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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

This is a compilation of the 110 lectures that Swami Krishnananda delivered from March to August in 1976 on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali. Patanjali's Yoga Sutras are a manual on mind control, meditation and mental discipline—a manual for spiritual freedom. Crisp and pithy in rendition, the *sutras* have an aphoristic quality and urge deeper reflection and dedicated application.

Across various philosophies the denotation of yoga varies. Patanjali uses the term 'yoga' to denote a complete cessation of mental modifications so that consciousness rests within itself in the state of *moksha* or liberation. This teaching has been delivered through emphasis on practice rather than mere philosophy. This is verily a manual for us to operate the mind and thus our life.

The Yoga Sutras are divided into four *padas* or chapters. The first chapter, the Samadhi Pada on which this volume is based, focuses on concentration of the mind and the practical aspects necessary for attaining meditative absorption. The second chapter, the Sadhana Pada, is about attaining and holding that single-pointedness through reining in the agitations of the mind by cultivating dispassion, discrimination and dedication. The third chapter, the Vibhuti Pada, focuses on the technique of *samyama* which is the combination of concentration, meditation and communion for the liberation of the spirit, while the fourth chapter, the Kaivalya Pada, is a metaphysical disquisition which deals with various subjects as a sort of explanation of some of the themes dealt with in the earlier chapters.

It is fitting to draw the reader's attention to the clarity and simplicity with which Swamiji Maharaj comments on these *sutras*. Swami Krishnananda was the living embodiment of that awareness to which the *sutras* and all spiritual texts guide. It is commonly said that Sanskrit, the language of the Gods, is by far the only one that has transcended, to some extent, the limitations of vivid expression and bears in it the ability to express the nuances of spiritual processes and the resultant experiences that the great Sages and Masters have experienced and conveyed to us. That Swamiji Maharaj is able to bend the limited English language to yield to his knowledge is a completely humbling experience.

These Yoga Sutras of Patanjali spoken by Swami Krishnananda are being made available to the public for the first time. It is our desire to retain the original lectures in their spoken form to a large extent. There are some unique twists of phrases and application of words that are uniquely Swamiji in origin and it has been sought to allow those to be as they were intended, without undermining the reverence to the English language. Consequently the lectures have been edited in very few places to render them the way Swamiji Maharaj himself spoke them.

CHAPTER 1

THE AIM OF YOGA

The whole of our life is a successive series of efforts - whether it is the effort that I put forth, or that which someone else puts forth. All these efforts have a common background, although the efforts of human beings are variegated and there is also an apparent diversity of the aims behind the efforts. The farmer's effort is towards producing harvest in the field; the industrialist's effort is towards production of goods and such other items in his field; the effort of the schoolmaster or the professor is in another direction; and so on and so forth. We have an apparent diversity of aims, motivated by a diversity of efforts.

But this is a great illusion that is before us, and we live in a world of illusions which we mistake for realities. The illusion arises on account of our inability to see beyond a certain limit of the horizon of our mental perceptions. The farmer forgets that the production of the harvest in the field is not the only aim, or rather the ultimate aim, of his efforts. It has another aim altogether connected with certain others, and so on and so forth, in an endless chain which cannot easily come within the comprehension of an untutored mind. The stomach does not eat for its satisfaction. We know very well why the stomach eats. The stomach may say "I eat", but it does not eat; the eater is somebody else, though it is thrust into the stomach. The legs do not walk for their own sake. What do the legs gain by walking? They are walking for some other purpose - somebody else's purpose, not their own. Nor do the eyes gain anything by seeing; the eyes see for somebody else.

Likewise, there is an inherent and underlying basic aim which is transcendent to the immediate purpose visible in front of any particular individual who puts forth effort, just as the legs do not walk for their own sake, the eyes do not see for their own sake, the stomach does not eat for its own sake, and so on, and they seem to be functioning for some other purpose. They can miss this purpose, and then there is what we call dismemberment or disintegration of the personality. When the aim is missed, the effort loses its motive power and it becomes a fruitless effort, because an effort that has missed its aim cannot be regarded as a meaningful effort. Also, it may be possible that we may be conscious of an immediate aim before the effort, but the aims that are further behind or ahead may not be visible to our eyes.

I will ask a question. We eat food every day so that we may be alive. But why do we want to be alive? Is there a purpose behind it? This question we cannot answer. Here is a question which is beyond ordinary logic. Why should we work so hard, and eat, and maintain ourselves, and exist? After all, we are doing all this for existing. Why do we want to exist? Suppose we do not exist; what is the harm? These kinds of questions will be pressing themselves forward when we go deep into the aims of the different activities of our life. Finally, when we press the aim to its logical limits, we will find that the human brain is not meant to understand it.

We are limited individuals, with limited capacities of understanding, and we can have only limited aims in our life - but we have unlimited desires. This is a contradiction. How can unlimited desires be fulfilled with limited aims? Life is a contradiction; it has begun as a contradiction, and it ends as a contradiction. This is the reason why not one has slept peacefully, or woken up peacefully, nor lives peacefully. There is a subtle contradiction in sleep and a pressing contradiction when

we wake up, and an annoying contradiction throughout our daily activities, so that there is only contradiction. There is nothing else in life; and all effort is meant to remove this contradiction. But if the very effort at removing contradiction is itself involved in a contradiction, then we are in a mess, and this is exactly what has happened to Tom, Dick, Harry, X, Y, Z, A, B, C, D - whoever it is.

The whole difficulty is that the structure of life is arranged in such a pattern that the depth of human understanding is incapable of touching its borders. We are not simply living life - we are identical with life itself. One of the most difficult things to define is life itself. We cannot say what life is. It is only a word that we utter without any clear meaning before our eyes. It is an enigma, a mystery - a mystery which has caught hold of us, which extracts the blood out of us every day, which keeps us restless and tantalises us, promising us satisfaction but never giving it. Life is made in such a way that there are promises which are never fulfilled. Every object in the world promises satisfaction, but it never gives satisfaction - it only promises. Until death it will go on promising, but it will give nothing, and so we will die in the same way as we were born. Because we have been dying without having the promise fulfilled, we will take rebirth so that we will see if the promise can be fulfilled, and the same process is continued, so that endlessly the chain goes on in a hopeless manner. This vicious circle of human understanding, or rather human incapacity to understand, has arisen on account of the isolation of the human individual from the pattern of life.

This is a defect not only in the modern systems of education, but also in spiritual practices - in every walk of life, in every blessed thing. When the individual who is living life has cut himself or herself off from the significance of life, then life becomes a contradiction and a meaningless pursuit of the will-o'-the-wisp. Why do we cut ourselves off from the meaning of life and then suffer like this? This is the inherent weakness of the sensory functions of the individual. The senses are our enemies. Why do we call them enemies? Because they tell us that we are isolated from everything else. This is the essence of sensory activity. There is no connection between ourselves and others, and we can go on fighting with everybody. This is what the senses tell us. But yet, they are double-edged swords; they tell us two things at the same time. On one side they tell us that everything is outside us, and we are disconnected from everybody else and everything in this world. But on the other side they say that we are bound to grab things, connect ourselves with things, obtain things, and maintain relationship with things. Now, these two things cannot be done simultaneously. We cannot disconnect ourselves from things and also try to connect ourselves with them for the purpose of exploiting them, with an intention to utilise them for our individual purposes. Here again is an instance of contradiction. On one side we disconnect ourselves from persons and things; on the other side we want to connect ourselves with persons and things for our own purposes.

The ancient sages and masters, both of the East and the West, have deeply pondered over this question, and one of the most magnificent proclamations of a solution to these problems is found in the Veda. Among the many aspects of this solution that are presented before us by these mighty revelations, I can quote one which to my mind appears to be a final solution - at least, I have taken it as a solution to all my problems - which comes in the Rig Veda, the Yajur Veda, the Sama Veda and the Atharva Veda. In all the four Vedas it occurs: *tam eva viditvā atimṛtyum eti nānyaḥ panthā vidyate ayanāya*. This is a great proclamation. What is the meaning of this proclamation? There is no way of escape from this problem, says this mantra, other

than knowing 'That'. This is a very simple aphoristic precept that is before us: Knowing 'That' is the solution, and we have no other solution. Now, knowing 'That' - what is this 'That'?

Knowing has been generally regarded as a process of understanding and accumulation of information, gathering intellectual or scientific definitive descriptions in respect of things. These days, this is what we call education. We gather definitions of things and try to understand the modes of their apparent functions in temporal life. This is what we call knowing, ordinarily speaking. I know that the sun is rising. This is a kind of knowledge. What do I mean by this knowledge? I have only a functional perception of a phenomenon that is taking place which I regard as the rise of the sun. This is not real knowledge. When I say, "I know that the sun is rising", I cannot say that I have a real knowledge of the sun, because, first of all, the sun is not rising - it is a mistake of my senses. Secondly, the very idea of rising itself is a misconception in the mind. Unless I am static and immovable, I cannot know that something is moving. So when I say, "The sun is moving", I mean that I am not moving; it is understood there. But it is not true that I am not moving. I am also in a state of motion for other reasons which are not easily understandable. So it is not possible for a moving body to say that something else is moving. Nothing that is in a state of motion can say that something else is in motion. There is a relative motion of things, and so perception of the condition of any object ultimately would be impossible. This is a reason why scientific knowledge fails.

All knowledge gathered through observations, whether through a microscope or telescope, in laboratories, etc., is ultimately invalid because it presupposes the static existence of the observer himself, the scientist's capacity to impartially observe and to unconditionally understand the conditions of what he observes - very strange indeed, really. How does the scientist take for granted or imagine that he is an unconditioned observer and everything that he observes is conditioned? It is not true, because the observing scientist is as much conditioned by factors as the object that he observes. So, who is to observe the conditions of his own observing apparatus: his body, his senses - the eyes, for example, and even the mind, which is connected to the body? Inasmuch as the observing scientist - the observing individual, the knowing person - is as much conditioned and limited as the object that is observed or seen, it is not possible to have ultimately valid knowledge in this world.

All our knowledge is insufficient, inadequate, temporal, empirical - ultimately useless. It does not touch the core of life. Therefore, we will find that any learned person, whatever be the depth of his learning, whatever be the greatness of his scholarship, is miserable in the end. The reason is that life is different from this kind of knowledge. It is an all-comprehensive organic being in which the knowing individual is unfortunately included, a fact which misses the attention of every person. It is not possible for anyone to observe or see or know anything, inasmuch as the conditions which describe the object of observation also condition the subject of observation. The Veda points this out in a mystical formula: *tam eva viditvā atimṛtyum eti nānyaḥ panthā vidyate ayanāya*. Now, when it is said, by knowing 'That', every problem is solved, the Veda does not mean knowing this object or that object, or this person or that person, or this thing or that thing, or this subject or that subject - it is nothing of that kind. It is a 'That' with a capital 'T', which means to say, the true object of knowledge. The true object of knowledge is to be known, and when 'That' is known, all problems are solved.

What are problems? A problem is a situation that has arisen on account of the irreconcilability of one person, or one thing, with the status and condition of another person, or another thing. I cannot reconcile my position with your position; this is a problem. You cannot reconcile your position with mine; this is a problem. Why should there be such a condition? How is it that it is not possible for me to reconcile myself with you? It is not possible because there is no clear perception of my relationship with you. I have a misconceived idea of my relationship with you and, therefore, there is a misconceived adjustment of my personality with yours, and a misconception cannot solve a problem. The problem is nothing but this misconception - nothing else. The irreconcilability of one thing with another arises on account of the basic difficulty I mentioned, that the person who wishes to bring about this reconciliation, or establish a proper relationship, misses the point of one's own vital connection - underline the word 'vital' - with the object or the person with which, or with whom, this reconciliation is to be effected. Inasmuch as this kind of knowledge is beyond the purview or capacity of the ordinary human intellect, the knowledge of the Veda is regarded as supernormal, superhuman: *apaurusheya* - not created or manufactured by an individual. This is not knowledge that has come out of reading books. This is not ordinary educational knowledge. It is a knowledge which is vitally and organically related to the fact of life. I am as much connected with the fact of life as you are, and so in my observation and study and understanding of you, in my relationship with you, I cannot forget this fact. The moment I disconnect myself from this fact of life which is unanimously present in you as well as in me, I miss the point, and my effort becomes purposeless.

We are gradually led by this proclamation of the Veda into a tremendous vision of life which requires of us to have a superhuman power of will to grasp the interrelationship of things. This difficulty of grasping the meaning of the interrelationship of things is obviated systematically, stage by stage, gradually, by methods of practice. These methods are called yoga - the practice of yoga. I have placed before you, perhaps, a very terrible picture of yoga; it is not as simple as one imagines. It is not a simple circus-master's feat, either of the body or the mind, but a superhuman demand of our total being. Mark this definition of mine: a superhuman demand which is made of our total being - not an ordinary human demand of a part of our being, but of our total being. From that, a demand is made by the entire structure of life. The total structure of life requires of our total being to be united with it in a practical demonstration of thought, speech and action - this is yoga. If this could be missed, and of course it can easily be missed as it is being done every day, then every effort, from the smallest to the biggest, becomes a failure. All our effort ends in no success, because it would be like decorating a corpse without a soul in it. The whole of life would look like a beautiful corpse with nicely dressed features, but it has no vitality, essence or living principle within it. Likewise, all our activities would look wonderful, beautiful, magnificent, but lifeless; and lifeless beauty is no beauty. There must be life in it - only then has it a meaning. Life is not something dead; it is quite opposite of what is dead. We can bring vitality and life into our activity only by the introduction of the principle of yoga.

Yoga is not a technique of *sannyasins* or monks, of mystics or monastic disciples - it is a technique of every living being who wishes to succeed in life. Without the employment of the technique of yoga, no effort can be successful. Even if it is a small, insignificant act like cooking food, sweeping the floor, washing vessels, whatever it is - even these would be meaningless and a boredom, a drudgery and a stupid effort if the principle of yoga is not applied.

In short, I may conclude by saying that happiness, joy, success, or the discovery of the significance of things, including the significance of one's own life and the life of everyone, would not be possible of achievement if the basic structural fundamentals are missed in life and we emphasise only the outer aspects - which are only the rim of the body of life whose vital soul we are unable to perceive, because we do not have the instrument to perceive the soul of life. We have the instruments, called the senses, to perceive the body of life, but the soul of life we cannot perceive, because while the senses can perceive the bodies and the things outside, the soul of things can be perceived only by the soul. It is the soul that sees the soul of things.

When my soul can visualise your soul, then we become really friends; otherwise, we are not friends. Any amount of roundtable conferences of individuals with no soulful connection will not lead to success. Ultimately, success is the union of souls; and yoga aims, finally, at the discovery of the Universal Soul, about which I shall speak in some detail later on.

CHAPTER 2

THE FOUNDATION OF THE DISCIPLINE IN YOGA PRACTICE

Once upon a time, people were under the conviction that parallel lines can never meet. But today, some extraordinary people say that under extraordinary conditions parallel lines can meet. Also once upon a time, Euclidian geometricians, the geometricians of the world, were cocksure that the three angles of a triangle make two right angles, and that nobody can controvert this truth. But today, this is not regarded as ultimately true. Under other conditions than conceivable by the ordinary mind, the three angles of a triangle need not make two right angles. Likewise, yoga is something which will take us by surprise and require of us to cast aside our usual workaday notions - even the notion of God, the notion of things, and the world, and persons around. When yoga comes in its true form, it will be a marvel to the tradition-ridden mind. We will be required to cast aside all the ideas of God which we have been holding in our minds up to this time. We will be required to cast aside our idea of society and the world. We may be required to dispense with the idea of our own person also. Whatever we have been regarding as worthwhile will become worthless before this great knowledge. Whatever has been regarded as usual, ethical and moral may become meaningless before this great requirement. Whatever we have been regarding as sacred will become absolutely devoid of significance before it. All this will come, one day or the other, before the seeking soul.

Nobody imagined that the earth goes around the sun. It is difficult to imagine that the earth goes around the sun. Everybody thinks that the sun is going around the earth because we can see the sun moving; so naturally, why should not the sun move? Can we not believe our eyes? And may I ask a question to you? If you cannot believe your eyes and say that the sun is moving, how can you believe anything else in this world, including myself sitting here and yourself sitting here? If you cannot believe one thing, well, perhaps the same rule may apply to many other things. If we cannot believe our eyes for a commonly accepted phenomenon like the rise and set of the sun every day, how can we believe that there is a tree in front of us, or there are people in front of us, or there is anything at all meaningful in front of us?

Why I state all these things is because we have been rooted in prejudices - ethical and moral prejudices, social prejudices, personal prejudices, philosophical prejudices, and religious prejudices. We are born in prejudice and we will die in prejudice. Yoga is a cleansing medium which will rid us of all this dirt of prejudice. Even the prejudice of the most sacred and holy has to be cast aside.

I told you even the idea of God may have to be thrown away when true yoga comes in front of you. You may be wondering how I can cast out God. Well, you are not casting out God; your idea of God must go because yoga has come, and must come, to give you the necessary medicine to cure the illness of the soul. The soul's illness is more terrible and more difficult to understand than the illness of the body or any other type of malady.

In the Katha Upanishad, the great master says that this knowledge cannot be imparted by an ordinary person. Rather, a person cannot speak this knowledge. The person who teaches this, or expounds this knowledge, cannot be regarded as a person at all - *ananya-prokte gatiṁ atra nāsty aṅīyān hy atarkyam aṅupramāṇāt* (Katha I.2.8). Extremely subtle is this point, beyond the comprehension of even the subtlest

understanding. Human thought cannot comprehend it and, therefore, human beings cannot teach it. Even one who receives this knowledge, a disciple, cannot be regarded as a human being, really speaking. Neither is the teacher a human being, nor is the disciple a human being when we come to the actual point on hand.

Yoga is a superhuman principle working for a superhuman purpose, through a superhuman medium. We cease to be ordinary persons before this masterly science. When we enter the field of this knowledge of the ultimate science of the mystery of life, we do not enter it as a man or a woman; we do not enter it as a human being at all. We enter it as a principle. We know that there is a great difference between a person and a principle. We are always fond of persons and not principles because we cannot see principles; we see only persons and things. But persons and things do not exist, to tell the truth. It is principles that exist. It is a law that exists. It is an order of things which ultimately is the constituting factor of even things. We are told even today that things do not exist, but only forces exist. What we call things and persons are only forces. There is no such thing as things and persons. But yet, we are wedded to this notion of persons and things to such an extent that we will die hard, indeed, in clinging to this notion of persons, things, and located objects. There are neither located objects nor persons and things - there are only powers, significances, meanings, which are impersonal ultimately and not abstract in the sense of what our understanding may regard as abstract.

To us, the concrete is that which we can sense - what we can touch is the concrete, and what we cannot touch, or cannot see, is abstract. This is not true; on the other hand, under certain conditions it will be seen that what we cannot sense is the real. What we sense is not the real. What we touch, what we see, is only a reaction produced by the operation of the forces in a particular manner. Can we regard a reaction as a substance? The tangibility of an object, the visibility of things, cannot be regarded as substantial from its own, or their own, point of view. These things are illusions in the sense that they are certain experiences caused by contact of certain types of located force with certain other types of force in the world. Yoga now comes as the revealing science which opens up the portals of a knowledge that is super-mundane.

As it was said, usually yoga is defined as 'union', and we are, again, traditionally bound to the idea that union means one thing coming in contact with another thing; but, no such thing is yoga. It is not one thing coming in contact with another thing. It is a union in the sense of transcending the lower in the higher. A dream-object getting united with the waking consciousness cannot be regarded as a union of one thing with another thing. It is an overcoming of the impediments to a real expansion of consciousness. It is impossible for two things to come together in real union, because that which is dissimilarly constituted cannot come in contact with another thing which is also characterised by conditions different from its own constitution. We cannot come in contact even with God if our nature is different from that of God, because the principle is that dissimilar features cannot unite. If our characters or features are different entirely from those of God, there is no question - there cannot be any possibility - of our uniting ourselves with God. That there is such a chance, that such a possibility seems to be there, implies and ought to indicate that there is implanted in one's own heart and soul something which is characteristic of God Himself. It is very strange, indeed, to understand this. So, it is not real union even with God. It is a manifestation of the potentiality that is in one's own self.

Lastly speaking, we may say that it is a union in the sense of a child uniting itself with

the adult that it is going to be. When a baby becomes an adult, can we say that the baby has united itself with the adult? Is there union of the baby with the adult? Nothing of the kind. There is only a growth and a maturity - an expansion and a becoming of a more profound reality. That is what is going to happen in yoga. We are not coming in contact with anything; we are growing into a wider perspective of our own lives and becoming something larger, not in the sense of an absolutely new thing altogether, but that which is already rooted in our own selves, like a seed becoming a large banyan tree. The seed does not unite itself with the banyan tree - there is no union. It has become the banyan because it is the banyan. So likewise, we become the Reality because we are the Reality.

This is an introductory remark that I make, which is usually regarded as startling to common understanding. But, all medicines are bitter. They do not come as honey and milk, because they are forces which are intended to rectify a deep-rooted, erroneous thinking and, therefore, a hard effort is necessary to become ready for the reception of this knowledge. Apart from the actual realisation or experience, even to be prepared to receive this knowledge we have to undergo a tremendous training. Even to become a disciple, a great training is necessary, and I am not talking of becoming a master or a yogi.

Religious texts, scriptures on yoga, have pointed out the necessity of these preparatory disciplines, again and again, to which most of us are likely to turn a deaf ear, because we are more concerned with the aim rather than the means. This is unfortunate, because while the goal is important, the means to the realisation of the goal cannot be regarded as less important. But we are not prepared to undergo the necessary discipline which is the means for the manifestation of the goal in one's experience.

Truly speaking, the goal is nothing but the evolution of the means. They are not two different things. If the destination of our journey, say a place like Delhi, is to be reached by a means, namely, vehicular movement along a road, we may say the road is not identical with the destination. Delhi is something; the road is another thing. While this is so under ordinary circumstances, it is not so in the spiritual field. The goal and the path are inseparable. It is the goal that is manifesting itself as the path. And the path that leads to the goal is nothing but an indicator of the nature of the goal itself. So, one who seeks the goal has to live a life which is to become a means commensurate with the nature of the goal.

What is the nature of the goal that we are aspiring for through the practice of yoga? What are its characteristics, its definitive features? Those features have to be seen in an adequate measure in the means that we are adopting, in the life that we are living, and the attitude that we are holding in regard to all things - including God, world and soul, and individual and society.

I was quoting a passage from the Katha Upanishad: *ananya-prokte gatih atra nāsty*. There is no hope of achieving anything unless it is taught by a superhuman person - this is what the Upanishad says. No amount of study is going to help us, because knowledge that we gain by study of books is something like drinking water from the Ganga seen on the atlas. The atlas also contains Ganga. We have got Mississippi and Amazon and Pacific and Atlantic - we can see them in the atlas. But our ship will not drown in the atlas-Atlantic and we cannot drink the waters of the atlas-Ganga. Though we have got tremendous knowledge of the entire physical features of the world by the study of geography and have a wonderful Ph.D. in geography, we cannot

drink a drop of water from the Ganga that we have studied in our books.

Likewise is the knowledge through books. It is all wonderful, no doubt, but it is of no use when we come to the question of the practice of yoga. For this the Upanishad mentions: *ananya-prokte gatih atra nāsty* - we cannot have the means of quenching our thirst for real knowledge unless it is imparted by one who is *ananya*. This is a very peculiar term used in the Upanishad. A person who is united with Reality alone can teach, because, as the Christ said in one context, "It is not words that I speak; it is Spirit that comes out." The words of Christ were Spirit manifest - energy, force of divinity that was revealed. They were not merely sounds that he made in the sense of language.

Likewise, the knowledge that comes from a spiritual master is not information that is gathered from books, but a vitality that is issuing from himself on account of his contact with Reality in his personal life. The Upanishad is emphatic that no other hope is there: *gatih atra nāsty* - no other alternative. We cannot find an alternative, and there is no hope of success unless this knowledge comes to us from a living being who is rooted in contact with Truth. All this is a great difficulty, no doubt; but naturally, yoga is a difficulty. How can we have another difficulty greater than this? All difficulty is nothing before this difficulty. This is the master-difficulty we have in life, namely, the reception of the knowledge of Reality. We have no other difficulty; this is the only difficulty we have. And when this difficulty is solved, every other thing also gets solved automatically, because this is the root-malady, the root-illness, so when that is obviated, everything else vanishes.

This is the caution that has to be given to every sincere student of yoga, that one may not take it slipshod, in a casual manner, as if everything will drop from the skies. It will not drop from the skies unless there is strenuous hard practice, as if we are melting our flesh, which is something unthinkable for the human being. Who can boil one's own flesh? But this is what will happen to us when we actually enter into this strenuous army discipline, as we may call it if we like; something worse than that or more difficult than that, is the practice of yoga. There is an old saying that one who is in search of knowledge has neither sleep nor happiness. He neither wants to eat nor sleep, because his mind is concentrated on how to acquire this knowledge. And, as the Bhagavadgita again and again reiterates, it looks very bitter at first, hard and impossible to stomach in the initial stages, because all training is a painful process in the beginning. Nobody likes to undergo training of any kind, because training or discipline implies the restricting of the movements of the human individual, the ego-ridden individuality, which is, of course, very painful. The ego does not wish to be limited, restricted or disciplined in any manner whatsoever; but this is precisely what is called for. Bearing in mind that the means to the goal is to be of the same character as the goal and cannot be divested of its nature, it is to be kept in view that a commensurate discipline is to be undergone. For this, a place is necessary, conditions are necessary, the Guru is necessary, and a willing, yearning, aspiring, seeking spirit in the disciple is necessary. All these conditions are obligatory.

Again, it has to be pointed out that this is the supreme science of life. It is not one of the branches of learning, like physics or chemistry, where we can choose any branch of learning that we like in our educational career. This is not a branch of learning which we can choose at our discretion. This is the master science which is the root of all other branches of learning, from which ramify every other form of knowledge; and therefore, when this knowledge is acquired, we have known everything. In the Upanishad the query is raised, "What is it, by knowing which, everything else can be

known automatically?" It is this. If this is known, everything else follows. Everything automatically follows - we need not go after other sciences. Every other science is included in this science, because this mystery includes every other mystery. And this power that acquires, that comes to a person due to the practice of this discipline, is inclusive of any other power that we can think of in our minds.

With this clarified perspective before us, we have to gird up our loins and take to it with the determination - do or die. This is the final decision that we have to take: either we do it or we die, that is all. There is no halfway between. As a saying goes, there is no such thing as half-living. Either we are living, or we are not living. We cannot say, "I am half alive." Likewise, half-yoga is unthinkable; either it is, or it is not. To take to yoga is to dedicate one's whole being to it. Even at the initial step, the first stage, we are confronting Reality in its totality. Even in the fundamental, the first, the most initial stage of yoga, the whole of our being is confronting the whole of Reality. It is not a part of our being facing a part of God - nothing of the kind. The density or the degree of manifestation of God may be less in the initial stage, and likewise, the degree of the manifestation of the totality of our being may be of a lesser degree, a lesser category - that is a different issue. But our total being is manifest for the purpose of confronting the total Reality that is the universe. So totality or wholeness is imperative, though the degree of manifestation of these two may be less. It is a rise from a lower degree of totality to a higher degree of totality, but totality is there. It cannot be partial, so that we cannot give half of our mind to it, or a portion of our mind. Even if one is not a genius and is in a lower state of understanding, it does not matter; the whole of whatever one has must be given, and it should confront the whole issue and not only a part of it.

So, this is the foundation of the psychological discipline necessary and called for in the practice of yoga. It has, truly speaking, endless stages of ascent. One cannot visualise, now itself, how many stages of ascent there are, though mystics speak of a certain limited number of stages, broadly outlined before us. The experiences and the disciplines one passes through also vary in detail from person to person, according to the structural peculiarity of the constitution of the individual, though, generally speaking, we can lay down certain broad outlines of the features of the experiences and disciplines that one has to pass through, wherever one is and whatever one be. Yet the minor details are so complicated that it is impossible to tread this path without a Guru; and our preparation for it also should be whole-hearted.

With these few remarks I close today, and request you to ponder over these meanings of yoga that I have placed before you, and take to it in right earnest.

CHAPTER 3

A BROAD OUTLINE OF THE STAGES OF YOGA

The practice of yoga, which is the main *sadhana*, has to bear resemblance to the goal because, as it was pointed out, the means and the end are not cut off from each other; rather, the goal is finally going to be realised to be an evolution of the means itself. There is a continuity of process right from the beginning till the end. The path and the destination have the sympathy of nature. The path begins right from the place and the time where and when the disciple finds himself or herself. Whatever be the condition in which we are, just now at this moment, is the first step in yoga. Therefore, the first step may not be of the same character in different individuals, inasmuch as there are various types of individuals on account of the difference in the levels of their condition of evolution. Nevertheless, each one should take the first step from the level in which one is, and not from a higher step above the level of one's present condition.

The point to be remembered is that a living connection should be maintained between one step and another step. There is no such thing as a jump or a sudden rise, with a disconnection between steps. There is a vital continuity, like the gradual growth of a person from babyhood. We do not jump from childhood to the adult condition. There is a very, very slow growing process with a tremendous continuity, with no gap whatsoever. The processes in yoga are of a similar nature - a gradually growing, evolving, blossoming procedure of the practice of consciousness. Here we come to a very interesting and important essential in yoga. It is an education of consciousness that is called yoga.

Every practice in yoga, even the first step, is a method of educating one's consciousness towards the attainment of that which it is seeking in the process of this enfoldment. It has been said by educationists that education is the systematic procedure of evoking the perfection that is already within. Everyone has perfection within oneself, but it is hidden beneath, covered over by accretions of various types. In education, knowledge is not imported from outside. The teacher becomes an instrument in the bringing out of the potentialities of wisdom already hidden in the recesses of the heart of the disciple. Knowledge is inseparable from 'being' and, therefore, the knowledge that one is to acquire has to maintain this character of inseparability from the being of the disciple, right from the beginning itself.

In the most initial of stages, this identity of knowledge with 'being' takes the crude form of body-consciousness and attachment to one's own individuality. It is from this level that the evolutionary work of education should start. At every step it should be remembered that knowledge should not be isolated from being. In our modern systems of education a mistake is committed, namely, the isolation of knowledge from being, so that the student's knowledge need not have any connection with the personal life of the student. So is the case with the teacher, the professor. The knowledge he seems to have acquired, the education that he has passed through, the career of education which he regards as his achievement, does not bear a resemblance to his being, so that he is one thing in his personal life and another thing in his profession. This is the defect of modern education, and the defect of both the teacher and the disciple. Hence, we find that we are unhappy after all the knowledge that we have acquired, wherever it is and in whatever form it might be acquired.

But yoga education is of a different nature. One must be very cautious that knowledge does not become a profession - far from it. The practice of yoga is neither a religious tradition nor a profession of the academy. It is a way of living, a condition of our being, to put it very, very precisely. The condition of our being is the knowledge that is really worthwhile, and any other knowledge is an external growth which can be washed away by a bath with soap; therefore, it will not help us. But that knowledge which has become a part of our being - the knowledge which we are living, the knowledge which is inseparable from what we ourselves are - is worthwhile, and that is to grow into greater width and depth in its profundity.

The initial misconception of human consciousness is that it is a single individual in a society of beings. This misconception has been taken as the right attitude to life, because the feeling that one is a single, isolated individual among many others has come on account of one's weddedness to the perceptions through the senses. Our senses are our masters, unfortunately, and they have led us into this quandary of insisting that we are individual units, and that we are not in a position to continue in this condition of an individual unit for a long time - it has to be exceeded and made good by other means, such as contact with other individuals by way of social relationship, activity, etc. If individuality had been real, there would have been no necessity to establish relationship with other people. The very fact that we feel a necessity of relationship with others shows that we are imperfect. If we are perfect individuals, why do we want contact or relationship with anybody else? The individuality of a person is a restless incompleteness, and this incompleteness is mistaken for completeness. The inherent inadequacy of this individuality expresses itself in an urge for contact with other conditions in life - persons, things, situations, etc. - so that the lack in one's own individual make-up is made good by acquisition of characters from the external world, characters which do not belong to one's own self and cannot be found in one's own self. The individual is a transitional process. That is why there is growth, change, decay, death, and birth.

There is a continuous movement of the structure of the individual, and this is called evolution. Bluntly put, it is the process of birth and death of the individual. Why does the individual die? Why should there be rebirth? The reason is simple: there is incompleteness in the very nature of the individual, in the very structure of personality, and evolution is nothing but an attempt of this individual to become more and more perfect by an increasing growth of its nature, by repeated experiences through several processes of birth and death, until it reaches a state of completeness where there would be no further need to establish relationship with externals. As long as there is a perception of what is outside, the necessity to connect oneself with that arises automatically, because there cannot be mere perception, an empty perception without any significance behind it. The significance is that one lacks something - that is the essence of the whole matter. Otherwise, the perception itself would not be there. This perception compels the individual to maintain a contact of a positive or a negative character with that external condition, person or thing. The positive contact is called love; the negative contact is called hatred. Sometimes it is a state of indifference also when there is an ambivalence between love and hatred.

This is the philosophical background of the very practice of yoga and, therefore, the need arises to view the practice of yoga in a very scientific manner, bereft of all prejudices of creed, caste, religion, colour, etc., and take it in a very impersonal, dispassionate manner so that it is a matter of life and death for every one of us. Thus in the practice of yoga it comes to this: the nature of the goal has to reflect itself in

the means adopted and, therefore, to the extent we are able to comprehend the nature of the goal, to that extent our means also would be perfect and commensurate with the nature of the goal. What is the goal of yoga? What is the aim before us? What are we struggling to achieve in the end? That would be a sufficient indication of the nature of the means that we have to adopt. Is it rice that we want, or wheat, or cloth, or vegetables, or fruit? If we know what it is that we need, we can go to that particular shop. Likewise, we are first of all to be clear in our minds as to what it is that we are seeking through thinking, or speaking, or doing anything. What is our aim? What is our end? What is our purpose?

As I mentioned sometime back, the purpose may not be very clear always, because we are used to pinpointing an immediate purpose and forgetting the purpose that may be beyond it. If we were to ask a person who works very hard, with a purpose, from morning to evening, "What is the purpose of working?" - the common man's immediate answer would be, "I must work very hard to earn my livelihood." What does he mean by "earning my livelihood"? "To maintain my social group and eat my daily bread." But why does he want to do this? "So that I may live." Why does he want to live? He has no further answer; it ends with that. Why do we want to live? Nobody knows. "I want to live, that's all." Now, the purpose takes us one beyond the other, gradually, until we come to a point of halt, and that halt is due to the incapacity of the mind to conceive the main purpose of one's existence. But that is the inscrutable point which determines every one of our activities, and forces us to behave in a particular manner in our life.

