we know whether we are really hungry or not? If we see a dish placed before us and we salivate immediately, then we are really hungry! It is very humorous, but there is a great truth in it. He said that even with plain cooked rice without any ingredients at all, if we see it in a state of hunger, salivation should occur. If so, we are really hungry, and at that time we can digest anything. We should not go on saying, "This food is not all right," and "That food is not all right." Everything will be all right when we are truly hungry. It may not be all right only because we are not ready to take it. Of course, these are all very small and humorous things, but they are very meaningful and of great value. Many of us are not really hungry. We so often eat with only a half hunger in us, and these habits make us sick—not merely sick, but we also become weak in many ways. We cannot sit

for meditation, and we are disturbed internally by worries and nervous symptoms of different types.

I am not just joking around—these things are all mentioned in the *Sutras* of Patanjali. He has given us a list of the obstacles that we face, and illness is one. I'm not going through this list now, as it is not my main interest, and there is not enough time to put it into focus. These difficulties that we may have to face in the practice of yoga are of various types, with physical illness being one. We have to avoid falling sick as far as possible. 'As far as possible' is the key phrase here, because I don't think that we can be absolutely the master over illness. But to the best extent possible, we can avoid illness by thinking rightly, honestly and in a godly manner. If we try to think in a godly way, we will see that our health improves. Don't think merely like a human being, as we have been thinking for so many years. Now try to think like God—a veritable God moving on this earth. Can we think like this? Just see whether it has any effect on our systems or not. It will have an effect. We will feel a freshness in our bodies, a normalcy of our breathing, and a kind of freedom which we will be unable even to express. Therefore, a divine way of thinking is necessary to regain our health.

In addition, one should not brood over the past. The past is past, so let the dead past bury its dead. We need not think of yesterday. We do not know what incredible things happened in our previous births, so where is the necessity to bother with what happened yesterday? Give it up completely. Yesterday has gone, and there is no more need for it to worry our minds again. Think as if we were reborn today! We can truly reconstruct ourselves, if we can think as if we were reborn today. A fresh child we are today, and how youthful and strong we will feel if we don't care to know what happened yesterday. These are all small suggestions that we can give to ourselves, and we can have many more such suggestions according to our own interests. These suggestions are given lest we should be obstructed by unnecessary botheration in life, and the suggestions are to be coupled with the honesty of purpose that will lend them strength. A divine way of thinking will ensure us success in the practice of meditation.

## CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

### OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

Constancy is most important in the achievement of success in this path. This constancy gets affected by intermittent difficulties that occasionally may come up due to conscious as well as unconscious causes. Very few really succeed in the path of yoga on account of these difficulties through which one has to pass. The difficulties become more intense when they cannot be easily foreseen or detected. All this happens because, when we have newer and newer phases of experiences, we seem to be coming in contact with newer and newer types of force in the world, and each force produces a peculiar type of reaction. We cannot tell today what will happen to us tomorrow, because tomorrow's experience will be of a new order altogether. It is like when we have to keep changing our path every day in our travels from one country to another country. When we move from one state to another, the conditions prevailing in the social atmosphere are different. Naturally, we are a stranger there until we get accustomed to the prevailing conditions. Hence, in every realm of experience which opens itself up before one's vision, peculiar experiences will follow, and in their wake certain difficulties will also follow. The difficulties are nothing but our inability to adjust with the prevailing conditions. The conditions will not adjust themselves to us—we have to adjust ourselves. But we do not know what the conditions are, and hence we have these difficulties in the beginning. The difficulties start from the level of physical experience.

In one of the *Sutras* of Patanjali, he gives a list of the obstacles that one may have to pass through. Broadly speaking, the classification is into the physical, the emotional and the intellectual difficulties. Desires have vital and physical reactions, and due to our anxiety in overcoming these reactions, we go to excess many a time. An excess in anything brings about a reaction of its own kind. We may go to excess in work, excess in not sleeping, excess in sleeping too much, excess in intelligence or even excess in abstinence. Any kind of excess, whether it is in speaking or even thinking, may tell upon the system. Yoga is the art of not going to excess. The *Srimad Bhagavadgita* is our guide here. It is mentioned in the sixth chapter that all excesses are to be avoided. Whether it is in intelligence or in obliviousness, both ways we have to be very cautious in treading the middle path. But it is difficult to find this golden mean. It is always easier to go to an extreme rather than to follow the middle path, due to a peculiar difficulty of the mind in selecting the *via-media*. Excesses of any kind, whether intellectually, emotionally, vitally or physically lead to disorder of the system. The first difficulty mentioned by Patanjali is illness among many other things, and this is one thing from which we have to guard ourselves with caution. These problems of illness and emotional upheaval, intellectual doubt, etc. come in larger numbers in the earlier stages. Later on we become more and more liberated from them.

There is a big chasm in front of us in the earlier stages, and wherever we put our foot, we will feel that the wall of the chasm is giving way. There is the possibility of the student becoming diffident, because whatever we touch appears to turn black, and we do not know what is happening to us. It is all because of our newly entering into a system of experience, whose structure and law we have not yet understood. The excess can find its

expression in immoderate force in meditation. In their initial enthusiasm people are likely to mistake meditation for a kind of exerting of the will. Complete seclusion for many years together is one kind of extreme, or not speaking to anyone, or not even looking at people—these are some of the kinds of excessive emotional enthusiasm that often come upon people. Everything is good in its own place, and these things may also be good things, but when they are out of place they become undesirable. Even this attempt at reclusive isolation retards one's normal way of thinking, and a sluggishness can result. Just like the sluggishness experienced in the liver or stomach, there is also a sluggishness of thinking. Instead of becoming *sattvic* we become *tamasic*, and one can be mistaken for the other. There are certain similarities of *tamasic* conditions and *sattvic* conditions. Both look alike on the surface, and one can be mistaken for the other. Not only this, a greater difficulty comes from *rajas*, which can simply devastate the system and upset the balance.

### THE GOLDEN MEAN OF PRACTICE

There are in addition abnormalities of various types which may afflict the student. For instance, in some peculiar cases the more he meditates, the more difficulty he may have in sleeping. All this is because he has mistaken meditation for an action of the will. It is not the will alone that is exerting itself in meditation. The will is only one function of the psychological organ—along with understanding, feeling, memory, etc. No part of the vital function should be exclusively employed in the practice of meditation. There are other certain small mistakes that students commit in their enthusiastic approach to yoga, namely, neglect of the body. They think of the body as an ass and as something that should be cast away. This may be true in the metaphysical sense, but practically it would be un-wisdom to deal with the body in this manner. The body acts as a kind of ladder to climb up to the terrace, and we may not need this ladder when we have climbed over the terrace, but on the way up it is still entirely necessary.

There are many other layers internally, along with the physical form, which act as rungs in the development of consciousness, and all have to be transcended. No rung of the ladder can be regarded as unessential until it is transcended. In the practice of yoga, no step is redundant. Everything is essential in its own place, and it has only to be outgrown and transcended—but not cast away. There is no such thing as casting anything away in the practice of yoga. We have only to transcend it, which means to say we have to sublimate it into a higher experience. However, often students of yoga are not wise enough, and they suddenly and without proper preparation want to try to catch a hold of God. While the aspiration is good, it should not go to excess. All excesses are contrary to the practice of yoga, whether it is in the body, whether it is in the mind and feeling, or whether in understanding or in exerting the will in meditation.

Patience and understanding are the watchwords of yoga and not just enthusiasm of an inordinate nature. We have to be spurred on by emotion and aspiration, it is true, but we should not be stirred up by a wild wind of enthusiasm. When this happens there are likely to be disorders of the system. We must recognise that everyone has to pass through these stages. Everyone starts as a novice, and no one can be fully mature at the beginning. Everyone has to pass through the very same rut, for the reason that the actual problems of life cannot be avoided merely because we were instructed about them by others. We have to pass through the experiences ourselves. If some elder tells us

something is not good, we are not going to listen to him. We have to pass through the experience ourselves, suffer from it, and then not go for it again. Though in certain things we may heed advice, in certain other vital things we do not take advice. These are all things to be considered, because on account of them we may get into difficulties.

The disorders of the system are not merely physical disorders—a total disorder of all the five sheaths may actually take place. This is related in the first chapter of the *Srimad Bhagavadgita*, where the condition of Arjuna is described. All the sheaths began to tremble, to vibrate and to go out of order because of an internal difficulty that was in his mind. He was trembling in the body, trembling in the *prana*, trembling in the senses, and trembling in the mind and intellect—everything started trembling. This may happen to any student, and as a matter of fact, the description of Arjuna is nothing but the description of the student of yoga in the initial stages. We will all be in these conditions one day or the other, and then we will feel as if we were lost at sea. To reiterate, in situations like these, the guidance of a guru is most important.

The golden mean of practice is the central instruction in yoga. One should also not overestimate oneself in meditation or in any other area. We need not be too anxious to immediately catch a hold of God, as it is an extreme in thinking. It is not easy to catch God like that, unless we pass through the proper processes of thinking, training and discipline. While God is very easy of approach, He is also very difficult of approach from another standpoint. The difficulty arises in understanding Him, not actually realising Him. The understanding takes so much time that all our lives will go only in understanding what it actually all means. Then and only then can we try to understand Him and then adjust ourselves with Him.

Hence, “*Samatvam yoga uchyate*,” says the *Srimad Bhagavadgita* (Yoga is balance in all our enterprises in life). Social, personal, physical, vital, emotional, psychological and intellectual—a balance has to be maintained. How do we know what a balance is, and how are we to know whether we have gone to an extreme or not? We must see that every extreme sets up reactions. This will be one of the tests for us to see whether we have gone to an extreme or not. We will be unhappy and distressed, we will feel that we have realised nothing, we will have doubts of various kinds harassing us, and we will have a sensation of going down rather than going up. These are some of the difficulties that may set in on account of going to extremes.

The path of balance or harmony in yoga is the path of happiness. It is not the path of sorrow. Yoga is not sorrow or grief, and whenever grief sets in we have to be aware that something is wrong in our practice. There should be confidence and a sense of freedom which are the consequences of a balance of practice. When these are absent we move from doubt to doubt, from one kind of diffidence to another kind of diffidence, into suspicions of various types, and a sense of weakness in our system, and then we have to assume that there is an imbalance in our approach. All difficulties listed in the *Sutras* of Patanjali have to do with the consequences of an imbalance of approach. ‘*Pramada*’ is the word used by the *Kathopanishad* to describe this imbalance. A kind of heedlessness becomes the cause of our failure in yoga. We are not careful enough in considering all aspects of the matter. We must be aware that the practice is novel and new to us and is therefore even more difficult.

Even in daily life and in our practical workaday world, we find that often we get into

difficulties on account of not being able to consider all aspects of the matter. We suddenly get into a fit of emotion, then take only a few aspects into consideration and ignore certain others. It may be any small matter, but when this happens we are bound to get a reaction or a rebuff. We must also exercise a tremendous balance in our practice. The balance involves bringing every aspect into consideration. The condition and preparedness of the physical body, the mental attitude to things, the intensity of aspiration, and the motive behind practice—all these have to be properly judged almost every day.

### **CONCENTRATION OF OUR TOTAL MIND**

When we sit for meditation each day, our first task would not be to concentrate the mind on the object of meditation, but it would be more than anything else to review our present situation. We should not suddenly close our eyes and jump into meditation, because we must be confident that we are ready for it. Is everything all right from all sides, and can we take a step? Is there any kind of disturbance from outside or from inside? Am I calm in my mind? This is what we have to consider. A kind of review, a spiritual diary that I had recommended that we maintain, should be our guide in judging our mental condition before sitting for meditation. Otherwise, there will be revulsions of various types, and these revulsions will prevent us from going further—there will be a stagnation in the practice.

When we exert too much pressure, there will be temptations of various types. Temptations will come in larger number and in greater intensity when we exert pressure on the will beyond a certain limit. In the practice of yoga we will find that what we do not want to have, we will get more of it! We will try outwardly to avoid something, and then alone it will come to us. This is a secret of nature: if we ask for a thing, it may not come, but if we seem to not want it, it will come. These are again due to internal maladjustments. On the other hand we have strong secret cravings for certain things, and the craving is sufficient enough that these things are coming to us. We may outwardly not want them, but inwardly we want them. The inner nature craves, while the outer nature discards. Nature sees our inner being, and so it provides us what we really need inside rather than what we seek outside.

Hence, there must be a discipline of all the mental layers of our personality. I shall not grow tired of saying that what meditates is not merely our conscious mind, but our total mind. We should not then cherish notions inside secretly and then try to contemplate with the conscious mind; otherwise the bottom will come up and disrupt the top. Immediately the lid will be opened and then everything will be upside down. It is better to proceed from the lowest layer of our personality and to take into consideration the least important first, rather than to leap after the most important things first. This is because sometimes the difficulties are from the smaller things rather than the bigger things. It is therefore necessary to take notice of the pennies first, as they say, and the pounds afterwards. The pounds will take care of themselves. A small pencil may save us one day or the other. We should not then merely focus on the bigger things, because the smaller things are also important. The small things may assume a large proportion one day or the other.