All of our activities are motivated by a condition and a purpose which is impossible to understand by the very person who does those actions, so that we are like blind people driven by blind forces, as it were. The forces are not blind, though they look blind because we cannot understand them. But yoga requires action with open eyes - it is not blind action. It is not the blind leading the blind. It is necessary that our minds should be vigilant, and eyes kept open every time, at every step that we take. If a particular step is not clear, it is better that we do not take that step. Just as in the movement of an army, if we do not know what is in front of us, it is better we do not hazard going forward until we understand what is there. First of all we should be clear as to what is there in front of us, and then take the necessary step. When a particular stage comes when it is all dark, oblivious, and clarified understanding is impossible, it is better for us to halt and then try to investigate into what is ahead.

Here comes the need for a Guru. "I am in a dark condition and everything in front of me is black. I cannot see beyond the screen that is hanging in front." With that condition the disciple approaches the Guru, who will tell us what the darkness is about. The darkness may be due to various factors. Hundreds of factors can be the causes of this impossibility to proceed further. So, until we reach the last or the penultimate step in yoga, we require the guidance of a Guru. It is impossible to walk unaided, because we cannot see what is ahead of us. We always see only one step - we cannot see a hundred steps ahead of us. There is a sense of insecurity and uncertainty because of the impossibility of piercing through the future, and it is then that we need confidence and comfort from a competent master.

Now we come to the main disciplines in yoga. We have been trying to understand them in as impartial a way as possible, as applicable to every human being in whatever condition one might find oneself. The system of yoga is a method of establishing unity with the atmosphere around, harmony with all things with which one is apparently connected - even invisibly, remotely. Ultimately, yoga has been

defined as a harmony, an equilibrium. Samatvaṁ yoga uchyate (B.G. II.48): Harmony is called yoga. This force or system of harmony operates everywhere in nature, outside as well as inside. And if we go deep into it, we will find it is this principle of harmony that works as gravitation in the external physical world, as chemical affinity among the elements of matter, as that which brings into unity the various thoughts of the mind and makes us feel that we are compact individuals. Otherwise, our thoughts will be dismembered, with one thought having no connection with another thought.

What is it that compels one thought to be related to another thought so that there is a system of ideas and a feeling of unity of one's personality? It works as a necessity for social collaboration and social brotherhood, harmony in external society. It works as the logical principle in the intellectual world so that we can deduce conclusions from premises. How can conclusions follow from premises unless there is a connection? The system of harmony present in the logical universe of discourse is also a manifestation of this ultimate principle of harmony, and it is this force which works as love and hatred. It is that principle of harmony that manifests itself as love and hatred in the world, without one's knowing how it actually works. We are simultaneously pulled and repelled by the very same force for different purposes, leading to the ultimate purpose of reconciling ourselves with all things around us. The pull of our individuality, with a vehemence that is unthinkable, towards things outside is due to the presence of this principle of harmony. Even the repelling forces - that force which cuts us off from certain things in the world through a dislike - even these forces are ultimately the negative operations of the same force of harmony. It adjusts and readjusts itself in various phases for the purpose of bringing about ultimate harmony.

This principle it is that is before us, not merely as an abstract legal formula like a law operating in another concrete world, but as the very system and order of things in which we also find ourselves, with which we are inseparably connected, so that in the practice of yoga we become at once friendly with all things and all conditions, in various degrees of comprehension. *Maitri* or friendliness becomes the principle of action in the practice of yoga of consciousness where, by the various modulations of adjustment and readjustment, by inclusion and exclusion at various stages, the intention behind it is to bring about a complete inclusion of all factors so that there would be no further necessity for the individual to feel a sense of incompleteness in itself, and it rests in a state of perfect harmony or *kaivalya*, as they call it - absolute freedom and independence achieved through a harmony which does not see a necessity for further evolution.

Therefore, in the very first and initial step, it is necessary to visualise the presence of the goal, just as in the psychology of education the purpose of education is kept in view even at the kindergarten stage. It may be the ABC of learning that the child has just started in the elementary or primary school, but the teachers are fully aware of what they are doing and why these things are being done at all. In the same way, even the most rudimentary discipline that is prescribed in yoga has a connection with the ultimate aim that is in the mind of the teacher.

One of the defects of individual life is an inherent feeling of exclusiveness, and this feeling of exclusiveness is called egoism in its various manifestations. We feel as if we are totally different from others, and this feeling, when it asserts itself with great force, becomes the principle of self-affirmation or egoism. Therefore, egoism is not a virtue. It is a defect of personality, which on account of its false feeling of exclusiveness, resents any kind of assistance from externals, though it cannot exist

without such assistance from externals. So, the principle of egoism is a contradiction, and it brings sorrow to the person. It cannot exist without assistance from others, and yet it resents assistance from others because it asserts its own completeness. The knot of this exclusiveness has to be gradually untied by systematic inner discipline - such as intellectual, moral, social and spiritual educational processes.

To give a very prosaic, common and very broad outline of the stages of yoga - I am not referring to the stages of Patanjali's yoga which, of course, are a different thing altogether - it may be said that there are four stages. The most fundamental and the immediate stage would be the need for social collaboration and adjustment of personality with society. One cannot be an enemy of society and then live in it. The method, the degree or the nature of this adjustment of oneself to society is an art by itself. This is a very important thing to remember, even by those who think that their aim is God-realisation and that they have nothing to do with temporal events. It is not true that we have nothing to do with temporal events, because the temporal is the face of the eternal - and not simply cut off from it. There is some connection even between our dream life and waking life, though they are poles apart in their character.

Therefore even yogis and teachers of yoga, like Patanjali, insist upon this necessity to bring about the needed harmony of relationship in one's social existence so that there is no insecurity and unhappiness caused by social factors. Each factor has to be very carefully and intelligently manoeuvred by us, independently if possible, otherwise with the guidance of a master. The second stage is individual self-discipline, which is still a higher stage. After social adjustment comes individual discipline, which is a very clear and palpable step that we have taken in the direction of spiritual achievement. This personal or individual self-discipline is, of course, a very difficult thing to conceive of and practise. It has many sides and many aspects to consider, and it takes many years to achieve certain concrete and tangible results. The intention of this is to reach the third stage, which is very advanced. Most people cannot even conceive of what it is - namely, a consciousness of universal interrelatedness. That is the third stage we reach in yoga. The last one is, of course, absolute oneness. That is where we are driving at, finally.

So from external diversity, we gradually rise to greater and greater harmonious wholes of achievement by disciplines which look individual in the beginning, but they assume greater and greater universal character as we proceed further. Thus we have a very symmetrical and systematic science before us which touches every little act and function of our life, so that in the practice of yoga we have no such thing as something unimportant or an unconnected event or affair. Every little thing seems to be connected with our goal, and the smallest thing will demand recognition - a fact which will come to our notice as we go further.

CHAPTER 4

INDIVIDUALITY AND CONSCIOUSNESS

Contact with the Eternal, being the aim of yoga in its successive stages, requires non-contact with temporal things simultaneously. This is something very essential, and is perhaps the main feature of all practice. Contact with the Eternal necessitates non-contact with temporal things. The reason is this: the character of the Eternal, which is supposed to be reflected in the practice, as it was pointed out earlier, is such that it cannot be reconciled with any type of externality, isolation, physical location or separation of any type. The Eternal is not something external.

The Eternal is a very peculiar something which what we call the normal human mind cannot comprehend, and therefore it is so hard to concentrate one's consciousness on its Being. But whatever may be the intrinsic structure of the Eternal Being, it calls for a non-contact from particular features visible to the senses, because the one very important character of the Eternal is that it is not an object of the senses. So anything that presents itself as an object of the senses has to manifest characters different from that of the Eternal. Eternality and externality are not identical; they are two distinct characters of the realm spiritual and the realm temporal.

The concept of the Eternal does not enter the mind because of the attachment of the senses to externality. The mind follows the senses. It is only a servant of the senses, and though often we think that the mind is superior to the senses and a master of the senses, that is only in theory. In practice, it is a servant - it is a slave. It only decides cases according to the reports of the senses - like a judge who is, of course, expected to exercise personal discretion, has to depend on evidence from external sources. He cannot use his discretion quite contrary to the reported evidence. Something like that is the condition of the mind and also of the intellect. The intellect merely decides a case upon the particulars gathered by the mind in terms of sense-perception. So our entire life in this world is something non-eternal, in its internal nature as well as outward form.

Yoga is a process of turning the tables around, as we may call it - a revolution to be brought about in our perceptive consciousness, and an effort to insist upon the presence of the Eternal in the non-eternal. Yoga is the persistent attempt of consciousness to interpret everything in terms of the Eternal, though this is done in various stages. But, even at the first stage, the fundamental requisite for a non-externality in attitude is demanded. This is a very simple fact to state, but a very difficult thing for the mind to accept and for the personality to take up for practice, because life is nothing if it is not external. Everything is external. Even our body is an external object because it can be seen in space and time. The individual perceiver or the seer, the bodily personality, is as much an object of sense in space and time as any other object of sense. So we live in an objective world, in a very uncomfortable situation, really speaking. Everything is an object; and if everything is an object, then who is the subject? This body is an object and everything that is outside also is an object. Who is the subject? The subject is missing. It is like a drama without actors; the actor is missing but the drama is going on.

The real deciding principle, which is the knowing subject, seems to be missing in this world of perceptions, and this is the reason why there is struggle and infinite effort on the part of people to achieve something whose nature is not clear to their minds.

What we are trying to achieve in life is nothing but the realisation of the subject which we have missed in the world of objects. We see only objects, including our own body, and we cannot see the subject anywhere. Yet, we know there cannot be objects without the subject. The subject is absolutely necessary in order that it may give meaning to the very perception of objects. But it is eluding the grasp of the mind since the subject cannot be grasped by any means, because the subject is the grasper. Just as we cannot see our own eyes, we cannot know the subject. "Who can know the knower?" - is the question of the Upanishad. Who can see the seer, and who can know the knower? Nobody can see the seer, and nobody can know the knower, but this is precisely the great question of life. How can there be meaning in anything unless there is somebody who knows things and sees meaning in things?

So, the practice of yoga is an attempt at self-recognition in various degrees. It is not a contact in the sense of one thing impinging on another, but a self-awakening, by degrees, of the subject who has missed itself in the conglomeration of perceptions of objects which it has mistaken for realities. They are not realities, because their reality, their meaning, their significance or value depends upon their connection with the subject, whose absence will remove all significance from life. Sometimes it is said that any number of zeros makes no sense, but if we put one figure in front of them, it may become millions. All zeros assume a tremendous importance the moment we put one figure in front of them; otherwise, they are an empty series of zeros. Likewise, all these wonderful objects of the world are like many zeros without any sense. They are millions and millions in number. They are like millions of zeros. What is the use of millions of zeros? They mean nothing. But if we add one figure in front of these zeros, we will know how vast is our wealth. Such is the meaning that objects assume, the world assumes, when we add 'one'; and that 'one' is the subject. But where is the subject? Great poets like Kabir Das have sung, "People search for it in Brindavan and search for it in Ayodhya, and find it nowhere." We search for the subject in all places, and it cannot be found anywhere. It cannot be found anywhere because it is not any object.

We know the story of ten people trying to cross a river, and afterwards they tried to find out if all had crossed the river or if someone had drowned. One of them started counting to see whether all ten were there or not. He made all the people stand in a line, and he began to count: one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine - the tenth was not there. He forgot that he was the tenth man, that the counter himself was the tenth man. He said, "Only nine are there. Oh, one is gone!" Then he said to someone, "You count, you count." So, another man came forward and the previous man stood in the line, and the other man also said, "Only nine are there. Oh, one is gone!" So he said to someone, "You count, you count." A third man came forward and the second man stood in the line, and again it was found that only nine were there. So everybody said, "Nine." They started weeping, "Oh, one brother has gone. One of our brothers has been drowned in the river." They hit their heads until blood started flowing and they were in pain, and cried, "My brother is dead!" They shaved their heads for sorrow of their brother's death.

Then one gentleman passing on the way said, "Why are you all crying?" They said, "One of our people is dead; he drowned in the river while crossing it." "Is it so? How many were you?" "We were ten." "Ten? But you are ten." "No, we are nine," one man said. "Now see," he said and counted again; and again there were nine. "My dear friend," said the gentleman, "you are the tenth man. You have forgotten to count yourself!" "Oh, I see. Now it's okay." The bleeding and pain had gone, and he did not

cry any more. He recognised that the counter had to be counted as well; he could not be excluded.

This person who comes like a good Samaritan and says, "You are the tenth man," is the Guru. We are unnecessarily crying, "I have lost everything!" We have lost nothing, because what we have lost is ourself only. That we have missed, and we have forgotten that we have lost ourself under the impression that we are one among the many things in the world. The awakening, therefore, is of the subject, by the subject, for the sake of the subject - a principle which is impossible for the logical intellect to understand or the common mind to comprehend, because this subject is not a grammatical subject. The grammatical subject is different from the metaphysical subject or the spiritual subject, which we are speaking of.

In Indian philosophical parlance, this subject has been referred to by various terms such as the *purusha*, the *atman*, etc. But these are, again, only words for us which cannot be understood unless their connotation is properly explained and grasped. What is the use of chanting *purusha*, or *atman*? We can chant anything, but it makes no sense. These are only explanatory devices to convey the meaning of what the real subject is. As I mentioned to you, it is not a subject in grammatical sentences, but a principle that determines the significance of all perceptions and experiences. Our experiences have no meaning if the subject is absent. The whole of philosophical studies may be said to be an unravelling of the nature of the subject of knowledge, whether it is of the East or the West. And the various schools of thought and philosophy are only systems of discovering the characteristics of the subject from different angles of vision, from various standpoints.

Yoga takes up this subject and girds up its loins to solve this mystery of the lost tenth person. The tenth person, to give the analogy already cited, is the very same person who observes, calculates and experiences the world of objects. The meaning that we see in the world is due to the presence of the subject reflected and focused through these objects of the world by means of the media of space and time. The light of the mirror does not belong to the mirror - it belongs to some other shining object. The mirror does not shine. If we keep the mirror in darkness, we will not even know that it is there. But if we keep it in the sun, it will shine and we cannot see the mirror at all. There will be only a reflection and a tremendous piercing light emanating from the mirror. The mirror will be invisible due to the glare which is reflected through the mirror.

Likewise, the light of the Supreme Subject - which is consciousness reflected through the medium of the various things of the world, including the mind and the intellect - creates a kind of confusion, just as there can be confusion between the light and the mirror. One cannot see the mirror at all, because so much glare of light is passing through the mirror. The subject, which is consciousness, permeates the world of objects through and through, from top to bottom, so intensely that one thing is mistaken for the other. The object is mistaken for the subject and the subject is mistaken for the object. This is called *adhyasa* in Sanskrit terminology, or the superimposition of one character upon another, mutually exclusive of each other. When we say, "I am tall, I am short, I am happy, I am unhappy," etc., what happens is that we transfer the characteristics of the body and the mind to the *atman*. The *atman* or consciousness cannot be tall or short, nor is it happy, nor unhappy. Some characters which do not belong to it are transferred from the bodily encasement and the world of objects to consciousness, and then we say, "I am such-and-such, I am so and so," etc., etc. Conversely, we transfer the character of consciousness to the body,

and then we say, "I am here, I am conscious, I exist." When we say "I exist", we transfer the consciousness aspect of our being to the body aspect.

Existence and consciousness are not the qualities of the body; they belong to something else altogether, which is the real subject. But that is transferred to the body and we then say that the body exists, that the body is conscious. The body neither exists, nor is it conscious, but the mutual interposition of characters has created this confusion called world experience. The practice of yoga attempts to carefully distinguish between these two factors of subjectivity and objectivity in experience and analyse these threadbare, to the root, until the true nature of both these aspects is carefully known.

As we proceed higher and higher in the analysis of the nature of the subject, we will realise that two things happen - two events take place, two types of experience begin to manifest themselves. Number one: the subject slowly expands its ken of perception and experience beyond the limits of the body and intensifies itself in quality, simultaneously widening the perspective of the jurisdiction of its knowledge. Secondly, the objective world slowly diminishes in importance, because the more the subject expands, the more also the object diminishes in quantity. Why does the world look so big? The world looks so big because we are so small. Suppose we become big - the world will look small. As the subject goes on expanding further and further, the world of objects will become smaller and smaller comparatively, so that when the subject becomes all-comprehensive, the world will vanish altogether. There will be no world at all, because all of the objects will be comprehended within the subject. This is a far, far end in view, to be reached after very much effort. The purpose, the central aim of the practice of yoga, is to make one absolutely independent - almost omniscient and omnipotent, deathless, immortal, as the scriptures have been telling us again and again.

The practice of yoga requires us to undergo certain disciplines - disciplines that are necessary in the light of the vision that we have in front of us. The vision is of the Eternal, and as it was pointed out, all characters of externality, which have assumed such an importance in our present-day life, have to be seen through to their true colours. It is the perception of externality that is responsible for the distraction of the senses and the agitation of the mind. Yoga, therefore, attempts primarily at a subdual of all distraction and a removal of agitation of every kind. There are various types of agitation, and in systematic expositions of yoga such as the one given to us by the Sage Patanjali and exponents of that nature, we are told that the agitation is of various types and of various degrees, and that every agitation has to be subdued.

Agitation is the cause of restlessness, unhappiness, and even birth and death, ultimately. We have to subdue all types of restlessness, distraction and agitation - right from the bottom to the top. Immediately, what we observe is that our body is restless. We cannot sit at any place for even five minutes - this is our main malady. No one can sit for half an hour or one hour at one place. The body jumps from one place to another place due to restlessness. Sometimes we do not know why it is that we are moving from place to place. We are simply driven by a habit and an incitation of the muscles and the nerves. Muscular and nervous agitation has to be subdued. Internal to the physical structure of the muscles and the nerves, we have the senses and the *pranas*; they are also restless. There is agitation of the *pranas*. There is an upheaval which causes arrhythmic movements in the flowing of the breath. Simultaneously with the agitation of the *pranas*, the muscles and the nerves, there is agitation of the senses. The eyes want to see many things, the ears want to hear many

things, and they want variety. We do not want to go on seeing the same thing for the whole day. The eyes also want variety, so we look here and there in twenty places as we walk; that is agitation of the senses. Why do we look in twenty places? What is the purpose? We gain nothing - it is a kind of habit of the distracted senses. So, the senses are agitated; the mind is agitated; the intellect is agitated. Finally there is an agitation of consciousness, which is the cause for all these lower agitations. The master himself is agitated - the commander-in-chief is restless, and therefore the whole army is restless. Yoga takes up this matter in right earnest and wants to control these distractions and agitations perfectly, to the very core. Therefore, it is necessary to analyse the types of agitation which makes us unhappy.

Ordinarily we cannot know that we are agitated at all. We say, "I am perfectly all right, what is wrong with me?" because we have become one with the agitation. As our minds and consciousness have got identified with the restless condition which we have mistaken for our real being, we cannot detect that there is some mistake in us. When we have become one with the mistake itself, how will we know that it is there? We are an embodiment of blunder, mistake, error, misconception, miscalculation; and how are we to know that such a thing has happened unless there is somebody to observe, point out and tell us something is wrong with us? Here is the necessity for a spiritual guide, a master, because one who is involved in agitation, restlessness, and illness of this character cannot recognise that such an event has taken place. It is, therefore, necessary to find out circumstances and conditions which are conducive to the scientific method of discovering the character and the nature of these agitations which constitute, ultimately, what we call the flux of individuality.

Our so-called individuality is not a static being, just as a flowing river is not static. The river Ganga is not a static body of water; it is a moving series, and yet it looks as if it is there permanently. Just as we do not see a single picture in a film in a cinema but see a series of passing pictures - which we cannot know because of the incapacity of the eyes to catch up to the speed of the movement of the pictures - the consciousness has got identified with a transitional movement of the structure of this body, and so it is unable to discover that there is a movement of the constitution or structure of this body. The whole individuality is nothing but a bundle of agitations. This is true not only from the point of view of science and physics, but also from the point of view of psychology. The great discovery of Buddha was nothing but this: that everything is a set of agitations, movements, transitions, and it is all phenomena - there is nothing noumenon in this world, but we cannot discover this truth because we got identified with the phenomenon that is the world.

It is necessary to find the circumstances under which we have become identified with this set-up of transition, process. The individual body, which is a little bit of the process of universal movement, is mistaken for a located, centralised, physical object because of the selective habit of consciousness which excludes certain characteristics that are not necessary or relevant to its attachment to this location called the body, and centralises or pinpoints itself on a group or set of agitations and considers that as its own body. If we put blinkers on both our eyes and do not see either side of the river, and see only a little bit of the river, it looks as if the river is static. We cannot see the motion of the river. We see only one inch of the river and cannot see the movement even though there is such a big torrent flowing, due to the blinkers that we have put on, which is the limitation of our consciousness to a pinpoint in the vast process which is called the flow of the river.

Likewise, the consciousness has got tied up to a pinpointed location of this entire

process of universal evolution, and that pinpointed location is this body. But this is a big mistake. A set of agitations has been mistaken for a static object, a reality by itself, which is 'being'. 'Becoming' has been mistaken for 'being'. The true Being is something different from what we mistake for being. The world of objects is not static - not even this body is static, as it has been analysed. Nothing in this world is permanent. Everything moves. Everything is in a state of hurrying forward to a destination which the mind cannot comprehend at present. This universal movement of forces towards a destination is not grasped by the consciousness on account of its tethered condition to a location called the body or individual objectivity. Then there is a consequent transference of property from object to subject, from subject to object, etc., by way of *adhyasa*.

The control of this entire process, the mastery one gains over these agitated conditions, right from the body up to the spirit, is the process of yoga. *Asana*, *pranayama*, *pratyahara*, *dharana*, *dhyana* and *samadhi* are only technical names that yoga mentions for these techniques of subduing the agitations of imagined individuality by a consciousness that gains control, gradually, through a process of discrimination and concentration. Therefore, it will be clear now that yoga is a very scientific process, calling for intense discipline in right earnest, with a wholehearted ardour of dedication and surrender to the cause, which, when it is achieved, is supposed to solve all the problems of our life.

CHAPTER 5

THE PRACTICE OF BEING ALONE

The Supreme Being, in mystical language, has often been referred to as the Alone, the Independent, or the Absolute. The aloneness of Reality is of a strange character, quite incompatible and incomparable with the aloneness that we as individuals feel when we are away from human society. The aloneness of a human individual is due to isolation from human society or society in general. But the aloneness of the Supreme Being is due not to isolation, but to all-inclusiveness. Because of an incomprehensible inclusiveness of the nature of the Supreme Being, it is symbolically and metaphorically designated as the 'Alone'. It is the Alone, because everything is in It - nothing is outside It. Inasmuch as nothing is outside It, It is not a social being. There is no society for God because God is the One, Single, Incomparable Existence.

This aloneness is reflected in the lower degrees of manifestation also, and on rare occasions we, too, like to be alone. When circumstances in life so arrange themselves that nothing pleases us, and when a time comes that we seem to be fed up with all things - we had enough of everything - then we would like to be alone. "Don't disturb me," people say. "Let me be alone." At the time when we are alone, we seem to be happier than when we are in the midst of people. The spirit of renunciation takes possession of a person under rare conditions, but such a spirit does not come to us when we are immersed in worldly activity and mistake social relationship for ultimate reality. Many a time we get caught up in the network of relationships to such an extent that our real nature is totally obliterated, for all practical purposes. What we really are gets immersed in what we are not, so that we can be said to be living a false life of external relationships, completely oblivious of the true life which is really ours. As I mentioned, it is on rare occasions, under extraordinary circumstances, that we like to be alone - otherwise, we always like to be in the midst of people.

The desire to be in the midst of things is due to a false sense of values; it is not our true nature. We get identified with the false bodily personality so intensely, its various kinds of limitations and shortcomings speak in such a loud noise, that it is impossible for us to exist without social relationships. It is our sense of intense limitation that compels us to be in the midst of society. The more we are limited and finite and inadequate, the more we require relationships with other people and things. But this state of affairs will not go on for a long time, because the truth will assert itself one day or the other.

It is not true that we are social individuals. It is not true that we are finite. It is not true that we are limited in any manner whatsoever. The sense of limitation is an imposition on our real nature due to various factors. The singleness and the unitary character of our being asserts itself sometime or other in each one's life. No one has been born in this world who was fully satisfied with human society. Each one has died with a curse and a complaint against human nature and society. Everyone thought that it is gold, but finally died with the feeling that it is rusted iron. This is the history of mankind right from creation to this day, and we do not know how long it will continue. The reason is that there is a miscalculation of values due to the weddedness of consciousness to the senses, and the dependence of our consciousness on the reports of the senses.

The practice of yoga takes into consideration, takes note of the essential character of

'being' reflected in some measure in one's individuality, and taking its stand on this pedestal, rises above to the next step of a more expanded condition of being. As it was pointed out, the stages of yoga are the stages of expansion in the dimension of consciousness which is, at once, a dimension of being. Consciousness is 'being'. They are inseparable. So the more we expand the dimension of our consciousness, the more also we expand the dimension of our being so that every step in the practice of yoga is a rising into higher levels of being - which means to say higher stages of inclusiveness, comprehensiveness, totality, and adequacy. Towards this purpose, the constituents of our individuality have to be disciplined. The various factors that make up our nature, as it is today, have to be brought into a focus of concentration, organised systematically, and arranged methodically for the purpose of an onward march into the higher levels of being and consciousness.

For this purpose, as it is in the case of a laboratory worker or a scientist, leisure is necessary. We should not be busybodies throughout the day. Leisure - time to think and freedom to ponder over the nature of things - is essential so that the necessary steps may be taken in the direction of a further achievement. We should not be always in a condition of muddle and confused relationships. We should not be like automatons or puppets which are driven by powers external to themselves.

Every step in the practice of yoga is a step towards greater and greater freedom - the freedom not imposed upon us by social contact, but the freedom that arises on account of inclusiveness in a larger and larger measure of our own being. So the freedom that we achieve here is not dependent on external factors. It is not like the freedom of a minister or a king, which is a false freedom tentatively erected by social factors which can fall down and crack at any moment when these factors disintegrate. Spiritual freedom, the freedom achieved through the practice of yoga, is another name for expansiveness of being itself, so that there is no question of its cracking or falling down. And it is a permanent freedom, whatever be the measure or extent of its realisation.

So, first of all, let there be a little leisure to think and to be with one's own self. This is a very important factor to remember. One has to be with one's own self for sometime every day. Mostly, we are with other people; we cannot be alone. We are always with some friends. This irresistible pressure to be in the company of other persons and things is a disease of the mind, ultimately, from the point of view of our real goal and purpose. How is it possible for a person to be so involved in externals that one forgets one's own self, loses oneself, and takes what one is not for what one is, so that one seems to be gaining everything and losing one's own self? "What does it avail you if you gain the whole world and lose your soul?" said Christ. The meaning of his teaching is that we may gain the entire world of objects and lose ourselves as the central subject. What does it matter to us? How does it benefit us? We will be like decorated corpses looking like human beings but without any life in them. When the subject is withdrawn from the object, it is a corpse looking like a living body - but there is no life in it, really speaking. So to depend on externals is to depend on a corpse for the values of life. The stages of yoga are stages in the rise of vitality and true living. We die to externals in some sense so that we may live in the Universal. Die to live. We die first and then live afterwards. We die to that which is false, counterfeit, makeshift, external, and then live in a percentage of the Eternal, which is inclusiveness, totality and indivisibility of being.

Every day it should be possible for any sensible person to find a little time to be absolutely alone. This is a very essential prerequisite in spiritual practice. People who

are in a house of many members should also find time to be alone a little while, away from the house. We should not be always in the workplace - that is not advisable. We constantly live in a false, externalised atmosphere where there is always noise, always crying, always relationships, always saying something or the other. This difficulty should be obviated, to some extent at least, even in the initial stage. If we live in a house with many people, we should go out of the house for one hour in the day - somewhere a mile off, or at least a little away from the atmosphere of social conglomeration - and sit for awhile. Either we should close our eyes or keep them open, whatever we like, and think for a moment, "What is it that I actually need?" Philosophical questions arise in the mind by contemplation of possible future experiences, such as one being deprived of relationships. That one can be deprived of external relationships is a possibility, not necessarily remote. The study of human history will reveal that this is perhaps a condition through which most people have to pass.

There cannot be but very few people in the world who have not been deprived of something or the other. Suppose we are deprived of everything in this world - persons and things and property and whatnot - and we stand alone, unbefriended, uncared for, not being looked at by any person. What is our duty at that moment? When we were born into this world, we did not come with friends. Who did we bring when we came to this world? Who will we take with us when we go away from this world? How many friends will come with us? Not one will come with us. Not a needle will come with us. Not a strip of cloth will come with us. We will leave this world in the same way as we came to this world. And when do we leave this world? After five thousand years? One hundred years? It can be the next moment. The breath can stop. The heart can stop its beat. We know we have no control over these factors. It is futile to imagine that one can live for a hundred years, for two hundred years, and can rule the world. All these are the empty imaginations of an untutored mind.

If we are good students of history and psychology, we must be able to appreciate a condition which can befall us any moment of time. What happened to another, can happen to us also. If suddenly a circumstance takes hold of us where we are unbefriended and our life itself is totally in danger, what is our duty at that moment? It is difficult to conceive what our duty would be at that moment. We are totally helpless, confounded, and woebegone - awful is the condition. Why is it that we feel so awful and wretched in a state where we seem to be disconnected from all external values? It is so because all the while we have been living in a false realm of values, and suddenly we have been possessed now by reality which has come and stared at us: "Here I am. You have forgotten me for years together. Today I am coming before you to demand my share of your life." If reality begins to look at us and stare at us, we shall be frightened. We are happy because we are living in a false world. It is false values that make us happy and, therefore, our happiness also is false.

We are stupid people, if we properly analyse ourselves. We have no wisdom in ourselves, because our happiness, properly analysed, will be found to be based on erroneous notions, illogical conceptions, and untrustworthy factors. These things make us happy. But sometimes the earth gets shaken and the reality will come up and then we find that we are nobody - nothing. This situation arises on account of a manifestation of truth in the process of evolution. What is truth? As I mentioned, the sense of aloneness will come and press upon us one day or the other. The Supreme Being, which is the Universal Alone, will be reflected in us in a measure, calling for a sense of aloneness in our life, bereft of all the false relationships of society which we

have been mistaking for truth and the real sense of values.

Yoga does not want us to be threatened like this; it wants us to understand things beforehand. It is better to quit a house honourably than to be asked to get out by force. Why should we be asked to get out? We ourselves should go honourably. "Yes, I am going before you say so." But if we do not understand this, we will be taken to task by powers which are the real rulers of this world. The rulers of this world are not presidents and ministers. The rulers are something else, of whom we have absolutely no knowledge, whom we cannot see with our eyes, and whom we do not want to think about even for a moment of time. The world is controlled by forces which are not human - human beings are only strings which are operated by other powers, of which human beings have no knowledge.

So yoga takes us by the hand, leads us along the path of right knowledge, and tells us where we really stand: "My dear friend, this is your situation." A real friend will tell us what our defects are. He will not go on praising us unnecessarily, that we are endowed with two horns and four eyes, etc. We have no two horns - nothing of the kind. We are bereft of horns. The friend will tell us, "You have no horns." Why do we think we have got horns? We have no tails. There are all sorts of things about which we will be taught by the lessons of life.

The wisdom of life is the practice of yoga in its essentiality, and every step in yoga is a discipline in this direction. By discipline, we should not understand any kind of imposed hardship or torture. Generally people are afraid of discipline because they think it is a kind of imposition of restriction upon oneself by somebody else. This is the usual definition of discipline or the working of law and order. This is because we are not used to discipline. We are always accustomed to a kind of life of abandon - license, rather than freedom - a kind of urge from within to live as one likes according to the whim and fancy of the conditions of the mind as it occurs, without any control over one's own self. But discipline does not mean that.

Discipline is the arrangement of our thought or consciousness according to the laws that operate basically in life - the laws which are not imposed upon us from outside, but rather the laws which constitute the nature of the world itself. The world is ultimately made up of laws and principles rather than things and objects, and we are a part of that. So, to obey a discipline, a principle of order or regulation, does not mean subjection to somebody else. The following of a discipline does not mean becoming a slave of somebody, but an acceptance of the true values of life - which means to say, the value of our own being. Ultimately, discipline is alignment with one's own personality, and not subjection to somebody else. We are not being threatened by somebody else when we are asked to follow discipline. It is our own true nature that calls for adjustment of our self with our Self. *Ātmaiva hyātmano bandhurātmaiva ripurātmanaḥ* (B.G. VI.5), says the Bhagavadgita: You yourself are your friend, and you yourself are your enemy under different conditions.

We can be our own enemy when our real nature cannot be reconciled with the false nature in which we are today living. When we have identified with our false level of being, which is not the truth of things, naturally it comes at loggerheads with the higher order of life which is our higher nature. So there is a fight between one's lower nature and one's higher nature; there is a war in one's own self. This is what is called psychological tension. A tension, psychologically felt, is nothing but a battle that is waged between our own higher nature and our lower nature. It is not somebody else fighting with us; we ourselves are fighting with ourselves inside, in the

two levels of our existence. When we are intelligently educated in the lines of the higher nature of our own being, we do not merely subject ourselves like servants to its laws, because we cannot be servants of our own selves. It is a voluntary acceptance of the true sense of values. It is recognition of what we really are in our fundamental nature.

Yoga is, therefore, also a process of education. There cannot be a greater system of education than yoga. There is no greater psychology than yoga. There is no greater science than yoga. There is no greater philosophy than yoga. There is no greater system of living than yoga. Therefore, to set one's foot in the line of the practice of yoga would be to step into the realm of being as such, the realm of reality, the realm of truth or *satya*, which is supposed to triumph or succeed in the end. The discipline that we are called upon to undertake - voluntarily of course, not as an imposition from outside - is to be exercised at every level and at every stage.

As I said in the beginning, the first discipline would be to find leisure, to find time to be alone. I requested you to find time, at least to the extent of an hour every day, when you will not be likely to see anybody, you will not talk to anybody, you will not have dealings with anybody, and you will not even think of anybody. Can you find one hour like that? That would be your first achievement in yoga. Sit alone for one hour every day, not seeing anybody, not talking to anybody, not having dealings with anybody, and not even thinking of anybody. If this can be done, you have stepped into the kindergarten stage of yoga. But even this much is difficult for most people. "Oh, I cannot find one hour - even five minutes is very difficult. I am always busy." Busy in heading towards death - what a pity. We are all busy towards that end only, heading towards our doom. This is the world, and it is made up of this nature. We have no time to be alone a little, to find out what is our aim in life and what is our real duty.