It is not advantageous to confine oneself merely to the conscious level in meditation. We are something else in our subconscious, and this has to be brought out as well. It is



therefore proper to attach adequate importance to our buried feelings and frustrated attitudes and bring them to the surface. We then deal with them as we consciously deal with people, and then we will find that there will be no inner disturbance. The imbalances which may come in the form of physical sickness and mental unhappiness are all due to the revolutions that take place in the lower strata of our personality. We may look all right at the conscious level, but still we are not okay. We will have a secret sickness which we will not be able to understand or explain. All this is because things may appear to be satisfactory on the conscious level but are not satisfactory internally. Therefore, we must be a very good psychologist in the proper sense of the term when we become a student of yoga, but it is of course in order to examine ourselves and not others. When the whole personality gets cleared up and it shines like gold, then all the three layers of the personality will come up and stand in unison for meditation. Then it is that we will realise quick results in meditation. Otherwise, it is only a futile attempt to engage a part of our personality in meditation and still keep the deeper layers buried—completely disconnected from the action of meditation.

All these are precautionary measures in meditation. We have been discussing the four stages in the practice of meditation, according to the system of Patanjali. The first four stages are connected more with external experience rather than pure experience per se. When the meditation leads back to the undifferentiated subject, there is no longer a separate meditator and a separate object, hence the object of meditation has been totally absorbed into the subject itself. The procession of ideas is from the external to the internal. Gradually we have to move from the objects of meditation back to our own selves. We would then have succeeded to some extent in disentangling the object of meditation from its external relations. We would also be able to contemplate the inner essence of the object in terms of space and time and as also free from space and time. When the concept of an object in meditation is freed from its relations to space and time, something very strange takes place. Here we overcome the physical and the empirical barriers of experience and enter into a more divine type of experience.

It is difficult to explain what transformations really take place here, but we can just imagine with a stretch of our imagination what it could be. When we dissociate the object of our meditation from its relations to space and time, the object ceases to be external to us. What makes an object external is the intervention of space and time. There is space between us and the object, and therefore the object is external. If we free the object from association with space, there would be practically nothing left to differentiate us from the object. All differences are due to the intervention of space and time. When we can contemplate the object as independent of space and time, what are we really contemplating? Are we thinking an object? What do we mean by an object? How do we define an object? In the grammatical or logical language, an object is that which stands before us as something capable of being grasped through the senses.

The senses cannot operate here, as no sensation is possible without space and time. The senses will withdraw themselves, and there will be an automatic *pratyahara* when there is no space and time. What will the senses do when there is no avenue for them to express themselves and there is no field for their activity? Where is the field? The field has been withdrawn altogether. Space and time are the field of operation of the senses, and therefore through this field they act upon the objects, and then it is that we regard something in front of us as an object. But if space and time are not existent, what is an

object? Where is the object now? It has ceased to be.

Our minds will get giddy when we start thinking the possibility of there being something to contemplate without the intervening modes of space and time. In the majority of cases our minds will simply cease being able to meditate and will turn back upon themselves negatively—either as sleep or as intense *rajasic* activity. When we press a thing beyond its limits, it will show its power—even if it is a small thing. Even a mouse can threaten us if we try to catch it. The mind refuses to come under control when we press it too hard and do not give it any object for thought. We are then not allowing the mind to think an object because the object has been freed from space and time, and at the same time we will not allow the mind to go to sleep. What is the mind to do? Then it is completely confounded. The mind can neither think nor can it sleep—it cannot do anything else. When it normally thinks, it thinks of an object in space and time. When that is not possible, it drops into non-activity like torpidity or sleep. Now we are exerting a peculiar kind of pressure on the mind by not giving it an object to think because of our dissociating the object from the relations of space and time. At the same time we want to melt in consciousness.

Here we are on difficult ground, and here it is that we rise from ordinary spatio-temporal experience. If we succeed—by God's grace or by whatever reason we may call it—in maintaining this state of consciousness beyond space and time even for a few minutes, and also if we have succeeded in preventing the mind from going to sleep, we will enter into a state of joy. The fifth stage of meditation is meditation on the joy that comes about as a result of the abolition of the difference between the subject and the object in meditation.

#### **THE JOY EXPERIENCED BEYOND SPACE AND TIME**

Up until this time there was an object in front of us. Now there is no object. It is difficult to say what the object is and where the subject stands. Wherever the idea of space tries to introduce itself, creating a difference between us and the object, we have to try to separate the spatial content of the object from the object itself. This amounts to our identification with the object. Space yields itself to our minds only when we think only in terms of our unitive self, and not at any other time. Wherever there is an objective thought, by definition space must be there. However, when we think only in terms of our unitive self, there is no need for space because we are a non-spatial something. We cannot then regard ourselves as a spatial consciousness. Consciousness cannot be limited to space as it is not an extended something, and therefore it is also not in time. We cannot say in this case that we are 'some-where' or 'some-when'. We do not know what kind of state our essential being is. The identification of the form of the object with the consciousness of the subject happens when the distinction between the object and the thinker gets abolished in the freedom of the object from space and time. The moment there is a coming together, a uniting of the form of the object with the thinking consciousness, there is the freedom of consciousness from the shackles of objects. Immediately there is an exuberance, a thrill and a joy which come not by the possession of things, but by the identification of the object with the subject.

It is different from sensory joy or sensory satisfaction, because here the senses cannot work because of the absence of space and time. The joy that comes as a content of experience here is not the result of the senses contacting objects, but the result of the

object merging into the subjective consciousness, or the consciousness getting identified with the object. There is nothing else for the consciousness to do. This is the *ananda* or the joy that comes of its own accord, manifesting itself from within rather than from without—and not by contact, but rather by a non-contact of consciousness. In this circumstance, ordinary meditation ceases. We are no more contemplating, because the usual thought process of the mind ceases. There is no process, as a matter of fact, because again all process is spatio-temporal, and as there is no space and time here, process also cannot be there. When there is no process, there is practically no mind, because all mind is process.

There is only what the yoga psychology calls '*sattva*', which is pure reality manifesting itself freed from *rajas* and *tamas*. What is called '*ananda*' or joy here in this experience is the *ananda* of *sattvaguna*—the property of perfect transparency. This is also called 'higher mind' many a times. What we call the pure reason or the higher mind is the *sattva* in the mind. When it gets muddled up with *rajas* and *tamas*, we think in space and time and in objective awareness. When it is freed from *rajas* and *tamas*, we begin to be conscious without being conscious of something.

This is where consciousness tends to realise Being. This is the fifth state which the meditative consciousness reaches, and here consciousness is conscious of itself but not conscious of anything else. There is self-consciousness of a superior kind—not consciousness of an object but pure self-consciousness. Where the joy becomes the content of meditation, we are supposed to be in the fifth state. When even the joy does not anymore remain as an attribute of experience, one has moved still higher to a rarefied level of pure existence, and this is indistinguishable from unmodified self-consciousness where joy and self-consciousness are identical. We are now in the sixth stage of meditation as we are not experiencing joy—we ourselves become joy, and joy becomes conscious of itself. This is self-consciousness of joy, we may say. It is not self-consciousness of a body, a person or an individual—it is joy becoming conscious of itself.

While in the fifth stage it was a 'someone' experiencing joy, in the sixth stage it is joy experiencing joy. This state is indistinguishable from the consciousness of joy, *ananda* and *chaitanya* (absolute consciousness)—as all of these are one. Here we are on the verge of transcending the barrier of individuality, having risen gradually from the physical and related external object, gradually higher up through the layers of the subtle internal content of the object, and higher still to the joy accruing from the freedom of the subject from having to contemplate the object in an external relation, and finally to pure joy alone.

This is not a joy that any human being can experience in the world. It is impossible to explain it, and nobody can write about it. It is not the happiness that we speak of in ordinary life. Happiness is an emotional condition, but here we are not in a state of emotion. This joy is not a condition of the mind. It is not any kind of condition at all, because it is Being manifesting itself. It is therefore not an intellectual joy or an emotional satisfaction or the satisfaction of the senses. It is not someone being satisfied by something—it is the satisfaction, if we can call it that at all, which arises on account of being totally free from relations of every kind. Bondage is relation, and freedom is actually the divorcing of oneself from all relation.

We cannot usually understand what relation is, and we are likely to mistake our isolated

sitting in a room as freedom from all external relations. However, relations are not merely relations to persons, and it need not take the form of a kind of external dependence. The very consciousness of there being a world outside with which we have to deal in some manner is a kind of bondage. When there is a necessity to deal with outward-ness in some way, bondage comes in, but when there is no bondage, there is also no necessity to deal in any manner with objects outside. This is a higher type of freedom where it does not take the form of mere disconnection from existing things outside, but is a freedom which is a realisation of our vital identity with all that was previously thought to be 'outside'. When we dissociate ourselves from people, we may feel a kind of satisfaction due to the solitariness, but this is an artificial kind of joy. A higher joy is where we associate everything with our self. If we have nothing to do with any person in the world, that will be one kind of freedom. On the other hand, where everything and all persons in the world get so associated with us that we see no distinction between them and ourselves, then that would be a positive kind of joy.

This *ananda* or joy that manifests itself in this meditation is not the consequence of exclusion of the object from the subjective consciousness, but an inclusion in the subject of all the content of the object. The meditative consciousness enters into the content of the object, and at least here in the sixth stage of meditation we cannot say whether the subject is meditating or the object is meditating. Who is the subject and who is the object? It is impossible to say here, because there is absolutely no differentiating characteristic between the subject and the object. Consciousness begins to throb equally in the subject and in the object. While ordinarily we think the object to be a material something that is external to us, in this stage of meditation the consciousness manifests itself equally in the object. The object will begin to shine intellectually and spiritually as our own personality shines. There is a kinship of the subject with the object, with the kinship getting so intense that one will collide with the other and become one. In this oneness of the subjective and the objective essences, each one is equally good. This is the threshold of universal meditation. These are all great secrets of yoga and subtleties of meditation which must be taught by a competent teacher with proper consideration of the level of the initiated seeker. The initiation should be only into that level of meditation which is existent in the mind of the particular person.

### QUALITATIVE MEDITATION

Hence, there are stages of initiation comparable with the stages of meditation. We cannot be initiated into a level higher than where our minds are. Otherwise, we would find it hard to catch or grab the object. The object and the subject should be on the same level of reality, and only then can there be a comparison, an association of ideas, and an appreciation of values. Thus, this totality of six types of meditation is called by Patanjali 'qualitative meditation'. This means qualitative not in the sense of some quality inherent in some object, like colour, size or shape, but qualitative in the sense that there is the residue of self-consciousness together with a faint memory of the processes through which the mind has passed. Memory of the past is retained, and this memory acts as a kind of attribute to the experiencing consciousness. That is why it is called 'attributive' or 'qualitative' meditation in a very large and wide sense of the term.

When pure self-consciousness becomes the content of experience, which is joy manifesting itself, the quality that seems to be associated with this consciousness is

universal happiness or universal joy that seems to reveal itself through every nook and corner of the world. Light will start blazing forth through every atom of the world, and it will seem that there are suns everywhere—not merely in one part of the sky. Everywhere there are suns resplendent and shining! Every particle of matter will begin to shine through consciousness like the sun. This shining is not physical light, but intelligence revealing itself—commingled with joy at the same time. This is why it is called a universal meditation, where consciousness contemplates itself as a universal reality.

Man becomes at this point a superman, and we can almost say that the mortal has become the immortal. We will laugh at death in this state of mind, and all bondage and relationships that seem to annoy and disturb us become an integral part of ourselves in such a manner that they are no longer mere relations or parts. They are our own spread-out limbs as it were. It is difficult to say what it actually means to have one's consciousness spread out. Scriptures describe this condition metaphorically, but all descriptions of this state remain purely metaphorical, and it is in the end impossible to describe it. In the *Srimad Bhagavad Gita* and the *Upanishads* for example, we have descriptions of this condition, but all are symbolic descriptions. The descriptions are magnificent and grand, but they are all descriptions employing deficient human language, and they naturally have to be limited. We have the description of this in the eleventh chapter of the *Srimad Bhagavad Gita* and in the *Brihadaranyaka* and the *Chhandogya Upanishads*. The experiences of the mystics corroborate these profundities described in the scriptures. These are all matters which should not be argued about intellectually, because they are experiences that one must have for oneself. They are described tentatively in the scriptures as a kind of encouragement to us about what is going to happen to us and what is going to come to us. Otherwise, they have no practical value when they are merely heard or read about.

All practical meditation which is accessible to the normal way of thinking ends with the first two stages. It is difficult to go beyond that. All our efforts will generally end only here in the first two stages of meditation, and whatever happiness we may seem to have in meditation is only the outcome of the first two stages. It is very rare that people go beyond these stages. Though the meditator may think that he has had some direct experience of God in the first two levels, it is probably not true, as it is difficult to see God so easily! Spiritual experiences are, at least in the higher levels, inaccessible to the thinking mind. Most people think in meditation, and the thinking process is hardly ever outgrown. Most of us think only in an ordinary way, but this is not what meditation is. It is not thinking with external and internal relations. If our second stage of meditation is to be perfect, we have to be able to think the object independently and without relations. This itself is a great achievement. It is a great thing to succeed even in the second stage of meditation. As we ascend to the higher stages, our own personal effort becomes less and less necessary. The need to exert is only necessary until we reach the second stage, and afterwards we need not exert so much.