After having been blessed with this rare opportunity of finding at least one hour in a day to be absolutely alone, seat yourself in a comfortable posture. By comfortable posture, I do not mean crossed legs. It can be any posture which is easy and free from muscular, nervous and psychological tension. You can even sit on an easy chair. You can even lie down on a bed for a few minutes in the beginning if you are very tired. You can occupy any kind of physical posture which would not necessitate your thinking of the body at that time. The meaning of a comfortable posture is that position of the body which will not demand thought of the body. Suppose you sit in a distorted position - you will feel some kind of muscle strain, or pain somewhere in the body, and so you will be thinking about a part of your body. The point here is that you should be in such a mental mood and condition where it is not necessary for you to think of the body. You are poised in such a way that the harmony introduced by that physical posture will free you from the thought of the body, for the time being at least - at least for an hour. So be seated, or be occupying such a physical posture which would not necessitate thought of the body. And then, what do you do?

For some days you need not do anything or even think anything. Let there be at least a satisfaction that you are able to sit alone for an hour every day. Even if you are looking at the empty space or the open sky, or gazing at the stars, it does not matter. For a few days, do not think about anything. After some days you will find that the mind becomes accustomed to this kind of aloneness and freedom from, or subjection to, false relationship with externals, and then the power of concentration will gradually develop. The mind is unable to concentrate on anything because it is always used to a life of distracted perceptions. We see a hundred people and a

thousand things, and think many a thought every day, so that we have never had the occasion to think of any one particular thing for a consistent period.

This chance given to the mind to be alone for some time enables it to adjust its ideas in such a way that thoughts begin to flow in a particular direction, rather than in a hotchpotch manner in all directions. The purpose of sitting alone, being alone, is to learn the art of concentration of mind, channelisation of thought in a given direction, and thus energising the mind for the purpose of the higher practice.

CHAPTER 6

SPIRITUAL LIFE IS POSITIVE, NOT PUNITIVE

It is our experience that things to which we are accustomed, rightly or wrongly, look normal and usual, and those things which we are not used to, to which we are strangers, appear frightening and non-promising. The practice of yoga has a double aspect to the seeker. There is an initial feeling of confidence, enthusiasm, and even a sense of success, but it is followed by a sudden diminution of enthusiasm and a sense of helplessness which comes upon one due to certain psychological reasons. One who is not a good psychologist cannot face these problems, because the most difficult thing for one to understand is: what happens to one's own self? While one can observe and study others' minds as a good professor of psychology, it is not easy to know one's own mind because the mind is identified with one's personality and individual being, and vice versa. All students of yoga will pass through these stages.

The lowest condition of human existence is one of material attachment and immersion in social values, imagining that the world is all and nothing is beyond, and that sense-life is the real life. This is, perhaps, the lowermost level of earthly existence, where the bodily pleasures and sensory attachments are mistaken for the true values of life. But a day must come when one is shaken up from this conviction, and a sense of the beyond peeps into one's life. It is then that people like to go to ashrams, monasteries, go on pilgrimage, see Mahatmas, Saints, Gurus, or resort to sequestered places for the purpose of isolation, peace of mind, etc., as it occurs to their minds. Then comes a feeling that there is something superior to earthly existence or worldly life - that a life divine, a life of discipline and ethicality, morality, a life of love of God perhaps is the aim of life, and one has to take these higher aspects of life very seriously. Life in the world is not all. This is the stage of the seeker, the *sadhaka*, who works oneself up into an emotional enthusiasm of the love of God, practice of *sadhana*, discipline, austerity, diminution of physical pleasures and enjoyments of life, and this can go on for a protracted period. Sometimes this period can extend to several years.

One may be practising *sadhana* for years and years with a tremendous enthusiasm of spirit. But there must come a time when there is a sudden feeling of sinking down, as if everything is going. There is a leakage in the ship and the whole ocean is entering into it, to drown it forever. This has come upon the lives of all saints and sages, and it must come upon the life of every one of us. This is what they call the condition of a *trishanku* - where we are hanging in the middle without any support and no perception of the next step that is to be taken. On one side we have lost the values of earthly life, and on the other side we have found nothing that is beyond. There cannot be a worse condition than this. The world has gone because we have left it as something non-essential, and God has not come - perhaps He is not willing to come. So, what is our condition? Most miserable.

This condition of helplessness is a dangerous situation where anything can happen to any person. The condition of vacuum is not a safe one. The wind can blow from any side, and we do not know from which side it will blow. It will simply blast us in a direction of which we cannot have any kind of idea at the present moment. This situation of vacuum, a sense of emptiness and hopelessness, arises on account of a peculiar psychological reaction that is set up by the mind on account of a protracted control of the senses and practise of austerity for years together. We cannot have an

action without a reaction. This is very important to remember. Even the action of *sadhana* will produce a reaction - it must. Well, one may ask, "Is there no *sadhana* which cannot produce a reaction?" Perhaps there may be a type of spiritual attitude which may not produce such reactions, but it is only a possibility and not a practicability.

For all practical purposes reactions must be produced, because it is impossible for a human mind to take into consideration every aspect of *sadhana*. Whatever be our wisdom, we will miss some points, and those missed points will react upon us with a tremendous vehemence and force. This is a condition of mind which one should expect at any time. If the austerity and self-control that we have been practising has been very intense, the reaction also may be intense, and it may come quicker than one would expect. But if it is a slow process, a lumbering movement of a seeker who is not able to devote much time to the *sadhana*, the reaction will not be set up for years and years. Sometimes nothing will happen at all; one will die without seeing any result. That is also possible because of the slowness of the concentration of the mind. But if one is earnest, the reaction must be set up.

Now, coming to the point, this reaction is a very important feature to consider. We will not find a single person who has not experienced this reaction at some time or other. There is no individual seeker who will escape this peculiar action of the mind. But mostly what happens is that when the reaction is set up, it cannot be known. No one will know that the reaction has been set up and, therefore, we have to do something about it. What generally happens is that we get identified with the reaction, and that comes to be seen as a normal condition. We think that this is a thing that is quite in consonance with the nature of things, and nothing abnormal has taken place. A vigorous sensory activity may be a reaction of subdual of the senses for years together. But when that vigorous activity starts, we will not know that it is due to a reaction, because the mind is very treacherous. It is wise enough to dupe us into the feeling that everything is normal and nothing unusual has happened, because if we can discover its tricks, its methods will fail.

So the enemy is not always a fool; the enemy is also wise. We should not be under the impression that all enemies are fools, and that we can dupe them. It is not true. Sometimes the enemy can be equally wise, or even wiser than us. Thus arises the difficulty of facing this battle of life. And finally, our enemy, or friend, or whatever it is, is the mind only. On one side it is our friend; on the other side it is our enemy. Why does the mind set up reactions? It sets up reactions merely because it has been ignored. When we ignore a friend, the friend is hurt. If we do not talk to a friend for days together and turn our face away, naturally there is a feeling of dissatisfaction in the mind of the person. "He has been ignoring me and not talking to me, not paying any attention to me." We know the result of this kind of attitude.

So is the attitude of the mind. We have not paid any attention to its needs. The mind and the senses have needs. They want something, and we have been telling them, "I am not going to give you anything." We would not like to see; we would not like to hear; we would not like to eat; we would not like to sleep; and we are not going to give any kind of satisfaction to the temporal pattern of our physical existence. This is what is called *sadhana* usually speaking, in common language. When we do something contrary to the normal demands of body and senses, we regard it as a kind of religious life - austerity. If usually we have breakfast, lunch and dinner, and we cut off the breakfast and the dinner and have only lunch, we begin to feel that we are becoming a little religious. We begin to feel that a religious consciousness is arising

because, "I am taking only lunch; there is no breakfast, no dinner. If I have been sleeping for eight hours, I am now sleeping for four hours. I have become more religious, and I am diminishing social relationships."

Now, the steps that we take in the direction of cutting off the requisitions of the mind and the senses are to be taken with great caution. A religious life, or a spiritual life, is not any kind of action that we take against the mind. It is because we mistake an action against the mind as a spiritual value, that the reaction mentioned earlier gets set up. The mind is not averse to spiritual consciousness, but it is averse to any kind of punishment that we mete out to it. This is the case with any schoolboy or student. It is difficult to believe that anyone would be averse to education. But one does not want that kind of education which involves punishment of some sort or the other. What is punishment? It is a deliberate and persistent refusal to give what one feels is an immediate necessity. The difficulty of the spiritual seeker in this respect is immense. We are not omniscient people. We cannot know everything at one stroke. So we are likely to commit mistakes in the attitude we have towards our own mind and the way we chalk out our daily programs.

One of the defects of the general approach to life spiritual is the treading of a beaten track of tradition, which has been driven into our minds right from our childhood as the proper approach to things. It is not true that what society says is always the right approach to things. There is a peculiar social conduct, which is regarded as normal by humanity - humanity in general, whether of the East or of the West. Human nature has a peculiar way of assessing values, personally as well as socially. These customs of human society have been allowed to percolate into the very blood corpuscles of the individual, and we live a kind of traditional mode of conduct which we are compelled to regard as final in its worth and value, merely because we have been taught these lessons right from our childhood.

We have been brought up under these conditions. We have a list of what we call the 'do's' and 'don'ts' of life. We should do this and we should not do that. Parents tell us, "Don't do that. Don't do that. Do this. Do this." Right from babyhood we are told, "Do this and don't do that." We are frightened right from childhood, and we are reared in a state of fear. We are never told the reason why it should not be done. Also, we are not told the reason why it should be done. Parents and teachers tell us, "It should not be done. Very bad. Don't go there. Don't do this." And also they say, "You must do this. If you don't, you will get this punishment, even of hell." This fear of religion often becomes the basis of our approach to God, and we know very well how harmful it is to a positive approach to anything whatsoever.

Though restrictive discipline is essential so that the unwarranted clamours of body and sense should be directed in a systematic manner along a given channel, it is also necessary, at the same time, to remember that every step in the line of success is a positive step. Anything that we call success is positive - it is not negative. It is true that we must be hungry before we take our meal. The feeling of hunger is a negative condition, which should precede the positive intake of the meal. It is true that negative conditions should be there - without hunger we cannot eat. But the negative condition is not the whole thing. The essential feature is that it has to be followed by a positive action. When the positive action is missing, and merely the negative condition prevails, it becomes an unhappy state.

If we analyse our spiritual practices - we may refer to our own selves here, in this very institution or in this very hall - what is the type of spiritual practice that we are

engaged in every day? What is it that we are doing? Is it a following of the system of 'do's and don'ts'? The monastery says, "You should do this, and you should not do that." So, we are following a rule that has been imposed upon us by a system of living. Is this the type of practice that we are following? Or is there any kind of urge, felt from within, towards something very substantial and positive from our own point of view? Or, to put it more precisely, do we feel that every day we have gained something in our practice, or are we only in a restricted, punitive atmosphere like a jailbird?

If a monastic life, or a life in a cloister, is a life of a culprit or a jailbird who has somehow been caught in that atmosphere and has to undergo a system of unhappy discipline which the mind is deeply resenting at every moment - if that is the condition, definitively it is not spiritual. It is something very unhealthy, and this will produce a serious reaction one day or the other. The condition of our mind will tell us whether we are spiritual, or whether we are unspiritual. Are we happy or are we unhappy? Is our *sadhana* making us unhappy? What a pity. Do we feel this about ourselves? "I have been caught up in this unhappy set-up of affairs; this could have been better for me." If we feel that this could have been better, and this is not all right, then this will pinch our heart and one day or the other it will speak in a language which is very annoying. To underline what I have said already, a sense of positivity and satisfaction should precede and accompany anything that we do as a spiritual practice.

The life spiritual is not an imposition either from a Guru or from a monastery - it is a thing that we have undertaken voluntarily, of our own accord. Nobody compels us to lead a spiritual life. Any kind of compulsion is unhealthy. Neither does the monastery require it, nor does the Guru require it. It is we ourselves that want it for our own purpose, for our benefit and welfare. So every moment, every day rather, one has to watch one's mind. "Is this spiritual practice an imposition upon me by the Guru, or the monastery, or society, or somebody else? Or is it something that I have been voluntarily doing and I am perfectly satisfied with it?" If there is any kind of external pressure and an unhappy feeling, whether it is justified or unjustified, that unhappy feeling is the reason why there is a reaction one day or the other. So ultimately, the reaction is caused by our unhappiness. How long can we be unhappy? We can bear it for one day, two days, three days, one or two years, five years, ten years. But eventually this pressure on the nerves caused by the unhappiness of our mind will burst like a bomb and devastate us. This is what they call 'the fall' in yoga, or any kind of fall for the matter of that. So the spiritual seeker must be very cautious, and must be a real spiritual seeker, not a disciplinarian or a hard taskmaster who will extract the blood of other people. This is not spirituality, because there is spontaneity in approach of anything that is spiritual. What we are aiming at finally is a development of our own inner nature, which is the highest spontaneity.

Nothing can be more spontaneous than what we ourselves are. There is no compulsion or restriction imposed by us on our own nature or our own being. We feel that we exist in a spontaneous manner. But to feel that one is a minister or a policeman or a collector is a little bit unnatural. We are not that, really speaking. So we have to pose and put on an air of circumstances to act like a collector, or a minister, or an officer, or this or that person. There is no difficulty in feeling what we really are. For example, we are not collectors when we are in the bathroom - we are just like anybody else. When we go to bed, we are just normal human beings. We are not ministers going to bed - that attitude will disturb the mind, because it is an

attitude put on under external pressure and circumstances which are not normal and usual to our intrinsic make-up. So if spirituality is like this - that which has been put on, that which has been made up, that which has been created artificially by circumstances, deliberately or otherwise, then it is not going to help us. It is better to give up spirituality if it has become an imposition, a kind of torture, a suffering, a sorrow, and something which the mind resents.

What is to be emphasised here is that the life spiritual is positive, undertaken by ourselves and not imposed upon us by others. We want it because it has some value for us, and every discipline that we are practising is undertaken by us of our own accord, deliberately. We need it and we know why we need it. We should not do it because somebody tells us to do it - then it is external and we may not like it. So, it is no use to jump to the skies in a sudden artificial enthusiasm or buoyancy of spirit created by circumstances external to us. One penny that is our own is much better than a million dollars which is not ours. What is the use of a million dollars? It is not ours. We are only holding it for somebody's sake. But one penny is really ours. So even a little that we do - really, positively and genuinely, with joy - is of greater worth in our life than many things that we do in a day without joy in the mind.

Many spiritual seekers find themselves in an unfortunate atmosphere on account of mistakes that they make in the choice of the type of life that they have to live, and the mistake is committed on account of an enthusiasm which is not directed by understanding. We are driven by emotion rather than by intelligence, and this happens to everyone in the beginning. We suddenly cry for God, as if God is going to jump from the skies in a minute. That looks very wonderful in the beginning, "Oh, how religious is the person, how spiritual, how yearning, how pure, how genuine." But this will not work for all time, because while God is love, God is also law. He will not break a law merely for the sake of love, notwithstanding the fact that He is infinite love.

It is here that we find a combination, inextricably related, of law and love. Tremendous disciplinary restrictive law combined with infinite spontaneity of affection and love - all these we will find in God. And so, in the approach to God, we have to take into consideration this peculiar feature of God, though nothing can be regarded as more congenial to our nature than God's presence. No one can be regarded as more affectionate than God, and no one can be regarded as stricter than God. He is the strictest of all conceivable beings - yet He is the most compassionate. These two features are blended there in a Single Unitary Being. And so, as God's nature is reflected in the stages of *sadhana*, the disciplinary aspect or the restrictive feature of *sadhana*, which is voluntarily undertaken, has to go hand in hand with a spontaneity of approach and a positivity of feeling and satisfaction.

To reiterate, spiritual practice is voluntary. It is we that move towards God. We are not pushed by some motive force from outside or from behind. Forces can assist us, but they should not compel us, because anything that is of the nature of a compulsion is extrinsic in nature - whereas the spirit is intrinsic, and spirituality is the manifestation of this intrinsic nature of our own being. It is possible, therefore, to avoid reactions in *sadhana* by a judicious observation of the various factors in our present state of affairs. We should be very humble and dispassionate in judging our own selves as we are just now, and not as we ought to be in the future. "Today, just at this moment, what am I? What are my senses saying? What is the body telling? And what are my involvements speaking to me?" We cannot avoid any of these things. If we have involvements, these involvements must be properly tackled. The

involvements may be psychological, emotional, social, monetary, economic, political - they can be anything. But these involvements are important things because we are involved - it is not somebody else who is involved - and so they have some meaning in the way in which we live. Our involvements, therefore, have to be properly encountered, and their questions answered in a satisfactory manner. Also, the needs of the body and the senses are not unnecessary things when they are actually there.

Nothing that is visible can be regarded as unnecessary. But it has to be properly approached and intelligently harnessed for the purpose of an onward progress in *sadhana* rather than kept aside as a hobgoblin of which we are afraid always, not knowing when it will pounce upon us. Every external factor should be converted into an internal feature of our *sadhana* so that all our external relationships, whatever be their nature - whether of a family, or an institution, or a whole nation - these external factors should be transformed into an internal feature necessary in the transformation of the total personality, because the individual's personality is not an island. "No man is an island," as a poet wrote. We are not like islands, completely cut off from other portions of the land.

Every individual is connected to every other thing in the world, in some way or the other, so it is not possible to have a totally isolated individual approach, oblivious of external factors. When these factors are visible, especially when they are very pressing in their nature, they should be taken note of in their proper place, giving due respect to the position they occupy, and then converted and transformed into a motive force for the onward movement of the spirit towards God.

CHAPTER 7

INITIAL STEPS IN YOGA PRACTICE

It is generally believed, often wrongly by people, that the sitting posture or *asana* is a simple affair and that it is, perhaps, a non-essential in the practice of yoga. It is not true. Sitting in a single posture is not a simple affair, because it is not practicable for all people. If we actually do it, we will see the difficulty. The *asana* is not a non-essential. It is very, very important and essential in the practice of yoga, because the body - the muscles, the nerves, the *pranas* - are all essential parts of what we are. How can we say that the body is a non-essential in our personal make-up? It is an essential, and our individuality, our personality - whatever we are, here and now - is inseparable from this physical set-up. Hence, a systematisation of the workings of the physical body becomes not a non-essential, but a very important feature of personal discipline. We have been referring to this subject of discipline, and in this context we had occasion to observe that discipline is not a force exerted on us by somebody else. It is not a compulsive activity we are undertaking under the pressure of some external power.

Discipline, at least from the spiritual point of view, is a voluntary, dedicated attitude adopted by me, you or anyone, which is deliberately undergone like a medical treatment for the purpose of gaining true health. The initial stage, called the physical posture for the purpose of meditation, is very important, and its importance will be realised if we actually try to sit for a protracted period. How many of you can sit for an hour or two without jerks and shakes and agitations felt in your body? There will be uneasiness in the mind even at the very commencement of this practice. Suppose you are told, "Now sit for two hours and do not get up." The moment I say this you will feel a sense of uneasiness. "Oh, he is asking us not to get up for two hours; it is better to go away now itself. We don't want to sit here." The mind is restless because of being asked to do something to which it has not been accustomed and which it cannot regard as its normal activity. The normalcy which the mind feels is really a kind of chaos; it is not a real normalcy. We are accustomed to chaotic activity. We never stick to time; we never stick to principle; we never stick to any kind of method either in our speaking, or thinking, or acting. We are used to such a kind of life. We get up at any time; we eat at any time; we walk at any time; and, at any time, any work that we do is done in any manner whatsoever, which is the usual habit of the mind that is marked by an absolute absence of punctuality. Now we are telling such a mind that things cannot remain so. There must be a system in every bit of its activity, right from its physical level.

To reiterate, this discipline is not a kind of imposition on the mind or the body, but it is a necessity. If the doctor tells us that we must take a capsule or a tablet at a particular time in a day, in such a quantity, he is not intending to impose upon us any kind of torture - definitely not. It is a kind of method that he is introducing into our life for the purpose of regaining health. An introduction of a method cannot be regarded as a torture. It is not a compulsion and, therefore, discipline in this sense is not only necessary but indispensable, considering the nature of the goal that is before us. Why then this insistence on system, method, organisation, punctuality, tenacity, persistence, etc., in the practice? The reason is that it is the nature of the goal itself. The goal of life is the ultimate point of system.

Nothing can be more systematic than consciousness itself. The highest method that can be conceived is deducible from the structure of consciousness, the nature of existence, the pattern of life - everything is methodical. The whole of nature works in such a systematic manner that it is impossible to conceive chaos as a part of natural activity. Chaos means an indeterminate causative factor operating behind the effects visible in life. Any cause can bring about any effect - this possibility would be regarded as a chaos. But that is not the way in which nature works. It is not that any cause will bring about any effect. Particular causes, arranged in a particular manner, will bring about particular results at a particular time and in a particular intensity. All this is decided and laid down due to the structure of things, the nature of life itself. The pattern of life is finally an organised whole and, therefore, organisation, which is another name for method, becomes a necessity in the practice of yoga. Just as we have social or political organisations, we have here an organisation of activity, conduct, procedure, and way of life.

The simple features called for, or the factors contributory to success at the outset are, to mention only a few, having a definite time, a particular place, and a chosen method for sitting in meditation. When we are students of yoga, it is necessary to choose a definite time for the sitting. This is a very important thing to remember. We should not change our timings according to the whims and fancies of the mind or the changing conditions of social life. Whatever be the difficulties in our external life, a certain amount of insistence on a chosen time for sitting should be regarded as essential. If we find that a particular time cannot be chosen on account of the kind of life that we are living, it is better to choose such a time when all our commitments are over. Generally, though people say that the early morning is good for meditation, it has one disadvantage: that we have got an anxiety in our minds about the future work. We will not be free in the mind in the early morning, especially if we are social bodies. If we are absolutely *alakniranjan*, that is a different matter - nobody bothers about us, and we can sit as long as we like.

But if we are social bodies with commitments and duties, a subconscious itching will be there at the bottom that, "I have to start work at eight o'clock." And that will be worrying us, though we will not be aware of it. The subconscious activity of the mind is a terrible activity and, therefore, when we actually start sitting for meditation, it is necessary that the period be a little before this time of commitment for catching the train, going to the court, etc. These commitments should not be very imminent or just near. The period of sitting should be such that it should be removed as far as possible from the point of activity which is of a distractive nature. And if it is towards the later part of the day when our commitments are over and the only commitment left is that we have to go to bed and sleep as there is nothing else to do, then the agitations will be a little less, because we have no other thing to do except to go to bed. Whatever it is, these are only minor details which have to be chalked out, each for oneself. The point is that there should be no feature, condition or factor that will even remotely cause distraction to the mind and draw attention away from the point of concentration. Thus, a particular time has to be chosen.

Yoga scriptures tell us that we must also choose a particular place, as far as possible - not that today we meditate in Haridwar, tomorrow in Delhi and the day after tomorrow in Benares. That is not all right if we want real success. We must be in one place. As a matter of fact, people who practise mantra *purascharana*, or disciplinary chanting of mantras for a chosen period, do this - and what can be a greater *purascharana* than meditation? So when we take to exclusive spiritual practice as a

very serious affair and not merely as a hobby, it would be necessary, I would say for beginners, that a period of at least five years is called for. If we are very serious and in dead earnest about it - not taking it only as a kind of educational procedure for informative purposes and not being very earnest about achieving anything substantially - we may have to stick to one place for five years continuously, and not less than that. If our point is to achieve something substantial, concrete and definite, then this amount of discipline is called for, which is a definite place, a definite time, and a chosen method of meditation - a definite system, arranged in one's own mind, which should not be changed continuously.

Whenever there is repeated persistence in one given direction with reference to any chosen point of attention, we will see that some sort of success results. If a laboratory scientist is to analyse the structure of an atom, he will analyse a particular atom repeatedly by bombarding it with various kinds of light rays, but he will not go on changing the atoms - today this atom, tomorrow that atom, today a hydrogen atom, tomorrow some other thing. That will not lead to success. A particular object will be taken up for consideration, observation and analysis, and a repeated attempt will be made to go deep into its structure until its mystery is revealed. So for this, great leisure is necessary, persistence is necessary, energy and willpower are necessary, and there is no need to mention that we must be free from all other outward distractions. When one takes to the practice of yoga, there should be no distraction of any pronounced nature. Minor distractions may be there, but serious distractions which will divert our attention markedly from the point of attention should not be there.

A fixed place, a fixed time, and a fixed method of concentration are called for. In one of the aphorisms of the *sutras* of Patanjali, which is very relevant to this point, it is said that the practise should be for a long period: *sa tu dirghakāla nairantarya satkāra āsevitaḥ dr̥ḍhabhūmiḥ* (I.14). If we want to establish ourselves in yoga, some conditions are to be fulfilled. One condition he mentions is that the practice should be for a protracted period - I said at least five years, and not less than five years. It should be repeatedly done every day, without missing even a single day. Even if we have a temperature, fever or a headache, we should not miss it, because these are obstacles. The more we try to exert our will in the practice of concentration, the more will the body also try to revolt. It will create all kinds of complications - we will have indigestion, we will have a stomachache, we will have a headache, we will have fever - all sorts of things will come. As a matter of fact, it is specifically mentioned in the Yoga Sutras that we will fall sick. It will be an obstacle, and we should not think, "Today I am sick; I will not meditate." That is what it wants, and then it has succeeded. So, first of all, a little guarded way of living may be called for to see, as far as possible, that we do not become so ill that we cannot even sit for a few minutes of meditation. By a regulation of diet and living in a climate that is not too extreme, etc., one can be somewhat free from the anxiety of falling ill to the extent that it would prevent us from doing anything at all in the spiritual field.

Dirghakala is a protracted period of practice. *Nairantarya* is practice without remission of effort; that means to say, it has to be done every day at the same time. The third condition is that we must have great love for it. We must have immense affection for our practice. We know how much affection a novelist has for his own work; how much affection an artist has for the painting that he does; how much affection a musician has for his *ragas*. Every artisan, every engineer, every artist, and every professional has immense affection for his own or her own profession. One

cannot have disgust for a profession and then succeed in it; nor should one take to it as a kind of suffering or pain. Suppose an artist feels, "Oh, this painting is a great torture and suffering for me," then a good painting will not come forth, because there is no love for it. So, the practice of yoga will yield fruits only if we have a real love for the practice; and if we have love for it, it will also have love for us. When we protect it, it will protect us. It is said in the yoga *shastras* that yoga will protect us like a mother - it will feed us and take care of us, protect us in every direction at all times, visibly as well as invisibly. Sa tu dīrghakāla nairantarya satkāra āsevitaḥ dr̥ḍhabhūmiḥ (I.14) - then we get established.

To come to the first point once again, the maximum time possible for sitting should be selected. I do not say that it will be a common directive for everyone. It may vary from person to person according to circumstances, occasions, etc., but under the prevailing conditions one can choose the maximum period possible. For certain types of professionals or workers in social life, sitting for more than half an hour may be impossible. Well okay, we shall take it for granted - sit only for half an hour, or I would say even for fifteen minutes, but let it be a regular feature. Sit for fifteen minutes every day, and later on, perhaps after a few years of sitting like this, conditions will change automatically.

Circumstances adjust themselves mysteriously when there is persistence in the practice. These circumstances are internal as well as external. The more we advance, we will find that conditions will become more and more congenial. We ourselves will get adjusted, inwardly as well as outwardly, and we will find that conditions change suitably. This is something very interesting. We will be wondering how external conditions will also change. They will change because, for the world, there is no such thing as external and internal. There is only one Universal, and so when a change occurs in one place, it will be felt sympathetically in corresponding places relevant to it. So there is no need to be afraid of conditions in life as being non-conducive to the practice.

The difficulty is only in taking the first step; then afterwards, we will be carried by the stream. The sitting for a chosen period is regarded as essential, because it is the first tap that we strike upon the vital point in our personal life in bringing about some sort of a harmony between the body and the mind. All stages in yoga are stages of bringing about harmony. Instead of confusion and unmethodical movement, there would be a more methodical and harmonious adjustment of the various units of life.

Life is very large; it is not confined only to our little room or to our body, and so this adjustment may have to be effected in all the fields of life with which we are directly connected. Though it is true that we are ultimately connected with everything in the universe, for the time being it is enough if we take into consideration those visible factors with which we are immediately concerned in our practical life. These factors have to be adjusted with our life, and vice versa. These factors are, of course, of various kinds. What are the factors in life with which we are connected? There are many things - physical, geographical, social, political, moral, and intellectual - all these, of course, are things with which we are connected. It is no use, therefore, laying emphasis only on the personal level while the person is also connected externally to the geographical, the historical, the political and the social aspects of life.

The principles called *yamas* and *niyamas* especially, or the *sadhana chatustaya*, as they say in the Vedānta philosophy, are intended to bring about the necessary

adjustment of personality with those conditions and factors which are going to affect one's life, especially when they are meddled with or interfered with. Things look all right when we do not interfere with them. The moment we touch them, they then show their real nature. So it is necessary not to oppose these forces or really meddle with them. We are not going to meddle with them. We are going to adjust ourselves with them in the beginning, and later on we will find that they will adjust themselves with us. When we become friendly with one aspect, that aspect becomes friendly with us also. Later on there is a mutual adjustment of values. All these things are difficult for a single mind to understand at one stroke.

A novice cannot comprehend all these things, because generally we are fired up with a kind of sudden enthusiasm. That is all - we don't know anything else. "I want to realise God in this very birth - now itself, if possible." This is all we say. But what are the things necessary for this purpose? How many difficulties are there? These things will not come to the mind easily, because every little event in this world is connected with many other events and conditions. There is no single, isolated event in this world. This is why we say that steps in the direction of the practice of yoga particularly, should be taken only under the guidance of a competent teacher, one who is an expert in this field. It is more dangerous and more difficult than flying an airplane, because we cannot know what is ahead of us. We also cannot know what influence our past will have upon our present, what effect external conditions will have upon us, and what sudden reactions will be set up from factors within - nothing of the kind will be clear in the beginning. When we take a few steps in the practice of yoga, an all-round change will take place. There will be internal change, external change, and even a feeling that God Himself is getting related to us in a more tangible manner than it appeared earlier.

Even after we succeed in sitting for awhile in a particular posture, the mind will refuse, after a time, to continue the practice. We will not find anyone in this world as clever as the mind - very clever in everything. It will look quite all right for some time and the path will appear rosy, but after awhile there will be resentment of the mind even to sit, and it will produce excuses. There will be rationality behind our inability to practise, and we know very well that rationality is the highest thing that can justify anything. When there is reason brought forth in a very judicious manner, justifying our inability to sit for some time and the worthlessness of the practice itself, then there is no argument against it. The greatest danger is rationality, when it is used as a weapon against what is good for us. It is a double-edged sword - it can cut us this way and can cut us that way also - such is reason. Reason can justify what is good for us, and it can also justify what is dangerous or what is not good for us. Many *sadhakas* justify themselves in a wrong way altogether, by bringing about reasons which try to point out that the way of life they are living is quite inevitable and unavoidable. "If it is unavoidable, what can I do?" This is what the *sadhaka* will say. But it would not be unavoidable if proper precautions had been taken. We make initial mistakes without proper thought, and then these small mistakes look very big and, like a mountain, they stand before us. Later on I shall have occasion to refer to the mistakes we generally commit initially, without proper understanding.

We have a wrong notion about everything, including our own self. And with this wrong notion we go headlong into such a serious practice as is meditation because, just as a small sand particle getting stuck in the eye causes us annoyance, so too a little mistake in the beginning will loom large and become a serious obstacle in the end - a factor which can be studied from the history of institutions and the lives of

saints, sages and *sadhakas*. These small mistakes look like normal things, and not serious obstacles, because they do not stand against us. They appear to be unconcerned externals; but there is no such thing as an unconcerned external. Every external is connected with us, and the very fact of our perception of it will be enough reason why it can take action, for or against us, one day or the other.

So, we have to chalk out very carefully, as in a spiritual diary, the little mistakes that a person can commit by injudicious thinking, irrational analysis of conditions due to a false view of life, a false judgement of things, and due to a woeful lack of knowledge of human nature and psychology. These are the difficulties that arise due to ignorance of the true nature of things that drives us into committing small mistakes, which will stand before us like devils one day and prevent us from going further. These mistakes must be avoided, and we have to consider them in some detail.

CHAPTER 8

THE PRINCIPLE OF SELF-AFFIRMATION

The next step is what we may call 'taking stock of our situation' before we actually embark upon the great adventure of whole-souled meditation. What do we mean by 'taking stock'? Every businessman knows it. We just try to find out what things are there. How much is there on the credit side, or how much on the debit side? How much we owe others, and how much others owe us will be revealed from a stock-taking process. It is said that the true inner structure of a person never gets revealed in ordinary life as long as the mind is pulled in different directions. We know very well that if our right hand is pulled by someone and our left hand is pulled by someone else, and if everyone starts pulling us from all directions, we cannot assess our true state of affairs on account of our diversion of attention in the direction of the pulls exerted upon our personality. Our psychological personality receives the impact of these pulls every day in our life so that we are never ourselves, even for a few minutes of the day. We are always artificial personalities, a fact which will not come to the daylight of understanding because we have never been anything other than that. This artificial personality of ours may become so strong and impetuous that it may persist even in sleep, so that we are artificial even in sleep. The true nature will not get revealed because of the heavy impact of this artificial set-up of our life.

The moment we wake up in the morning, we generally tune ourselves to external conditions rather than be ourself and to go deep into our own needs - our weaknesses and our strengths. We are placed in this world under such conditions, fortunately or unfortunately, that we have not a moment's rest from the pressure exerted upon us by conditions outside - external circumstances. We are always something in terms of something else; we are nothing by our own self. This is very unfortunate and is going to be a great obstacle before us. We are either a brother or a sister, a father or a mother, a friend or an enemy, an officer or a subordinate, this or that. All this is a false personality, because in our own selves we are neither brothers nor sisters, neither fathers nor mothers, neither bosses nor subordinates or servants, or any such thing; all these are only foisted relationships. But these are the things that make our life, and we are only that, and nothing but that. How happy a person feels when he has the opportunity to go on brooding, thinking and contemplating the social status that he holds. He would not like to think that he is a puny animal, bereft of these relationships, when he is divested of all these contacts.

The status that one occupies in human society is not the true nature of that person. The status need not necessarily be a social imposition - it can be a psychological circumstance also, and it can even be biological. All these keep us in a state of subconscious tension. If very deeply studied, psychoanalytically, we will find that every human being is a patient - not psychologically healthy, at least from a very profound point of view - a patient in the sense that there is something external grown as an accretion upon one's true nature which has covered up and smothered one's own freedom of existence. All these various types of fungii that have grown around us in the form of the biological, psychological and social relationships, keep us in a fool's paradise - a fool's paradise in the sense that we live in a world which is totally false, and which is not true or compatible with our real nature.

The practice of yoga is very cautious about all these internal structural devices, which have been manufactured by nature to keep the individual under subjugation by

brainwashing him from birth until death and never allowing him to think of what these devices are. If we want to subordinate a person and keep that person under subjection always, we have to brainwash that person every day by telling him something contrary to what he is, repeating it every day - every moment in every thought, every speech and every action - so that there is a false personality grown around that person and he becomes our servant. This has happened to everyone, and this trick seems to be played by the vast diversified nature itself, so that everyone is a servant of nature rather than a master. This is the source of sorrow.

Human suffering is due to a kind of subjection exerted on it by forces about which one cannot have any knowledge, truly speaking; also, one would not be allowed to have any kind of knowledge of it. This is what we call an iron curtain hanging in front of us so that we will not know what is ahead of us, or behind us, or even by the side of us. Let anyone find a little time to brood over this subject and weep silently if the truth comes out. They say that when a person is drowning and has lost everything that can be regarded as worthwhile in life, or when a person's life is in danger - death is yawning before him and is imminent - in such conditions, the mind reveals its true nature. It is said that when there is asphyxiation caused by drowning, all the memories of the past, sometimes even of past lives, will be unrolled before the mind for a flash of a moment due to the horror of impending death and the nervous pressure felt at that moment. Similar experiences are known to have happened in situations when a person has lost everything.

These are things which cannot be learned theoretically by the study of books, because very few people have lost everything; we always have something with us. But to experience that moment of reckoning, we must lose everything, even our last strip of cloth; no one should want to even look at our face, as if we are the worst perhaps in the whole of creation. Such should be the condition to come upon us - nothing to eat, no food of any kind, no place to lie down, no raiment on the body, everything is horrible - at that moment the true nature of a person comes out. Otherwise, whatever self-analysis we will do, it will be an analysis of the false personality. Psychological analysis or yogic investigation conducted by a false mind will produce only false results and, therefore, a very superior type of CID (Central Intelligence Division) agent, who is not involved in the case on hand, is necessary to investigate into the mind - someone quite different from and outside the purview of the operation of the involved mind. Such a mind is called the higher mind, which is in us. It is this higher mind that has to do what is called the stock-taking of one's own condition.

When a person seriously takes to the practice of yoga, a thorough analysis or stock-taking may have to be done, taking into consideration one's experiences during the past many years, of whose nature a little may be still present in one's current state of affairs. Memories of the past sometimes evoke present experiences, and we must also take note of those experiences and factors which can evoke memories of the past. According to Patanjali, memory is one of the obstacles in yoga. Many people think that memory is a very good thing, and even complain that they have no memory. Well, that is all right for the workaday world, but from another angle of vision memory is regarded as an obstacle because we are repeatedly made to think of something that has happened in the past, so that it goes on annoying us constantly even though that event has passed and has no connection with our present life. Both pleasures of the past and pains of the past can evoke conditions which may force us to repeat those experiences, positively or negatively.

We have to wipe out memories of the past, especially when they have no connection

with the type of life which we are going to live in the future. Whatever experiences we have passed through that are unrelated and irrelevant to our future aim should be brushed aside and cast out by exorcising them like devils, and then not allowing them to enter into the ken of the mind by emphasising in our understanding that: "They mean nothing to me. They are only something like the experiences I had in my dream. Why should I think of them now? They have no meaning, though they had a meaning at that time."

But more difficult than the work of wiping out past memories is the adjustment of oneself with present conditions. We shall not think now about what is ahead of us in the future. The present condition is a reality more vehement than the past memories because we see it with our eyes, and nothing can be worse than that. These things which we see with our eyes every day and with which we have some sort of connection or the other, at least remotely, have some say in the matter of our own personal lives. They have to be harnessed for the purpose of the practice of yoga, harnessed in the sense that they should be made contributory in some way or the other to the aim before us.

It is also necessary here to make a distinction between the necessary and the unnecessary aspects of life, or the essentials and the non-essentials, we may say. We have umpteen kinds of perceptions and relationships in life. I see a tree in front of me, I see the Ganga flowing, I see the sun rising - these are all perceptions. But I need not worry too much about these perceptions since they are indeterminate to a large extent, and except for the fact that they are cognitions and perceptions of certain facts outside, they do not mean much in my personal emotional life or volitional undertakings. In two important *sutras*, Patanjali draws a distinction between 'indeterminate perceptions' and 'determinate perceptions'. The determinate ones are those which have a direct connection with our daily life - we cannot avoid them, and they control us to a large extent. The indeterminate ones are like the tree in front, for example. It is merely a perception and a knowledge of something that is there, but it is not going to harass us or control us in any visible or palpable manner.

These perceptions - or we may call them cognitions - of the determinate and indeterminate character are designated in the language of Patanjali as *vruttis*. Sometimes they are equated with what they call *kleshas*. A *klesha* is a peculiar term used in yoga psychology meaning a kind of affliction. Unless we enter into the philosophical background of yoga, it will be difficult to appreciate why a perception is called an affliction. We shall look into the details of this subject as we proceed further - why every perception is a kind of affliction upon us, why it is a pain and not something desirable.

The determinate perceptions or the directly involved factors in our life are: love and hatred, self-assertion, and fear of death, including of course, or equivalent to, love of life. We are terribly fond of our own personal life, and we dread death. The physical individuality is to be protected at any cost - by hook or by crook, by the struggle for existence, or as our biologists say, by the application of the law of the survival of the fittest. By struggle, by competition, by any method, we wish to survive. If it is a question of one's survival, one would not mind even the destruction of others, because it is a question of 'my life'.

This is the argument of the central principle of individuality called the ego, or the *asmita* or *ahamkara*. The protection of this ego is the main function of our psychophysical individuality. Its existence and its operation have two sides or aspects

of emphasis - a like for certain things, and a dislike for certain other things. We may be wondering why it is that we like certain things and dislike certain things. Is there any reason behind it? The reason is not easily available, though it is available if we go a little deeper. A like, a want, a love or an affection is that pattern of the movement of our consciousness towards an external object, whose characteristics are observed by the mind for the time being to be the counterpart, the correlative of the present condition of one's individuality - so much so that when the condition of our personality changes, our like or love will also change. We cannot go on loving the same thing for eternity, nor can we hate a thing for eternity.

Loves and hatreds change when our condition changes, so that likes and dislikes, loves and hatreds are the reactions set up in respect of certain external objects by the changing pattern of our own personality or individuality. If it is summer, I like to drink water; if it is winter, I like to drink hot tea. My liking for hot tea or for cold water has some connection with what is taking place inside me in my biological and psychological personality. When there is drying up of the system due to heat, there is a need for water - I would like to drink cold water. But when it is freezing cold due to the wintry atmosphere, I would like to have hot tea. So our like of hot tea and dislike of cold water in winter is caused by a peculiar condition of our body - coupled with the condition of the mind, of course. In summer we would not like to drink hot tea. We would like a soda or cold water, etc., and dislike anything that is hot; we would not like to have hot coffee or hot tea in such climate. "Oh, it is so hot. I will take cold water." We dislike during summer that very thing which we liked in winter. What has happened to us? Why did we like it that day and today we dislike it? It is not because there is something wrong with tea or something wrong with water. They are the same things; nothing has happened to them. But something has happened to us. So today I like that which I disliked the other day, and today I dislike that which I liked the other day. What is the reason? The reason is us only. What has happened to us? Something has happened to us. If one can very carefully go into the deepest recesses of one's nature, one would know why loves and hatreds arise in one's mind. We project upon others, by a peculiar process called a defense-mechanism in psychoanalysis, the counterpart of our own nature. That which will not fit into our present condition is not liked by us. By 'present condition' I mean physical, biological, psychological, social - everything. Anything that will fit into our present physical, biological, psychological and social condition is liked or loved by us. Anything that is outside the need of this condition is disliked; it becomes an obstacle. "I don't like it," we say. Why don't we like it? We do not know. "I don't like it; that is all." But if we are good physicians of the mind we will know why it is that we like it, and why it is that we do not like it.

Asmita or egoism, which is the principle of the affirmation of a particular condition of individuality, is the reason for a particular love or hatred under given conditions. This affirmation of individuality is a peculiar thing, which cannot be understood by the intellect, by ordinary logic. Whatever be the condition with which consciousness identifies itself, that is affirmed by the ego, so that the ego does not have a set pattern - it goes on changing itself. "Today I assert myself as a collector; tomorrow I assert myself as a minister." Though the principle of assertion is the same, the way of its function is different. The principle, and not merely the function, has to be tackled. It is not important to know what kind of food we want. We may want *chapatti*, or rice, or *dal*, or bread, or jam, or butter; that is not important. What is important is why we are feeling hungry - that is the principle behind eating. What we eat is a minor detail, but it is why we eat that is important.

Likewise, what type of assertion we are making is a different matter - it is a detail. But why we are making this assertion at all is the subject for analysis in yoga. Why is it that today we identify ourselves as a *sannyasi* - "I am a *mandaleshwar*" - and we go on asserting that we are *mandaleshwars*; we are officers; we are such and such; we are this and that. This principle of affirmation is a peculiar twist in consciousness that has got identified with a changing condition. Every condition changes. We cannot have a permanent condition in life, so the affirmation of the ego also goes on changing. How do we know what we were in the previous birth? We had a different type of affirmation at that time. Who was our father in a previous birth? Who was our mother? And what has happened to that father and that mother? We have completely forgotten them. We now have another father and mother. In the next birth, what will happen to us? We will have some other father and mother. How many fathers? How many mothers? How many sisters? How many brothers? How many friends? How many enemies? So, who is our friend and who is our enemy? Who is our father and who is our mother?

The ego does not want all these questions to be raised; it cannot answer these questions. It is a terrific sword that we brandish before it, to put these questions to it. It will become mad if such questions are put. It doesn't want to listen to all these things; it will affirm a particular condition only. Immediately there is a ramification with two tentacles - on one side there is love and on the other side there is hatred. They are automatic manifestations of the principle of individuality. The moment we assert ourselves in a particular condition, love and hatred must be there, because love is an automatic projection of the mind in respect of the counterpart of our present condition, which also explains hatred.

Patanjali mentions that these are terrible obstacles in our spiritual progress. We are caught up and we do not know how we are caught up. First of all there is the self-affirmative principle which reinforces itself, like hard concrete, by repeated hammering upon loves and hatreds throughout the day and night; and the love of this individual life and the consequent fear of the death that may come upon it are natural consequences of this ego-ridden individuality. Therefore, we can say the whole problem of life is the ego of man. This has to be tackled with caution.

CHAPTER 9

PERCEPTION AND REALITY

In the previous chapter we were discussing a very important subject which every student of yoga should remember: how the two types of perception, about which Sage Patanjali tells us some very important aspects, tell upon not only our personal and social life, but upon our efforts towards spiritual perfection. The determinate aspects of psychological experience were touched upon briefly as consisting principally of self-affirmation or egoism, which projects itself as love and hatred. Also, we had occasion to go a little deep into the mystery of love and hatred - as to why they arise at all. Generally this is the type of life that the individual lives in the world, getting identified with these psychological processes to such an extent that one cannot know that one is so involved.

The worst thing for a person would be to get involved in something and not know that it has happened, because in such a case, observation, experiment, and analysis would not be possible. There should be some sort of a possibility for objective observation by a state of mind which will act as a witness of these conditions which are to be observed. But when these conditions to be observed get identified with the witnessing consciousness itself, then observation is not possible. So, self-analysis is a very difficult process. It is a difficult process because in the self which is to be analysed, the subject and the object cannot be distinguished, and we are used to only those types and kinds of analyses where the objects of observation stand outside the subject of investigation. Self-investigation is difficult merely for this reason. One cannot know oneself, analyse oneself, study oneself, examine oneself, or treat oneself, for obvious reasons.

Why has this situation arisen? Why this vehement affirmation of the ego, this assertion of the mind in respect of a particular condition which is passing, transitory, phenomenal? The attachment of the mind to a particular condition is the principle of egoism. Why does it happen? Why does it breed the further problems of like, dislike, love of physical life, individual life, fear of death, etc.? This happens because of a background which is still deeper than this particular psychological involvement. The very belief in the reality of externals is the cause for this calamity, because the moment we have a conviction that an object of perception is real, we have to develop a real attitude towards it. The perception of the object as something real is the beginning of the trouble. The trouble then intensifies itself as a compulsive activity towards the development of an attitude towards that object. The precondition of this attitude is egoism.

To describe the series or the successive stages of this development - there is, first, a perception of the object, such as a tree, for example, in front. I perceive an object in front of me such as a tree, and I am convinced that it is a real tree. The tree is really there; it is not an unreal perception. The existence of the tree is real. It is really there outside me. The 'outsideness' of the tree is also real. The tree is real, its externality to me is real and, therefore, I am now compelled to develop a real attitude towards it.

Now comes the second problem. What is this real attitude that I have to develop towards it? The force that urges this real attitude towards the object is egoism. It is the breeding ground for the impulsive power which drives the consciousness out towards that object which has been regarded as real. It is not possible to merely

perceive an object and have no attitude towards it, because the very consciousness of an object is the demand of the object to be recognised in a certain manner, and this recognition is called attitude. Therefore, we now have to find out the reason for this perception of the object itself.

We are going from the lower stage to a higher stage, from the immediate experience of a concrete trouble to the causes thereof. We have a complex problem in the form of like and dislike for objects, and we want to maintain this condition of like and dislike. Therefore, there is love of life and fear of death, which, of course, requires the affirmation of the individual subject maintaining this attitude. We have now arrived at the stage where we understand that the reason behind all this psychological activity is the perception of an object as a real something, external to oneself. Why do we perceive the object? We are not deliberately, or of our own accord, perceiving the object; here also, we are forced. Ultimately we will find that everything that we do is under a compulsion. Though people parade under the notion that they are free people and they can do whatever they want, it is not so. There is no free person in this world. Everybody is a slave of an urge, a force, a compulsion that is at the back of all these psychological activities. Just as we cannot see our own back, we cannot see the existence of these forces - they are behind.

The perception of an object is caused by a subtle activity that has taken place in the cosmos itself. We have to go back to the Upanishads and texts which are akin in nature. The human mind is not made in such a way as to be able to comprehend what has happened, ultimately. This is what they call the cosmological analysis of human experience. Why do we exist at all as individuals, and then are compelled to perceive objects, and then to have to undergo all this tragedy and suffering of positive and negative attitudes, etc.? This is a mystery for the human intellect. While we may be able to understand and explain what things are like in the world, we will not be able to explain ourselves - why we are what we are. Can we explain why we are what we are? "I am what I am, that is all. It has no reason behind it." But there is a reason, which is the reason behind the reason itself. Here we go back to a condition beyond human intellect. Great masters like Acharya Sankara, Ramanuja, etc. tell us that here we land in a realm where intellect should not interfere. The intellect has a boundary, and beyond that boundary, it is useless.

Now I am touching upon a realm where intellect will not work - and it is not supposed to work at all because this is a cosmic question, and intellect is made in such a way that it cannot understand cosmic relationships. The reason is that intellect is an individualised endowment; it is not a cosmic principle. It is a function of the individual psychological principle. This is what we call the intellect and, therefore, it will work only in terms of the affirmation of individuality. The intellect will always take for granted that the individual exists. But now we are trying to find out why the individual exists at all, so we know why our intellect will not work here. The intellect cannot work here because of the simple reason that we are trying to find the cause of the intellect itself - so intellect fails, as it has to fail.

Here we go to a realm where the revelations of the ancient masters, which are embodied in the sacred scriptures, become our guide. Otherwise we shall be blind - we will know nothing. The great masters who are the Gurus of mankind, who had plumbed the depths of being and had vision of the cosmic mystery, tell us something which the intellect cannot explain inductively, logically or scientifically. Our individual existence is caused by something which is prior to the manifestation of individuality and, therefore, let not the individual intellect interfere with this subject.

The masters, whose records we have in such scriptures as the Upanishads, for example, tell us that there is a cosmic mystery behind this operation of individuality - namely, the diversification of the Cosmic Principle. We cannot ask as to why it happened, because the intellect is interfering here. We are asking the reason why the intellect is there at all, and why individuality is there at all. That question cannot be asked because this intellect is an effect of individuality, and now we are trying to find the cause thereof. "Unbridled intellect is an obstacle," says Sankara in his commentary on the Brahma Sutras, because the intellect will insist that there is diversity. It will oblige us to accept that individuality is real, objects are real, our relationships to them must be real, and so forth. So we should not take the advice of the intellect hereafter. The mystery of cosmic manifestation, which is the diversification of the cosmic principle, is regarded as the controlling principle behind the existence and the functioning of the individual.

Nowadays, our scientists also have conjectured the possibility of the universe having been once upon a time constituted as a sort of a cosmic atom. One scientist said, "The whole cosmos was like an atom." By "an atom", he means an indivisible something. The whole universe originally was like an atom, and that atom split into two parts. This is also mentioned in the Manu Smriti, prior to the declaration of this scientist. In the first chapter of the Manu Smriti we find the process of creation described, and instead of an atom, Manu says "*anda*" - it was like an egg. Well, the scientist says "an atom". Does an atom not look something like an egg? It split into two parts. This original split of the atom into two parts is the cause of all our problems today. And it goes on, splitting and splitting - two became four, four became eight, eight became sixteen, and umpteen, a millionfold and uncountable in number. These little split parts are the individuals - you, me, and everybody included. We are struggling to become the original atom once again, as something unnatural has happened to us.

While the physical scientist thinks that the atom has really split into a millionfold parts, the sages tell us that really it has not split itself like that - it is only an appearance. Really there is no split, because if it has really split, we cannot go back into the original, just as curd cannot be converted into milk once it has become curd since the change is irreversible. But that is not the case here. If that had happened, there would be no urge of the part to go back to the whole. If we really have been cut off, then it is finished; the matter is over. Why are we urging back to unite ourselves with the whole? That means a real split has not taken place. A kind of mysterious bifurcation has taken place.

To put it in modern psychological terms, a kind of cosmic schizophrenia has taken place. In schizophrenia the person does not become split, but looks like a split personality. In this condition, which sometimes is compared to a dream split of consciousness, a real isolation does not take place. This is another analogy. Our personality splits itself into the observer and the observed world in dream. But are we really split? No. Otherwise, we would not wake up as a whole individual. The perception of real objects in dream, by a real subject dreaming, and a real attitude of like, dislike, etc., which that subject projects towards the object - all of this drama looking very, very real is not truly real, because if that had really taken place, there would be no waking up of the individual into a wholeness of consciousness. So this is explained only as a mystery beyond human comprehension.

This universal condition which has ramified itself, as if in dream, into the individual

segments, is the cause for the affirmation of individuality and the perception of objects, and the likes and dislikes and the sorrows of this world. Our very sorrow is due to our loss of identity with the Cosmic. Otherwise, there would be no sorrow in this world. We are suffering due to an agony felt on account of our isolation from that Cosmic of which we are a part. So, the philosophical and spiritual advice in this context is that the mystery of life cannot be explained, and the sorrow of life cannot be obviated unless the original cause is discovered and it is dealt with in a manner which is requisite. This requisite manner of dealing with the ultimate question is yoga. As I mentioned earlier, yoga is a gradual process of identification of the part with the whole.

Now, analogically speaking, if the one has become two, and two has become four, four has become eight, etc., so that we are today what we are, in this condition, the reverse process of returning to the original unity would be by a successive recession of the very same process, stage by stage, missing not a single link. These are the stages of yoga. The steps in yoga, or the stages of knowledge, are the process of the recession of the effect into the cause, the condition of the effect in which one is - 'A' or 'B' or 'XYZ'. So we have to determine our present condition, and from that condition we must retrace our steps back - not suddenly to the topmost unity, but to the immediately-above condition. The step that is next to us, the condition above us, the stage ahead of us, is our goal for the present or the time being, with which we have to get united in meditation, in yoga. And that second step would effect a further stage ahead, and so on and so forth, until the final unity is achieved.

So, it would not be judicious on the part of any individual to vehemently assert that the physical perceptions of the world are all-in-all. The materialist's conception is, therefore, not correct, because this conception arises on account of a miscalculated attitude towards everything. This is the reason why, in the practice of yoga, expert guidance is called for, because we are dealing with matters that are super-intellectual, super-rational. Here our own understanding is not of much use, nor are books of any use, because we are treading on dangerous ground which the mind has not seen and cannot contemplate. We are all a wonder, says the scripture. This is a mystery, a wonder. It is a wonder because it is not capable of intellectually being analysed. The scripture proclaims that the subject is a great mystery, a great wonder and marvel; and one who teaches it is also a marvel, and the one who receives this knowledge, who understands it - the disciple - is also a wonder, indeed, because though the broadcasting station is powerful, the receiver-set also must be equally powerful to receive the message. The bamboo stick will not receive the message of the BBC. So the disciple is also a wonder to receive this mysterious knowledge, as the teacher himself is a wonder; and the subject is a marvel by itself.

Thus arises the need to be cautious in the adjustment of the mind and the judgement of values in life. The *sutras* of Patanjali that I referred to give only a hint, and do not enter into details - the hint being that the *vrittis* or the modifications of the mind are of a twofold character, which I translated as determinate and indeterminate, and have to be gradually controlled. This control of the *vrittis* or the modifications of the mind is regarded as yoga: *yogaś citta vṛtti nirodhaḥ* (I.2). Yoga is the control of the modifications of 'the stuff' of the mind, the very substance of psychological action. Not merely the external modifications, but the very 'stuff' of it, the very root of it, has to be controlled, and this is done in and by successive stages. We have always to move from the effect to the cause in the manner indicated in this analysis that we have made.

Ultimately it comes to this, that our perceptions are our problems. They become a problem because we pass judgements on these perceptions. Mere perceptions as they are, left alone to themselves, would be a different matter altogether. But we do not simply perceive an object and keep quiet. The moment we perceive something, we pass a judgement on it. "Oh, this is something. This is a snake." This is a perception. "Oh, it is dangerous." This is a judgement. "I have to run away from it." This is another judgement. "This is a mango." This is one judgement. "It is very sweet." This is a second judgement. "I must eat it." This is a third judgement. We go on passing judgement after judgement of various complex characters on an object of perception. So, judgements become subsequent effects of the perception of an object.

Now, perceptions are of two kinds: real perceptions and unreal perceptions. When we perceive an object in the world, like a tree, it appears to be real; we cannot say it is unreal. Why is it real? What is the definition of reality? This is another very interesting philosophical subject. How do we know that any object is real? If we are asked how we define reality, what we mean by 'real', what is our idea? If we are asked to define reality, define the character of anything being real, we will find that it is difficult to define it. If I project my fingers and attempt to touch it, I must have a sensation of touch - then it is real, isn't it? The sensation of touch should say there is a hard object, and then I say it is real. Is this the definition of reality? So we want only a sensation of hardness. The moment that sensation comes, it is real. And it has to be corroborated by the eyes; they must also say, "Yes, we are seeing a shape." The eyes can see only a shape. But how do we know that the shape is real? The fingers will tell us, "We are feeling solidity - a hardness and concreteness." If it has a smell and a taste, etc., then it becomes real. We have passed judgement - it is real. So, the nose should smell, the fingers should feel the concreteness and solidity, the eyes should see a shape, etc.; then, the thing is real. Is this a definition? This is a dangerous definition, but we cannot have any other definition.

The reason behind our feeling a solidity, concreteness, hardness, etc. of an object and a shape perceived by the eyes, is because the condition of the senses which perceive and that of the mind behind the senses are on the same level as the constitution of the object. That is why we can see this world and not the heavens, for example. We cannot say that heavens do not exist; but why do we not see them? Because the constitution of the objects of the heaven is subtler than, less dense than, the constitution of our present individuality - the two are not commensurate with each other. Or, to give a more concrete example, why don't we hear the music when the radio is not switched on? Somebody must be singing at the radio station now, but our ears are unable to hear; they can't hear anything because the constitution, the structure, the frequency, the wavelength of the electrical message that is sent by the broadcasting station is subtler than the constitution and the structure of the eardrum. It is not possible for the eardrum to catch it because it is gross. But if you talk, I can hear, because the sound that you make by talking is of the same level or degree of density as the capacity of the eardrum. I can hear your sound, but not the sounds of radio waves, music, or the message, because of the dissimilarity of the structure of frequency, wavelength or density of structure.

So, the world need not be real merely because of the fact that we are seeing it. It only shows that we are as much fools as the things are. We are in the same level or degree of reality as the atmosphere around us. This is not a great proof for the reality of the world. If I agree with you, it does not mean that our agreement is based on any judicious judgement. Suppose you have an opinion and I agree with that opinion; it

does not mean that this opinion is correct. Merely because I agree with you, it need not be correct. It shows that my way of thinking is similar to your way of thinking, that is all. But it does not mean that it is a correct opinion; a third person may not agree with it.

So, merely because our mental make-up and sensory constitution agree with the structure of things outside, it does not mean that the world exists or that it is real. It only indicates that we are on the same level, that is all. Here is a word of caution: we have to be on guard in our attachment to things and our taking them for ultimate realities. We have to withdraw ourselves into higher, more judicious judgements for the purpose of higher unity.

CHAPTER 10

SELF-CONTROL: THE ALPHA AND OMEGA OF YOGA

It has been discovered now, therefore, that perceptions are due to a segmentation of consciousness. This is the secret behind our life in this world. And inasmuch as our perceptual experiences are involved in a condition of consciousness which is inseparable from our own being, we cannot know the reason why we see things. Consequently, we cannot know why we like things or dislike things. Our knowledge becomes half-baked, inadequate, and erroneous when the conditions of all knowledge lie behind our capacities. Thus it is that often it looks as if we are completely under the control of pressures that are exerted from above and behind, from the right and the left, from every direction - a fact of which we cannot have any awareness. It is, therefore, useless to apply scientific methods of knowing or investigation in regard to matters which are the very conditions of knowing.

This is something which goes deeper than even psychology, because all knowledge - even of the mind, which is what we know as psychology - is gained by an observational technique employed by the mind in an objective manner, as if it is observing somebody else, and the only thing that the mind cannot do is to know itself or to know the conditions of its own functioning. The relationships of the mind and the conditions of knowledge determine the very existence and the character of the mind, and therefore it is that we find ourselves in a helpless condition. The practice of yoga becomes all the more difficult when it deals with conditions prior to our present state of existence, when it deals with causes rather than effects, and especially causes that lie 'behind' us which are precedent to our present physical and social condition.

What we call self-control, sense-control, mind-control, etc., is nothing but the attempt of consciousness to go back to its cause. When an effect puts forth effort to return to its cause, that would be self-control on its part. It becomes self-control because in order to understand the cause of an effect, the effect has to withdraw its ramifications of action, thought, feeling, and relationship. We may wonder why such a kind of withdrawal is called for on the part of the effect for the sake of the knowledge of its cause. If I feel hot, and the cause of this heat is the sun that is shining in the sky, and I have to know the cause of this heat as the sun, I need not withdraw myself to know the cause of this heat. I can simply look up and see the sun blazing in the sky and say, "Here is the cause of heat." Where then arises the need for self-control on the part of the effect when it has to know the nature of the cause of its very existence and action? The reason is something very peculiar. The cause of this effect we are speaking of is different in every way from external causes, such as the sun causing heat, etc. A wind may blow and cause chilliness, and a wrong diet may cause a tummy upset, etc. - these become causes of certain effects in the form of experiences. In the matter of all these causes, knowledge of the causes does not necessarily involve self-control, because all these causes are outside the effect and they exert an external pressure on the effect.

Therefore, it becomes practical for us to employ observational techniques of a scientific character where causes are outside the effect, or external to the effect. But here, we are speaking of certain other types of causes, where the cause is inherent in the effect, and not outside the effect. The cause, in this case, does not have a spatial existence outside the effect, standing externally like a master outside the servant. The

master is not inside the servant; he is not inherent in the servant. He is absolutely an external cause, operating on the servant with no intrinsic force in respect of the servant, whereas here the type of cause we are referring to is intrinsically operative in the effect, and not merely extrinsic. That which is the cause of this effect is present immanently in the effect, and not merely transcendentally. This means to say that the very pattern, the structure, the existence, the make-up, the substantiality of the effect is constituted by the nature of the cause which has become the effect by a greater density of its structure.

When gas becomes water by a particular form of permutation and combination, or when water becomes ice, the water that has become ice does not stand outside the ice; it is inherent in the ice. The water which is the cause of the ice is not extrinsic to the ice; it is intrinsic, so that the water is the ice, we may say, in all respects. However, for practical purposes, and for explanatory reasons, we may say that the cause is the water, and the effect is the ice. Here, the cause and the effect are inseparable: we have to melt the ice in order that we may find the water there. There is a complete transformation or modification of the effect called for, in order to know the nature of the cause thereof.

The effect here, which is our own personality and individuality, is projected by certain conditions as causative factors which do not operate outside our individuality, but are the very constituents of our individuality; therefore, what is called for is a very unusual type of transformation on the part of the effect, for the sake of the knowledge of its cause. All logical and scientific methods fail here because of a completely new type of technique that is expected to be employed. The observing scientist here is not sitting in a laboratory with some instrument to observe the effect, or to know the nature of the cause of a particular effect. The observer is involved in the very act of observation, and herein is the difficulty. The observer is involved in the act of observation, so that the condition of the observer determines the condition of the observation and the nature of the observed effect.

The effect, which is this individuality of ours, is nothing but a spatial and temporal projection of a particular condition called the cause. The more we become externalised, the more we become spatial and temporal. The more we go towards the cause internally, the less is the pressure exerted on us by space, time and relevant conditions. But the more we proceed further and further in an external direction towards space, time and objects, the more we become automatons, more and more enslaved, more and more helpless, more and more puppets, as it were. We become more and more free and autonomous the more we withdraw ourselves from spatial and temporal conditions and tend to be what we are in our own selves. The causes of our existence as individuals are not capable of being known by the mind, because these causes drive even the mind in a particular way for its function in space and in time.

The whole of yoga is self-control - in one word, 'self-mastery' - in the sense that the rays of the mind and the senses, the projecting powers of individuality, have to be brought back to their source in order that there may be consciousness of the cause. There cannot be a consciousness of the cause as long as the cause is not the object of consciousness, inasmuch as the latter is involved in the externalised activity of the mind and the senses. We cannot know an object unless the consciousness follows this cognitive act and enlivens the senses, activates them towards the object which is seen, cognised or perceived by them. On account of this engagement of consciousness through the mind and the senses in respect of objects outside and in

all acts of perception and cognition, it finds no time to revert to its cause. We have no time. The consciousness cannot find time to become aware of its own background, inasmuch as it is heavily engaged and is very busy throughout the day and the night in attending to the needs of the mind and the senses in their activity of projection externally to objects. So, to become aware of the cause would be to enable the consciousness to revert itself in that direction - inwardly - for which purpose it has to be withdrawn, tentatively at least, in an appreciable measure, from its engagement in objective perception through the mind and the senses.

All perceptions are, therefore, engagements of consciousness, which prevents it from knowing its own background and conditions of action, so that when we are busily engaged in the perceptions and cognitions through the mind and the senses, we cannot know our own background, and we look helpless. The necessity for self-control arises merely because of the fact that the object of our quest is inherently present in the very act of our individual experience, and it cannot be observed by the ordinary means of an academic character or a scientific nature. Here we need no instruments, no types of apparatus either for observation or knowledge, because the object here is the background of our own self. There are causes behind causes, extending one behind the other, and lying one behind the other in larger and larger expansiveness - one implying the other, and one inclusive of the other. The causes that are precedent are inclusive of the causes that are succeeding, so that when we go higher up we do not lose anything that is lower, but get everything that is lower in a refined form by transcendence.

Transcendence is different from giving up. When we transcend a condition, we do not reject that condition as something necessary or unnecessary, but absorb that condition into a higher nature, include it in our higher condition and make it a part of our experience, so that nothing is lost but everything is found in a more real form. So in the practice of yoga, nothing is lost. *Nehābhikramanāso'sti pratyavāyo na vidyate* (B.G. II.40), says the Bhagavadgita. There is no loss in the practice of yoga; always there is a gain. And no question of sin arises here. If we do it well, so much the better for us. If we cannot do it well, there is no sin in it; the only thing is, we have not got what we wanted. Such is the impartiality and the genuine character of this wonderful practice called yoga.

Previously we were touching upon the nature of perceptions of objects, and these were explained as the reasons behind our attachments and aversions, our love of individual physical life and dread of death, etc. It was also discovered that self-affirmation or egoism becomes a necessary link, an intermediary between the external acts of cognition, perception, attachment, aversion etc., and the ultimate cause of the appearance of this phenomenon, of which we have no knowledge. This phenomenon was explained also as having been caused by a vast multiple manifestation of the Ultimate Reality in the form of what we may call 'located individuals', as if one is not connected with the other, so that each individual - which was originally an inseparable part of the Ultimate Truth or Reality, enjoying the status of pure selfhood or subjectivity - got distorted into an object of the cognitive act and perceptive action of the senses, so that it is possible to regard any person and any object in this world either as a subject from its own point of view, or as an object from another's point of view. It is this peculiar double character, or dual role, of persons and things in this world that has made life difficult. Which is the correct attitude: to regard things as subjects, or regard them as objects? Well, the correct attitude would be to regard everything as it ought to be regarded from the point of

view of what it really is.

Can we look upon anything, any person, any object for the matter of that, as something which is to be utilised as a kind of instrument in perception or cognition, or has it a status of its own? What we mean by a status of one's own is a capacity to exist by oneself, independent of external relations and dependence on others; this is the nature of subjectivity. Everyone, you and I included, has a status of one's own. It is this status that gets distorted later on into what they call egoism, pride, etc., what is called *ijjat* in Hindi - a kind of stupid form which it has taken, though originally it was a spiritual status. Our status as pure subjects is incapable of objectification, and it is not intended to be used as a tool for another's activity or satisfaction. It is not in the nature of things to subject themselves into objects as vehicles of action and satisfaction for somebody else, because every individual, judged from its own real status, enjoys subjectivity. It is an end in itself, and not a means.

That is why everyone is egoistic, and everyone wants satisfaction for one's own self. When we analyse all our actions, we will find that there is no such thing as unselfish action, finally. Every action is selfish, if we very closely define the principle of selfishness. The element of self is present in every act, every perception, every cognition and every effort, because when the self is isolated, all things lose their meaning - the whole world looks empty. What we call unselfishness is only the presence of a higher type of self as an element in our act of perception, cognition, etc. It does not mean that the Self is absolutely absent - that is not possible. We only mean that a higher, more expansive kind of self is present rather than a lower self. What we call selfishness is nothing but the interference of the lower self in our actions, and what we call unselfishness is the presence in the same way of a higher form of self, but Self is there - it cannot be absent. There is nothing in this world where the Self is absent. The whole universe is invaded by the Self. It is present in everything, and nothing can exist without it, because that is the only existence.

The act of self-control is the return of consciousness to a higher selfhood from a lower one. It is a rise from self to self, we may call it - from the self that is involved in externality and objectivity, to a self that is less involved in this manner - a return from objectivity to subjectivity through higher and higher degrees of ascent. But this process becomes extremely difficult on account of our weddedness to the senses. We have been habituated to look at things only through the senses, and we have no other way of knowing or judging. We immediately pass a judgement on anything that is seen with the eyes - it is there in such-and-such a condition, it has such-and-such a value, it is real in this percentage. Our judgement of value and reality depends, therefore, unfortunately for us, on our sense-perceptions, so that external relationships are mistaken by us as realities. A reality is not a relationship; it is an existence by itself. So, self-control is a return of consciousness from its life of relationships, to a higher form of life where relationships become less and less palpable.