Afterwards we are taken—instead of our going, we will be taken. In certain of the *Upanishads*, we are told that someone will take us by the hand and show us the way, although we are not told who or what will come. We are given a tremendous encouragement by this sort of idea. Once that stage is reached, we will not be in the position to know where to go. Everything will look all right, but we are not sure in which direction we should move, as we could move in any direction at all. Then at some higher

level of experience, a superhuman being will come, says the *Chhandogya Upanishad*. The opinion of some teachers is that this superhuman being mentioned in the *Upanishad* is the guru, who takes us by the hand in the proper direction. Some others think it is God Himself coming in a particular form. It matters little to us who it is. If the guru comes, it is not in any way less than an incarnation of God. These are all encouragements, as I have said, but they do not yet manifest when we are in a lower stage.

### EFFORT AND SURRENDER

The effort that we have to put forth in the initial stages is large enough even to terrify a strong mind. If we read the lives of saints, that will give us an idea as to the difficulties of the path. The joy comes, no doubt, but the joy is very costly. We have to pay a heavy price for it, and we cannot so blithely say that we want the joy and the milk and honey. We have to plough the field, and likewise we have to tend this spiritual spark and nurture it with great affection—just as we presently take care of our bodies. We must see that this spiritual realisation grows healthily and blossoms to perfection. Then it is that the joy comes.

While the fruit is magnificent, the price is also terrifying when we think of it. Many do not want to take to this task, and many cannot take to it because of the price that must be paid. Most people want cheap realisation, but this is not possible. This seems to be the unfortunate thing about all exquisite things in the world and especially with yoga—we seem to not have the ability to pay the price. What is the price that we have to pay? It is not money that we have to pay. What we need is a whole-heartedness of approach and a correct understanding of the path. Can we pay this price, if God is our goal of realisation? God wants nothing from us. He has enough already, and He doesn't need any gifts from us! There is no need of being afraid and saying that, "I have to pay so high a price, and I have to give so many things to God." He wants nothing from us, because He is rich enough already! What He needs is us! The Absolute, which is the final objective of yogic realisation, needs nothing *from* us—He needs *us* and nothing else.

While it is difficult to understand what this surrender means, if we thought it were possible to do it, we might then find it easier to actually offer ourselves. Can we not offer ourselves? We are not asked to offer anything from the outside world. As a matter of fact, these things are of no use. The outside world does not belong to us; therefore we cannot offer it as a bribe. We have to give the price of our own selves—which is the whole art of yoga. Yoga is a gradual transcending of ourselves, which is the offering up of ourselves to the Absolute and the realisation of a larger and larger reality of our own personality. While from one side it may look like the offering up of ourselves, from another side it is a regaining of ourselves in a larger and larger avenue of being. If we aspire to live the eternal life, we have to die to this mortal self. This is the instruction of all saints: "Die to live," to put it bluntly. If we want to live, we have to die for it. Die to the mortal, die to the personal, die to the individual, die to the relational, die to the particular, and die to the external in order that we may enter into our own Self as an eternal Being. Empirically speaking it may look like a loss, but really it is a gain. Every gain in the realm of the spirit involves a so-called loss in the world of nature. It is very unpleasant in the beginning, but enthralling and enrapturing in the later stages. We may even cry in the beginning, but then afterwards we will be flooded with joy.

We have to be prepared to pay this little price. It may look like a big price for us because we seem to have to lose ourselves, but we are not going to lose ourselves. We are going to *find* ourselves. How is it that we have lost ourselves? It is by this meandering in this world of objects. Coming to God is like waking up to a wider reality which comes through the ascent of the rungs of the ladder of yoga. We may call it either an ascent to the heights or a fathoming of the greatest depths of life—we may call it by any name that we like. It is like an entering into, or an expansion into the Infinite—both ultimately mean the same thing. This experience therefore is the outcome of the six stages of meditation described in Patanjali's text. Whatever be the number of stages described in the texts, the succeeding one differs from the preceding or the earlier stage only in its larger freedom from relations of every kind. This is how the higher stage differs from the lower stage. As we proceed to the higher stages, the relations with the external get lessened and lessened. One stands more and more independently and in a more profound sense. Ultimately, one stands absolutely independent in the sense that there is nothing external. To this end, these stages of meditation lead us.

## CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

### ALL-CONSUMING DEVOTION TO GOD

The first stage of meditation is a concentration of the mind on the physical concept of the object with its external and internal relations. The second stage is the concentration of the mind on the very same object, freed from these external and internal relations. The third stage of meditation is the concentration on the same object as constituted of certain essences, rather than on its external form or shape in terms of space and time. The fourth stage of meditation is the meditation on the very same essence of the object as independent of space and time relations. The fifth stage of meditation is the fixing of the consciousness on the joy that automatically follows from the freedom realised as a consequence of the abolition of space-time relations. In this stage, the subject and the object come together automatically when there is no space and time and there is no distinction between subject and object.

The sixth stage of meditation is the resting of the consciousness in itself—pure self-awareness of a universal character, where even joy is not experienced as a content or an attribute of consciousness. Joy becomes consciousness and consciousness becomes joy, because Self-consciousness is joy. The sixth stage of meditation is a very indescribable and blissful state, and it represents a veritable freedom of the soul from mortality. The seventh stage in meditation is the realisation or the experience of the Supreme Being. As a matter of fact, it is not a state, it is the ultimate goal reached in a fusion of eternity and infinity. These are the seven stages of meditation in which certain transformations of the mind are involved, and which take place simultaneously with these seven processes of meditation.

The first stage is that particular transformation or modification of the mind, wherein it keeps a check on the undesirable modifications. There are two types of modifications: the desirable and the undesirable. In this case, the desirable modification of the mind is that which is conducive to the concentration of the mind on the ideal or the chosen object of meditation. The undesirable modification is that which pulls the mind towards sense objects. There is a struggle between the desirable modifications and the undesirable modifications, and one grapples with the other. The desirable one is the stronger one, and it tries to keep the undesirable one in check. This process of struggle going on between the higher and the lower modifications of the mind is one transformation, and is the first one mentioned in the *Sutras* of Patanjali. The first transformation of the mind in meditation is that which involves an apparent struggle between the higher and the lower mind, wherein the higher mind is trying to keep the lower in check for the purpose of bringing about concentration of the mind.

The second transformation occurs in the context of an oscillation of the mind between consciousness of multitudinous-ness and consciousness of single-mindedness. In this stage, we are sometimes conscious of the objects outside, and at other times our minds are concentrated on the chosen ideal. For a few seconds the mind will be concentrated, but for another few seconds it will be jumping to other objects. That state of mind, where there is a vacillation between external consciousness of variety and the consciousness of concentratedness, is the second stage of mental modification in



meditation. Again, this stage involves an oscillation between the consciousness of multiplicity and the consciousness of concentratedness.

The third stage of meditation is where the two processes shake hands with each other, as it were, and become friends. In the first two transformations there was a struggle with one trying to overcome the other. This would mean to say that one is different from the other, one does not like the other, and one wants the other to be gone. The objective consciousness and the concentrative consciousness were apparently in disagreement with each other in the first two kinds of transformations. In the third stage they become as one, like water flowing from one reservoir to another reservoir with both reservoirs situated on equal levels. The mental modifications of one kind flow into the mental modifications of another kind. There is apparently no distinction between external consciousness and internal consciousness. The distinctions of the necessary and the unnecessary, and the desirable and the undesirable cease in the third transformation of the mind. Whether we are objectively conscious or subjectively conscious, it makes no difference in this condition, because the object and the subject cease anymore to have a varying character. As I mentioned before, here we will not know whether the subject is meditating or the object is meditating, because the spatial distinction is abolished.

#### **THE HIGHER STAGES OF MEDITATION**

The fourth transformation of the mind in meditation is a check exercised automatically over the sense activities. The senses had to be withdrawn in *pratyahara* with some sort of effort, and we found it a kind of duty on our part to control the senses. Here in the fourth transformation of the mind there is instead a spontaneous check exercised on the senses, and they will not work in the same way anymore. They will be as if paralysed and stupefied with no more strength to move towards the objects. To give an example, there are certain circus masters who keep a stick in their hands in case the lions or tigers get out of control. If the animals show any tendency to get out of control, the stick will be taken and touched to the animals' bodies, and they then respond immediately. When they are touched by the stick, the animals are receiving a sort of warning that punishment may follow. Likewise, the senses receive a kind of paralysing check on account of the expansion of consciousness towards the infinite. The senses will not work wherever there is a tendency to an infinitude of experience. They are like a snake who is under the control of the snake charmer, and the snake cannot do anything as long as it is under the control of the snake charmer. We need not exert to control the senses here, because the senses cannot work. They are almost dead and gone, because the energy that was once moving externally towards objects has now been subdued, withdrawn, sublimated and absorbed into the mind. This is like the prodigal son returning home. The father and son embrace each other and are friends once again, and there is such a joy in the house. The senses are prodigal sons. They were running about hither and thither squandering energy, but now that they have realised their fault and come back, they are received with great satisfaction. This is spontaneous *pratyahara* that is taking place, which is control over the senses that is not exercised with effort, but through realisation. This is the fourth transformation of the mind that takes place.

The fifth transformation of the mind that takes place is also a consequence that follows externally in the wake of this control of the senses. When we are a master of our senses, we are also a master of our destiny, and the environment around us also comes under

our control to some extent. This automatic transformation that we observe in our external environment is to be taken as a consequence of the mastery that we are exercising over our own selves. As it is said, self-mastery is world mastery. When we have mastered ourselves, we have also mastered the world, because the world is inseparable from our own constitutional make-up. We are not an isolated entity in the world. We are in every nerve and every pore and every cell of our personalities connected with every bit of creation outside. We cannot deal with ourselves without dealing with things outside. One thing implies the other. Self-control, which is achieved to such an extent here, also means—even without our own knowing it—a control exercised over external environments. Then comes the higher transformations of the mind, where the mind can work independently of the senses. The mind does not need the senses to work anymore, as it can merely think, and things will take place. There is no need of seeing, hearing or even speaking.

This is a very advanced stage of yoga. People in this condition are rare in the world. They have merely to think something, and it will happen. There is no need of saying anything, there is no need of their doing anything, and there is no need of their senses working. They need not see, they need not hear, and they need not do anything. The mind has received such power that their very thought is action. Their thought is more compelling and more powerful than sensory activity. The highest transformation of the mind is where it merges into the Spirit. The mind no more exists as a mind when there is no thinking faculty. Mind becomes consciousness; consciousness is mind. To be is to be conscious, and to be conscious is to think, and vice versa. Our being is consciousness and our consciousness is thinking—thought thinking itself, as Aristotle told us. When thought thinks of an object, it is manifest as man, but thought thinking itself is God. Here is the last transformation of the mind: thought begins to contemplate itself, and it is God thinking Himself. We have become identified with God here. The last experience in meditation is identical with the last transformation of the mind. These again are not mere subjects for analysis and study, but they are matters of experience.

#### **DEVOTION TO THE BELOVED**

*Yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana* and *dhyana* are the seven accessories of yoga. *Dhyana* or the meditation itself is of seven kinds, as I already explained, and it is attended with seven kinds of transformations. With this I have given in a nutshell the essence of the teachings of yoga philosophy, psychology and its practice. This does not mean that the methods of meditation are completely exhausted by the yoga system of Patanjali. There are also other methods of meditation—for example the *bhakti* method. The devotees of God have their own ways of contemplating God. Their way is not necessarily this analytical, psychological and philosophical method of Patanjali. Their method is more of love, longing and even weeping for God. Only the saints who love God exclusively can tell us what love of God truly is. It is impossible to describe love of God, as we also cannot describe what God is. Even saints and sages who had this experience refuse to explain it, because it cannot be explained.

The love of God is a love that we are having for creation as a whole, because God is manifested in the world. These saints who loved God loved the world, and they made no distinction between the two. Their hearts went out to the Beloved, and we can imagine what it might mean for a heart to go for something beloved. Those who have lived in the

world will know what it is for a heart to be moved, and what it means for a heart to go for something it deeply loves. It is not our senses going, not our personality going, and not our speech going—it is something else that goes. Our soul is moved. Nobody can say what it is actually, because we cannot know what happens when a soul is moved. We cease to be anymore when our soul is moved towards something.