The whole difficulty is in self-control, and this is the alpha and omega of yoga - everything is here. It is practically impossible for ordinary people, because consciousness is involved there. If anything else had been involved, we would have done something. We ourselves are involved - that is the meaning of consciousness getting involved - and if we are involved in mistaken activity, how are we to rectify this activity? We are involved in this wrong action, and who is to rectify this wrong action? Not someone else - that someone else cannot do anything in a matter where we are involved. This is the difficulty of self-control. It is not control by somebody; it

is control by the self. It is control of oneself by oneself, and nothing can be more difficult in this world than this effort. But once we taste the joy of self-control, we will not like to taste even milk and honey in this world.

Self-control is not a pain; it is not a suffering, as people may imagine. The moment we talk of self-control, people get frightened. They think it is a kind of *tapasya* that is being imposed upon us contrary to the joys that we are expecting in life. Not so is the truth. The joy of self-control is greater than the joy of sense contact - very important to remember. The joy of sense-control is greater than the joy of sense contact with objects. One may ask why. The reason is that in sense contact an artificial condition is created, whereas in sense-control a real condition which is commensurate with our true nature is generated. In sense contact a condition is generated which is not commensurate with our true nature. We become sick in sense contact, and a kind of illness takes possession of us. And the distorted joy (distorted is the word to be underlined), the perverted joy - reflected, limited, and distorted joy - which we are supposed to acquire by every kind of sense contact, is far, far removed from the true joy of which it is the reflection, distortion, etc - a state of affairs which can be known only by direct practice. There is a vast difference, as between health and disease. How unhappy one is when one is sick, and how happy one feels when one is healthy. But if we are perpetually sick and we do not know the joy of health, it is difficult to make it clear to us. What health is cannot be explained, because we have not seen what health is.

Sense-control, or self-control, is causative of a greater happiness than anything conceivable in this world, because it is a return of consciousness to its own self that is motivated by this effort. The more we return to ourselves, the more are we happy. The more we are away from ourselves, the less we are happy and the more we are miserable. So, in all externalised perceptions and contacts, likes and dislikes, etc., we are in a diseased state of mind and consciousness. We are not what we are. We are other than what we are: *asvatha*—not in our own self. We are outside ourselves when we perceive anything. *Svatha* is one who is healthy—one who is situated, located and rooted in one's own self. One who is established in one's own self is *svatha*, and that condition is called *svatha*—health. When we are outside ourselves, we are *asvatha*.

Self-control is yoga, and that is the return of consciousness to its own cause, which is nothing but its own higher nature. This cause that we are searching for is not another thing outside consciousness. It is a higher expansive condition of its own being, so that we rise from our self to our self in a more expanded form. When we rise to the cause from the effect, we do not grow from one thing to another thing, or rise from one state to another state as if they are two different states. We grow from a lower condition of inadequacy to a higher state of greater adequacy, greater comprehensiveness and reality. It is like rising from lesser and lesser abilities of cognition and knowledge to higher and higher abilities. It is like waking up from deep sleep to the dream state, and from dreaming to waking. We are not rising from one world to another world, but from one condition of consciousness to another condition of consciousness. So it is, after all, a treatment of one's own self by one's own self. Here, another person, another thing or any external instrument is of no use, and so great caution and persistence in practice is necessary.

If we miss the practice even one day, we will miss the link of action, because it is easy to follow the course of the senses and difficult to control them and act in a reverse order. The senses have a peculiar habit - if we do not allow them to act according to

their whims and fancies even on a single day, the next day they become more powerful and vehement, like a servant who has not been paid his salary and will not do his work. He will murmur, grumble, and he will say all kinds of things because we have not paid his dues. He will say, "I'll go. I will do this or that." Likewise are the senses. They are like servants who have not been paid their dues because of our act of self-control, so they murmur, grumble, and threaten us and tell us, "One day we will do something to you" - and they may even do that if we are careless. They may finish us and see that we are done for ultimately, if as masters we are careless with the servants. So, even for one day we cannot miss the practice.

It is dangerous to miss practice even for one day. Why is it so? It is dangerous because the senses will revolt, and once they revolt we cannot control them. They will gain the upper hand and we will be finished, and all the good that we have done for months and years will be in dust. We are warned that carelessness is equal to death. It is better to die than be careless in this practice. It is like touching dynamite. One has to be cautious. So why is self-control necessary? It is necessary because that is the return of the mind and consciousness to its own healthy condition of higher expansiveness. It is also necessary that we should not miss the practice. If we miss it for a period in the middle, the controlled senses gain the opportunity to revolt and exert a pressure with such vehemence that our whole personality will be driven by a blast of wind in a direction which is contrary to what is expected.

So while self-control is extremely difficult, to miss the practice of self-control is extremely dangerous. Hence, the guidance of a Guru is called for, and earnestness of practice is also requisite. Conducive atmosphere, suitable company, activity commensurate with the nature of the goal, and the presence of a competent master or a Guru - all these are indispensable requisites in the practice of yoga.

CHAPTER 11

THE INTEGRALITY OF THE HIGHER SELF

There is an important difference between what is known as value and what is designated as existence. Existence and value are not identical. What is the meaning of this *sutra*, this aphoristic principle of the distinction between value and existence? Value is a meaning that we discover by means of judgement; existence is the character of a thing as it is in itself, independent or regardless of our judgement - and they are not always identical. When we say that such-and-such a thing is good, we pass a value judgement on that thing. Our judgement does not affect it in any manner whatsoever, and neither does it mean that our judgement is correct. All judgements are partial, which is perhaps the reason why Christ made a great proclamation - "Judge not, lest ye be judged" - because all of our judgements are wrong judgements. So, if we live our life judging others, we will also be judged in the same manner by the law of existence, which is the law of God, the Absolute. Although Christ said "judge not", we do nothing but that throughout our whole life. What is called 'judgement' is simply an opinion that we hold about things. The court also does the same thing - it holds an opinion, and we call it a judgement.

Any kind of categorical opinion that we hold about anything is called 'judgement', whether it is legal, psychological, social, or moral. We get caught up by these judgements themselves because of the fact that we can mistake what is for what it really is not. The nature of existence, the character of things as they are in themselves, need not conform to our judgements. Yet, we insist that our judgements tally with the nature of things. When I tell you that you're a bad man, I take it for granted that you are really a bad man and do not feel that I am merely holding such an opinion. I do not tell you that I hold an opinion about you that you are bad, though you may not be bad. This is not the way I think. I simply identify your existence with my judgement; and so it is with every kind of judgement. If I say that this is beautiful, it is a judgement. The thing may not be beautiful, because beauty is a character that we observe by means of a psychological judgement. Goodness is a value that we discover by means of judgement. Any kind of worth or significance that we see in things is a value judgement. But the existence of the thing is an impersonal background of the thing in itself, which is what we are going to discover by means of philosophy, and which is the goal of the practice of yoga.

Previously we made reference to the important pivot-point of yoga, namely self-control, and also we noted how difficult that is, and why it is difficult. It becomes all the more difficult because of our insistence on judging things. The judgement that we pass upon things is the method or manner by which we judge our own self also, so that we have got a uniform way of thinking which applies to our own self, together with the other things external to us. Inasmuch as the very nature of human thinking prevents an ultimately correct judgement of anything, we may be said to be living in a world of relative values and, therefore, the ideas that we hold about things are subject to modification. But no one would be prepared to accept that one's ideas are subject to modification. This is also the work of the self-asserting principle called the ego. Self-control is a gradual mastery over the ego-principle by thinning out its hard, encrusted substance through various devices such as self-analysis, austere living, and the practice of meditation.

The control of oneself, which one is supposed to exercise over oneself, is a tendency of consciousness to return to the true nature of things from the false value judgements upon which our life is usually based. The value that we attach to things and to our own self as individuals is our bondage; this is the world of *samsara*. The meaning that we discover in temporal life is a relative affirmation made by the ego of the subject (individual), and this has to be overcome by a gradual introduction of the principle of true existence into our temporal life. This is to introduce God into our social and personal life, because God is existence and not a value in the sense of an individualistic significance that can be attached by a perceiving subject.

All judgements and values are connected with the relationship obtaining between subject and object. Unless there is a bifurcation of the subject and the object, the seer and the seen, and a necessity arises to bring about a connection between the two, there would be no need for value judgements. Existence need not judge its own self. The question of judgement arises only when there is a dichotomy or a split in one's own consciousness, by which a necessity is felt to read a meaning into what is observed. The meaning that we read into objects of perception is the source of joy as well as sorrow; and self-control is a mastery over these emotions.

Joys and sorrows are the outcome of value judgements and are not necessarily expressions of the character of truth, because the truth, as it is in itself, is precedent to the action of the mind and the senses, prior to the activity of our individuality and, therefore, does not stand in need of any meaning being read into it. Existence itself is a meaning by itself; any other meaning need not be attached to it. Is existence good or bad? We cannot say anything, because the highest conceivable value is existence and, therefore, further adjectives cannot be attached to pure existence. When we utter the word 'absolute', we have said everything. There is no need for any adjective, because there is no adjective that is going to add any meaning to it. It will only diminish the meaning rather than increase it, because this term signifies the totality, and there is no further significance that can be added to increase its value.

Self-restraint or self-control is, therefore, a return of consciousness from its meandering movements in the world of temporal events, to the realm of true existence. But nothing can be more difficult than this arduous adventure. The spiritual adventure is an adventure of self-restraint. Self-restraint or self-control is not any kind of mortification of the body, as it can be misconstrued often by amateur yogis. Many of our yogis may read a false meaning into the great requisite of yoga called self-control. It is connected with physical existence and social life, no doubt, but it is something much more than our physical existence and social life. It is much more because it is connected with the attitude of our mind and consciousness. The attitude of consciousness will determine the character of austerity, self-control, or the extent of success in the practice of yoga.

Our social status or physical features do not always express the inner attitude that we have towards things, and our life is nothing but an inner attitude. Philosophy is nothing but our attitude towards things, and it is this that requires a thoroughgoing transformation from less comprehensive realms to more and more comprehensive ones. To become more comprehensive in one's attitude would be to feel less and less necessity for judging things and objects. The necessity to judge things becomes less and less on account of a diminution of the intensity of subject-object relations as we proceed further and further. In the beginning, the subject and the object look completely disconnected from each other, as if a great effort has to be put forth to bring them together for particular purposes in life.

In the lowest level, the whole of nature seems to be so discrete and scattered in its particulars that it looks like an almost impossibility to bring these particulars into a sort of unity for the purpose of social life. It is very difficult to bring animals together to make a parliament, because they will never agree in their minds on account of an intense instinctive affirmation of their bodily individuality, to which they are wedded. In our human life also, the animal instincts are not absent and, therefore, to the extent that they are present, we become incompatible elements. This explains wars and battles and irreconcilable attitudes in human life - these are owing to the vehemence of the instincts of animal that are present even at the human level. All of these, of course, are meant to be overcome and subdued by a complete transformation of conscious attitude.

As it was pointed out, the difficulty lies in the fact that we are accustomed to certain habitual ways of thinking and action. Our thinking and action has become part of our skin and blood, and therefore to change it or to bring about any kind of reorientation in it is next to an impossibility for a layperson. No one can change one's own self, because the self is the identity of existence even in its individualistic connotation. A self-identical being cannot change itself, and the moment it changes itself it loses its self-identity. No one would like to lose one's self-identity; one clings to it with great force. Everyone resents any kind of order or mandate in respect of bringing about a transformation in one's own self-identical personality.

Philosophical understanding of things means a training of the reason - to apply reason to its objects in more and more generalised terms rather than by clinging to particular instances. Philosophy makes us more and more general in our attitude, and this, of course, is the tendency to a universal approach to things. The intention of self-control is to establish the lower self in the Supreme Self. It is to enable the Ultimate Self to exercise a control over the lower levels of self. When the Absolute Self takes charge of our lower levels of self, we have attained the pinnacle or culmination of self-control. God takes charge of us, ultimately. This is ultimately the meaning of self-control - the Supreme Self controls us.

As I endeavoured to point out previously, self-control is relevant to the introduction of the rule or sovereignty of the higher self in our lower realms, so that what we call an unselfish attitude or a selfless attitude becomes a presence of a higher form of self and not an attitude of absence of selfhood in any way. *Ātmaiva hyātmano bandhurātmaiva ripurātmanaḥ* (B.G. VI.5), says the Bhagavadgīta. In cryptic language, Bhagavan Sri Krishna says in the Gīta that the Self is the enemy of the self, and the Self is the friend of the self. We cannot understand the meaning of this merely by stating it, but it has a tremendous meaning - perhaps it has all of philosophy contained in it. The Self is the friend of the self, and also the Self is the enemy of the self. The Self becomes the friend of the self when we understand what this Self means.

The Self, which is the friend of the self, is the wider self which automatically imposes its law upon the lower self, not as an extrinsic force but as an immanently governing principle and the law of health operating in our body. The law of health determines the existence and function of our body. But this law of health does not work from outside, like a boss sitting in a chair externally and commanding a subordinate; it is not in this way that this law works. The law of health is immanently present in the very structure of the body. It is inseparable from the very existence of the body and, therefore, to allow the law of health to operate in the body is not to subject oneself to the rule or autocracy of another master. It is not at all a sort of subjection. It is a

spontaneous allowing of oneself to be ruled by the law of one's own higher nature, which is the health of the body.

When the higher self takes charge of the lower self and the lower self allows itself to be governed by the principle and the law of the higher self, then the higher self becomes the friend of the lower self. When we obey the law of the government, the government is our friend. When we disobey the law of the government, the government is our enemy. So the government is our friend and the government is our enemy; both are true. If we obey its law, it is a friend; if we disobey its law, it is an enemy. Likewise is the higher self. If we obey its law, it is our friend. If we disobey its law, it is our enemy. However, there is a difference between the attitude of the lower self to the higher self and the attitude of the citizen to the government. It is possible for the citizen to express an opinion regarding the law which the government imposes upon him. But no such opinion is possible here, because while the government, at least to some extent though not entirely, is external in existence and operation to the existence, action and activity of the individual or citizen, the higher self is not at all external to the lower self. The higher self is not outside the lower self, just as in the earlier analogy, the law of health is not outside the body. The body cannot say, "The law of health must change. I will bring about a revolution in the law of health and introduce a new law of health." The law of health is set according to the structure of things or the law of nature.

Likewise is the law of the higher self. We cannot say the law of the higher self should change for certain purposes. It is the eternal law, *sanatana dharma* - the eternal law of the Supreme Self, the Absolute Self, God or *Ishvara*, which eternally works without any need for change or modification by acts of parliament. *Yāthāthyato'rthān vyadadhācchā śvatībhyaḥ samābhyaḥ*, says the *Isavasya Upanishad*. Eternal law has been operating eternally, from eternal time, and it will never need any modification, because the moment it would subject itself to modification, it would cease to be eternal; it is no more *sanatana*. That which is subject to change is not eternal, and the law of God is eternal in the sense that it is the law of the very being of God Himself. To change the law of God would be to change the very existence of God, and to bring about a destruction of God. It is absurd to think in this fashion.

Thus we come to the main principle of self-control, namely, that our lower nature - the physical, biological, vital, sensory, mental, intellectual and social aspects of lower self - have to be allowed to be governed by the principle of the higher, more integrating form of self. Here, we have to also note the difference between the nature of the lower self and the nature of the higher self. The lower self is relational, whereas the higher self is integral. The lower self cannot exist without external contact. The higher self does not need any kind of contact. The lower self depends on external conditions for its existence and action. The higher self is self-existent, self-sufficient, and perfect in itself. It does not require even sense organs to act. Hence, to bring about the rule of the higher self in the lower self is to introduce a percentage of integrality and a non-relational attitude into the lower self. We become less and less dependent on things when we become more and more self-controlled. The dependence of the lower self on externals arises on account of its own feeling of finitude. The more finite we are, the more is our need for external contact, relationship and dependence.

Self-control, inasmuch as it is the introduction of the law of the higher self, makes us more and more independent. '*Atma svarajya*' is the term used in the *Upanishad*. *Atma svarajya* is where one becomes self-king, self-emperor. It is the real *svarajya*

that one is aspiring for. *Svarajya* means self-emperorship. One becomes the emperor of one's own self - a self-government, and not a local self-government. This is a universal self-government.

Here, in this automatic allowing of the lower self by itself to be governed by the principle of the higher self, it becomes naturally more healthy in its internal structure. There is a tendency to dissipation in the lower self, and there is a tendency to integration in the higher self. Or, to put it in common language, the centrifugal force seems to be working more in the lower self. The centripetal power seems to be working in the higher self. There is a tendency to move toward the centre when the higher self takes charge of us, whereas a tendency to move outward, from the centre to the circumference, is the character of the lower self. The lower self has a tendency to run outward to the periphery or the circumference of things from the centre, while the higher self brings this tendency back to its own centre. This centre is not a point, but a significance that is introduced into the life of the lower self.

CHAPTER 12

SUBLIMATION - A WAY TO RESHUFFLE THOUGHT

We have been discussing a very important principle in the practice of yoga - namely, self-restraint. I would like to touch upon another aspect of it which is an essential in the practice. Self-restraint or self-control is not a pressure of will exerted upon oneself, but a spontaneous growth inwardly experienced on account of transcendence and not by way of rejection. The term '*vairagya*' also has some relevance to the meaning of the term 'self-control'. *Vairagya* is renunciation, self-abandonment, relinquishment, etc. which is mostly interpreted as an abandonment of certain things in the world.

But *vairagya* is not an abandonment of things in the world. It is an abandonment of false values, the wrong interpretation of things, and a misconstruing of one's relationship with everything around oneself. It is this erroneous notion about things around oneself that is the reason for attachments, aversions, likes, dislikes, and whatnot. So also is the principle of self-control. A rejection of an existent value is impossible. This is very important to remember. Anything that is real cannot be rejected. If we think that the world is real, we cannot abandon it - the question of abandoning it does not arise. Anything which has already been declared to be real cannot be abandoned. How can we abandon real things? So, also, if self-control or self-restraint implies a withdrawal of consciousness from those things or values which are real and external to oneself, then it is impossible, because the consciousness or the mind which is expected to withdraw itself from externals will insist that abandonment of real values is impracticable and unadvisable.

Here we have not merely an effort of the will, but an educative process of the understanding. Understanding plays a very serious role in every walk of life. When the understanding is clear, the will can be applied in its implementation. But, the will is not to be applied bereft of understanding. Otherwise, that which the understanding has not accepted as correct will react upon us - it will have a deleterious effect upon the entire system. That which the understanding or the reason cannot accept, our whole personality will not accept, and that which we cannot accept cannot become part of our nature; and thus, a new difficulty will be created.

So, in the process of practice of yoga, whose essential ingredient is self-control or self-restraint, what is expected is a gradual blossoming of the flower of consciousness into a deeper insight into the nature of things, tending towards a wider experience, rather than a forceful suppression of really perceived values or a crushing of desires for things which are expected to bring about real satisfaction to the individual personality. This is a very important aspect which many seekers may miss due to their enthusiasm.

In our system, the culture of Bharatvarsha, four aims of existence are always emphasised - *dharma*, *artha*, *kama* and *moksha*. None of them can be ignored. There are people who are fired up with an enthusiasm for *moksha*, and under this impulse of a love for *moksha* or salvation of the soul, an immature mind may apply the wrong technique of forcing the will to abandon the real values of life, namely *dharma*, *artha* and *kama*, under the impression that they are obstacles to the salvation of the soul or the liberation of the spirit. Most people commit this mistake, and so they achieve neither anything in this world nor anything in the other world -

they live a miserable life. They have not been properly instructed, and so have taken a wrong direction altogether.

The culture of yoga does not tell us to reject, abandon, or to cut off anything if it is real, because the whole question is an assessment of values, and reality is, of course, the background of every value. What is achieved in spiritual education is a rise of consciousness from a lower degree of reality to a higher degree of reality, and in no degree is there a rejection of reality. It is only a growth from a lower level to a higher one. So when we go to the higher degree of reality, we are not rejecting the lower degree of reality, but rather we have overcome it. We have transcended it, just as when a student goes to a higher class in an educational career, that higher class transcends the lower degrees of kindergarten, first standard, second standard and third standard, but it does not reject them. Rejection is not what is implied; rather it is an absorption of values into a higher inclusive condition of understanding, insight and education.

Yoga is a process of education. The principles of *dharma*, *artha* and *kama* are preparatory processes for the readiness of the soul to catch the spirit of salvation. How can we get salvation from bondage if bondage is really there? A real bondage cannot be escaped; if bondage is real, we have to remain in it forever. We already take for granted that bondage is real, which is why we want to run away from it; but running away from real bondage is impossible. There is no escapism in yoga - that is impossible. There is always a conditioning of the mind to the states of understanding. Again it must be emphasised that where we have not understood a principle, we will not be able to master it.

The principles of *dharma*, *artha* and *kama* are temporal values. They may not be eternal values, but many religions of the world commit the blunder of imagining that the eternal is different from the temporal. All religions, we may say, have an idea that God is outside the world and, therefore, temporal values have no connection with religious values. This misinterpretation of religion, and wrong emphasis laid on the so-called spiritual values of an otherworldly character, have led to a conflict between the social values of life and the religious and spiritual values of life.

We are not to bring about a conflict in life, because spirituality is not in favour of any kind of conflict, whether it is inside or outside. So when we are exerting to control ourselves and to educate ourselves in a higher sense, either in society or in our personal lives, we are not creating any kind of split of consciousness, either social or personal. Rather, we are rising to a higher integrated condition where we have grown into a larger personality, so that in no step that we have taken have we lost anything, nor have we created tension anywhere. All stages of spiritual practice are freedoms attained from tension of every kind. A spiritual genius, even a spiritual seeker, does not create tension anywhere, either externally in society or in one's own self. Whenever we feel tension, we must understand that we have committed a mistake in our practice. What is the mistake?

The mistake is in believing that something is real, and yet not wanting it on account of a traditional attitude towards it that has been religiously introduced. The tradition of religion tells us that something is wrong, though we do not believe it. This is the difficulty. "My feelings say that something is okay, but religion says it is not okay. So I have a split between myself and the religious values." The religious novice then becomes a neurotic, an unhappy person, because in the cloister and the monastery he has a world of his own which is in conflict with the world outside. He has been told

by religion that the world outside is wrong and the world inside the monastery is right, but he does not believe it. Oh, this is a horror - that we cannot believe it and yet we are told to accept it. This is a kind of tyranny. Religion can become a tyrant; it can become a kind of dictator's order. But religion is far from dictatorship - this is an important point to remember. Religion is not a dictator. Spirituality is not a tyrant. It is not asking us to do something because it says so. It is again to be emphasised that it is a process of inward adjustment to higher values by way of a positive education.

In the practice of yoga, in the understanding of *vairagya*, in self-control which is yoga, one should not be too enthusiastic. Over-enthusiasm is bad because it is mostly emotional, coupled with a kind of will-force but bereft of understanding, which creates a conflict psychologically and, consequently, even socially. It is better that a student takes note of all his desires. "Have I a desire?" It is no use saying, "I have no desire." If we have really no desires it is okay - very good, and so much the better - but we should be sure that we have no desires.

Swami Rama Tirtha used to make a list of his desires. He used to go into a forest with a notebook or a diary and write, "How many desires have I got? One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten." Every day he would check, "How many have I finished? Or are they all still there?" To the extent of the diminution of desires, we are free in this world; and to the extent of the presence of these desires, we are bound in this world. Our bondage or freedom can be judged from the number of desires that are unfulfilled or fulfilled. If we have fulfilled all the desires and have no desires left, then we are free. But if we have not fulfilled our desires, if they are still there harassing us from inside, we are bound souls.

Before we take to a positive practice in the direction of yoga, a careful calculation of the number of desires, their nature, etc., is necessary. If there are desires, what is to be done with them? Are we to fulfil them, or are we not to fulfil them? The traditional religions tell us 'don't fulfil desires'. Parents tell us 'don't fulfil desires', and so on. This is all right, as far as it goes, because generally a desire is regarded as a kind of diversion of consciousness from its own centre to an object outside. So, theoretically speaking, this instruction is all right - we must control our desires and not give them a long rope. But how will we control our desires? What is the method? There is no use in merely saying 'control desires'. This is very good and this instruction can be given, but how do we control a desire? What is the technique that we adopt? Here, book-knowledge is of no use. Even our intellect will not help us much because it will waver - sometimes to this side and sometimes to that side.

First of all, we must determine the intensity of the desire before we try to deal with it. The desire may be very mild, or it may be very intense. If it is mild, we may take one course of action towards it. If it is very intense, another course may have to be taken. Like a fever - suppose it is only a very mild fever, 98.8°, for which we need not go to the doctor for medication, and we need not lie down in bed; it is very mild. We can fast one day - take a purgative and fast - and perhaps it will be all right. But it is not all right if the fever is 105°; then we have to do something immediately because it has risen beyond a certain limit.

Likewise is a desire. What is the percentage of the intensity of the desire? Is it irresistible and impossible to control? Has it almost taken charge of us? If so, what are we to do? When the desire is very intense, what are we to do? There is only one way - we go to the Guru. "My desire is very intense. What am I to do at this time?" The Guru will tell us what step to take. If the desire is very mild, then of course we

can find the solution by ourselves. Suppose we have a desire to eat a banana. We eat the banana, and the matter is closed; it is not a very serious matter. We want to have a cup of tea. We have a cup of tea and are done with it. But suppose we want to become the President of India. This is a very serious desire. We cannot fulfil it in two or three days, and we may have to take another birth to fulfil it. We have to think very seriously about such desires. "Oh, I have such a desire. I want to become *Rashtrapati*, and it is an irresistible desire." But the means are such that it is not practicable, and so we will have to take another birth.

In the Yoga Vasishtha, it is said that there was a Brahmin couple, poor people, who were sitting on the roadside when they saw a king's procession passing. The royal man was sitting elegantly on an elephant. And the poor couple, seeing the happiness of the king, thought, "How happy this king is, and we are wretchedly sitting here." That was the desire in the mind of the couple. This desire was not fulfilled, as the Brahmin could not become a king in that birth. He was reborn as a king in the next birth and the desire was fulfilled. He was born as a prince in a royal family and he became an emperor.

If we have such desires which cannot be fulfilled in this life on account of prevailing conditions, we will take another birth. But we do not want another birth - that is another point. Do we want to go on increasing the number of births because we have got intense desires? Here comes the need for a Guru. If we have such terrible desires that are, reasonably speaking, impossible to fulfil, and yet they cannot simply be ignored from the point of view of spiritual practice, a Guru's direct guidance is absolutely necessary. The point is that desires cannot be completely neglected. We cannot simply turn a deaf ear, or close our eyes to their cries. They have to be very rationally dealt with and sublimated.

There are three ways of dealing with a desire. Psychologically, the terms used in this connection are 'suppression', 'substitution' and 'sublimation'. We can suppress a desire. Suppose we have got a desire just now, and we cannot fulfil it because we are in an audience and cannot fulfil the desire right here; we will suppress it. We will push it inside because society does not permit it. We cannot simply start fulfilling any desire in an audience or in a parliament - it has no meaning. So we suppress it and push it inside, but this is no solution. We have pushed it inside, so it is sitting within us like a coiled-up snake, and it will show its hood when the audience is over.

Another way of dealing with a desire is substitution - instead of giving it one thing, we give it another thing. If we have a craving to smoke a cigar, we drink a strong cup of coffee instead; some milder substance is given. Or if a child is crying and throwing a tantrum, demanding a knife that we are holding, for good reason we will not give the knife to the child, so we will substitute another thing such as a sweetmeat or a toy for the knife, saying, "My dear child, this is not a good thing. I will give you something better." Instead of a knife, we give a toy. We substitute one thing for the other thing that was asked for. This is a better way, of course, than suppression, though it is not a complete solution. Merely because we have diverted the course of the river from one direction to another, it does not mean that the intensity of its flow has ceased.

The third way to handle desire, which is the only effective course, is sublimation. Sublimation is the only technique to be adopted. Sublimation means boiling, melting and transforming the desire into a new substance altogether. The desire is no longer a desire; it has become something else. The shape of the desire has changed, and it

has now become something quite different from what it was. This is the most difficult of all the techniques of self-control. The emotions are the motive power behind our thoughts, will and actions. Whatever we do is generally driven from behind by an emotion, like a dynamo, and this emotion is connected with desire. The desire is inseparable from an emotion. An emotion need not necessarily be a kind of upheaval of feeling. That upheaval is felt only when the desire is very intense. Otherwise, it is like a mild ripple on the surface of a lake. When it becomes very intense it is like a strong wave on the ocean, throwing everything hither and thither - nevertheless, it is an emotion.

What is emotion? Now we come to another subject in psychology. An emotion is a wave in consciousness. As I mentioned, when it is mild, it is like a small ripple. When it is very strong, it is like a very turbulent wave of the Atlantic which can wash away things - even elephants can be drowned if the wave comes rising up with great power. A wave in consciousness is an emotion. And what is this wave? It is a tendency towards the achievement of an objective. This wave is a frequency, and a frequency of consciousness is the intensity of consciousness. This frequency or intensity of consciousness, which rises as a wave called an emotion, is directed towards an end, just as the waves in an ocean dash against the shore or against another wave. There is a push of the body of water in the ocean in a particular direction; that push is the cause of the wave, whatever be the reason behind the push. Some pressure is felt from inside, due to the wind or some other factor, so the wave is directed in some way. Likewise, the consciousness rises in a tempestuous mood like a wave, and that is an uncontrollable emotion. This tempest can do anything if it is uncontrolled.

The point is that the difficulty in controlling an emotion arises on account of the vehemence with which it moves towards an object. The emotion is a tendency towards an object. The object may be physical, or it could even be psychological. Suppose we want to raise our social status. This is a psychological object that is in front of us, towards which we are working. Let us say that we want to become a chairman, or a minister, or some such thing. This object that is in front of us is psychological, not physical, because chairmanship is not a physical object, though it is as powerful an object as anything else; that is the end towards which the consciousness drives itself. It can also be a physical object towards which the consciousness rushes. Why does it rush towards an object, whether it be physical or psychological? It wants to fulfil a purpose.

Consciousness does not move in a direction without a purpose; and if the purpose is meaningful, at least from its own point of view, nobody can resist it. It sees a meaning in the way in which it moves towards the object, and when the meaning is there, then naturally nobody can control it. "I see significance in it. There is a purpose behind it and there is a reason - a very good reason for my action in that direction," says consciousness. So the question of controlling the movement of consciousness does not arise. If the movement is meaningless, we may control it; but if it is meaningful, how can we control it? So, the resisting of the vehemence of consciousness in the direction of an object is possible only if the meaning that it reads into the object is sublimated.

As long as we see a meaning in a thing, there is no doubt about it, and nobody else can influence us. No law, no order will work against a meaning that is seen by a person with open eyes. If I tell you that it is midnight, you will not believe it. "Why are you saying it is midnight? You can see it is daylight." We have faith that it is daytime on account of our clear perception of daylight. We are seeing it directly, and

why is someone saying it is something else? So when consciousness sees a peculiar and definite meaning or significance in an object in front of it which it regards as valuable, worthwhile and necessary for its happiness, then no law or order will operate against it. It breaks all laws, be they social, personal, or moral - any law, whatever it is - because it is the law of reality, and the law of reality is more powerful than any other law that is made by man. Why is it called the law of reality? It is called the law of reality because it is seen physically as an indubitable something about which there is no doubt in the mind, and we cannot frame a law contrary to what we see physically and palpably as something real.

We now come to a very crucial point. All of this amounts to saying that we cannot easily practise self-control. It is not so cheap an affair; it is a terrible job. It is terrible, no doubt, but there is a way out. The way out is to reshuffle the ways in which we think under given conditions. Emotions rise up under certain conditions, and under certain other conditions they may not be so forceful. The meaning that the emotion reads into its object is to be transformed. Are we correct in reading this meaning in the object? This is a philosophical question that we have to ask ourselves. Is it correct that because we see a meaning in something we can regard it as real? This is a simple question, for which there is a simple answer. But, another question can be raised - are we sure that our perception is correct?

Perceptions need not always be correct, though perceptions may insist that as long as they are there, the object is real. As long as the perceptions are there, their objects certainly will look real. Otherwise, it would not be a perception. But is the perception correct? This is the question. Here we raise a very fundamental question which is philosophical, and even deeper than philosophical. When the emotion, the consciousness, directs itself towards an object for the achievement of its purpose, is it being motivated by a correct perception of values, or is it blundering in its attitude towards things due to certain other factors? Perhaps it is mistaken. Yet it will not accept the mistake as long as it sees things by an identification of itself with the object in front of it.

Here, we feel that the withdrawal of consciousness from its object would be something like tearing off our own skin from our body. How can we tear off our own skin? It would be terrible, but this is what is happening when we practise self-control. We are tearing off our flesh, and it is so painful. But the pain is lessened if the consciousness is properly educated and made to reasonably accept the background of its attitudes and the incorrectness of its perceptions, for reasons which are superior to the one that it is adopting at the present moment.

CHAPTER 13

DEFENCE MECHANISMS OF THE MIND

The term '*indriya nigrahi*' means sense-control; '*atma nigrahi*' means self-control. Both these terms are often thought of as having a synonymous meaning and are used as such, but the term 'self' has a larger connotation than 'sense', as we already know. So the term 'self-control' should mean something much more than what is indicated by the term 'sense-control', because the senses are only a few of the functions of the self and not all the functions, while self-control implies a restriction imposed upon every function of the self, meaning thereby the lower self, which has to be regulated by the principle of the higher self. The self that has to be controlled is any self which is lower than the Universal Self. The degrees of self gradually go on increasing in their comprehensiveness as we rise higher and higher, so that it becomes necessary that at every step the immediately succeeding stage, which is more comprehensive, acts as the governing principle of the category of self just below. An analogy would be the syllabi or curricula of education - we do not suddenly jump into the topmost level of studies. There is always a governing principle exercised by systems of education, wherein the immediately succeeding stage determines the needs of the immediately preceding condition. The self, as far as we are concerned at the present moment, can be regarded as that principle of individuality which comprehends all that we regard as 'we', or connected with us.

The control of the self is, therefore, the refining of the individual personality in its manifold aspects, together with anything that may appear to belong to it, including taking into consideration all of its external relationships. Our individual existence is not limited to the physical body. It also includes its physical relationships - such as the family, for example. The members of a family are not visibly or physically attached to any individual in the family, not even to the head of the family, but there is an attachment psychologically; and the self is, therefore, to take note of that aspect of its individual existence. Both the internal structure and the external relationship are to be taken into consideration, because they are inseparable. We cannot say which precedes and which succeeds, or which has to come first and which later. They have to be taken into consideration simultaneously, almost.

Our self - the individual self, for all crude, practical purposes - is the bodily self, the physical self which is hungry and thirsty, and which feels heat and cold, etc. That is the immediately visible gross self. Whether it is really the self or not is a different question, but we take it as the self because we feel a sense of inseparable identity with the body. And, anything that is inside the body is also the self, because the body acts only as an external limit of the operation of the individual self, while it has many constituents inside.

Our physical body is not our total personality. We have many things inside us which we cannot see with our eyes. Internal to the body is the vital principle, called the *prana* in Sanskrit. The *prana* is not the breath. The breath is only the external function of an energy principle called *prana*. It cannot be translated into English. *Prana* is a very subtle, ethereal principle, subtler even than electricity. It is *pranic* energy that enables the physical body to function, including the functions of breathing, digesting, and the circulation of blood. Everything is controlled by the movement of the *pranic* energy. It is also this *prana* which acts as the motive power behind the action of the senses. If the *pranas* are withheld, the senses become weak

in their action. So, the *pranas* are something like the electric force generated by the dynamo of the individual within, to project the senses externally towards objects. And the mind, which is the synthesising principle of all sense activities, passes judgement of a tentative character upon the reports brought in by the senses. Finally, there is the supreme judge, which is the intellect.

All of these are inside the body - not in the sense of pebbles in a bottle, but inseparably permeating everything that is in the body, or that is the body. We cannot separate the intellect, the mind, the senses, the *prana*, the body, etc. One is involved in the other, so it looks like a compound that has been created by these elements. For some purposes they look like different functions, but for other purposes they look as if they are a single force, acting in different ways. So, self-control would mean a judicious control exercised over every function inside, including the physical functions, the function of the *prana*, the senses, the mind and the intellect. All of these have to be harnessed in a given direction.

According to ancient systems of spiritual practice, self-control is effected by three main methods: the control of the *prana*, the control of the mind, and concentration of consciousness. These are the three standard methods of *atma vinigrah* or self-control. This is a triple method prescribed in the Yoga Vasishtha, for instance. It does not mean that each method is mutually exclusive of the other; they are connected with one another. Also, it is not possible here to say which should precede and which should succeed. Are we to control the *prana* first and the mind afterwards, or the mind first and the *prana* afterwards, or are we to practise concentration first? We cannot do all of these things in a linear fashion. They all have to be worked at simultaneously in some acceptable degree.

In the Bhagavadgita, we have a hint of the method of self control where, in a very cryptic *sloka*, Bhagavan Sri Krishna says that the senses are turbulent and cannot be easily controlled unless resort is taken to a higher principle than the senses themselves: *indriyāṇi parāṇyāhurindriyebhyaḥ param manah, manasastu parā buddhiryo buddheḥ paratastu saḥ* (B.G. III.42). This is the verse which is relevant to this subject. The senses cannot be controlled because they are driven by a force which is behind them. As long as they are driven, pushed or compelled by a power that is behind them, they will naturally act in the direction of that push. So we have to exert some kind of pressure upon the power that is driving the senses towards objects. Otherwise, it would be like ordering the servants to work in a particular way while their master is saying something else which is contrary to our advice to the servants. We have to approach the master himself so that he may not direct the servants in a wrong manner or say something undesirable to them. So there is a master behind the senses, and unless this master is approached, the senses cannot be controlled. For all immediate purposes, we can regard the mind as the master and the senses as the servants. The senses cannot be controlled if the mind is not properly tackled, because the mind is the force that urges the senses towards objects. But there is a difficulty in controlling even the mind, because the mind orders the senses to move towards objects, on account of a misconception, so unless this misconception is removed we cannot do anything with the mind.

As discussed previously, a sense of reality harasses the mind in respect of the objects of sense, and as long as anything appears as real, it cannot be abrogated or rejected; and we cannot close our eyes to it if it has already been declared to be real. The mind will find difficulty in withdrawing its orders to the senses in respect of their movement towards objects as long as it cognises a worthwhile reality in the objects of

sense. Why does the mind see a sense of reality in the objects of sense? It is due to a peculiar situation that has arisen, which is the reason behind why the mind is accepting these perceptions through the senses.

What is this peculiar situation? The situation, precisely, is a misplacement of the values of life by a limitation of consciousness to a location called the individual. Therefore, *yo buddheḥ parastu saḥ* - there is something higher than the *buddhi* (the intellect) and the mind, in which we have to take refuge in order that even the mind may be directed along proper channels. Inasmuch as the mind is the general who orders the senses, if it has been instructed properly and advised well, then naturally it will give instructions to the senses accordingly. It comes finally to this: we have to take refuge in the Self - not in the individual self, but in the higher self, whose principle alone can regenerate the mind and remove the miscalculated attitudes of the mind in respect of things, consequently enabling the mind to properly direct the senses in a desirable direction.

The special term used in the Yoga Vasishtha for this kind of practice of the principle of the Self behind all things is '*brahmabhyasa*'. *Brahmabhyasa* or *atmabhyasa* is the practice of the presence of God. A Christian mystic called Brother Lawrence used to practise this technique called 'The Practice of the Presence of God'. The technique involved the practise of the presence of God in everything. It is quite clear that the recognition of the presence of God in things will prevent us from going wrong because, in the presence of God, we would not do anything undesirable. So the recognition of the presence of God in all things is the final remedy for the errors of the mind, and subsequently, of course, of the mistaken movements of the senses.

In the texts like the Panchadasi and the Yoga Vasishtha, the *brahmabhyasa* is described as: *taccintanam tatkathanam anyonyam tat prabodhanam, etad eka paratvam ca tad brahmabhyasam vidur budhah*. *Taccintanam* means constantly thinking only of That, day in and day out, and not thinking of anything else. *Tatkathanam* means that when we speak, we will speak only on that subject, and we will not speak about anything else. *Ayonyam tat prabodhanam* means that when there is a mutual discussion among people, or we are in conversation with someone, we will converse only on this subject and we will not talk about anything else. *Etad eka paratvam ca* means that, ultimately, we hang on to That alone for every little thing in this world, just as a child hangs on to its mother for every little thing. If we want a little sugar, we go to the mother. If we want food, we go to the mother. If a monkey is attacking us, we run to the mother. If we are sick, we go to the mother. If we are feeling sleepy, we go to the mother. Whatever it be, we run to the mother. That is the only remedy the child knows when it has any kind of difficulty.

This is the sort of attitude we have to adopt in respect of the Supreme Absolute. We run to it for every little thing, even if it is such a silly thing as a small need of our physical body. We cry only before that, and we do not ask for anything anywhere else. This sort of utter and total dependence on the Supreme Being for everything, at all times and all places, is called *brahmabhyasa*. This will cut at the root of all misconceptions of the mind. But this is a very difficult practice that is meant for very advanced seekers, and not for beginners.

Hence, the Yoga Vasishtha prescribes other psychological methods of mind-control apart from this utter dependence on the Absolute, which is meant only for very advanced practioners. Psychological techniques of mind-control are of various types. We have to determine the weaknesses of the mind first. The weak spots and the

vulnerable areas of the mind have to be detected before we tackle the mind's functions in respect of objects. Everyone has some weaknesses, and if we touch a weak spot, the person automatically becomes different from his usual self. But in the ordinary course, these weaknesses are always covered over by the veneer of social activity and public etiquette, etc. There is no one without some sort of a vulnerable spot, and that spot is the essential point to be tackled - not only in our workaday life, but also in our spiritual life.

Each one knows one's vulnerable spot. If one can carefully investigate into one's own self in a fairly dispassionate manner, this vulnerable spot can be discovered in oneself. There may be a little liking for something, and that little liking is the weak spot; like a small hole in a pot, or rather a small hole in a ship - a little hole is sufficient and through it the whole ocean can enter the ship. Likewise, in the individual we can find a little hole which is always concealed by other external factors. These weaknesses of the mind are its pressing needs, we may say, in another sense - a need which it feels irresistibly, and also feels that it is to be fulfilled by hook or by crook, by any method whatsoever. The all-surpassing weakness of the mind is its dependence on things.

Every person is totally dependent - we are not independent, as we imagine ourselves to be. If we were not dependent, we would not be annoyed or upset, nor would we get angry. We would not be disturbed. These almost daily appearances or phenomena in the mind show that we are hanging on to certain other factors for our existence and action; and when those factors do not appear to be conducive to our way of thinking, we get disturbed. There is no independent person in this world. Everyone is dependent, and to imagine that we are independent is foolish, because if we were independent there would be no botheration for us or worry of any kind, at any time. The dependence of the mind on things is, again, of various kinds, and it arises on account of the make-up of the individual personality itself.

Broadly speaking, there are various phases of the individual - the physical needs and the psychological needs experienced by us daily which make us hang on to things, like slaves. We cannot bear extreme heat; we cannot bear extreme cold; we cannot bear hunger; we cannot bear thirst. These are the immediate creature needs of the individual which makes it totally dependent on external factors. We cannot control these urges by any amount of effort. There are other vital needs of the individual which press it forward towards fulfilment. The vital urges are forceful impulses which drive the mind and the senses towards their objects of fulfilment, and these are, again, the weak spots. If we are in a position to fulfil the needs of the body, the mind and the senses in any measure whatsoever, we become friends. A friend is one who can fulfil our needs; and this is, of course, how we usually define a friend. My needs have to be fulfilled, whatever the needs may be, and when the needs are analysed threadbare, the structure of the mind and the senses are automatically analysed also.

In a medical examination, the diagnosis is the more important part of treatment. Proper diagnosis precedes any prescription of medicine. So, the order for self-control, *atma nigrāh*, may be regarded as a prescription for the illness of the individual, but this prescription can be given only after a thorough diagnosis of the individual's case. Although every individual may be said to be sick in some way or the other, everyone does not suffer from the same kind of sickness uniformly.

So even in self-control there are varieties. It is not the same type of technique that we

adopt uniformly and universally, as previously mentioned. Though it is true that everyone is hungry and everyone needs food, universally and uniformly, it does not follow that we all have to be given the same food. The whole world cannot be served the same kind of diet merely because everyone is equally hungry. In the same way, even though self-control is a universal necessity for the purpose of higher spiritual regeneration, the methods of practice may vary in detail according to the conditions of the individual in the stages of evolution, the circumstances in which one lives, and various other such relevant factors. The dependence of the mind on externals is also, therefore, variegated. It is not a uniform type of dependence. Therefore, each one has to investigate into the peculiar type of dependence due to which one is suffering. This requires leisurely thinking. A hurried mind cannot think so deeply on this subject, because it is not easy to detect where we are weak, and upon what things we are hanging for our dependence, for our existence.

Apart from the usual and obvious forms of dependence, such as the need for food, clothing and shelter, there are other types of dependence which are secret, subtler in their nature, and these are more important for the purposes of investigation than the grosser needs, because the grosser needs are well known to everyone. Everyone knows that we will be hungry, and will feel heat and cold, and that we need a shelter for living. But there are other things which may not be known to everybody. We have weaknesses other than the feeling of hunger, thirst, etc., and these are the harassing factors of life. We are worried not so much because of food, clothing and shelter, but due to other things which are the secret wire-pullers of the individual's existence. These other things are not minor factors. They are made to appear as if they are insignificant and secondary on account of a trick played by the mind, because if they are brought to the forefront they will not succeed in their attempts. So, a subtle device is adopted by the mind to succeed in its attempts.

A political manoeuvre is adopted by the mind by the manufacture of certain mechanisms psychologically, which are usually called by psychologists as defence mechanisms. These defence mechanisms are very peculiar structures - like bulldozers and tanks which we have in armies and public works - which the mind manufactures for its stability, security, sustenance and permanent establishment in the world of diversities. These defence mechanisms are terrible machineries which the mind manufactures and keeps secret, unknown to people, like secret weapons which one may wield, not allowing them to come to the knowledge of other people. If everyone knows what weapons we have got, then they won't be effective, because others also may manufacture the same weapons. So we keep our weapons very secret and use them only when they are necessary, in warfare or on a battlefield. Everyone has these weapons, and they are not made of material objects. They are psychological apparatuses which the mind always keeps ready at hand, whenever there is any kind of threat to the psychological security or individual happiness. The adepts who have made deep study of this subject are the psychoanalysts in the Western world and the teachers of yoga in the East, particularly Sage Patanjali; and certain other texts like the Upanishads have made a study of the subtle devices that the mind employs for the purpose of its individual security and permanent satisfaction.

These mechanisms of the mind are to be studied very well before we try to adopt the method of self-control. Otherwise, we will be pursuing what they call a wild goose chase and we will get nothing out of our efforts. The mind is a terrible trickster, and it cannot be easily tackled by open methods. Frontal attacks will not always succeed, because these mechanisms of the mind are invisible weapons; they are not visible to

the eye. The reactions that the mind sets up in respect of persons outside and things around are indications of the presence of these defence mechanisms. Even when these reactions are set up by the mind in respect of externals, the mechanisms are not made visible - we see only reactions, and not the source or the cause of the reactions. They will all be kept hidden so that the nature of a person cannot be known, and even when the person sets up a reaction, that nature is kept secret always. That is another device of the mind. Through all of our outward behaviour and conduct, we cannot be studied properly by a mere look at our faces, because we are very secret inside, looking like something else outside. This deep-rooted secrecy of the mental structure has to be dug out and brought to the surface of consciousness before any successful effort can be made in the direction of self-control.

CHAPTER 14

THE INDIVISIBILITY OF ALL THINGS

We were discussing the mechanisms which the mind employs for its protection, safeguard, and fulfilment of purpose. These psychological mechanisms are very subtle devices, subtler than even electronic equipment, and are invisible to ordinary perception. Often these devices get the upper hand over the very individual who utilises them, and as a servant can suppress the master under given conditions, the mechanism itself can prevent us from having any control over it. This is what they call Frankenstein's monster. These monstrous devices will be in a position later on to get into a friendly relationship with the entire apparatus of the personality, so that they can set up a revolution against the central government of the body. But in the beginning they are utilised, set up for particular purposes as a safeguard of one's own self.

These devices are very peculiar in their nature, and their very strength lies in their inscrutability. Many things become strong when they cannot be understood. The difficult persons in this world are those whom we cannot understand. If we can understand them, the difficulty will not be there. They are so very complicated in their make-up that we cannot know the way in which they will move and the purposes which will guide their actions. There are many types of mechanisms of this kind, all of which are listed in a graduated order in the science of psychoanalysis, and it may be difficult to enumerate every one of them here. I can only give some instances of how these mechanisms work.

One important device of this nature is what is usually termed 'the principle of regression'. This is a peculiar psychological term which has a great meaning behind it. Regression is a kind of withdrawal, a return from the main objective. The mind, with the help of the senses, keeps before itself the objective which it wants to tackle, contact and utilise for an ulterior motive. But we know very well that the conditions of life are such that every motive cannot be fulfilled. There are certain desires which cannot be fulfilled for obvious reasons - physiological reasons. Our body may be too weak and incapacitated to fulfil a particular desire. We may be financially incapacitated, or socially restricted, etc., so that the main objective of the mind may not be fulfilled. So, what is the alternative? One alternative is regression.

Where an enemy is too strong, withdrawal is wisdom. Where it is wise to attack, we will attack. Where it is unwise to attack, withdrawal is better. The mind too employs these tactics of armies in war. It adopts the principle of regression, and instead of asking for 'A', it comes down to a lesser degree of asking and asks for 'B', which is the next best thing. When it is absolutely certain that the objective cannot be gained under the conditions that are present, it would then follow the principle that whatever is available under the given conditions would be acceptable. If 'B' is not available or is, perhaps, too difficult to achieve, it would then ask for 'C', which is of a still lesser degree. Thus, the mind can come down to a very low level of asking, the objective getting circumscribed almost to a pinpoint, but with the background of the total pressure of the entire force of its asking for the original objective itself. The desire has not come down, but the nature of the object has been circumscribed. Instead of working in a wide circle, it has now taken to the alternative of coming to the decision that a smaller circle would be all right under these circumstances.

Sometimes, though very rarely, it becomes totally impossible to fulfil any desire whatsoever. It is then that the mind completely withdraws itself into its own cocoon of bodily individuality. It is here that people become neurotics. A neurotic condition is the limitation of a desire for an external objective that is then directed internally, to within one's own body, when every other alternative fails. It will try its best, of course. Nobody could be wiser in this world than a desire. Yet, when alternatives are not visible at all in the near future, there is a possibility that the mind may create a world of its own within itself. The mind can create a kingdom which it can rule without any kind of limitation from outside. We can have a city built for ourselves where we are the supreme masters, where everything will be done according to our wishes, and no law will operate against our wishes. We can create such a world for our own selves, and no one can pass orders against that world. This is the world of neurotics. Nerves are strained to create an inward condition of imaginary satisfaction, wherein external objects get identified with internal conditions, and concepts take the place of percepts.

These psychological states can be mistaken for virtuous and successful attainments, such as self-control. When a person is completely introverted within oneself due to forces of circumstances, the condition cannot be called one of self-control, because we have been forced to withdraw ourselves into our own bodily circumstance - not because of our wish, but because of a force which has sat upon our nerves. It is the regression principle that makes people get attached to simple and silly things like a notebook, a walking stick, a cat, a dog, etc. There are people who have no possessions except a small puppy, a cat, or if not even that, a bowl or a walking stick which is their entire property. If we remove the walking stick they will pounce upon us like lions. The walking stick is their entire life because the whole force of their personality has been concentrated into a silly object for all outward appearances - but it is not a silly object for that particular person. When these objects are not available outside, they can be replaced by internal moods, whims, fancies and private outlooks on life.

It is then that people are vehement in their opinions and will not agree at all to any other opinion. It is not a virtue; it is a kind of neurotic condition where we are disagreeing with everybody's opinion in this world, and we do not know what has happened to us. We may be under the impression that we are very wise persons and that others are fools and, therefore, our opinions should have sway over everyone else's. But what has happened to us is that we are nervous, because our desires have been withdrawn and they have taken the upper hand. They have reinforced the ego and, therefore, the ego creates a world of its own, a world of self-mastery. When objects are not available for satisfaction, the ego creates subjective conditions which it wants to impose upon others as the only ruling principle of life. These unhealthy mental states which get identified with one's own individual self can be mistaken for spiritual attainments, austerities and even advanced yogic visions - which are not at all the case, and are far and wholly removed from truth.

There is another mechanism of the mind which is called displacement, where it substitutes one condition for another condition. This act of displacement may be a peculiar manoeuvre of the mind to find the object of its fulfilment in some particular physical object, or a mental state, which is nearest in characteristic to the thing that is desired. The characteristics of the object that is desired can be visualised in the immediately available object or condition. This displacement can take place externally, or it can even take place internally. Internally, it can take very atrocious forms of displacement. For example, an act of self-control may induce us to long

hours of sleep and we will not know that it has something to do with self-control at all. We will be thinking that we are great yogis, fully restrained in our sensory and mental activities, but the mind has recoiled upon this condition by inducing sleep. There is also gluttony - immense hunger and a voracious desire to eat, which is the counterpart of sleep. They work together. An insatiable desire to eat food as often as possible, in larger and larger quantities, and to sleep as much as possible are negative conditions induced by an attempt at self-control. But no one would imagine that it has anything to do with self-control at all. They would say that it is something else and has no connection with their spiritual practice, though it has a very great connection, because the only purpose of the mind is satisfaction. It has no other purpose in life, and by hook or crook - by any method whatsoever, beg, borrow or steal, whatever be the way it follows - it must find the satisfaction it seeks. Either we directly fulfil our desire, or we indirectly fulfil it.

The mind can adopt both of these methods. Displacement is the trick of the mind played to postpone the act of fulfilment until a time when the conditions become favourable. Why do we go on sleeping, day and night? It is because sleep is a state of forgetfulness of all problems. If we have problems, the best thing would be not to think of them; but the mind, being active, will naturally think of them, at least subconsciously. It wants to wipe out the memory, or even a possibility of retaining a consciousness of the problem being there at all, by going to sleep. Or the dam can burst in some other direction altogether and there can be a desire of a particular nature which is regarded as innocuous by society. There are certain desires which society regards as harmful, but there are other desires which society, in its foolishness, regards as innocuous or harmless.

So the mind turns to those directions which the social rules regard as harmless - such as making money, for example. If we are greedy, thinking only of dollars and rupees, and have no other interest except making money somehow or other, we will be under the impression that we are going scot-free. It is a mistake of society that it has not understood what true morality is. We are going by traditions which are often wrong in the way of their working. There are fundamental desires in the human being which can take various directions of action, and society does not seem to be aware of these tricks of the mind. It has taken notice only of certain obvious ways of the action of desires, and forgotten the subtle ways in which it can work. Nobody condemns us for gluttony, for example. Nobody thinks that we are out of the way in our conduct because we are gluttons. "Oh, *bahut khata hai*." (Hindi for 'Oh, he eats a lot'.) They will simply make a remark and let it go. They do not think that there is something seriously wrong with it, because society is not wise enough to go so deep into psychological matters.

Society is foolish in many respects. It does not understand all the secrets; and we also follow that tradition. The greed for wealth, property, the desire to eat and the urge for sleep are as harmful, morally speaking, as any other desire which society regards as harmful. Also, a craving for fame - the expansion of the ego by its placement of social status - is as dangerous as anything can be in social life. When we are discussing ultimate principles under the auspices of yoga, we are not going to talk in terms of tradition, nor follow beaten tracks and insist that we have to drink water only from a particular well merely because our grandfather dug it. This kind of principle will not work when we are moving along the road to greater and greater impersonality of approach.

Among many other mechanisms of the mind, the mechanisms of regression and of

displacement, which we saw so far, explain the method of the mind wherein one thing is replaced or substituted in lieu of something else, under the impression that it is doing something quite outside the vision of the restrictive laws, and, at the same time, it finds a venue, an outlet, for its own private satisfactions.

There is another mechanism called projection, where suddenly one begins to condemn people for the very same evils that one has. This is a peculiar trick of the mind where people suddenly become important by detecting the evils of others. When we have no importance of our own, the best way of becoming important is to criticise a great man - and then we suddenly become important. Social foolishness is such that it cannot understand that there is a trick behind this mental activity. Sisupala suddenly became great by criticising Lord Krishna. He was an insignificant person, yet his name is remembered even today merely because he insulted Lord Krishna in public. If we can neither write anything nor understand anything, we criticise a great author, write a contrary review of a great work, and become very important. "He must be a very great and scholarly man. He has criticised Bernard Shaw and H.G. Wells. He must be greater than H.G. Wells himself." He may be a stupid idiot who knows nothing, and yet he suddenly comes to acquire an importance, albeit of a negative nature, on account of the criticism that he passed on great geniuses.

This is another trick of the mind, and we practise it every day - we are not above it. We have nothing to do other than this. Morning to evening we criticise people, under the impression that we are doing great justice and are practising virtue, not knowing that the devil is working within to put us outside the track. By a peculiar mechanism of projection, our shortcomings are seen. Whatever we lack, we see as lacking in others, and this is how we get on in life. This kind of projection can be either positive or negative. Where it is positive, our desires appear to be fulfilled in the context of other people's existence. Where it is negative, we see our own shortcomings in other people. In whatever manner we work, we will find that the mind is a mischievous imp and it cannot be easily brought to the point of real and positive self-control.

Yogis are very rare. If we very carefully investigate into the truth of things, we will find that almost no such person exists in this world. We cannot find Gurus, masters and adepts easily, because many seekers get waylaid due to the impossibility of understanding what is happening to them. This is because consciousness gets identified with every condition that one passes through. The difficulty in understanding one's own self lies in the fact that whatever be the stage that we are in, and whatever be the condition that we are passing through, it becomes a part of our nature. We become the very object that we are investigating, and so we fail in our attempts. There are countless devices which the mind manufactures for the sake of getting on in a temporal state as a substitute for a particular higher conduct that we are demanding of it, simply because the mind refuses to see meaning in the principle behind the higher conduct that we are asking it to follow.

Again we come to the point of the necessity for higher education in the field of practical life. The impossibility of the mind to read meaning into things makes it also impossible to approach them and take them as its guides or friends in life. The principles of yoga practice are the principles of the higher life, and these principles must become part of the nature of the individual so that they become instruments of higher progress. But friendliness with these principles cannot be established as long as they are not understood. Therefore, it becomes imperative on our part that every principle that we are asked to follow in our higher life is understood thoroughly and

made a part of our being.

In spiritual life, 'knowledge' cannot be isolated from 'being', though in the practical life of the empirical world, such a bifurcation is seen. Our knowledge has no connection with our 'being' and, therefore, it becomes a useless burden when actual difficulties are to be faced in life. Professorial and academic knowledge is of no use in life, because it is something bifurcated from our 'being'. Our life is different from what we know. But here, in spiritual life, the contrary is the case. Every step is a step in 'being', and not merely in 'knowing' in the sense of an isolation of oneself from the object known. The ultimate aim of spiritual life is Universal Being, and every step that we take towards it also is a higher form of integrated being, tending towards Universal Being.

Now, 'being' cannot be isolated from 'knowing'. All philosophies, both of the West and the East, have racked their heads, even to the present day, in finding out the relationship between thought and being. Is thought different from being, or has it a relationship with being? There are at least three types of philosophies in the world which regard thought as separate and completely isolated from the object of its knowledge. These are the materialistic theories, or what they call 'realism' in modern philosophical epistemology. The object of knowledge is completely different from the process of thought, which knows the object. There are others who follow an intermediary course by accepting that contributions are made both by the object and the subject in an act of perception. There is an element of objectivity in the knowledge of anything, and also an element of subjectivity. But there are others who have come to the conclusion that there cannot be any kind of distinction, ultimately, between the objective condition and the subjective condition in the act or process of knowledge. Traditionally, these are the schools of Dvaita, Vasishtadvaita and Advaita. They follow the gradual stages of intellectual comprehension of the relationship of the subject with the object. But it goes without saying that the soul cannot keep quiet until it becomes possessed of its object in an inseparable relationship.

We cannot be happy unless we are in possession of the object in an inseparable relation. We feel insecure if there is even the least chance of our being divested of the object that we have possessed. Even when we are in possession of what we have been asking for, there can be a subtle fear inside that one day we will be deprived of it. This fear can be obviated only if the possession is complete. The possession of wealth, for example, is not a complete possession, because no one can become one with wealth - wealth is outside us, so there is no such thing as a real secure possession of wealth. Therefore, every rich person is insecure and unhappy due to the fear that one day he can be deprived of all his possessions. As long as the object stands outside the subject, there is insecurity on the part of the subject and a lurking fear on account of the possibility of one being divested of one's possessions, one day or the other.

All this difficulty arises on account of an extrinsic factor still persisting in the intrinsic, imaginary possession of an object. We are aiming to understand that as long as ultimately there is a distinction made between thought and being, consciousness and its object, there will be a subtle insecurity and unhappiness subtly working from inside, for the simple reason that being cannot be divided. There cannot be a division of what is really indivisible. It is the indivisibility of things that asks for its realisation through the possession of objects. The asking for an object by the subject is an externalised projection, a symbolic manifestation, a representation

of the subject asking for unity of being.

In the practice of yoga, at every level through which we have to climb there is a rise from a lesser state of being to higher state of being, where knowledge becomes identical with the existence of the object. It is this principle of the identity of knowing and being that should guide us in our practice of self-control. Where the object lies outside knowledge, self-control would be a failure. And, therefore, the positive principle of this identity of being, even with its minutest form, should be followed in order that we tread the path of wisdom by means of self-control for higher achievements in yoga, rather than getting caught up by the mechanisms of the mind which is ready to deceive us at every step of our practice.

CHAPTER 15

CONSONANCE WITH THE ESSENTIAL MAKE-UP OF THINGS

Human beings, living in a human world, can think only in a human manner. This is, of course, something taken for granted. But many things are taken for granted and become part of our very existence in this world, and yet they may not be helpful when matters come to a climax. In the practice of spiritual life, in our undertaking called yoga, we are likely to make the mistake of introducing the human way of thinking into a system which is far removed from mere prosaic human thought. Even in scientific fields involving more generalised investigations, human ways of thinking do not apply. It is difficult to understand what the human way of thinking is, though we have understood the meaning of this sentence from a grammatical point of view. What is it to think humanly and to visualise things in a human fashion? This is a peculiar characteristic of our life, not at all commensurate with what should be called the scientific way of thinking; and yoga is a science - it is not a human tradition.

We have, apart from traditions, customs and routines of life, a certain peculiar characteristic called the human attitude. Even where a particular force is working which should be regarded as prior even to the manifestation of human modes, we apply the human modes themselves for defining and implementing these forces in our life. It is impossible for ordinary thought to divest itself from the notion that there is a chair in front of it, rather than a few pieces of wood. It is impossible for us to imagine that we are seeing only a few pieces of wood. We are insistently asserting through our minds that it is a chair we are looking at, and not merely a bundle of wood. I am giving an analogical method of finding out what it is we mean by the human way of thinking - the traditional, prosaic way of thinking, as distinct from the scientific way of thinking. To look at an object, to evaluate it in a purely personalistic manner, may be regarded as the human way of thinking, whereas to evaluate it by an observation from its own point of view, rather than from the point of view of a relationship that seems to obtain between itself and the observer, may be regarded as a more scientific way of looking at things.

What makes us feel a great difficulty in thinking scientifically is that there are things in this world which are called values, and these values cannot be dissected using the scientific method. For example, there is such a thing called beauty, but it cannot be scientifically analysed. No mathematical equation can understand, or point out, the significance behind a peculiar value-concept called beauty. Whatever be the extent of our imagination into the probing of this mystery, it will always remain a mystery. Just as we cannot touch the borders of the horizon however much we may proceed towards it, we will not be able to investigate into the structural basis of this peculiar significance of perception called beauty. What is science? It is nothing but mathematics and logic coupled with experimentation and inductive analysis. But no mathematics can explain what beauty is, and no logical deduction or induction can make clear what it is that is being perceived. Observation, of course, will simply make us come a cropper; it will not reveal any truth at all.

The reason is that there are very peculiar features which escape a purely temporal way of observation. This difficulty arises on account of certain characteristics interfering with our perceptions and experiences, which do not belong to the realm of pure sensation and empirical thought. It is difficult to distinguish between these interfering factors and the characteristics of things as they really are. Man is not used

to impersonal ways of thinking, because man is a person. Every human being is a person, so naturally there can be only personal ways of thinking, and impersonal ways are far, far from one's reach. What do we mean by saying that certain perceptions can be impersonal? The meaning is that the general background of the make-up of a thing is taken into consideration in impersonal observations, rather than its shape or its present context, which need not be the whole of the context.

A judgement which is relevant only to a given context, completely ignoring other associations of this context, would be more a personal evaluation rather than an impersonal one. If a doctor examines a person, he does not see a brother in that person. He does not see a father; he does not see a friend; he does not see an enemy. The doctor sees a case for examination. The doctor's eye never sees these evaluations in the patient, because his observation is intended to be connected with facts which have gone to make up the physical personality of the case and not the values which may be associated with someone else by way of relationship.

In the analytical processes and the synthetic procedures to be adopted in the practice of yoga, we have to remember that we are not dealing with human realms, human beings, or things or objects as they are presented to the senses. Most of us find little success in the practice of yoga because we apply human values to things which are not human. Nothing that is connected with the principles of yoga can be regarded as human. As a matter of fact, there is no such thing as 'human' in the whole of nature. It is only a concept of a particular type of mind that is called human. A particular characteristic of a specific type of mind is what goes by the name of 'the human way of thinking', 'the human way of functioning', etc.

What makes us think that we are human? This is only a way of evaluating ourselves. Our personalities are made up of certain physical substances - earth, water, fire, air and ether - which go to make up the bones, the muscles, the nerves, the marrow, etc., in various densities of structure, animated by certain forces. These forces are not human. The body is also not human, really speaking, because it is made up of the five elements. The earth element in the body cannot be regarded as human; the water element is not human; the fire element is not human; the air element is not human; the ether element is not human; the *prana* is not human. What is human in us? There is nothing called human, in the ultimate analysis. So, just as beauty cannot be understood in a scientific manner, the peculiar feature called 'humanness' also cannot be understood. But this inscrutable feature interferes with every type of observation and thinking, and it is this inscrutability that creates problems.

We have been mentioning, again and again, that what cannot be understood becomes a source of fear, and when it is intelligible, it then appears to be capable of mastery. We are dealing with the world in the practice of yoga, and the world is not a human being. Even the so-called human beings are not as they appear to be. They are parts of the world, projections of natural forces, and they partake of those characteristics which are present in their causes. Merely because we call a hard lump by the name 'ice', it has not ceased to be what it is; it is nothing but water that has taken a particular shape. The human being, with human attitudes, is a peculiar structure evolved out of causes which themselves are not human. The human being has not come from human characteristics, but those which are more general in their comprehension and application than the personal attitudes and needs of the human individual.

As we go higher and higher, even in our way of thinking, we have to become more

and more non-human. I deliberately avoid the word 'superhuman', because it looks very frightening for a beginner. We have to become non-human in our way of thinking as we became more and more spiritual. Neither should we look upon ourselves as men or women, nor should we look at others with this eye, because there are no men and women in this world. There are only certain structures, certain configurations which are constituted by powers and not by things. These powers are not male or female. They are not even human, as I mentioned, and they are, to put it in intelligible language, impersonal. But because of our stereotyped way of thinking right from childhood, we are unable to think in this fashion. Just as we cannot see wood in the chair but we see only the chair in the wood, so too we see only a man in a peculiar structure of forces and have a peculiar attitude towards that structure, which we ourselves will not be able to understand if we go deep into it. These are our difficulties.

We have certain inborn traits which obstruct every progress on the right path, and these inborn traits are the pressing urges of the individual nature. It is impossible for one to forget that one is an Indian, or an American, or a German; or a white or a black; or from the south, or the north, or the east or the west. These traits are deeply hidden in the smallest particle of our nature, but we know how far removed they are from the truth of our nature. There is no meaning in saying that we are Americans or Indians, etc., because these are only certain nomenclatures, certain ways of deciphering persons, certain epithets employed for practical convenience in daily life, and these need not necessarily be part of our nature. There is no such thing as American hunger and Indian hunger - they are equal. Even thinking is identical. These are only to give examples of the lowest category of impersonality which is at the background of personalities. But as we go higher and higher, these impersonalities become more generalised, and more difficult to grasp.

Very powerful analytical thinking is necessary to go to the causes of the names and forms that we see in this world as constituting the real meaning of our life. The names and the forms are not really identical with the substances, but we mix up the two. The name-form complex is identified with the substance, and vice-versa, so that we commit mistakes in every act of perception and relationship, not knowing whether this perception or relationship is in respect of a substance, or merely a name-form complex.

As in the analogy mentioned earlier, when I look at a chair, what is it that I am looking at? Is my attitude one of relationship with the wood that it is made of, or the name and the form which is what is called the chair? The chair is only a name-form complex. It is not a substance, because the substance is wood. There is no such thing as a chair, substantially. But when we touch the chair, we are touching only wood. We are not touching a chair, because if we remove the wood from it, the chair will not be there. Though wood is what the chair is in substance, we have associated a name with this structure of wood and imagined it to be almost as an independent something, though there is no independence of chair from the wood. Though this may look very simple to think about and understand, it has become a prejudice in our thinking, and that is what sets up reactions in our minds.