When our personality in its manifestation as the sense organs, the mental faculty and so on is moved, we may be aware of what is happening. But when our soul is moved, we cannot know what is happening—just something happens, that is all. Love of God is a sudden, ultimate transformation in which the mind longs for God alone and does not want anything else. This cannot be explained with any amount of philosophical analysis. We can know it only to some extent by study of the lives of saints. Study the life of Christ, the life of St. Francis of Assisi, of St. Theresa, of Gauranga Mahaprabhu and of the great *acharyas* who founded the *bhakti* cults in India. Read the *Srimad Bhagavata Purana* and read about the love of the *gopis* for Lord Krishna. We will be wonderstruck as to how this level of love could exist. Is it possible? Can we conceive of such a thing? But that is love of God. The love of God has again certain stages of development. It does not suddenly drop from the skies. The *bhakti* scriptures describe elaborate processes of the development of love for God. These are very strange things and are especially unknown to people in the West. It is not that devotees of God did not live in the West—there were some—but they were more prominent in the Eastern countries, and especially in India.

For those who are interested in the study of this psychology of the intense love of God or devotion, I would suggest one or two books—the most prominent being the one written by a disciple of Gauranga Mahaprabhu, the great saint of Bengal, namely, *Bhaktirasam Ratasindhu*. It is a very beautiful book. *Bhaktirasam Ratasindhu* means ‘the ocean of the essence of devotion’. I happened to come across an English translation of it recently, and it is a very beautifully written work in English. This book is published in its English translation by the ‘Institute of Philosophy’ in Vrindavan. We should also read the *Srimad Bhagavata Purana*. We should read it in the original, but of course those who don’t read Sanskrit can read it in any good translation. We can have an idea through these books about the approach of the devotee to God. The third one is the *Narada Bhakti Sutras*. This is one book worth reading, and it is a very exhaustive work. The *Narada Bhakti Sutras*, the *Srimad Bhagavata Purana*, and this particular one, the *Bhaktirasam Ratasindhu*, are all to be recommended.

The devotee of God generally regards God not merely as an Absolute in the philosophical sense. It is very difficult to love God in the absoluteness of His being, though there is one stage of devotion which is compatible with the highest of philosophical knowledge. They call it ‘*parachute*’ or supreme devotion, where devotion becomes identical with knowledge. That is however something very difficult to understand. In ordinary language when we speak of devotion to God, we mean love of God as someone or something, and not everything or nothing. The devotee does not regard God here as everything, as one school of philosophy would say, or God as nothing, as another school says. He is something and is someone whom the devotee can approach with an expectation of response from Him. The God of the devotee is one who responds to the love of the devotee. If there were no response, we could not love, so God responds to the devotees’ calls.

The *Srimad Bhagavadgita* is the ‘mother’ of all the texts of devotion, but it is a very elevated text, and it is difficult for a beginner to extract the essence out of it. I didn’t suggest it as one of the texts of *bhakti* yoga, though it also is a very great aid in understanding the devotion to God. In one of the verses of the *Srimad Bhagavadgita*, God is said to take care of the devotee fully, and that the only responsibility of the devotee is to love God—he has no other responsibility. He does not have to study books or to go to school or do this and that. He has no responsibility, no function to perform, and no other yoga except for intense thinking, longing and loving of God. As I said, God is conceived by the devotees as someone who can respond to this affection. “Oh God, please come! I am dying of separation from you.” When such a cry comes from the devotee, God should be able to respond to that cry. That is the essence of devotion, and we can easily imagine what could be the concept of God in the mind of such a devotee who wants an immediate response. It might be like the child wanting a response from the parent, like a friend expecting a response from a friend, the servant expecting a response from the master, or the husband expecting a response from the wife, or she from him. The human expectation of a sympathetic response is sublimated into a divine emotion in love of God.

### **SYMBOLS AND IMAGES IN THE PATH OF DEVOTION**

The peculiarity of divine emotion is that human sentiments cannot be destroyed, but are rather sublimated and ennobled. This is why many people think that the path of devotion is easy and also very pleasant. It is simultaneously both easy and pleasant, because the human sentiments are not overcome as in the case of philosophical meditation. We are not asked to cast aside our human ways of thinking in the devotional path. We are a human being, and we think as a human being thinks. What is our usual attitude? We want sympathy and cannot live in a place where there is no sympathy and where people do not respond. The least that we would expect from the world is sympathy. If nobody would speak to us, we would feel like a fish out of water, and we would be unwilling to stay there. This is what the devotee expects from God and is similar to the response we expect from a human being. There are then different attitudes of devotion. These are what are called the sentiments of love in the *Bhakti Shastras*. We may love God as our master, as our friend, or as our parent, and there are some devotees who even regarded God as a child—something very strange for us, but that is also one of the ways of devotion. There were devotees who regarded God as a baby! I have seen one lady devotee here recently who used to hug an image of God every day and who wept before it. This image was no more just an image for her—it was a living being. As a matter of fact, for the devotee of God everything becomes a symbol of God. There are no such things as images or statues for the devotee. They are all living emblems of God’s presence.

We may wonder as to how an image can be God. There are some religious people with sceptical minds who can’t believe in image worship. They see it as idolatry and as something quite contrary to religion. All these ideas arise in the minds of people because they do not understand what religion is and how symbols can play an important role in the practice of religion. What is life but symbols? Everything that we do is symbolic, and it would be a kind of futile audacity of the mind to think that it has risen above images and symbols. Everything that we do is through images and symbols. What is a photograph? What is a currency note? Have they any value? The fact is that they have

absolutely no value except as a piece of official paper—but yet how lovingly we fondle these scraps of paper! We know what a thousand dollar bill means to us, but it is really nothing if we go into the depths of it. Why is it then that it becomes so important that we must possess it? How affectionately we hug the photograph of a person whom we love. What is the harm in spitting at it? We could spit on any place on the ground, so why not also spit on the photograph? Yet we would find it repugnant to do that. This is pure image worship that we are doing in this case. Yet when it comes to God, we are very reserved and very strict and very scientific. If this scientific attitude applies to God, why shouldn't it also be applicable to other things like the photograph or the currency note? Why do we insist on science and logic only when it is a question of God?

Everything is symbolic. Take for instance when we meet a friend with a gesture of salutation. We bring our hands together in a particular position to greet them. Suppose though we want to strike a person—we would assume another position of our hands altogether, even if we do not actually strike. Only the position of the hands is sufficient to show the intent—but it is a mere symbol. Symbols speak, and the language is louder than anything that we can bring forth with our mouths. Moreover, the psychology of symbol, which is inclusive of image worship, is very significant. Apart from the psychology, there is also a very scientific and philosophical meaning behind these symbolic gestures. For instance, if God is everywhere, why should He not also be in the image? Why do we say He is not there? That attitude means to say He is not everywhere.

The religion that accepts the omnipresence of God should accept His presence even in an image—or even in a spade for that matter, as one philosopher said. God can be worshipped even through a spade. Even that simple tool can act as a symbol, but only if our hearts can go to it. Therefore, scientifically and philosophically there is no problem in taking any article of creation as representative of God's presence. Everything is full of God's potency. This potency can manifest itself under any circumstances. Psychologically—apart from this scientific and philosophical import—it has a great significance, because we cannot think of God as He really is. The image is nothing but an image that we have chosen to which we can direct our affection and love. We want something which we can love. It may be a human being or it may be something inorganic—it makes no difference if our hearts will really go for it. The one required condition is that our hearts should be fully engaged in the devotion.

Our hearts should be full of love for that which we have chosen, and that which we have chosen is our image. Our country which we love is our image. A patriot practises image worship through reverence for the flag of his country. To come to the actual essence of it, all sentiments—whatever be their character or nature—are worship of symbols. Sometimes we cannot explain it rationally. We innocently respond, “Anyhow, I just like it, that is all I can say.” This word ‘anyhow’ we have used has no rationality behind it. These are all sentiments. These sentiments are symbols that we cherish in our hearts and idols which we worship in our minds. They may be psychological idols or physical idols, but what is the difference? The importance of this adoration of the image or the symbol is that we can concentrate the universal characteristics of God on a localised concept or form.

Who can think the universal presence of God? The mind is not made in that way. We cannot do it—we become giddy if we think of the omnipresence of God, so we choose an

easier symbol. Whatever be the symbol, the condition is that our love for it should be equal to our love for God. In the analogy I used just now, when we love a currency note, we love purchasing power. We share and even love the value of the government which has produced the currency note. Likewise, when we keep a symbol like a legal document, it serves as a symbol of agreement. By valuing the document we symbolically say that we agree with the terms written there. What is an agreement? It could be a registered document in a court. But what is it? It is only a symbol, an image or an idol of a faith that has been sworn in the presence of people.

### OVERWHELMING LOVE FOR GOD

I'm giving only a few examples of what an image or symbol is, but they may also refer to a stone image or a kind of article that we keep in a church or a temple. We cannot live without symbols, images and idols. Our lives would be essentially nullified if these symbols were to be wiped out. The emotional sentiment that is centred in the idol that is worshipped in the temple is one which regards it as divinity. This distinguishes images of God from ordinary images and idols of the world. Not merely this, apart from the fact that the religious image provides us a prop for centring our love or emotion, it can also stir energy into activity through the concentration of the mind. The mind can so stir the constituents of the image, that the image can speak. There have been instances mentioned where devotees with their overwhelming emotions moved images into action. Again to come to what we have studied already, reality is present everywhere, and it can be moved in anything. It is the subject as well as the object. That which moves us within can also move that which is without. God can be moved into action in any principle of creation because of His omnipresence, and the love of God acts as an agent or a means in stirring the forces of God that are present in an object. The extent to which this motion of God in the object can be affected depends upon the intensity of our love. We can move the hearts of people by our love, so why could we not move God's heart? We can do it, and if God is moved the whole world will be moved.

The devotee has great faith in God. For his various purposes the devotee conceives God in various aspects. There are at least five devotional concepts of God. One is of God as a transcendent Creator. This is usually the concept of God in many of the religions, including Christianity and Islam. God is a transcendent Creator, and He is up in heaven. Though we may have been told that the kingdom of heaven is within us, it is difficult for us to believe that God is not above us. We always think God is above us as Supreme Father of the universe—Creator, Preserver and Destroyer—and to love Him is to love a universal All. Awe-inspiring is God. The Jewish religion is also of this character. The religion of the Old Testament is an example of the devotion of awe. God, who is a terror, a master and a father who will wield a rod if necessity arises—this is God's transcendence worshipped in religion. In India we also have such religions. This is called *aisvaryapradhanabhakti*, or devotion where God's supremacy, transcendence and power are taken as His primary characteristics, rather than something else. This is a very advanced stage of devotion, where we worship God perpetually as a universal power—transcendent, towering and master over everything. Our attitude towards Him in this case would be the same as an attitude towards a judge or a parent. We are afraid of Him, and we cannot look at Him without a sense of humility and fear.

Yet, devotion has varieties. God is not always worshipped as a manifestation of universal

terror and fear. God is also seen as a manifestation whom I can approach, as I can approach an important person in the world. I can silently speak to this God, I can speak to Him in privacy, I can open my heart to Him, and I can weep and sob and tell Him I am dying without Him. This sort of God is the one the devotee seeks. When our hearts are torn by the woes and agonies of life, we open our hearts to God. It is the same as when we are harassed by someone—we may go to a court, or we may go to our superior for protection, or we may go to anyone whom we think is competent to help us in some manner or the other. When we are tormented from every corner of the world, we look to God when there is no other help. For this purpose, God is regarded as a benevolent manifestation rather than as a transcendent terror.

In India we have a peculiar trinity of God, conceived as Creator, Preserver and Destroyer—known in Sanskrit as Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. We have the trinity concept in the Christian religion also, but it is slightly different from the trinity of India. God is the Father, God is the Son and God is the Holy Ghost—this may be the trinity in Christianity, but these are not identical with the concept of trinity in India. There is a kind of trinity concept in every religion, because it is difficult to always imagine God as one single totality. God may become an object of affection in His manifestations as trinity or in any kind of manifestation, but a difficulty arises. We want God to come nearer, but even this God the Father or God the Son is very far away. One wants God very near as a flesh and blood incarnation. God as incarnation is easier to contemplate and feel affection for than God transcendent, Master or Creator. There are types of devotion which take primal objects as incarnations of God, because God speaks through these incarnations—like the sunlight peeping through a screen. The sunlight is everywhere in space, and yet it is easier to see when it peeps through a window in our room. We can concentrate our minds more on it when it is located in a particular spot in space. “God should come to my home. God should be adored by me as a person,” a devotee of this type may say.

There were therefore devotees who cried, “Let us become stones in Vrindavan. Let us become grass, let us be born as jackals in holy Vrindavan where Krishna trod the earth.” This is the attitude of devotees which differs from those who want to merge themselves in the Unknown. “What is the use of becoming sugar; we want to taste sugar!” a devotee would say. This is because their love is of such a nature. Love cannot brook its abolition even if the abolition leads to a philosophical union. These types of devotees have no dislike for philosophy, but they cannot brook the abolition of love. “If love is allowed for me, well then, you can keep your philosophy, but I cannot tolerate separation from my Beloved.” Love is supreme in devotion to God. Another aspect of this level of love for God is that one cannot exist for a moment without thinking God with the whole of one’s heart.