What is the difference between a table and a chair? The difference is very clear, and everyone knows what it is. The impersonality, which is the truth behind these names and forms, is the wood that is in the chair and the table. But the personality is that this is a chair and that is a table, and they are two things which are quite different from each other. So things that are self-identical can also be assumed to be different

for the purpose of dealing with them. That they are different is only an assumption and not a substantial truth. The same erroneous logic is applied by us in respect of everything in this world. Otherwise, there would be no attitudes at all. We cannot have an attitude towards anything if we start looking at the substance of things, and yoga is the art of probing into the substance of things.

Our attitudes become more and more impersonal and less and less palpable as we go higher and higher, and our stereotyped, ingrained traits gradually drop off like scales from the body and our way of perception becomes reoriented. To define this new way of thinking would be difficult, and for want of sufficient words which can connote its true significance, we can only say that this is a scientific way of thinking. A scientist cannot think as a human being, though he is a human being, because he sheds his human characteristics for the purpose of impersonal observation. Otherwise, the nature of things cannot be seen.

We can never understand the difference between the substantial or the impersonal way of thinking, and the other side of it, namely, the way of thinking connected with the name-form complex and with the peculiar relationship that we have with things. Yoga has nothing to do with these subject-object relationships, ultimately. As a matter of fact, it is there only to remove the bondage created by this sort of relationship. So it is necessary, first of all, to give up the old way of thinking and start a new, refined form of thinking altogether, which will be in consonance with the nature of things.

The constituents of our personality are not human, as I mentioned; and yet we call ourselves human. Nothing that is in us can be called human. Everything has come from certain other factors, certain other forms of existence which cannot be called human. Chemically, physically and scientifically analysed, we have nothing human in us. It is all impersonal right through, from beginning to end. Nature is impersonal. The sun, the moon and the stars are impersonal; the wind that blows is impersonal; the water that we drink is impersonal; the air that we breathe is impersonal; the food that we eat is impersonal; and our own body is made up of impersonal features, so that the whole existence is impersonal. Yet, we cling to personalities.

This is a peculiar prejudice, and it is the first thing that we have to shed. On account of this attachment to individualities and the personal notions attached to these individualities, we have fears of various sorts. Fears arise on account of relationship with persons like us, and these fears would not be there if we regard ourselves as certain forces impinging upon other sets of forces caused by certain conditions, all of which are impersonal. This is a frightening way of thinking for the type of mind that we have right from birth, but it is better to be frightened in the beginning of our spiritual practice than to be frightened afterwards, in the end, when we are about to jump into a new realm of existence altogether.

The teacher of yoga should be regarded as a very uncanny individual, indeed. As I mentioned previously with a quotation from the Katha Upanishad, the teacher of yoga, and even the student of yoga, should have an element of impersonality in order to absorb these characteristics of the goal of life, which is the highest thing that a person can conceive. We never move from person to person or from personality to personality. We move from one stage of impersonality to another stage of impersonality. Even in the lowest condition we are in a condition of impersonality, though it may be just the initial stage of it because, as I tried to point out, there is nothing in this world which can be called personal. Neither the atom is personal, nor

the molecule is personal, nor the electron is personal, nor the cells of the body are personal, nor the blood is personal, nor breathing through the lungs is personal. Nothing is personal; everything is impersonal.

How does this personal attitude come, then? From where does it come? This is a crotchet in the head. We identify principles with personalities. This is a mistake everyone commits, and then there is unhappiness of various sorts. There is an old saying: "You may dislike sin, but not the sinner" - but we mistake one for the other. When we dislike a sin, we start disliking the sinner himself even though the sinner is different from the sin. A sin is a peculiar condition, and when the condition is obviated, the sinner is no more a sinner. But we cannot identify the background of this condition.

We superimpose one on the other, and when I dislike a peculiar attitude of yours, I dislike you yourself. What I dislike is not you, but your attitude. If your attitude changes, it becomes all right. But I cannot distinguish between these two factors in your personality. Your attitude is identified with you. The substance and the quality get jumbled up, whereas the substance is not identical with the quality. The quality is a peculiar condition of the substance, and this quality can go on changing as the substance evolves. So, our attitude should be a permanent understanding of the substance behind these attributes which are the causes of relationship, rather than a clinging to the attributes themselves. It is this inability to think in this fashion that creates attachments, aversions, loves, hatreds, wars, prejudices, heart-burnings, sleepless conditions, and sorrows of umpteen types.

The system of yoga can cut at the root of all problems merely because of a single base on which it stands, namely, the impersonal attitude; not an attitude which it has created of its own, but an attitude which is the character of being itself. The being of anything, for the matter of that - your being, his being, even the minutest conceivable object - the being of anything is impersonal. So as it is true that we rise from a whole to a whole in wider and wider comprehensions, it is also true that we rise from lesser types of impersonality to higher types of impersonality.

The idea of something being in relation to us rather than something in itself, is to be given up at the very outset. Whenever we look at a thing, we always look at it as something of meaning to us, of what it signifies to us, and on the basis of that imagined significance we develop an attitude and take an action in that direction. But if this wrong notion can be given up with a little bit of hard thinking and a little effort on our part, then many of our difficulties can be obviated.

But a person immersed in the workaday world, who is always walks along a beaten track and never exerts to think independently, will find this very difficult. Great leisure is necessary to reshuffle thought and to make it a new system of understanding. It may take years to develop this sort of thinking, but once this stand is taken on the impersonal background of everything in this world, there shall be neither sorrow nor grief, nor insecurity, nor fear of anything, because the world will take care of us when we understand it as it is. But when we misconstrue it and treat it in a way in which it should not be treated, then the cause of our fear is, of course, obvious. We have, therefore, to think, to feel and to act in a manner which is not dissonant with the essential make-up of things, and when we succeed in this way of thinking, we have also succeeded in living a true life. Success in life is nothing but success in our developing a permanent attitude commensurate with the essential nature of things.

CHAPTER 16

THE INSEPARABILITY OF NOTIONS AND THE MIND

It has been accepted, universally and commonly, that the practice of yoga essentially consists of the restriction and adjustment of the modifications of the mind. This is perhaps the main stronghold of Patanjali's system of yoga, and perhaps any other system of yoga. But it is difficult to gain a control over the modifications of the mind without a knowledge of the location of the mind as well as its functions, together with a knowledge as to why these modifications have to be controlled at all. Even a child would not be amenable to instructions which are unintelligible to it.

A mere mandate or an order issued by a court, whether or not we like it, may have to be followed for fear of punishment. But such an order of a judicial type cannot be issued to the mind. It is not a court order that we are issuing to the mind: "You keep quiet, and if you do not keep quiet, I will do something to you." This kind of instruction will not work with the mind. But when nothing else seems to be possible, people generally resort to this method of suppression of the desires, thoughts, feelings and emotions of the mind, not knowing the consequences thereof. The danger of suppressing anyone by force is known to everyone; it needs no comment. One cannot suppress with force even a servant. Though suppression can be tolerated for some time, it cannot be tolerated for all times, because there is a status of each person and it cannot be completely denied, root and branch, especially for a protracted period of time.

The status of every individual asserts itself in the required measure, at some time or the other; and the mind itself has its own status. Perhaps its status is much greater than we can conceive in our minds. Hence, ordinary approaches of a prosaic character do not work with the mind. Going to a monastery and closing our eyes, suppressing the modifications of the mind - seeing nothing, hearing nothing, and attempting to think nothing - would be a very undesirable practice. As has been pointed out repeatedly, the evolution that is effected by living a spiritual life is a healthy growth into greater forms of expansiveness and realisation, not at all connected with mere subjugation in an external sense.

The mind cannot be controlled unless one knows what the mind is, and also what our relationship is to the mind. Who is to control the mind? Who are we to control the mind? What is our connection with it? It is a very, very easy thing to say that we control the mind. But, where are we sitting, and who are we? Are we made up of the mind, or are we something other than the mind? We cannot deal with the mind as if we are playing jokes with it, because it is the mind that makes even this decision, "I shall control the mind." Often we have a very queer notion of the mind. Even good psychologists may have a wrong notion of it - such as, that it is a peculiar fluid vibration inside the body, or perhaps a kind of droplet, like a drop of mercury moving hither and thither inside the walls of the body. Or sometimes it is also conceived as a kind of centre of force located somewhere in the body - either in the brain, or the head, or the pineal gland, or the throat, or the heart, etc. - all of which are inadequate concepts of the mind. The mind is not any such thing.

It is not located physically in any part of the body, because the mind is not a physical substance. It is non-physical in its nature. Though it controls the movements of the physical body, and it has intimate relationships with our physical system, it itself is not physical. Also, the mind is not any kind of ethereal substance. It is not a fluid; it

is not like mercury; it is not like the flame of a lamp. It is not even a centre of force, if we regard that centre as somewhere situated inside the body - at the top, or the bottom, or the centre, etc. - it is nothing of the kind. The mind becomes difficult to understand because of the appellation that we give to it. Our language itself is a defect, inasmuch as it sometimes contorts the significance of what it tries to explain. We have a grammatical way of thinking when we express ideas through sentences. There is a subject of reference in every sentence, and when we speak of the mind, we regard the mind as a kind of subject in a grammatical manner. And a grammatical subject is some 'located' something - it is some substance, some person, some thing, some object, this, that, etc.

But the mind is neither this nor that. It is neither a substance nor an object - not anything whatsoever imaginable in the ordinary manner. The mind is not anything that we have seen with the eyes. It is not even something that we can hear of anywhere in the world. It is not available anywhere in the world, and the likes of it are not seen anywhere. One cannot, even with the farthest stretch of imagination, conceive what the mind can be, because all conceptions of the mind fall short of its real nature. The mind, fortunately or unfortunately for us, is not any isolated existent object - it is neither physical in the sense of a solid object, nor non-physical in the sense of a gaseous or a liquid substance. It is a force. For the time being, we can accept this definition. But even this definition is subject to a little modification. It is not a force like electricity, for instance - it is something much more than electricity. It is an outward expression of what we ourselves are, to put it in a more appropriate manner.

The mind is what we ourselves are; only it is expressed spatially, temporally, objectively or externally. It is not someone thinking through the mind - "I think through the mind." We do not stand apart from the mind when we think through the mind, and so this linguistic expression, "I think through the mind," is not a proper way of expressing the fact. It is not 'we' thinking the mind in the sense of someone thinking something else, or through some other instrument. We ourselves are the mind, and the mind may be said to be a temporal form taken by us. Now, the difficulty is simply this much: it is we ourselves who are the mind, and so it becomes a little difficult for us to define it.

How will we define ourselves? We are the persons who define things, and we have to define our own selves. Also, when I said that it is we ourselves expressing ourselves in a temporal manner, I have to explain what is meant by 'temporal' which goes, of course, along with the concept of the spatial existence of things. We are a spatial and temporal something, and that is what the mind is. That the mind has different instruments of action, such as the body and the limbs, etc., is another matter, and we need not concern ourselves with those at present. Just now we are merely concerned with the central issue, namely, what is it that motivates action or impulse, or any attitude towards a thing? It is a peculiar situation in which we have found ourselves, or rather, we have created for ourselves. The mind is only a situation, a particular condition in which we are finding ourselves. Therefore, when our condition changes, our mind also changes, because we change ourselves. When we are defining the mind, we have to take into consideration our own selves, naturally, because it becomes difficult for us to isolate ourselves from the mind, and we ourselves seem to be the mind itself in a particular state.

I used the terms 'temporal' and 'spatial' to explain what it means to be a mind in an individualised form. To be temporal is to be conscious of a successive series, or to be

aware of a relationship with conditions that pass, events that take place, or processes in which we seem to be involved. We are perpetually aware of this state of affairs. We cannot extricate ourselves from the notion that we are caught up in a flux of events, in a process that takes place, which is what we call temporality, or rather, the condition of being in time. We are always conscious of something called 'time', though we do not know what time is.

Time does not mean the movement of a clock, because the clock is only a material mechanism which we have created to calculate a peculiar process that takes place in nature, and which we call time. Time is not a physical event, because it is somehow or other connected with a state of mind or consciousness. There are conditions under which time alone can be the object of our understanding. Events have to take place, and there should be relative motion of things, such as the movement of the earth round the sun, or the solar system round the galaxy, etc. If everything stands still and there is no motion whatsoever anywhere, the consciousness of time would be impossible.

But more important than all these aspects of time-consciousness is a peculiar sensation in ourselves that we are involved in a process, a kind of a sensation in us which we identify with, which is called 'duration'. We are aware of what is known as duration. We cannot define it even to ourselves, but we are instinctively aware of something which we express in language as a process of duration - the consciousness of there being a gap between events that take place, and on account of which we make a distinction of past, present and future. The idea of past, present and future is also connected with the procession of events; and our peculiar involvement in what is known as temporality is connected with another factor called spatiality.

We are in space, externalised in an objectified form, and we are involved in this condition. We cannot extricate ourselves from this condition. We are a part of space, we are a part of time, and we think only in this way - there is no other way of thinking. So space, time and individuality are the essence of our existence. Thought process, or the function of the mind, is a condition of ourselves which is inextricable from what we call space, time and individuality. We are simultaneously aware of all three aspects of one particular condition, namely, space-time-individuality. We do not think of these successively, one after the other - first space, then time, then individuality, or individuality first, etc. All three come into our minds at one stroke. The moment we wake up in the morning, we at once become conscious of three aspects of our being - of being spatial, of being temporal and of being individual. Therefore, the way of thinking is inseparable from this threefold limitation of our existence. So the mind is a limited condition of consciousness, and for the purpose of our present analysis, we can say that this limitation is spatio-temporal and individual.

When we talk of mind and its control, we have to take into consideration its background. It is not something that is outside us. It is the very condition in which we are involved, and that is what we are trying to control. Understand the difficulty. We are not controlling, or subjugating, or restraining someone or something outside us - we are trying to become aware of a peculiar state of affairs which is inseparable from our very existence itself, and which we are trying to modify now for a better state of affairs. This is the implication of the control of the mind. So we are controlling ourselves when we are trying to control the mind. When we talk of ourselves in relationship to what we know as 'mind', we come to a new type of difficulty - we cannot understand ourselves in the same way as we cannot understand

mind and its involvements, because we have various layers of our self-consciousness, and these layers of self-consciousness repeat themselves successively, one after another, under different conditions of our life, so that we are not always the same every day and at all times.

We are faced with the problem as to the exact condition of our real self. Are we physical somethings in space and time? If that is the case and the truth of the matter, then the whole question of life would be a physical one. If we regard ourselves merely as physical substances located in space and time, in relation to physical objects outside, including physical personalities, and if this is the truth, then all of the problems of life would be only physical problems. There would be no other problem in life. But that does not seem to be the whole truth of things, because life is not merely physical.

We have other peculiar desires, wants, needs and whatnot, which cannot be regarded as purely physical, because even if all the physical requirements are provided, we can be unhappy for other reasons which are perhaps more important than physical conditions. I can provide you with all the physical needs, and yet make you unhappy. Then, what is the reason for your unhappiness? Unhappiness is a peculiar state in which we have found ourselves, in spite of the fact that we seem to be well-placed physically.

So, our 'self' is not merely the physical self. We have another layer of self which can take the upper hand and make us unhappy or happy under different conditions, as if it has no connection at all with the physical set-up of things. While it is true to some extent, in some percentage, that our life is physical, that our self is physically involved and our needs are physical, it is not the whole truth. So the self that we are speaking of is something more than the physical, because our joys and sorrows are not physically connected, entirely; they have some other thing restraining them inwardly. For example, our ideas about things, and the ideas others have about us, may contribute largely to our joys and sorrows, despite the fact that we have food to eat, that we have clothing, property and money, that we have a building - that we have everything. Yet, the idea that we have in our minds may make us sorry, and the idea that others have about us can also bring us to the same condition. So we have something peculiar in us called the idea, or the mind; and ideas can sometimes rule the destiny of people, independent of physical relationships.

We have a layer of self which is a little different from pure physical relationships. Not only that - even if the physical relationships and the ideational contexts are all taken into consideration and are well provided for, some third factor can interfere in our life and then make us happy or unhappy for other reasons. There are fears and insecurities which are a little transcendent to the present idea that we have in our minds, either physically or ideationally. We have unknown fears which will suddenly grip us by surprise, such as the fear of death and the insecurity of life as a whole - not knowing what will happen tomorrow.

This has little to do with our idea about things, or the ideas that others have about us. People may think of us as very great. One is perhaps the greatest of people in the whole world, but that does not prevent one from being unhappy about impending death and the insecurity of life caused by catastrophic conditions of natural forces. One may be the world's emperor, but one can be unhappy for other reasons than social causes, even if one is well provided for physically.

What is it that makes us unhappy? We have got another condition, another situation,

another layer of self which can speak in a language of its own, independent of physical, psychological and social aspects. We have different strata of self, and at different times we get identified with one or the other of the strata, and then we are this or that in different conditions. The mind is a condition in which we find ourselves, temporally and spatially. This condition goes on changing according to the concept of self that we have, or rather, the layer of self in which we find ourselves at any given moment of time.

The control of the mind, which is the principal function in yoga, is a tremendous affair. It is not a little trick that we play, like turning on an electric switchboard. Rather, it is a very tremendous act that we are embarking upon, which is a manipulation of patterns in which we are involved, the world is involved, things are involved - not in a very intelligible manner, but in a very complicated manner. So even the concept, even the idea, even the first effort of controlling the mind becomes something which requires of us a very deep analytical background.

The very initial advice of Patanjali is that yoga is to be practised as a control of the modifications of the mind. I have only given a very, very faint outline of the various types of involvements which we have to take into consideration in our adventure of controlling the mind - not taking it as a mere hobby, or an easy joke, or an act, but as a great encounter of a complex situation, not merely connected with our isolated individual state but also connected with many other factors, even outside. Even space-time gets included here when we control the mind, because the mind is inseparable from the notions of space and time. When we take into consideration space and time, every blessed thing comes, because everything is included under these concepts. So to tackle the mind would be to tackle a tremendous universal problem before us. When we face the problem of yoga, we are facing the world and not merely a little dot inside our bodies, as we may wrongly think.

CHAPTER 17

OBJECTIVITY IS EXPERIENCE FINALLY

As we have been trying to understand, the mind is a total force of what we ourselves are, and not something outside us requiring an external observation or an outward mode of contact. For centuries, philosophers have been trying to discover the proper relationship between the mind and the self, the mind and its object, etc., and everyone has differed from everyone else on this subject. There is rarely unanimity of opinion on this subject among thinkers, the difficulty lying precisely in the enigmatic character of the mind. It has been held, for instance, that the mind is a synthesising, intelligent element lying at the background of all sense functions. According to this doctrine, the mind is nothing but an organising power which does not introduce anything new to the reports of the senses, but merely collects them, arranges them and gives them a shape.

Generally, in the process of the knowledge of any object, three stages are involved - sensation, perception and cognition. In the beginning there is what is known as the sensation of the object. We begin to have a faint idea of something being there in front of us. We say, "I sense something." This sensation is not something merely in a psychological form inside, but is external as well. The senses themselves begin to have an inkling of something being in front of them - very, very indeterminately, generally, and without any kind of a specific identification of the object. When this sensation gets more concretised by the intensification of attention on what is being present in front, it becomes a perception of such-and-such a thing. Here the mind is silent, though it is sitting at the back of the senses, and when the perception is complete, the mind begins to act. It conceives, directly acts upon the senses, and connects intelligence with a bare perception of the senses.

It is here that the trouble really takes place - that when intelligence is connected, we ourselves are connected, because we are intelligence. Our essential nature is intelligence. We may call it by any name - intelligence, consciousness, understanding or awareness. All of these various names are synonyms meaning almost one and the same thing ultimately. We ourselves seem to be drawn to the object when the mind begins to cognise the object through the senses. The mind synthesises the sense perceptions in this manner. For instance, the eyes see a shape and a colour. Along with the perception of shape and colour through the eyes, there can be a connected perception of sound through the ears. The skin, or the tactile sense, may feel the sensation of touch of solidity or substantiality of the object that has a shape and a colour, etc., as visualised by the eyes. It may have a taste, and it may have a smell, etc. One sense cannot do the work of another sense. The eyes cannot hear, the ears cannot see, etc., but the mind can bring all these together and focus them on a single perceptual data. Then it becomes a complete awareness of such-and-such an object with so many complex characters.

The five senses act like five agents, bringing five different types of reports regarding one and the same thing. These five reports are brought together into a single consciousness of five aspects of the given object, and the mind begins to perceive that the object is one, though the reports are five. Then, of course, many other processes take place inside - judgement, etc. - which is the work of the intellect. After all, what is the purpose of this perception of the object, and what is the intention of the mind in synthesising the perceptions and sensations of the senses? The purpose is to pass a

judgement, ultimately: "What is to be done now?" Such-and-such a thing has been seen possessing such-and-such a character. "Oh, I see," the intellect says now. "It is a snake. I will run away from this place." A judgement has been passed. To find out that it is a snake, so much time has been taken by the activity of the senses and the synthesising function of the mind. Or, it may be some pleasant thing: "Oh, my friend is coming." Then we are so happy, and we go to greet the friend. If it is a tiger, we run away from that place. Varieties of judgements are passed by the intellect in various ways under different conditions, as the case may be.

The mind is a peculiar intermediate principle between the object outside and the pure self within. Many thinkers have felt that there is no such thing as the mind, that it is only the self acting directly upon the senses. But others have held that this kind of doctrine has a defect in it, because if the self is immediately connected with the senses, there would be perpetual perception of objects, and there would be no such thing as non-perception of objects. Because the self is permanently there - it has no modifications, it of a uniform character - if it is connected directly to the senses, we will be aware of things always. There would be no time when we would not be aware of them. But there are occasions when we can perceive and non-perceive, etc.

The attention and the non-attention that we bestow in respect of objects has made people feel that there is something else functioning between the essential self and the objects outside, and that can be called the mind. Now, what is this mind? Is it a quality of the self? Is it an attribute like the greenness, blueness, etc. that we see in a flower? A blue flower means a flower with blue character, attribute and quality. A heavy object, a blue flower, a sweet dish, etc. is what we speak about when we characterise things. Is the mind a character, an attribute, a qualification or an adjunct of the self, just as blueness can be regarded as an attribute of a flower? This, again, has driven people to great controversy, inasmuch as it is difficult to come to a definite conclusion because it is difficult to conceive of a relationship between attribute and substance. This is one of the great problems in philosophy.

What is the connection between quality and substance? That peculiar term we used, namely, inherence, does not explain matters, because inherence is only a way of expressing the inseparability of the attribute from the substance. It does not mean that the attribute is the same as the substance. We never say that the attribute is identical with the substance. The attribute is a peculiar condition of the substance, or rather, to put it more precisely, the attribute is a condition under which the substance becomes an object of cognition, etc. We become aware of an object under certain conditions. These conditions which are responsible for the specific perception of an object become what we call the attribute of the object. This would amount to saying that the substance has no qualities itself, because these qualities are only certain characteristics perceived by the subject under certain circumstances.

If the circumstances were to change, perhaps the attributes would not be there, or certain other attributes would be perceived. So can we judge the self and the mind in this manner, and regard the mind as an attribute of the self? If this sort of definition is to be applied, then we have to concede that there can be circumstances or conditions under which, alone, the mind could be located as existing. There are no conditions, or there is no circumstance, where we can imagine when the mind is absent.

Previously we were trying to find out the various levels of self, the layers of our personality, and we found that the mind is operating under every condition and on

every level. Even in the deepest layer of self there is an element of mentality. The attempt of yoga in controlling the mind thus involves many an aspect which, ultimately, is connected with one's own self. The mind cannot be controlled as long as the precise connection of oneself with things outside is not properly understood, because the control of the mind is nothing but a regulation of one's relationship with things. That, itself, is control of the mind. On careful analysis, we will realise that what we call the mind is only a conscious relationship with externals which sometimes create an unconscious background, a residuum in the form of potencies, latencies - or, as we call them in Sanskrit, *samskaras* or *vasanas*. Conscious perceptions can produce memories which can lie in an unconscious condition.

It finally comes to this: any attempt at the restraint of the modifications of the mind, control of the mind, is tantamount to a proper understanding, evaluation and organisation of our relationship with externals. The very precise function of the mind is the contact with externals and the judgement of externals as certain values connected with oneself. We feel a necessity for controlling the mind, and therefore arises the necessity for the practice of yoga, because it has been observed that the usual types of relationship which obtain between oneself and objects outside are not always conducive to the happiness of oneself. All these relationships appear to be untrustworthy modes of contact and undependable sources of satisfaction.

If a particular object of sense, on which the mind and the intellect pass judgement by way of relationship and contact, is really dependable and very trustworthy for all times, then it should be so for every person in the world, and even for one and the same person for all times. It has been seen by experience, observation and experimentation that no object in the world can be regarded as having an identical or uniform value for all people, at all times, and even for the same person at all times. It goes on changing its appeal; or rather, one changes one's attitude towards it for reasons that are difficult to understand. This means that there is something very inscrutable and difficult about one's relationship with things, which makes one conclude that there is a necessity to probe deeper into this subject.

The aim of life is freedom from sorrow, complete abrogation of all pain, and an establishment in the hoped-for perennial joy or eternal bliss. This seems to be such an impossible thing in this world, on account of the unintelligible relationship that the mind has with things upon which it pins faith and which it regards as the source of its satisfaction. Two questions arise here. Firstly, is the object of sense really the source of joy? If that is the case, there is justification in the mind hanging itself upon an object for its joy. But is it true, or is it not true? This question is to be answered very dispassionately. Secondly, why is it that an object, which the mind imagines to be the source of its satisfaction, changes its characters constantly and makes it feel miserable at different periods of its life?

These are very profound psychological issues. Before we try to bestow some thought upon the various methods of the control of the modifications of the mind, which is the main forte in yoga, it would be essential for us to go into the subject of whether any object of sense, upon which the mind and intellect pass judgement, is a source of joy. Is it true, or is it not true? This has to be carefully investigated. Secondly, we have to determine why there is a constant anxiety felt by oneself in respect of an object, and why there is a subtle insecurity and joylessness even at the time of experiencing a so-called joy during one's contact with an object. Even while we are enjoying an object, there is an unconscious unhappiness in the background, for reasons which the mind is not consciously thinking about at that time.

The object of sense cannot be understood easily, because there is a preconceived notion of the mind in relation to the object. It is not possible to understand anything if we already have a preconceived notion about it. We have to first shed this preconception or prejudice. We always say, "Oh, this is very good." If we have already said it is very good, then one has nothing to say about it; one will keep quiet. First of all, we have to be very dispassionate and a little more general and impersonal in our making a remark about a thing being good or bad, useful or otherwise. But the mind is not amenable to an investigation of this kind, because the essence of the mind is prejudice, which is another name for clinging to objects as sources of real joy. It is born into prejudice, and it is stuck-up in that peculiar, prejudicial mould into which it is cast.

It becomes very difficult to investigate an object, because the mind has a prejudged notion of the object and always tells us, "It is there. The matter is closed. If it is there, why are you going to question it now and ask whether it is there or not there? I am telling you it is there, and you should not put another question." The question that arises regarding the existence of an object may be due to a doubt in regard to its existence, but the mind says, "There is no doubt. It is there. I am seeing it, and also I am experiencing a particular reaction from it." This reaction from the object, which comes through the avenue of the senses, is the cause of the conviction arising in the mind that the object is really there, outside, as a substantial something. But all of this so-called conviction of the mind in regard to the existence of an object is an outcome of a misconception, a kind of confusion, a muddle. A muddle is something which we cannot intelligently investigate into; but this is what has actually happened. The object, according to the perception of the senses and the conception of the mind, is something which would not permit logical analysis.

One of the strong points about the objects of sense is that they do not allow any kind of investigation, because if we subject them to scientific analysis or logical investigation, they slowly begin to lose their ground, like the investigation of the activities of a thief. A thief does not like to come to the forefront. He always lies at the background where he is not perceived, because any kind of investigation into the background of his life would be a source of insecurity and unhappiness for him. So the strength of the object is precisely in its inscrutability - *anirvachaniyatva*, as they say in Vedanta philosophy. One cannot say it is there; one cannot say it is not there. In classical analogies, they give the example of the rope and the snake. When we see a long rope, twined-up, lying on the road in twilight, we mistake it for a snake. We may jump over it in fear, imagining that it is a snake. We have seen a snake. If we had not seen it, we would not have jumped. Now, it is not there. So it is possible, under certain conditions, to see something that is not there, and these conditions have to be examined.

What are the conditions under which certain objects can be perceived, even if they are not there? There are various factors in the case of this analogy - lack of sufficient light, or the memory of a snake that one has seen earlier, and so on and so forth - umpteen causes are there. Likewise, there can be certain sets of conditions which can generate in the mind the perception of something outside as an object. The reality of an object lies in the conviction of the mind, which conviction has arisen out of the judicious synthesising of the reports of the senses - a process which it has done and which it regards as logically deducible from facts given. If something can be regarded as having a colour or a shape, if something can be tangible, and if something can have other characters that excite the activities of the five senses, then it can be

regarded as an existing object. But why does something excite the senses? This is a side-issue that arises from this investigation.

What makes an object endowed with the capacity to excite the senses in a given manner? We have a very simple answer, and it is given in the Bhagavadgita: *guṇā guṇeṣu* variante (B.G. III.28). The reason why an object stimulates or excites the senses is due to a similarity of character in the structure of the senses and that something that we call an object outside. Let us go back to the Samkhya and the background upon which this statement has been made by the Bhagavadgita: *guṇā guṇeṣu* variante. *Guna* does not mean a quality, but a pattern or a structure of things which is supposed to be the substance of every object. What is intended here, in this statement of the Bhagavadgita, is that the thing out of which the senses are constituted is the very same thing out of which the object outside is also constituted. So there is a pull of one thing in respect of the other. The senses run towards the object, and the object evokes the activity of the senses on account of a similarity of structure. The same structural pattern is present both in the object outside and the senses inside.

These substances which make up the senses and the object are called the *gunas*. The '*gunas*' are peculiar technical terms in Sanskrit, meaning certain properties. These properties of objects are also the properties of the senses. These properties are *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. *Sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* are *gunas* or properties, and to explain what it actually means would bring us to the substantiality of the objects and the substantiality of the senses themselves. *Rajas* is a condition of the absence of equilibrium. Any state in which there is disturbance, agitation, division, tension and a tendency to externality may be regarded as *rajas*, or what may be called kinesis. The kinetic condition of an object is *rajas*, whereas the static condition is *tamas*. In our scientific studies or studies of physics, we talk of the kinetic or dynamic condition of things, and the static condition of things, but there is no talk about the third aspect, which the Samkhya and the Bhagavadgita speak of as *sattva*. We do not know what it means because such a thing is never seen in the world.

Sattva does not exist anywhere outside. Either a thing is dynamic, or it is static - that is all. But the condition of dynamics and statics is, after all, a condition, and we must remember that. Very aptly, the word '*guna*' has been used here, and is translated as 'property'. It is not a substance, but a condition. When we say something is inert, we refer to a condition of that something. When we say something is active or kinetic, we also refer to a condition of that something. Can we say that substances are made of merely conditions? It is very strange indeed to say that, because we always say that a condition is 'of' something, a condition is 'of' a substance. Now we are saying that the substance itself is nothing but a collocation of conditions. Otherwise, why do we use such words as 'property', '*guna*', etc.?

Both the Samkhya philosophy and the Buddhist psychology of momentariness or the transience of things have concluded, after deep thought, that the substantiality of things is ultimately inseparable from a condition in which these things find themselves. This is also corroborated by scientific analysis, as has been done these days. A condition, though it cannot be and should not be identified with the substance itself, somehow or other seems to be inseparable from the characterisation of the substance by sensation and cognition. We cannot say what a substance is, except by definition of its condition. We have never seen a substance minus its condition. Whenever we speak of a substance, an object or a thing, we always speak of a particular characteristic, or a group of characteristics, or a set of circumstances

under which that object, the so-called object, is supposed to be.

So, we can safely say that though we speak of a substance, or an object, or a thing, we are really speaking of certain states, of certain conditions, of certain reactions set up in respect of our senses. Finally, the judgement in respect of the existence of an object seems to be the same as the judgement in respect of an experience that has been produced in us. What we speak of as the substance of an object is nothing but an experience of something being there. If the experience is not there, the object also is not there.

From the difficulty of not being able to differentiate a condition from the substance, we have come to another difficulty of it not being possible for us to differentiate the so-called existent object from an experience of that object. So we have a double difficulty - one objective, and another subjective. We shall think of it a little later on.

CHAPTER 18

THE DUAL PROCESS OF WITHDRAWAL AND CONTEMPLATION

The existence of the mind can be known only by its function, and the main function of the mind is cognition of objects. Thus, the character of the objects has something to do with our attempt at knowing the nature of the mind itself. Direct knowledge of the mind, independent of any reference to other factors, is difficult. We have been trying to determine the nature of these objects which the mind cognises by a kind of internal relationship which it establishes with the objects. If the objects exist, the mind that cognises them should naturally exist; and, to the same extent that objects are real, we may say that the mind is also real. What is the extent of reality present in objects? Are they real, or are they not real? This question, when answered, also answers a very great question about the mind itself, because we are now trying to find out ways and means of controlling the mind - restraining the modifications of the mind, as yoga puts it. One thing has a connection with another thing, and as the links in a chain it goes on, with various aspects involved in a single problem.

In order to know the nature of the object of mental cognition, we have to have a clear idea as to what we mean by an object. What is the definition of an object as far as the mind is concerned, as far as our present problem is concerned? An object, for all practical purposes, whether it is physical or psychological, is a clearly definable character in the sense that its existence and function can be specified, as distinguished from the existence and function of other things. The perception of an object, or the knowledge or cognition of an object, is made possible by the observation, or through the observation, of certain features which we call the defining characteristics of the object. An object is tall or short, stout or thin, red or blue, heavy or light, and so on. These are some of the features of an object. By an observation of these features, we begin to have an idea about the object.

Apart from this, it is taken for granted that the object is at a distance from the subject, though the distance may be very negligible. Even if it is touching us physically, there is still a distinction between us and the object. The object cannot be a part of our own existence - then it ceases to be an object. It has to be something separate in its location and function. It has to assume a sort of independence from the cognising subject in order that it may be an object. The very meaning of object is 'distinction from subject'. What distinguishes the object from the subject? This is another subject which we have to look into a little later.