### **THE DEVOTION THAT CAN SUMMON GOD**

I have an interesting story which is a little difficult to believe. There was a great devotee in Kerala who was a great devotee of Krishna. He was such a devotee of Krishna that he saw Krishna everywhere and would actually speak to Him. The members of his family could not understand what was happening to this man. He would speak of Krishna, glorify Krishna, worship Krishna, and talk of Krishna. There was no other thought. We cannot imagine the devotion of a man like this. One day he told his wife, “Tomorrow the

Lord is coming to take me. I am going with Him tomorrow. Please prepare a grand dinner for the Lord.” The wife said, “This man is going crazy. How can the Lord come and eat a dinner?” The time was fixed—the next day at eleven o’clock. “He is coming to my house. The Lord is coming! A grand dinner should be prepared.” What could the poor wife do? She grumbled as she prepared it while murmuring, “What is happening to my husband?”

The dinner was prepared and the man was anxiously awaiting the arrival of the Lord. He swept the house, sprinkled water on the road, decorated the gate with flowers, and lighted candlesticks. As the time was approaching, he called his wife and said, “The Lord is coming near. I can hear the sound of His conch. He is coming nearer and nearer. God is coming! Oh, I am hearing it—He is coming nearer and nearer. I am seeing Him, He has come; there He is!” The wife thought he was completely crazy. When a revered guest comes, we offer him water to wash his feet, as that is a custom in India. Hence, a special kind of vessel with a spout was brought which is used to wash the feet of guests. “Bring water, my Lord has come,” the man exclaimed, and immediately he prostrated flat with all his body on the ground. “The Lord has come. This is Your house, Lord,” and the devotee poured the water saying, “I am washing His Feet.”

The wife could see nothing. What is happening, she wondered? Her husband said, “Lord, please come. This is Your house. I have been waiting for You. Today my heart is filled with joy. It cannot contain itself,” and he poured water onto the ground to wash the feet of the Lord. The man exclaimed, “Please, sit here,” just as any Indian host would tell a guest. “Please sit,” and the man placed an *asana* on the floor. “Oh, Lord, please come,” and a garland was brought and the Lord was garlanded. But nobody could see anything, and there seemed to be only an empty space where the devotee was looking. The man then did *arati* in worship of Sri Krishna and prostrated himself. “Bring dinner,” he ordered his wife, and he slowly started serving from the plate. “Do You want a little more, my Lord? Is it all right? Salt? Sweets? Less? More?” and after the lunch was over, he told his wife, “My dear, the Lord wants to call me back. I am going. Good-bye!” and he suddenly died then and there. Nobody knew what was happening—least of all the wife who was crying with grief. Nobody could understand what happened. Perhaps the man knew and God knew, but it is impossible even to humanly believe that such occurrences are possible. How could God come to a house? We can only imagine what pure devotion can accomplish. It is impossible for the human mind to understand what this level of devotion could be, but devotees testify to this possibility that God actually comes to them.

We have instances in the lives of saints in India where God came as a servant. In the case of one saint in Maharashtra, Lord Krishna came as a servant, washed the clothes and washed the vessels without identifying Himself. The psychology, the meaning and the beauty behind the path of *bhakti* is something very enigmatic. Rationality is far removed from this level of faith, and the intellect cannot touch it. The intellect is barred from approach in this realm of devotion to God. I mentioned these instances only to emphasise that God can be worshipped as a person, because the human manifestation can also become a vehicle of God’s force, knowledge and power.

We cannot understand the implications of the significance of *bhakti* through the study of books. We have to live with people who have lived this life. We have to observe their



behaviour and see what it means to them, then we will realise that there are more things in heaven and earth than our philosophy can dream of. Philosophy is nothing when it is measured against God's power. It is something more than our intellects can think. This is what the path of devotion imparts to us. It is a matter of the heart, so how could reason explain it? Devotion is supposed to culminate in the recognition of the immanence of God—where God is not a transcendent Father, but something very present here and now. That is a kind of universality that is recognised in God's presence. While God can be a universal transcendence, He can also be a universal immanence. Devotees consider this to be the highest type of devotion.

God can be worshipped as an incarnation, as a trinity, as a human being and as an object of devotion in the form of an image or an idol. There is a set of worships among the devotees of India especially explained in a group of scriptures called the *Agamas* and *Tantras*. All these scriptures abound in elaborate descriptions of worship and devotion of God. The *Agamas* have described at least four stages of devotion. The lowest is worship of God in temples. We may take it also as worship of God in churches or a mosque—it makes no difference. They all have the same intent finally, which is worship of God in a concrete manifestation in a place of worship. The worship commences in the earlier stages with the availability of the accessories of worship, the necessity for the maintenance of the worship regimen and then the worship itself. We may sweep the temple, we may collect flowers for the temple, we may clean the temple, we may bring water for worship, and we may provide any kind of external assistance. This is supposed to be the outermost form of devotion to God. The internal form of worship is the higher type of devotion, and the *Tantras* describe this. The still higher stages of devotion involve the cessation of ritual in worship. There is no collection of flowers, no bathing or washing, no waving of *arati*, and no offering of *prasad* or sacraments. These are all not necessary in the third stage of devotion where pure contemplation on God is enough. That is the form of yoga where devotion merges into yogic meditation. This last stage is supposed to be knowledge of God and *parabhakti* (supreme devotion), where love and knowledge of God become one and the same. Here it is that Vedanta and philosophy become one with *bhakti* or devotion.

## CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

### LONGING FOR REALISATION

The path of devotion is regarded as easier than the other ways of approach, the reason being that people are easily affected by feeling and sentiments more than by any other faculty. It is comparatively rare that we appeal to the reason of a person, because often a person is not in a position to exercise their will beyond a certain limit. We have seen in practical life that feelings get moved for or against something more emphatically than any other faculty. This psychology is at the background of the fact that most people take to the devotional path of religion. In fact, all the religions of the world are essentially *bhakti* paths. There is no totally philosophical religion anywhere. Though they have the background of philosophy in practice, everyone is fundamentally a devotee, because most everyone has a simplistic concept of God equivalent to the common man's notion. Whatever be our learning, when it comes down to practical affairs, we think of God basically in the same way as any other person in the world. This is the simple truth about religious consciousness. It is therefore more advantageous to approach the subject from the angle of vision which will immediately appeal to the human sentiments. I have already tried to give a broad outline of this path. It is a very vast subject of course, but the essence of it is that God can be adored, concentrated upon or worshipped in any symbol or image. Even a diagram would suffice for the purpose of concentration.

As there are degrees and stages of meditation in the systems such as those of Patanjali and Vedanta, we also have stages of approach in *bhakti*. In such great texts as the *Narada Bhakti Sutras*, these stages are described in detail. There are nine modes of devotion, five feelings or sentiments of approach, and various experiences through which the devotee passes. In the path of *bhakti* there are such emotional transformations as are described by Patanjali. These are regarded as evidence of the advancement of the soul in the path of devotion. When divine love receives adequate emphasis, loving things of the world becomes more difficult for a devotee, because the love of God has taken total possession of the soul. All the affections which usually get directed to persons and things outside—to family, to country and to other things—get withdrawn and fixed in the concept of God. This concept may be gross or subtle, external or internal, immediate or remote—whatever be the concept—but to the devotee it makes no difference. What is important in devotion is not the concept of God but the feeling for God, just as it is the feeling itself that is most important in all affections in the world. It matters little what specific object of devotion we are loving—it is rather the aspect of love itself that is important. We can be transported into ecstasies of love even in regard to a silly object of the world. What is of consequence then is the capacity of the object to evoke our love and not the make-up of the object itself. As a matter of fact, it is not very significant to focus on the form of the object here in the path of devotion.

The principle of *bhakti* is that when love inundates the heart and is in a position to engulf the object wholly, the mind gets automatically concentrated. The path of devotion therefore is also a path of concentration. All yogas culminate in meditation. The ways of meditation are different, but the aim is the same. One may meditate through love of the adored object, with the force of will, or with an analytic and philosophical

understanding—but all this is essentially concentration. Wherever there is exclusive engagement of the functions of thought in a chosen object or a set of objects, there is yoga. Yoga is the union of the mind with its object. The paths of the different yogas are therefore finally not different yogas. They are only avenues of approach to culminate in the common experience of *dhyana* or meditation on God in whatever way we may conceive of God.

We may conceive of God as a universal existence, transcendent or immanent, or we may take Him to be present in an image. The *bhakta* (devotee) feels no difference, because even in this localised image he feels only the presence of the universal. Plato's philosophy has much to do with this great philosophical controversy of the relation between the universal and the particular, but in reading Plato we will realise that even philosophers who are averse to tethering their minds to particulars have recognised the presence of the universal in every particular. The universal is present in every particular, and we cannot deny this, because being present in every aspect of the particular is the essential characteristic of the universal.

### **GOD PRESENT IN THE IMAGE**

This is how the devotee looks upon God—even in the image. It is not an image that he is worshipping. There is no such thing as an image for him—it is God the universal who is present there in the image. Just as the vast heat of the sun can be focused through a lens, the universal power of God is focused through the image which becomes the object of love of the devotee. It is futile to criticise the sentimental devotions of simple devotees who worship images in temples, because these criticisms arise on account of a misunderstanding of the efficacy of the devotion and the psychology behind it. We should know that it is not the body alone that we love when we love a person. We do not love any object merely for its own sake as a fragment, but rather as the universal present in that particular. The meaning that we find in a person is the universal presence in that person, and such is the case with the devotee. He reads a meaning in the object, but the faultfinders see only the object he is worshipping and feel justified in criticising him. He doesn't worship the object as such—he sees the significance behind it. Possibly he alone can see it, but not others.

This is a very important branch of study—as important, meaningful, significant and practical as any other in the world. Just to repeat what I said before, its importance can be realised from the fact that all the religions of the world are paths of devotion—whether it is Hinduism, Christianity or Islam. All are lovers of God and are not merely philosophical analysts. This is strictly speaking the import of the devotional path to God. Even when we scientifically and philosophically conceive of the largest idea of God, persisting within it is a fundamental longing. In fact, there is no yoga without longing. In one of the aphorisms of Patanjali, it is said that yoga becomes successful only when there is an intense and ardent yearning for it.

What is this yearning devotion? We may yearn for anything, but it is all some form of devotion. The longing is the devotional principle getting engaged. One need not merely dissect the object into its scientific constituents, but one must also have a feeling for the constituents, because feeling is more powerful than reason and rationality. Yoga at a particular level transcends reason. Reason is only a help in the beginning stages, but in the higher reaches of yoga one goes beyond the power of will, and here even love takes a

different shape altogether. The understanding, the scientific attitude, the volitional activity and the affection that we have for the object of meditation in the last stages transcend the psychological functions. Finally these take the form of a longing, but it is difficult to say what kind of longing it is. It is the longing of the soul for God—we cannot say anything else about it. It is not one person longing for anything else. It is the impossibility of the river not merging with the ocean. It has to find its way to the ocean one day or the other. It is an impossibility for an integral part to rest contented within itself without completing itself.

The path of yoga has many branches, but the prominent ones are the path of knowledge and the path of devotion. All the other paths can be brought back to these two significant approaches. While untutored persons imagine that these are two distinctly divergent paths, under careful scrutiny we will realise they are only two aspects of a single path. They are two roads—if at all we would like to call them roads—which lead to the same destination. The concrete, the subtle, the conceptual and the spiritual are the normal stages of accent—whatever be the path or the approach. I have given some idea of the different stages according to Patanjali, but these apply to all the yogas. These stages are applicable to *bhakti* yoga as well as to the *jnana* path and to any path, because all these ways of approach are ways of the transcendence of consciousness from the external to the internal, from the gross to the subtle, and from the visible to the invisible. All lead finally to the Universal and the Absolute. We can't escape this whatever our own approach may be. The nomenclature differs and the feelings or attitudes also seem to diverge on account of the apparent differences in the faculties of the psychological organ. The psychical faculties are apparently different from one another but are actually ramifications of a single approach to the supreme Absolute.

When we hear or read all these things, and then when we close our eyes for a few minutes to try to understand what it all finally means and what we are supposed to do exactly, we may feel that we are at an impasse. We will be surprised that the understanding gets confused when it is asked to take a step. That is the actual practical implication of yoga, and please remember that it is the practice of yoga that we are concerned with and not merely an analytical understanding of its significance in life. The difficulty of the practice consists mainly in our not being prepared to take to it wholeheartedly. I have said many times that we should not approach yoga with an experimental attitude, because if we do, we will get nothing out of the practice.

The moment we try to experiment with nature, it is understood that we are suspicious of nature. If we approach anything with a suspicion in our minds, we will never gain sympathy from that object. This is the universal psychology that concerns anything and everything in the world. It may be God, it may be a simple object of the world or a human being—if we approach an object, a person or even God Himself with a suspicious attitude, we will receive only a limited response. Nobody wants to be approached with suspicion—our hearts should be open, candid and receptive. 'Empty thyself, and I shall fill thee,' is a great psychological truth of the spiritual path. To empty oneself is difficult, because we have prejudices which are like conceptual idols for us. Whenever we try to approach anything, we approach it with a critical and preconceived attitude, and this is why yoga fails in practical life.

## CONCRETE ADVICE IN THE PRACTICE OF YOGA

I should mention a few of the concrete facts of the practice of yoga which are of importance. The first and the foremost of all things is that a teacher is very important—a competent master and guide is crucial. The tradition is that we have to live with the master physically for some time and not merely be in correspondence with him. Physically we have to live with him for a considerable time until we imbibe in our personalities an understanding of the vital and practical steps to be taken in the practice of yoga. The second thing to remember is that we have to take yoga as our ultimate course of action. It cannot be taken as just one of many diversions in life, just as God should not be viewed as merely one of many things available in the world. He is all things, and yoga must mean all things to us.

But here again, we may be harassed by a doubt. “How can I take yoga as my all-in-all? I have got many responsibilities in life. I have got my wife; I have got my husband; I have got my job, and I have got this and many other things in the world to be done. How can I take yoga as a career?” We have this doubt because we do not know what yoga is. We have made the mistake of imagining that yoga is one of the things among the many things of the world. If it were only one of the many things, naturally it would be difficult to take to it wholeheartedly and exclusively. Fortunately or unfortunately, yoga is not just one of the many things—it must be the precondition of our approach to life as a whole. How can we say, “I have no time to do it?” If we have time to breathe, then we have time also to practise yoga, because yoga is a way of thinking and an attitude to life. How can we say, “I have no time to have an attitude to life?” It is meaningless to say that. Yoga is an attitude that we have towards the whole of our lives, so there is no need of time to practise yoga.

This is another important thing that we have to remember. Yoga is a reconstruction of our ways of thinking. It is rethinking our lives and a wisdom of life that we have to try to cultivate so that this wisdom has an impact upon every one of our actions. We may be in any vocation in our lives, but we can be a *yogin* in that particular context. We may be an office-goer or we may be a sweeper—but we can be a *yogin*, because yoga is an attitude of the mind and of the whole of our consciousness. Why can we not be a *yogin*—whatever be our vocation? Whether we are a worker in a factory, a professor, a teacher, a student or a businessman—again, it makes no difference. Yoga can reconcile itself with any vocation, because it is a principle behind all activity—and not merely activity—but all ways of thinking. The logical precondition of our way of thinking, feeling and understanding is yoga.

If we think of yoga as an Eastern concept, as a mystical approach or as a religious attitude alone, then we may have a doubt in our minds as to how we could practise it. It is however not an Eastern concept, not a mystical approach and it is not merely a religious attitude. All these are false ideas that we have. If I must put it succinctly in one sentence, yoga is the way in which we have to think, and we cannot escape it. If we want to be successful in any walk of life, we cannot but think in terms of yoga; otherwise we will experience only failure. We cannot say, “I don’t want yoga.” We have to like it and we have to want it—we cannot want anything else, really speaking. The question is not whether we want yoga or not; the question is whether we can want anything else. We cannot want anything else in this world but what I am calling ‘yoga’, because without it

everything becomes lifeless and devoid of vitality. Like a saltless curry, we wouldn't like it—so would all of life be without this yoga-essence behind it.

Our attempt in these talks has been to understand what the principle is behind the ideas, the notions, the understanding and the practice of yoga. What people suffer from these days is a thorough misunderstanding of the essence of life. It is not that people don't want God, but they don't know what He is—that is their handicap. There is no man who cannot want God, but there are apparently people who do not want Him on account of not knowing what it means. When we say, "God does not exist", or, "I don't want God", we only betray our ignorance of what God is. What is essential is for us to chasten our thought, re-educate ourselves and try to be cultured and aware of the true sense of the term. Then it is that life becomes a joy. With an understanding of this attitude, we have to engage ourselves in a daily practice, because this re-thinking is not an easy task. We cannot re-think ourselves like that, because we have had the same superficial background of old thinking for many years—perhaps for many lifetimes.

A daily schedule has to be prepared, and we have to stick to it systematically like the motion of a clock. What ensures success in the practice of yoga is the system of practice, method, consistency and tenacity. Every day we have to be at it in a systematic manner, otherwise it may slip out of our hands. The routine that we have to pass through should be of a uniform and harmonious nature, which means to say that we should not change our ideas every day. To constantly be changing the concept would be like digging a few feet down in twenty different places each day to get water. On the other hand, we will definitely find water if we persistently dig in one place a few hundred feet down. Again, if we dig only five feet in a hundred different places, we will not get water. To change ideas, concepts and attitudes so blithely would be like digging a few feet down in search of water which we will never find. We must go deep through one way, and we must choose one path, one method of meditation and one way of living. We must then go very deep into it, and when we break through, then we will see something wonderful. So it is that yoga insists upon tenacity, an exclusive approach and method, and consistency in the choice of the path and in the practice.

We have to first of all see clearly who we are and what would benefit us. As I said earlier, if we cannot do this analysis for ourselves, we have to take the assistance of a guide for the time being. To take to the path of extensive meditation exclusively at the outset would be difficult, and we cannot sit for meditation for hours together. We should therefore be wise in using some variety to engage our minds in meditation. We have to take to various types of approach in this particular case. Another important item is *japa*, which is the repetition of a *mantra*. A *mantra* need not necessarily mean a Sanskrit formula. It may be a formula that we choose for our own selves in our own language, because it is supposed to be a symbol or a formula with an idea hidden behind it that is meaningful for us. Meditation being ultimately an emphasis of an idea, the formula may help us in comprehending this idea. With a vehicle like this, we will be able to remember the idea. The *mantra* is nothing but a vehicle of thought, and so we may choose a *mantra* even in our own language, if we cannot understand any other. We formulate a symbol of thought for our own selves which may be our own *mantra*. Go on repeating it again and again—in the beginning verbally, but later mentally.

The third thing is to keep as our guide one of the great texts for study. We have to read

this text again and again until the ideas of the text become part of our nature, and we can begin to think exclusively in that way. We have to be saturated with these ideas. If we truly become saturated, then it should be possible for us to think only along these lines and no other way. Just as we at present have one particular way of thinking, this new and more elevated way of thinking should become our new way of thinking. When we open our eyes in the morning, we should think only along these lines. That should be the extent to which these ideas get saturated into our personalities. This is of course a very advanced stage when we can think only in yogic terms and in no other way. Then it is that we become not merely good but also divine and spiritual. To repeat, *japa* of a *mantra*, study of texts conducive to the development of these ideas, actual meditation coupled with analysis—'vichara' it is called—and daily introspection are all very important. Apart from these, we may also maintain a diary of our progress. I mentioned this earlier, because it is very important to note down every day or every week the progress that we make or the difficulties that we are confronting on the path. Knowing whether the difficulties are repeating themselves or whether we are having newer difficulties is a means to keep a watch on our progress. Is there any progress at all? This is what we have to watch out for. This is why we keep a spiritual diary. If there is no progress, we need to be able to detect the reason.

### **OUR HEARTS MUST BE PRESENT**

We will realise later on that the whole difficulty is that, when there is no progress, the reason is that our hearts are not there—they are somewhere else. Sometimes when we do *japa* our minds may not be there, and we may have completed a whole *japa* rosary, but we have not been at all present. Just as when we mindlessly walk along a road, the fingers may be automatically rolling the beads, but when we have completed one round, we may not even know what we have been chanting. The reason is that the mind was elsewhere. We may be thinking that we have completed ten rounds, but what is the use of the ten rounds if we have been completely oblivious? The mind is the important element in the rolling of the beads—not the number of rounds. We will realise that this is the difficulty.

The mind will escape, because the mind does not like monotony. That's why we prefer to go to a movie rather than do *japa* or attend *kirtan* (devotional singing). The mind cannot tolerate the monotony, as it is not accustomed to think just one thing. We do not like the same food every day; we don't like to see the same persons throughout our lives, and likewise, monotony of any kind is detested by the mind. This habit intrudes itself even into our spiritual path. The mind dislikes any sense of being tied down. That is why people want to travel from place to place. They will go to some other place because they are fed up with staying in one place.

These are all obstacles. Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj used to say that we must have 'stickability', which means to say sticking to one place. We need not be moving from place to place. These are all distractions, because we will be seeing various persons and things, and we will need to adjust ourselves to different circumstances, and this is an unnecessary waste of time. Stick to one place, stick to one master, stick to one *mantra*, stick to one text, stick to one method of meditation, stick to one way of living, and have one aim in life. We should not go on changing our aims—today one thing and tomorrow another thing—because this is not good. We must keep a watch over the progress that

we make with a spiritual diary, and keep contact with our guides until we are able to stand by ourselves. God Himself will guide us if we are honest, and we will be brought in contact with the necessary master. Nature itself will work when the longing is there. “Ask, and it shall be given” is the law. If our hearts really ask, it shall be given, but our *hearts* should ask and not merely the lips. If the longing comes from our deeper feelings, then we will see that the doors are open for us. We will be surprised that the resources of nature are at our disposal.

The spiritual seeker need not be despondent or melancholy. They are the blessed souls; they are the salt of the earth, and they will not be deserted at any time. The whole world will help them. The whole of nature will be at their beck and call. But there is once again that one most difficult condition: let the heart be there, let the love be there, let the longing be there, and let there not be any other want. There is nothing else that we are required to do except long for realisation. At the conclusion of the eleventh chapter of the *Srimad Bhagavadgita*, the Lord says that nothing can enable us to reach Him except a deep longing. All these sacrifices, all the charity, all the austerities, all the study and all these efforts of the will do not enable us to see this tremendous form that Arjuna has seen. Only one thing will help us—a deep longing. If we want Him, we will find Him, otherwise all our efforts will be of no avail. This is the simple secret of all paths of yoga. As I have said many times, the longing is not merely an exclusive devotional or sentimental path. It is the longing of the whole soul of our being. It is this that is referred to by mystics as “the alone flying to the Alone”. The more we think of it, the more we will start liking it, and the more we will get absorbed into it, and the path will become very easy.

I think that what we have heard and learned here is quite enough to keep us active and refreshed in our lives, provided of course that we have really understood all that has been said in its true spirit. Different things have been spoken about, but they are not discrete or isolated ideas. They are all integral parts forming a whole. We have to be able to bring these thoughts and ideas together to constitute the single edifice of the yogic way of life. Again, may I reiterate that yoga is not *a* way of life, it is *the* way of life, and we cannot but follow that way. This is the difficulty many people have, because they cannot understand what it means. They think that yoga is for the old man, for the monk in the monastery, for a particular section of people, or for just a part of life. It is not so. All these misconceptions should go. There cannot be any other way of living, there cannot be any other way of thinking, and there cannot be anything else that we can want in this world. With this, I think, I have stated the quintessence of the approach to yoga.



# CONCLUSION

## THE WISDOM OF LIFE

We should make it a point to collect our thoughts and make these thoughts a part of our personalities. Whatever we have learned, thought about or meditated upon has to be a little different from what people generally read in schools and universities. We know the difference, and I need not go into it at length. Generally, learning is a cumulative process. It is something like a property that one has, but this is not the real learning which will help us in our lives. It is said in an old proverb of India, that the food that is to be carried throughout the journey and also the knowledge that is in books will not help us for very long. Hence, our learning and knowledge should not be merely in books. Not only that, our knowledge should also not be a sort of property that we are carrying. We know that all property can leave us one day or the other. Anything that has been accumulated is likely to leave us.

Our learning or knowledge is not to be a kind of asset that we are carrying—something that is outside our nature—like the house that we have, the properties, the fields, the business or the money that we have. These are our assets, but these assets are not reliable, because we do not know how long they can be with us and when they will leave us. Our knowledge is to be a part of our being. This is the distinction between knowledge and wisdom, as it is generally stated. In an *ashram*, we seek out the presence of saints and sages in order to imbibe a type of knowledge which will not be easily forgotten. Similarly, we do not forget our own existence, our own special inherent characteristics, our own name, that we have come from such and such a place, that we were born to so and so, or that we have a certain vocation, and so on. These have become so intimately related to our personalities that we cannot forget them.

So should be the knowledge or the wisdom of life that we acquire. It is this wisdom that has become a part of our nature that will indeed help us. When the need comes, we cannot just search for the knowledge in our pockets, as we will not find it there. Knowledge that is in our pockets or in the books or that remains merely a memory will not help us. The great distinction between spiritual insight and accumulated learning of the world is that while learning is tentatively helpful and workable in the pragmatic world, the insight of life enables us to be happy in this world. The essence of knowledge is happiness, and the extent to which happiness is rooted in our permanent nature will also be the test of our wisdom in life. It is difficult to be happy in the world. People who have lived in the world will know why it is so. There are obstacles of various kinds all coming to us unexpectedly—nothing comes to us with a previous notice! Nothing of the world will tell us that it is coming and whether it is for us or against us.

Everything will come when it wants to come. To take these things in their proper spirit when they come, whether they are for us or against us, is a part of the wisdom of life. Mere book learning will not help us in this matter, because the learning of a scientific or a philosophical character would give us only some sort of outward information about the characteristics of things. But this learning will not tell us how these things will act upon us. The things of the world may be studied in a scientific manner, but what counts more is not merely our understanding of what these things are superficially, but rather what

they mean to us at any given moment of time. It is this knowledge that people lack. We always underestimate or overestimate things. We can never have a proper evaluation of things, because this is exactly the blindness that thwarts us, namely, that we lack the wisdom of life.

### INSIGHT INTO LIFE

The spiritual wisdom which the scriptures and the sages give us is not a bookish knowledge. It is not a learning in the ordinary sense at all. It is something difficult to equate with the qualifications that we generally acquire in our institutions of education. A simple truth of the world is that to be happy in the world is quite difficult. Just as it is difficult to be happy, so also it is difficult to be wise in this world. Both mean the same thing. The unwise man is always unhappy, because wisdom is happiness, and knowledge is happiness. They are not only qualitatively related to each other, but one is identical with the other. In the ultimate sense they are the quality of God Himself—wisdom and happiness mean '*chit*' and '*ananda*' in the technical Sanskrit definition of God. He is consciousness and bliss, to put it in ordinary language.

He is wisdom and happiness, and any reflection of God in the world is a comparative reflection of perfection. Wherever there is a reflection of God's presence in any manner whatsoever, happiness is revealed. It may be just a drop, it may be a most inconceivably small percentage—it does not matter—but if God is revealing Himself, then we feel a rapture and an ecstasy. Insight into life is another name for a minute reflection of God's presence in human life. It is towards this end that yoga and the psychology of spiritual practice lead the mind of man. Every day it should be the duty of a student of yoga to watch his steps and to determine the extent of the progress that has been made.

How do we know that we have progressed? It is not a physical space that we have to count—it is rather a mental attitude. Most people cannot go to bed with a contented heart. There is something heavy weighing down on their shoulders when they go to bed at night. It is impossible for most people in the world to get a good sleep, because everyone is tethered down to unexpected, unforeseen and anxious situations. "Something may happen; something may not happen; something which I don't like may happen, or something which I want may not happen." These are the anxieties with which we go to bed every night. These are difficult enough to understand, and burdensome enough for any person. The purpose of the study of yoga is to free us from these tangles and not merely to give us some information. It is not for us to assume that we have learned something and that we have progressed merely because we think we know more. There has to be something in it more vital and significant that is crucial to us.

We have to go with a contented heart. We have to go with a feeling that we have achieved something which is meaningful to us. What could be more important to us than our own Self? Can we count upon anything else in the world as more consequent, momentous and meaningful than our own Self? What is the use of gaining the whole world, if we are losing our own soul, as Jesus phrased it? If we are to lose our own soul and gain the whole world, what does it avail us? Ultimately then, what is the most valued thing? Our own Self is the most valued thing. If we are out of tune, out of track, out of order, and have got drowned in the ocean of life, then what value could the world have for us? What is all this glory of the world, and what does it mean? It is nothing, it is

trash, and it is a straw for us if we have lost our own soul.

If we read Goethe's *Faust*, we will know what it is to sell one's soul, and what calamities can then come as a result. Every one of us has sold himself to some extent at least. It is selling one's soul that keeps us in slavery to the world. We have sold ourselves; so naturally, we are slaves. To sell oneself is to be a slave of others or of the world. What is it to sell oneself? To sell oneself is to fix one's affection in things which are untrustworthy and in a world where things will deceive us. In these ephemeral things we pin our faith and affection, and so we sell ourselves to phantoms of the world which will immediately react upon us in their own way. To guard ourselves against this onslaught of the world is the yoga that we practise. I'm now giving here certain practical workaday outlines of what yoga is, along with the deeper implications about which I have spoken earlier. Sometimes it is easy to understand big things and difficult to understand small things, and it may be possible that we will fail in the small things, while we may appear to be successful in the larger things.

Up to this time it was my endeavour to speak on the profundities of yoga, but now I want to discuss some things that are very simple, but which are also of great importance. What makes us unhappy is not our faithlessness in the existence of God. We may be a very good churchgoer and temple worshipper; we may be faithful to God and believe in the existence of God, but nevertheless we may be unhappy. While the larger, general perspectives of religion and philosophy are good enough, they may not help us in the small things in life, because the knowledge has not entered into our personality. This knowledge has remained a commodity that we are carrying, like a load on our backs, and no material or psychological commodity can help us. This knowledge should not become a commodity that we are carrying. Knowledge is our own Self, and where it becomes our own Self, we blossom like a flower. Then we will feel that we are a true human being with some meaning in us.

Otherwise, many a time we ask despondently, "What is the meaning in life?" Many people do not understand why they were born at all. There are certain circumstances in life which make us cry, and we feel that it would be better to be rid of this world. Such situations are extremes of reaction set up against people. Against these difficulties we have to guard ourselves, but not with a drawn sword as if we were confronting an enemy. Yoga tells us not to be an enemy of anyone. We are not to come with drawn swords, because this is not the way to happiness. Hatred does not cease by hatred. Hatred ceases by love, says the Buddha.

### **YOGA AT ITS MOST PRACTICAL**

This is not an instruction to us merely as regards our neighbour. Rather, it is in regard to all things in creation. This is the simple, outer, social and personal meaning of this attitude to life. Yoga has to come down to the practical level and be in our own homes as it were, and not remain merely in the heavens. Yoga is not merely a matter of our *puja* room, or the monasteries and churches. When yoga comes down to the street, to the shop, to the bazaar and to the workaday world, then it is that we can say that God has entered into our lives. To reiterate, the purpose of yoga is to make us happy human beings. It is only then that we can think of becoming a God-being. Every step that we take in the path of yoga is a path to happiness. From freedom to freedom, from happiness to happiness, and from broadness to broadness we move in the path of yoga.

Our movement is from one whole to another whole. The 'small whole' we may say is the beginning, and the 'larger wholes' are the subsequent stages. There was one philosopher who wrote a book on what is called 'whole-ism'. He said that everything moves from whole to whole. It is not a part that moves to the whole, as generally people think. Even a part is a whole in itself. A cell in our bodies is a whole and therefore complete. If we ask a biologist, he will say that any body is complete in itself and is a whole. It may look like a part, but in itself it is a whole.

We are told that we are a part of creation, but we think we are a whole by ourselves. We never regard ourselves as a part, because it is almost impossible to think so, but even a cell of our bodies is a whole by itself, if it is analysed. Many wholes make a larger whole—like cells becoming a body for instance. Wholes are concentrated into other wholes and are ultimately consummated in the supreme merger of all things, which is the Absolute. Such is yoga in its principle and practice—easy to understand, something very happy and most delighting when it comes into our hearts. In broad outlines, the outer aspects of the practice of yoga are possibly more important than our metaphysical understanding of it. This is because we are likely to be disturbed by small annoyances, and at the time that we experience them, they may be of greater consequence than anything else in the world. What disturbs our lives are the little pinpricks of life and not the larger aspects of *maya* or the cosmic *prakriti*. These are not really our problems. Acharya Sankara's concept of *maya* as the universal attribute of *Ishwara* is not out problem. Our actual problems are very small ones, and if we carefully think about our own personal lives, we will find that our wants are small.

Yet it seems to be impossible to fulfil them. Our difficulties are many a time of a very silly character. To properly react to these simple situations of life is the test of yoga. If we want to know the inner stuff of a person, we have to watch his daily, small works and not just the big things that he does. He may be wonderful in the big public things, but if we watch him in the small things he does—like taking a bath, eating lunch, speaking to a person—these may all seem unconnected to his spiritual life. We can know a person and also know ourselves more from these things than from the university degrees that we have or the offices we hold. We can slip when it comes to the small things, while we may be very cautious as regards the bigger things.

*Maya*, if at all there is any such thing, tempts us and catches us in the small things. The devil catches us only in the smallest of things and not the big things. He knows that we will be very cautious in the big things. The enemy comes from the back—but never from the front—because he knows that with the things right in front of us we will be cautious. Why not then come from the back? This is how *maya*, *avidya* (ignorance), *ajnana* (lack of knowledge), nescience and the world work. Whatever we may call them, it makes no difference, because our problems are of a uniform character. We have to be cautious in our immediate circumstances, and not just in the more rarefied relationships.

We may not know what is just under our own skins pricking us from within, while we may be very careful to see what is far, far beyond. With a telescope we may be seeing what is happening on Mars, but we may not know what is happening next door. Yoga tells us that these oversights may be our doom, and therefore we must be wise in these immediacies of life. God is an immediacy and everything of true importance is also an immediacy. That which will help us is very near, and that which will trouble us is also

very near. Our friends are not coming to us from thousand of miles away, nor are our enemies coming from such a distance. Our troubles and our solace are all immediately near us. Our 'friends' will speak to us from within, and our 'enemies' also may speak to us from within. "I am here," both will say.

The student of yoga should be concerned with the larger philosophical aspects. However, while these issues have their own importance, there are other things which are also important, and which we are likely to neglect. I am going on repeating all these things, because I have tried to explain why we are unhappy in the world. Our unhappiness is not due to our religious attitude or because we lack education. Perhaps we are all well-educated, but despite that, we can be unhappy due to small maladjustments in the personality. For instance, we may not be able even to speak to a person without hurting their feelings. There are some people who are like that. It is impossible for them to meet with other people without causing some sort of negative response to be elicited. They may not be deliberately doing that, but it is almost second nature to them, and they always say the wrong thing at the wrong time. They shouldn't speak things which are not necessary or things which are harmful, or conduct themselves in an anti-social or unsociable manner, but yet they do it time and again. Why should this be? These are some of the smaller difficulties in life which have not been dealt with properly, and which have much to do with yoga. We will be surprised that these things have something to do with yoga. I have said, God is nearest to us, and God will see what is nearest, because He is nearest. He is an immediacy. God is also called the '*Atman*,' and this is a very significant word.

#### **GOD IS NOT FAR AWAY**

The word implies that God is not far away. When we say God is the *Atman*, we mean that God is our Self. We can understand what the Self can be. What can be nearer to us than the Self? When God is the *Atman*, it means God is nearest to us, and therefore the Real can manifest itself in what is immediately here and near to us. All reactions are immediate. Perhaps I'm saying something new today. All the while we might have been under the impression that the world is big, the cosmos is so immense, creation is so wondrous and God is Absolute. That is so, but today I am trying to point out another thing, namely, that they are also something quite unimaginable, and that they can be in a place, a condition or a situation that is so very immediate to us—more immediate than we could even dream. God is not merely *Ishwara*, but He also is the *Atman*. When we say He is *Ishwara*, we speak of Him as the universal Creator—very big and awe-inspiring. When we say He is the *Atman*, He is very immediate. He is internal even to our own hearts. Nearer to us than our own breath is that Reality.

We have to learn in our study of yoga that the whole world can set up reactions—inside rather than just outside. We should not expect reactions always from the outside. While reactions can take place from outside, because God is also in a certain sense outside, He is also inside. He can set up reactions from another corner altogether. Whatever is outside is also inside, says the *Chhandogya Upanishad*. The text says in a very beautiful language that just as there are thunder and lightning, sun, moon and stars outside, these things are also inside. Everything outside in the universe has a counter-correlative in one's own personality.

Therefore, our caution about the world outside is not enough. This is the wisdom of

yoga, which is for us also the wisdom of life. This is why we are often told, “Know thyself and be free.” It is difficult to know this truth. We may know many things of the world, but not this simple thing, because the most difficult things of the world are the simple things. The complex things can be analysed, but indivisible, unitary and simple elements cannot be resolved further. The most indivisible and unitary element is our own Self, and everything is connected with it. This fact is very subtle and easy to forget, and it eludes our grasp, but this is the significance of the path of yoga. Yoga is external as well as internal. It is a macrocosmic as well as microcosmic approach, and our vigilance must therefore be twofold. Yoga is both a father and a mother in showing affection to us, but it is also like a double-edged sword which can cut both ways. Such is this wondrous and difficult path of yoga. I am confident that most can find access to its subtleties. There is absolutely no doubt that these ideas which have been implanted in our minds are going to help us in our practical lives. What is the use of anything, if it is not going to help us in our lives? Everything must also be helpful in relation to our day-to-day lives, and this knowledge is going to help us in our day-to-day lives.

It is going to make us a full human being—a human being in the sense of a happy being. This happiness will be a part of our nature. We will be radiating joy, and all the apparent reactions of the world around us will cease. In the beginning though, there will be opposition from inside as well as outside. Persons, things and conditions may terrify us many a time—outwardly as well as inwardly. The first thing that we get when we churn the ocean is vinegar and not nectar. In the *Puranas* there is the story of the churning of the ocean. The gods and the demons churned the ocean for nectar, but what they got in the beginning was not nectar but poison. The poison choked their throats, but then later no doubt nectar came. In the beginning though, what came was not nectar, so we shouldn't expect nectar to come in the beginning in our practice. What we will get instead are disturbances, reactions and unpleasantness of various types, but we have to bear up to them.

All this is not merely a story of the churning of the ocean in the *Puranas*; it is also an analogy for the lives of all the saints and sages who tread this path. We will know this if we read the lives of saints—the most outstanding being the life of Buddha himself. We see what life he lived, what reactions he had to face, and what difficulties he had on the path. Many people would be intimidated by these problems, and they wouldn't be willing to go through them. Fortunately for us we have the lives of these great people to encourage us, so that we will not be deterred by the initial obstacles.

When homeopathic medicines begin to act, they sometimes aggravate the illness which we are trying to cure. It looks as if we had become worse, but soon thereafter the illness ceases completely. Perhaps, all human processes and all things in the world follow this rule of aggravating first and then dying out completely. There is a particular section of the eleventh chapter of the *Srimad Bhagavad Gita* where everything seems to be ‘at sixes and sevens’—all confusion and disorder where nothing at all is clear. The eleventh chapter of the *Gita* is precisely the situation of the initial step in yoga. Everything will be hard in the beginning. We won't know what this is or what that is, which is exactly the situation in which Arjuna found himself in the eleventh chapter. In the beginning we will have adverse reactions, which come because of an interference with the system of living to which the mind has long been accustomed. There seems to be a sudden upset of forces from all sides which may terrify us, because the mind is now being introduced to

a new method of thinking to which it has not yet been initiated. The mind will not agree, and it can easily turn away from the path. The mind sets up reactions, and when the mind sets up reactions, it looks as if the world also is up against us. When we take the initial step in yoga, there will be a feeling of being lost. All this will happen to us only if we practise—not merely when we read or talk about it. When we really start contemplating, meditating and seriously taking to yoga, then it is that these experiences come to us.

One need not be afraid of these things. While these poisonous vapours may try to suffocate the efforts in yoga, later we will have a flood of nectar flowing towards us, as was the case in the story in the *Puranas*. What is this story? It is nothing but the spiritual evolutionary process described in images and symbols. The path of yoga is both difficult and also wonderful. It is the path to God. While God is most compassionate and loving, He is also a hard taskmaster. God is both of these. He is a loving mother and also a very critical father. He can punish us and also save us. The path of yoga, being the path to God, is of a similar character. These are the watchwords that I have offered as a kind of guidance in our day-to-day lives, which again I want to emphasise, should become a part of our nature and a part of our being. Yoga should be our own selves. *We are yoga, ultimately. We are not to practise it as something outside us. To live yoga is to live a godly life, and it is to bring God into our own lives. Yoga means to be happy even in adverse situations. It is difficult indeed, but success will come, and it has to come, if we have honestly heeded the call. May God bless you all. Hari Om Tat Sat.*

## GLOSSARY OF SANSKRIT TERMS

### A

abhyasa: repetition; practice

abhyasa yoga: the yoga of persistent practice

adhibhuta: pertaining to the elements

adhidaiva: presiding deity

adhiyajnah: entire administration of the cosmos in its various facets

abhyasa: repetition, practice

abhyasa yoga: the yoga of persistent practice

adhyatma: the subjective self

advaita: non-dual

Advaita Vedanta: non-dualistic philosophy

aham: I

ahamkara: egoism

ahimsa: non-injury in thought, word and deed

ajnachakra: the point between the eyebrows

ajnana: spiritual ignorance

akshara: imperishable

anahata: mystic sounds heard by the yogis

ananda: bliss, happiness, joy

anatma(n): non-Self, insentient

ananya chintana: completely absorbed thinking or contemplation

annamaya kosha: gross body, physical sheath

antahkarana: inner instrument or organ; the fourfold mind: mind, intellect, ego and subconscious mind

arati: waving of light before the Lord

artha: an object of desire, wealth

asana: posture, seat

ashram: hermitage

ashtanga yoga: the eight-limbed raja yoga of Maharshi Patanjali

asparsayoga: the yoga of non-contact

asura: demon, evil tendency in man



Atma(n): the Self

atma anubhava: experience of the Self

avarana: a covering, veil of ignorance

avatara: incarnation

avidya: ignorance, nescience

## **B**

Bhagavan: the Lord

Bhagavad Gita: 700 verses from the great Hindu epic Mahabharata recording the discourse between Lord Krishna and Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra, prior to the commencement of the great war and giving in clear and concise form the highest teachings and truths

bhajan: devotional singing, worship, praise of the Lord

bhakta: devotee

bhakti: devotion, love of God

bhakti yoga: path of devotion

bhav(a): mental attitude, feeling, purity of thought

bheda: soliciting political alliances against an opponent

bhokta: subject of experience or enjoyment

bhrumadhya: concentration on the centre between the eyebrows

bhuloka: the earth plane

bhuma: the unconditioned, infinite, Brahman

bija mantra: seed mantra or original mantra

brahmaloka: highest heaven

bhumika: stage

Brahman: the Absolute Reality, Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute, it is not only all-powerful but all-power itself, it is not only all-knowing and blissful but all-knowledge and bliss itself

brahmacharya: purity, celibacy

brahma-jnana: direct knowledge of Brahman

brahmakara vritti: thought of Brahman alone

brahmatva: the principle of Brahman

brahma-vidya: science of Brahman, knowledge of Brahman, learning pertaining to Brahman or the Absolute Reality

brahmatatsattva: universal knowledge

brahmin: priest class

buddhi: the discriminating faculty, intellect, understanding

buddha: one who is awakened

### **C**

chaitanya: the consciousness that knows itself and knows others; Absolute Consciousness

chakra: plexus, discus, circle, cycle

chit: absolute consciousness or intelligence

chitta: subconscious mind

### **D**

daivi: divine

dakshina: offering, monetary gift

dakshina marg: the southern path

dama: control of senses

dana: charity, giving

danda: direct conflict with the opponent

darshan: vision, making visible, sight

daya: compassion, mercy

deva: god

dharana: concentration

dharma: righteous way of living as enjoined by the sacred scriptures, virtue, properties, duty

dharma megha: cloud of virtue

dhyana: meditation, contemplation

dukhya: sorrow

dvaita: dualism

### **G**

ghee: clarified butter

Gita: see the Bhagavad Gita

guna: quality born of nature; *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*

Guru: teacher, spiritual preceptor

### **H**

Hiranyagarbha: cosmic intelligence

## **I**

ida nadi: the psychic nerve current through the left nostril

istha devata: chosen deity for worship

Ishwara: God

## **J**

japa: repetition of the Lord's Name, repetition of a mantra

jigjnasu: one who seeks knowledge or reality

jitaatma: one who has attained self-control

jitendriya: one who has restrained the senses

jiva: individual soul with ego

jivanmukta: one who is liberated in this life

jivatma(n): individual soul

jnana: knowledge, wisdom of the Reality or Brahman

jnana indriya(s): organs of knowledge

jyoti: light

## **K**

kama : desire, passion, lust, legitimate desires

kapha: one of the doshas (humours) of Ayurveda, meaning 'phlegm'

karma: actions operating through the law of cause and effect

karma bandhana: the bondage of *karma*

karma bhumi: land of action, the earth plane

karmakaushala: dexterity in action

karma-phala-bhoga: experience of fruit of actions

karma yoga: the yoga of selfless service

karma yogi: one who practises *karma* yoga

kirtan: singing the name and glory of God

kramamukti: progressive emancipation

kosha: sheath

krisattva: integrality

kritsnam: completeness

kshara: perishable

kripa: grace, mercy, blessing

kshatriya: warrior class

kshetra: field, holy place, physical body in the philosophical sense

kshetrajna: knower of the field

kumbhaka: form of breath control involving breath retention

kutastachaitanya: the changeless, permanent Self

## **L**

loka: world of names and forms

## **M**

mahatma: great soul, saint, sage

mahatattva: the great principle, principle of intelligence

mahat: great, lofty, or, the primordial evolution of *prakriti*

Makara Sankranti: Movement of the sun across the Tropic of Capricorn (according to the Hindu calendar) that begins summer in the northern hemisphere

mala: rosary

manana: pondering the meaning of the scriptures

mantra: sacred syllable or word or set of words through the repetition and reflection of which one attains perfection or realisation of the Self

mara: mortal, perishable

marga: path

maya: the illusory power of Brahman, the veiling and projecting power

moksha: liberation, Absolute Experience

mrityuloka: world of suffering

mukta: the liberated one

mulaprakriti: the ultimate subtle cause for all matter

muni: a silent person

## **N**

nadabindukalatita: the supreme state of Brahman

nam(a): name

niddhyasana: deeply meditating on the meaning of the scriptures

nirakara: formless

nirguna: without attribute

nirvana: liberation, final emancipation

nirvitarka: unchanging

## **O**

omkara: OM

## **P**

parabhakti: highest level of devotion

pravesa: to dissolve oneself

pingalanadi: the psychic nerve current which terminates

pitta: one of the doshas (humours) of Ayurveda, meaning 'fire'

prakriti: nature, causal matter

pralaya: dissolution, complete merging

pramada: prana: vital energy, life-force, life-breath

prana sakti: subtle vital power arising from the control of *prana* and self-restraint

pranava: the sacred monosyllable OM

pranayama: regulation and restraint of breath

prasada: food dedicated to a deity during worship and then eaten by devotees as something sacred

pratyahara: abstraction or withdrawal of the senses

puja: worship, adoration

pundit: scholar, learned man

Puranas: Hindu scriptures containing the whole body of Hindu mythology (major Puranas are eighteen in number)

purusha: the Supreme Being, the Self which abides in the heart of all things

purushartha: right exertion

purushottama: the Supreme Person

## **R**

rajas, rajo guna: one of the three aspects of cosmic energy, the principle of dynamism in Nature bringing about all change, activity, passion, restlessness

rajasuya: a sacrifice performed by a monarch

raja yoga: the royal yoga of meditation; the system of yoga generally taken to be the one propounded by Patanjali Maharshi

raja yogi: one who practises *raja* yoga

rishi: sage, seer of Truth

## **S**

samyavastha: equilibrated condition of the cosmos

sadhak(a): spiritual aspirant

sadhu: a pious or righteous person, a *sannyasin*, a holy person  
saguna: with attributes or qualities  
sama: control of mind, tranquillity, or, political conciliation between opponents  
samadhi: the state of superconsciousness where Absoluteness is experienced, attended with all-knowledge and joy, Oneness  
samadhana: proper concentration  
samatva: evenness of mind, equanimity  
Samkhya: correct understanding, knowledge of reality; a school of philosophy  
samkhyabuddhi: correct understanding, higher reason  
samsara: life through repeated births and deaths, the process of worldly life  
samskara: mental impression, subconscious tendency  
samyam(a): perfect restraint, an all-complete condition of balance and repose, concentration, meditation and samadhi  
sankalpas: imaginations  
santi(h): peace or transitional period  
sannyasi(n): a monk, one who has embraced the life of complete renunciation  
sat: Existence Absolute, Being, Reality, Truth  
satchidananda: Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute  
satta: Reality  
satsang(a): association with the wise  
sattva: light, purity, reality  
sattvic: pure  
satyaloka: heaven  
satyamukti: immediate salvation  
savitarka: with logic and argumentation  
seva: service  
shakti: power, energy, force, the Divine Power of becoming, the dynamic aspect of Eternal Being, the Absolute Power or cosmic energy  
sharanagati: self surrender  
shastra: scriptures, words of authority  
siddhi: psychic power, perfection  
sloka: verse  
sraddha: faith  
sravana: listening or hearing the scriptures

sukha purvata: type of breath control

sunya: merit

sushumnanadi: the psychic nerve current that terminates in the *sahasrara*

sutratman: the cosmic thread

svabhava: one's own nature or potentiality, innate nature

svadharma: one's own prescribed duty in life according to the eternal law

swami: a Hindu monk

## **T**

tamas, tamo guna: ignorance, inertia, darkness

tanmatras: rudimentary element in an undifferentiated state

tantra: path of spiritual practice laying emphasis on *japa* and various esoteric practices

tapas(ya): asceticism, austerity

tattva: reality, element, truth, essence, principle

## **U**

upadhis: limiting adjuncts or additions, superimposition that gives a limited view of the Absolute and makes It appear as the relative

Upanishads: knowledge portion of the Vedas, texts dealing with the ultimate Truth and Its realisation. 108 Upanishads are regarded as important ones of which ten are regarded as most important

upasana: worship, devout meditation

uttaramarga: northern path

## **V**

vairagya: dispassion, indifference towards sensual objects and enjoyments

vata: one of the doshas or humours of Ayurveda, meaning 'wind'

Vedanta: the end of the Vedas (lit.), the Upanishads

Vedas: the most ancient authentic scripture of the Hindus, a revealed scripture and therefore free from imperfections

vibhuti: manifestation

vichar(a): enquiry into the nature of the Self, Brahman, Truth Absolute

virat: the physical world

vitarka: projection, emanation, ejection, bringing forth

## **Y**

yajna: sacrifice

yoga: union (lit.), abstract meditation or union with the Supreme Being, unruffled state

of mind under all conditions; yoga is mainly of four types; *karma, bhakti, raja* and *jnana*

yogi(n): one who practises yoga

yogayukta: established in yoga

yugas: divisions of time

yugasanti: one power colliding with another power