Our main concern, at present, is that the defining characteristics of the object, which are responsible for our knowledge of objects, are certain restricting features of the object - they contradistinguish the object from other objects. So a definition of an object is also a limitation of the object, by which we differentiate that object from other objects of a dissimilar character. To give a concrete example: a blue object is some located entity whose features we call the colour blue. They occupy a limited space and do not expand themselves into the whole of space. There is a limited space, occupied by the feature called 'blueness', in that object called blue. Now, what do we mean by limitation, or the occupying of a limited space? This, again, is an involved concept. A limitation, whatever be the type of that limitation, is the capacity of the cognising principle to distinguish that limited object with those features from other

factors and other objects, or an environment that is different from the object, whose features are different from the features of the object. To put it very simply, we cannot see a blue object if there is no non-blue object. If everything is blue, we cannot see blue. If the sky is blue, the sun is blue, water is blue, men are blue, and women are blue - if everything is blue, then we cannot say that there is anything blue at all. So the blueness of an object is due to the presence of non-blue objects.

Ordinarily, we cannot imagine that the presence of non-blue things has anything to do with the blue object directly, or even indirectly. We do not take into consideration the presence of these things at all. We take for granted that there is a blue object, and that there are other things. Now, how do we know that there are other things? This is a vicious circle. The knowledge of other things, or something other than the blue object, is possible because of the presence of the blue object. We differentiate the non-blue things from the blue thing that we are seeing. So the non-blue thing is known because the blue thing is there, and the blue thing is known because non-blue things are there; there is relativity of perception. We cannot have an absolute perception of any object. All perceptions are relative.

To extend this argument a little further in a more generalised fashion without giving concrete examples - we cannot know the existence of 'A' unless there is 'B' to differentiate 'A' from 'B' by its own features. This can be extended further - we cannot know 'B' unless there is 'C'. How do we know that there is 'B'? There is something else called 'C', from which we have distinguished 'B'. 'C' cannot be known without 'D', 'D' without 'E', etc., until we will be horrified to see or discover that we cannot know the existence of even a pinhead unless the whole universe comes into action for it to be known. The perception of a minute object, like a needle or a pin, is made possible by an invisible action of factors which are cosmic in their nature. It is really a surprising discovery, having been logically arrived at, that even the smallest perception of the tiniest object is nothing but a cosmic perception, by an abstraction which the mind adopts for its own particular purposes, of features which are artificially distinguished from other features. Really, they should not be so distinguished.

The impact of features other than the features of the cognised object, upon the object, is such that it cannot be ignored, and it should not be ignored. There are many important things in this world whose presence we ignore. Yet, they are very important things - like sunlight. We cannot say that the sunlight is non-important, or that the rise of the sun has no meaning for us. But the rise and setting of the sun, and even the existence of the sun, is something on which we bestow the least attention, as if it is not at all concerned with us. We do not realise that our very existence hangs on the very being of the sun.

Likewise, there are very subtle operative factors and principles in our life which we take for granted, such as the working of the heart, the operation of the lungs, the breathing process, the digestive system, and even our own body. All of this is a miracle, but we take all this for granted. We do not know why the heart is functioning. Who asks the heart to function? We have not ordered it. It is not possible, even with the farthest imagination, to discover the reason behind a perpetual beating of the heart - from birth to death, without stop. Who is the impelling force behind it? We cannot understand all this because the best thing for us is to take everything for granted and never enter into scientific investigations of any sort, as this is what keeps us artificially comfortable in life. This is a dangerous position that we are taking, because it is an artificial comfort that will simply be

withdrawn, at any moment, when those conditions which are responsible for the existence and function of these factors are withdrawn.

The point is that we are very foolish people, indeed, to ignore aspects which are really necessary for the perception of objects, and take a particular object as if it is everything. Yattu kṛtsnavadekasminkārye saktamahaitukam, atattvārthavadalpaṁca tattāmasamudāhṛtam (B.G. XVIII.22), says the Bhagavadgita in the eighteenth chapter where Bhagavan Sri Krishna says that to foolishly imagine that there is a particular located object, to consider that object as everything and then to cling to that object, ignoring all other aspects responsible for the existence of that object - that kind of knowledge is the worst kind of knowledge. *Tamasa* - it is the lowest type of understanding, says the Bhagavadgita. It is the lowest type of understanding because it is far removed from the truth.

It is not at all true that an object can exist independently from factors which are responsible for not only its defining features, but also even its structural pattern in existence. Not one wave in the ocean can rise unless it has some internal connection with other waves, though this connection cannot be seen with the eyes, because the total pressure of the ocean has an impact upon all the waves uniformly, in different degrees of intensity. Likewise, the pressure of the universe exerted on different centres of space, for reasons the mind cannot understand, is responsible for the appearance of objects. We can only say that no object can exist unless the whole universe is at the back of it. So when we perceive an object, we are not perceiving an object - we are perceiving the universe, pinpointed in one space and appearing as an isolated object merely due to the ignorance of the cognitive faculties.

What makes the mind imagine that there is an isolated object when the truth is something else? This will give us an insight into the nature of the mind itself. How reliable is the mind? How trustworthy is our perception of things? Let us take another example. A physical object is perceived, and even a cursory investigation into the nature of its make-up will reveal that the physical object is made up of certain chemical molecules, all which come from the five elements - earth, water, fire, air and ether. Whatever be the object - it may be a stone or it may be a mango - they are all made up of the same elements in different densities - earth, water, fire, air, ether. The mango that I see in front of me is made up of the five elements, including ether, and my body, which is the vehicle of perception through which I locate the presence of the object outside as the mango, is made up of the same five elements. But I make a distinction between myself and the mango - the mango is there, and I am here. Why is this distinction made? The distinction is made because of the space between us. But, this space is a content of the object itself.

That which distinguishes the mango from me, or the object from me, is space. This space is an element - a content in my own bodily structure, as well as in the structure of the mango outside - so that, that which appears to create a distinction between the subject and the object is also contained in the subject and the object. So there is an illusion here. The perception of an object is an illusion created on account of a peculiar error in the method of cognition. When we try to control the mind - *yogaḥ citta vṛtti nirodhaḥ* (I.2) - restrain the modifications of the mind, we have to understand how we can deal with this sort of mind, which is eluding our grasp of it by creating tricks and counterfeit conditions, and making us feel that we are secure while we are not.

The restraint of the modifications of the mind, the control of the mind-stuff, is

nothing but an arrangement of the *vrittis*, or the functions of the mind, in a different pattern which is consonant with the nature of Reality rather than consonant with its own prejudiced, artificial ways of cognition of illusory objects. What yoga requires of us is to rearrange the pattern of the functions of the mind so that they are more synthesised and ordered as a whole, rather than existing in a chaotic manner, and partake as far as possible of the features of Reality rather than the features of imagined objects.

Every step in the control of the mind is a step taken in the introduction of wholeness into the pattern of mental functions, which means to say, the introduction of the character of Reality into our personality. What is the nature of Reality? What are the characteristics of Truth? To mention only a few among the many, Truth is inseparable from Selfhood. Right from the beginning, from time immemorial, ancient adepts have been proclaiming that the secret of life is in one's own self. "Know thy Self" - *atmanam viddhi*, says the ancient dictum, which implies that what we are aiming at is inseparable from our Selfhood.

We seem to be pursuing a distant objective even when we talk of God or salvation, for the matter of that. But this so-called distant objective, apparently in future, seems to be non-separate from our essential being. It has the character of Selfhood. The character of Selfhood is something not easy to understand, because we have heard the word 'Self' uttered so many times that it is likely to be taken for granted once again. It is not so easy to understand what Selfhood means, and this is one of the essential features, perhaps the most essential feature, of Reality.

Selfhood is that character of consciousness which makes it impossible of externalisation or objectification in any manner whatsoever. We cannot externalise ourself. We cannot become other than what we are - that is impossible. We are what we are. That impossibility of externalisation or alienation of oneself in any degree, even in the least conceivable degree, that indivisibility of substance which is what we regard ourself to be - that is the character of Selfhood. Non-objectivity, non-externality, indivisibility or divisionlessness, and a compact substantiality identical with self-awareness - all these can be regarded as the descriptions of what Selfhood can be. That is the *atman*. *Atman* is the Self, and the Self is that which cannot brook differentiation, distinction, or objectification to any degree.

If this is the character of Reality, and if we finish our definition of Reality only by saying this much, we are likely to be led into another misconception, which is, namely, that it is present, perhaps, as the substance of every individual percipient. 'A's self, or 'B's self, or 'C's self may be conceived to be a kind of substance which is indivisibly present inside the body of the perceiving subject. To remove this misconception it is also said that anything that is individual is perishable. Whatever is perceivable is destructible. Very dangerous, indeed. Anything that we can see with our eyes is perishable, and what is it that we cannot see with our eyes? All that we regard as dear and near and valuable is visible, and all that is perishable. It is perishable merely because of its individuality, because of its isolatedness. Why should isolatedness or individuality imply destructibility? This is due to the dependence of every individual on other features for its very existence.

As mentioned earlier, every object exists on account of the existence of other things. Not merely the function of an object, but even the very existence of an object is controlled by the existence and function of other things. The tendency of every individual or object to exhibit its character of dependence on others is the tendency

to destruction. Death is nothing but a manifestation of this character of dependence on other factors into which it enters through the process called 'death', for re-emergence once again, putting on new features, which is called rebirth - all for the purpose of fulfilment of cosmic evolution. So it is not enough if we merely say that Truth is Selfhood, because that can lead us into the erroneous notion that it is located inside the body. It is non-individual. It is Self. It is non-individual, because if it is individual, it is perishable. To be non-individual would be to be omnipresent - all-pervading.

The terms '*atman*' and '*Vaishvanara*' are used in the Upanishads to characterise the Ultimate Reality. It is *atman*, because it is the Self. It is *Vaishvanara*, because it is Universal. It is Universal Self. We are likely to think that Self is some object, because of the habit of deciphering peculiar meanings in the words we utter. Even when we utter or use the term 'Universal Self', we are likely to think that some substance exists there as a universal body. It is neither a body nor a substance in the sense of any physical object. It is impossible to define in any other manner. It is something that can be realised only by practical experience. The nature of Truth, the character of Reality, is of this depth and profundity.

Self-control is the introduction of some element of the nature of Truth into the perceptions of the mind, and would be the first step of control of the modifications of the mind-stuff. We cannot control the mind by the force of will. Every stage in the practice of yoga is really a positive step in the sense that there is a healthy growth into new stages of Reality, rather than merely a withdrawal from unreality. We cannot live merely by withdrawal. We have to also live somewhere, positively. A sort of negative withdrawal is sometimes adopted for certain practical conveniences, but that has to be immediately substituted by a positive introduction of a vital, healthy view of things, because we cannot live merely in a vacuum. If we go on withdrawing ourselves, it will end up only as a vacuum. But Truth is not a vacuum - it is a positivity, a plenum, and a felicity - *bhuma*, as the Upanishads call it.

Hence an element of *bhumatva* or completeness is to be introduced into our personal life. In the beginning, it is our personal life with which we are concerned. Then it goes on expanding itself in wider and wider circles. The element of Reality is, therefore, to be introduced into our perceptions, cognitions, etc., which means to say, that we have to be more organised in our thinking. To be organised in our thinking would be to be able to exercise control over our thoughts, because any organisation requires control and a system of function. What happens, generally, is that the mind begins to think whatever it likes; it has no system. It will cling to whatever is presented before it, and it has a habit of thinking that every object is real in itself, independent of every other thing. This is the *tamasic* knowledge referred to in the Bhagavadgita, and is an unfortunate feature of every mental cognition.

Also, the mind has a susceptibility to get distracted by every perception. It gets distracted for two reasons: either it likes, or it dislikes. They are like the obverse and the converse or reverse of the same coin - they exist at the same time. The moment we like something, we have to dislike something else. It is impossible to avoid the other side, because the very existence of 'like' implies the existence of 'dislike'. There cannot be like without dislike. This is the peculiar way in which the mind cognises things. The moment I cognise a thing, I like it or don't like it. That, again, is due to a peculiar sympathy or empathy, we may say, of the nature of the object with our own present state of affairs. 'Present state' means not merely a physical state, but also a psychological state, and sometimes a social state of affairs. All of these states are to

be taken into consideration. Our present social, physical and psychological condition has something to do with the character of the object which the mind cognises, and with the restricting channel of this socio-physical-psychological factor. The mind cognises the object and evaluates the object. It is this habit of the mind that we have to control by the introduction of a deeper element into every form of cognition. This is how we can gain control over the mind.

In the Bhagavadgita, we have also been told that the senses cannot easily be controlled unless a higher principle is invoked. In every act of control, a little bit of restraint of a negative character is no doubt called for, but, at the same time, an invocation of a higher positive principle is also necessary. These two elements are called *vairagya* and *abhyasa*. *Abhyāsa vairāgyābhyām tan nirodhaḥ* (I.12), says Patanjali. Or in the language of Bhagavadgita: *abhyāsenā tu kaunteya vairāgyeṇa ca gr̥hyate* (B.G. VI.35) - the mind can be controlled by *abhyasa* and *vairagya*, by the twofold effort of withdrawal from the non-essential and of contemplation on the essential. The withdrawal from the non-essential - the artificial, the counterfeit, the unreal, the illusory - is *vairagya*. The contemplation of the real, the positive, is *abhyasa*. *Abhyasa* and *vairagya* should be resorted to immediately. *Abhyāsa vairāgyābhyām tan nirodhaḥ*: The *nirodha* or the control of the mind is possible only by the practise of *abhyasa* and *vairagya*.

So, every step in yoga is a double step, a twofold step. On the one side we withdraw ourselves from the non-essential, and on the other side we positively contemplate on something essential. In medical science or medical treatment there is a *patyam*, as they call it - we do not eat something which is contrary to the action of the medicine. There is a dietetic discipline in medical treatment. If we go on eating whatever we like, then the medicine will not act. That is the *vairagya* aspect. *Vairagya* is the withdrawing of ourselves from those elements which are contraindicated in the context of the action of the medicine in the body. The actual taking of the medicine is *abhyasa*.

Likewise in yoga, we free ourselves from the clutches of habits, prejudices and attachments, etc. in respect of factors and features which are removed from the nature of Truth, and practise contemplation on those features which are consonant with the nature of Reality. Thus, we can gain control over the mind to a great extent.

CHAPTER 19

RETURNING TO PURE SUBJECTIVITY

What actually happens when the mind cognises an object, is not, again, a matter of easy comprehension. A sudden miraculous trick, as it were, takes place when there is a mental cognition, and we are suddenly tripped from our balance and caught in a condition which escapes notice and eludes understanding. The cognition of an object is a miracle by itself. It is a wonder, and therefore it is not easy to comprehend. The peculiar structure, called the mind, envelopes the shape of the object, which is what is called '*vyapti*' in Sanskrit. Various examples are given to explain what sort of enveloping takes place. It is said that as molten lead cast into a crucible may take the shape of the crucible, or water flowing into a field may take the shape of the field - circular, or rectangular, or square, or whatever the shape the field is - the mind takes the shape of the object; and something else happens, at the same time, which is the cause of our bondage.

The mind does not merely stop with this act of enveloping the object. It drags our consciousness with it - just as when the wife goes, the husband also goes. This is a danger in all mental cognitions. If the wife starts quarrelling with somebody, the husband runs and adds to the quarrel, which makes it much worse; this is what happens. So if the mind merely envelopes the object, so much the worse for us; but something still more undesirable takes place, which is that the consciousness is pulled, together with this rush of the mind, towards the object, and then it is not merely the mind that is there in the object - 'we' are there in the object. I am there in the object - finished. My doom has come immediately.

When I run from myself and sit on the object outside, one can imagine my condition. I forget myself, lose myself, snatch myself away from myself and completely destroy my subjectivity, my self-identity, my very existence. I sell myself to the object, so that I have abolished myself like a slave surrendering himself to the master under utter abnegation. The subject has become the object. This is an extreme form of clinging to objects. Why does a subject cling to the object? The subject has lost itself completely - lost its very life. It does not anymore exist there. It has transferred its location to that of the object. It is sitting in the object and has become the object. It has taken the shape of the object and identified itself with the object; its existence is the existence of the object, and it thinks through the object. The subject is now finished. This is the last consummatory condition to which the mind takes us in the cognition of objects.

This result does not come about at once - there are stages to this process. The extent of absorption of the subject into the object depends upon the extent of the meaning that the subject reads into the object, the extent of the value that the subject sees in the object, and the extent of the need that one feels for the object. According to the degree of the value that is recognised in the object, to that degree one transfers oneself to that object. There are degrees of affection - all affections are not same. One may have a little love, or a little more love, or intense love, or complete self-abnegating love. In very rare cases, the ultimate stage comes. But mostly it is only some percentage of love. We have a love for our children, we have a love for our dog or cat, and so on and so forth - but all loves are not the same. They have various degrees according to the meaning that we find in them, the value that is there and the significance that we can read into their very existence in respect of our personal necessities.

But now we are considering merely the psychological processes of perception. The subject which is supposed to transfer itself to the object is not merely a process of thinking. When I say the mind transfers itself to the object by an act of enveloping, it does not mean that merely a thought process in the ordinary sense takes place, because the subject - the cognising individual - is not merely thought, but is also will and emotion. Thinking, feeling and willing - these three are the primary functions of the psychological organ. So in cognition it is not merely the thinking aspect that functions. Though thinking is perhaps the first aspect that rouses itself into activity in cognition, emotion follows.

It is very difficult to withdraw emotions from acts of cognition. In some cognitions, emotions are not involved very much. Just as when we see a rock on the bank of the Ganga, there is a mental cognition based on sensory perception of that rock on the bank of the river, but as a rock does not mean much to us - whether it is there or it is not there, it is not of great significance to our life - our emotions do not run to that rock. But if it is a rock of gold, or a diamond, then the emotions will go to it. "Oh, it is a diamond rock." We will not withdraw our eyes from the rock; we will go on looking at it because a tremendous meaning has been seen in this rock. But ordinary rocks do not mean anything as we have seen so many rocks.

But the control of the mind, which is the primary function in yoga, is also a direct step taken in the restraint of emotion and will, together with thinking, because while thinking is the beginning of attachment - the identification of the subject with the object - the will and the emotion get the upper hand subsequently and reinforce this act of cognition and make it impossible for the individual to extricate itself from the identification it has established with the object. We cannot ordinarily understand to what extent we are attached to objects, because we are shifting the position of attachment from one object to another, every day, according to circumstances. We do not stick to any particular object from morning to evening. That is not possible, because we do not find it necessary.

There are many factors necessary to maintain our individuality in life - a single object is not adequate. So the mind, in its intelligent manoeuvres, shifts itself suddenly, like a shuttle, from one centre to another, and keeps itself in contact with all the necessary factors in life which are essential for its existence and security, just like a good politician who shrewdly maintains contact with all the people concerned with his security, position, etc. He can contact even a thousand people in a day if the necessity arises - by phone, by telegram, by letter, by personal interview, etc. - because he knows that these contacts are necessary for his security and status. Likewise, the mind - the greatest of politicians conceivable in the world - plays the very same trick and sees that its security is maintained throughout life, and that nobody threatens its existence. The act of mental cognition is nothing but a continuous activity engaged in by the mind for maintaining its security in life. Otherwise, what is the use of perceiving things? Why do we want to see objects? Why do we want to contact people in the world? Why do we want friends? Why do we want telephones? It is only for security, maintenance and status, so that we may not be cut off from the ground on which we are standing. This is what the mind is doing in every act of cognition.

This is a bare outline of the psychological process involved in perception, but it is a process which completely enslaves us into conditions which go beyond our control. We can imagine the state of affairs in which a bonded slave lives. Nowadays we do not have slaves of the kind that we have heard of in ancient history. The slaves were

sold not only financially and physically, but even emotionally and in every aspect that constituted their personality. A slave is one who has no individuality or personality of his own. He has become part and parcel of the master to whom he has been sold. His existence, his will, his thought, his feeling, his very security and life itself is in the hands of the master. So is the case with an individual selling itself to the object. The object controls us, and one is a slave of that object.

One cannot know that one is a slave. In the case of mental attachments, the situation is a little different from a human slave selling himself to a master. The slave in the ordinary case may be aware that he has bound himself to a master who is controlling him in every way, so he may feel very unhappy sometimes. "Oh, what a condition is mine. I am serving under this master and he may even end my life due to the subjection into which I have entered with him." But in our case of slavery to objects, something worse is taking place. We cannot be aware that we are slaves. We are not sorry that we are attached to objects. We are immensely happy because of the attachment. Otherwise, how can there be attachment if we are always conscious of the sorrow that is involved in it? The attachment becomes a source of happiness. It is not a source of sorrow, as in the case of the ordinary slave or subordinate. It is a source of happiness because something very strange has taken place in the cognition of the object, which is the cause of this joy.

Something inscrutable is taking place. The mind feels the need, which is the need that the whole personality feels. Why is the need felt? It is a little difficult to understand merely by surface thinking. The need is biological, sociological, psychological, economical, and every blessed thing. When we are attached to something, we are not attached merely for one single reason. Many factors pull us to the object, and all these factors act simultaneously, like enemies attacking from all sides, so that we may not know what is happening to us. We become helpless and then surrender ourselves. Similarly, the subject surrenders itself to the object on account of the attack to which it is subjected by umpteen factors from all sides - social, physical, economical, psychological, emotional, volitional, and whatnot.

The need that we feel in our personality is multi-faceted. This is what keeps us unhappy throughout the day, and to remove this unhappiness we cling to objects. We feel social insecurity, physical deficiency, emotional inadequacy and psychological inferiority - all of which cannot be set right at one stroke by a single object. It is difficult to find a single object which will fulfil all our needs - economical, sociological, physical, biological, etc. All these needs cannot be fulfilled by a single object - such a thing is difficult to find. There may be such a thing, but it is not always easy to find. So we cling to many aspects of objectivity for the fulfilment of various types of need we feel in our personality. We want social status; we want the recognition of people; we want a lot of money; we want a wife or husband; we want a very delicious dish to eat every day; we want a nice bed; we want security by army, police and friends, etc. so that nobody can attack us. We want medicines to cure us of illnesses. What untold things we require to keep us happy and secure in life! For this reason the mind keeps us distracted. It shifts itself from one thing to another thing to find out what it lacks and where it can find what it needs.

Occasionally the mind gets caught up by the preponderance of a type of need, to the exclusion of others. That is what is called a mania or an intense form of emotional clinging, which rarely takes place in people, but is not unseen. It can be the state of affairs of any person under certain conditions where exclusive attachment is possible, closing one's eyes to all other aspects of one's existence. When we are about to be

elected into a very high post and we are working day and night, sweating, and moving earth and heaven for this purpose, we may have an exclusive concentration on that aspect of our life, oblivious of every other factor. We may not eat - hunger also vanishes at such times. Though at other times we may think very much about the food that we want to eat, during the election period we will not eat food. The appetite has gone because there is a shifting of emphasis on some other aspect. Also, normally we sleep because sleep is a necessity, but during the time of elections - no sleep. There is no food and there is no other biological attachment that is usually present in family life or social life. It is not cut off, but it is completely suppressed by the preponderance of an urge which has taken the upper hand at that particular moment or period. Or, when we are in an army, in a battlefield, where we are worked up into a feeling of intense emotion - do or die - we find that all other needs are suppressed, and a particular aspect of our mind gains the upper hand and directs us along a single channel.

In the practice of yoga we have to place ourselves in a practical condition by conscious analysis, and subject ourselves to diagnosis and treatment, deliberately and voluntarily, for the purpose of freeing ourselves from the chances of getting caught by these conditions in future, sometime or the other. Self-analysis is something like a vaccination, where we produce an artificial disease in our personality in order to get rid of the impending destructive disease which may threaten us. Though we may not be in a state of attachment just now, we become conscious of the possibility of such attachments in the future, because no one can be completely immune to attachments of any type. Any attachment can come to any person at any time, only if circumstances are favourable. So we should not say we are free from such these things. Nobody can be free.

That we are free from certain attachments is only because of the fact that we have laid emphasis on certain other factors, for other reasons, which does not mean that the enemy is not lying in ambush even though he is not visible now. Anything can happen at any time to any person - we should not forget this. So we have to be cautious of these possibilities and then rouse the potentialities of the mind in this connection, up from the unconscious level to the subconscious, and then bring it to the conscious level of direct attack and frontal investigation. This is self-analysis.

To revert to the point I mentioned earlier, in the act of mental cognition the mind takes the shape of the object and drags the consciousness towards it. In technical Sanskrit language these are called *vritti vyapti* and *phala vyapti*. *Vritti vyapti* is the mind enveloping the object and taking the shape of the object - the molten metal getting cast into the crucible of the structure of the object. To become conscious of it is to be in the state of *phala vyapti*, as they call it. So there is a dual role played in acts of perception and cognition - psychological and conscious - and they are inseparable.

The mind cannot be isolated from the consciousness that is animating it, just as when a mirror is kept in the blazing sun, it may itself become invisible. A glass that is in the sun cannot be seen because of the light of the sun that is shining through every particle of glass. The whole glass or mirror is radiant with the blazing light of the sun, and therefore we see only a glare and we cannot see the mirror. Though it is there it cannot be seen, because light has enveloped every particle of that matter. Likewise, we cannot know that some peculiar perceptual involvement is taking place, on account of consciousness enveloping every fibre of thinking. We may say the mind is something like a mirror. Sometimes we may call it is a prism. Sometimes we may call

it a plain glass, or it may be called a stained glass through which consciousness passes like light and takes various shapes. Inasmuch as consciousness envelops the total structure of the mind in acts of mental activity, we cannot isolate ourselves from perceptual processes - we become the process. We become the process, and we become the object towards which the process is directed, and then we are the object.

Samsara is the subject becoming the object, and *moksha* is the object becoming subject, to put it very plainly. When we become the object, we are a *samsarin*. When the object has become us, we are liberated. They are simple things to explain and say but most difficult things to swallow, because the mind is not an object of perception, as we have been noticing in our earlier analysis. It cannot be studied in the usual manner, because here we are studying our own self, and so every act of self-control or mental-control involves subjugation of oneself by oneself. *Atma vinigrah* is another word which is very aptly used in this connection. One controls the self, which means oneself as one is at present, by the introduction of the principles governing the higher values of life or the higher nature of the self. The higher self includes the immediate vicinity of objectivity which usually the individual self regards as external to it; and every stage of rise to the higher degree of self is also a rise to a greater inclusiveness of objectivity in subjectivity, so that in every higher stage the subject becomes larger in its comprehension, and the objectivity gets lessened. The more we rise higher, the less is the objectivity involved in awareness, and the greater is the subjectivity.

In the final consummation, which is the goal of life, there is only subject, and no object. All the objects are drawn into the subject, in the largest comprehensiveness of the subject. That Supreme Subjectivity, which is All-Comprehensiveness, in which every object is subsumed, is *Ishvara* or God.

CHAPTER 20

THE WORLD AND OUR WORLD

The subject of our discussion is the mental cognition of objects. In the experience of an object, does the mind influence the object, or does the object influence the mind? This is the central issue in all philosophical schools, which has led to various divergent doctrines such as idealism, realism, materialism, subjectivism, etc. There has been very little progress towards an answer to this query because, just as we cannot know whether the beauty that we see in an object is in our own mind or if it is really in the object, so there is the question - is the mind influencing the object, or is the object influencing the mind? The difficulty arises on account of the position of the perceiving subject itself. To hold that the mind entirely influences the object, that it determines it in every manner, would be another way of saying that we have created the world and everything is in our hands - which does not seem to be the truth of things.

Everything does not seem to be in our hands. We cannot change the pattern of things. We cannot make the sun rise in the west merely because we think that it should be so. So there seems to be something which is outside the jurisdiction of mental operations, to which the operations of the mind should accord, and whose law the mind has to follow. We cannot suddenly imagine that a cup of milk is identical with a stone. The stone and the milk are not identical, and the mind cannot change one into the other by any amount of thought. So, the hard reality, in the form of an external something which the world presents before the mind, has led many to conclude that the mind cannot determine the objects. On the other hand, the objects have a reality of their own and they influence the mind, so that the mind subjects itself to the conditions of the object, rather than conditions the object by its own laws.

We are in a world of interrelated facts and figures, and Eastern thought has tried to solve this question by positing a Creator for the world, independent of individual percipients. We have standard expositions on this theme in such texts as the Panchadasi, Vichara Sagara, etc. on the basis of certain proclamations in the Upanishads, for instance. Nobody has seen the Creator. Nobody can imagine that a Creator can exist, or must exist, or does exist. But the necessity of thought, the conditions of thinking seem to demand the presence of such a thing as a Creator for the world; otherwise, we cannot explain perception. The very fact of the perception of things - the inherent meaning that we see in objects of perception - compels us to accept the existence of a prior cause behind the objects of perception, and it seems that the world could exist even if we do not exist. We have arguments by modern scientists - biologists and evolutionists - who tell us that once upon a time the world was unpopulated; there were no percipients of the world. According to the astronomical theory, the world, the earth, is only a chip of the block of the sun, and was boiling and incandescent in its original state, so naturally no human being or nothing living could have existed at that time, not even a plant or a shrub. But did it exist? The earth did exist. So the earth could exist even if there is nobody to look at it or observe it.

These assumptions have led to the conclusion that the object exists independently of its being perceived, and the universe was created much earlier than the creation of the human individual. This theory gets confirmation from the expositions in the

Puranas, the Epics, etc., wherein we are told that God created the world. He did not create man first; man is perhaps the last of creation. Even in the Aitareya Upanishad, on which perhaps the Panchadasi, etc., take their stand, we are given to understand that man was not the first creation, and that perhaps nothing perceiving was ever existent. Nothing perceiving, nothing thinking, nothing willing, conscious, ever existed except that One which willed Itself to be many, and the world was so created, etc., is the doctrine.

Basing themselves on this scriptural proclamation, exponents tell us that there is a distinction between what they call *Ishvara srishti* and *jiva srishti* - the creation of God and the creation of the individual. There are two kinds of creation. *Ikshanadi-praveshanta srishtir ishana kalpita; jagradadi-vimokshantah samsaro jiva-kalpita* - says the Panchadasi, in a famous passage. The meaning of passage has reference to the Aitareya Upanishad and such other relevant passages in other Upanishads, and makes out that God willed to be many, and manifested Himself as this vast creation, projected individualities, and entered the individual by an immanence of His own nature. This is another way of describing the traditional process of creation through divine manifestations usually known as *Ishvara*, *Hiranyagarbha* and *Virat* - all of which are precedent to individual manifestations, and prior to the existence of human beings. But there is also what is known as 'individual's creation'. A lot of detail about it is given in the Panchadasi, especially in its fourth chapter called Dvaita Vivek - how duality- consciousness arose at all, and how perceptions can bind us, though they need not necessarily bind us.

The point is that the perception of an object *need not* bind us, though it *can* bind us. It need not bind us, because we can correctly perceive the existent object as it was created by *Ishvara*, merely reflecting in our minds the character of the object as it really is in itself from the point of view of the Creator. Then, perceptions would not be binding. For instance, a human being, tentatively speaking, may be regarded as *Ishvara's* creation. A human being is not created by another human being by the will of creativity. The object in front of me - such as a tree, or a mountain, or the shining orb of the sun, and the moon and the stars - may be regarded as parts of *Ishvara's* creation. We can simply perceive them as such.

But I can perceive a human being in another way altogether by which I can bind myself - namely, this human being is my father; this human being is my friend; this human being is my enemy; this human being can do something for me, this way or that way. This is what is known as *jiva srishti*, which is an attitude of subjective appreciation and evaluation which an individual projects in respect of an external object. A woman is a human being, but the moment that woman is regarded as mother, or a wife, or a sister, that attitude becomes *jiva srishti*. A relationship that seems to obtain between one individual and another in a subjective manner is the projection of the mind of the *jiva* or the individual, which is the cause of joy and sorrow in the world and is the essence of *samsara* - bondage.

But *Ishvara srishti* is pure existence of things. A lump of gold is a lump of gold; but, that it is a valuable substance, that it has great worth and, therefore, can be taken away or stolen - these ideas are projections of the mind of the individual. So in the perception of any given object, two factors are supposed to be involved - *jiva srishti* and *Ishvara srishti*. This is a conclusion safely arrived at to obviate any kind of extreme position that people generally take, either from the objective side or from the subjective side.

There are those who think that the object alone is real and the mind is only a stupid something, which merely reflects the nature of an object as it is. This is the realistic, materialistic attitude. They do not give any place for mind in the scheme of things. It is only a kind of exudation of material existences. This is one extreme view - where the objective world alone is the determining factor of every situation in life, and the mind has no place in the scheme of things. The other extreme is that the mind alone is the determining factor of everything and the object has no place in the scheme of things - everything is on account of our thought. This is the extreme idealistic point of view, contrary to the extreme materialistic point of view of certain others. The via-media, the middle course, would be that both contribute a percentage of meaning in the perception of objects. And so the act of mind-control, the restraining of the modifications of the mind, would not mean an abolition of the existence of objects - at least according to thinkers such as the author of the Panchadasi - but is a withdrawal of those special modifications of the mind, on account of which the mind reads particular subjective meanings in objects.

The author of the Panchadasi tells us that if an abolition of objects were a condition to liberation, then liberation would not be possible, because nobody can abolish the existence of objects. Or, if merely a non-perception of the objects of the world is to be regarded as liberation, then sleep would be a condition of liberation because we do not perceive anything during sleep. The actual event that is taking place outside may also not be the cause of joy or sorrow, says the author of the Panchadasi, who gives the following analogy. Suppose there is someone in a foreign land whose mother is here, far away from the person, and his mother receives false news that her son is dead. One can imagine the condition of the mother. Though the son is alive, healthy and hale, and everything is all right, false news can create a real heartbreak for the mother. On the other hand, if the man has been dead for ten years but his mother has not received any news, she is happy.

So, the birth or death, the life or the extinction of a person, is not the real cause of the joy or sorrow of a person. It is the reaction that the mind sets up in respect of a particular event as it is conveyed to it subjectively which is considered as being the cause of its joy and sorrow. This is another interpretation. With all our thinking, we cannot come to a definite conclusion about the nature of things. We cannot say whether our mind is largely responsible for our joys and sorrows, or whether objects also have some say in this matter. The difficulty arises on account of a relativity of action and reaction between subject and object, and no one has answered this question properly. Similar to this is the question of the perception of beauty in things. No one can say, even today, whether the beauty is present in the object outside, or present in the mind inside. Somehow we reconcile ourselves by saying that both factors coincide, and there is some truth in this side and some truth in that side.

The difficulty is simply because the mind cannot think both ways, and the truth lies neither on this side nor on that side. The isolation of the individual from its relationship with the pattern of things is the cause of its difficulty in understanding anything. The whole universe is an organic structure in which the percipient is included as a vital part. For instance, we cannot study the nature of the heart of a human being by removing it from the body. Though it is a fleshy substance and can be examined pathologically, medically, etc., studying it like this would be meaningless because the moment the heart is removed from the body it ceases to be a heart and becomes only a lump of flesh. The heart has to be studied in its

connection with the body in its working condition, and not by isolating it from the organic relationship it has with the body.

Likewise, we should not wrest the object from its connectedness with things in our perception, which is another way of judging it. A similar mistake has been committed by us - we have wrested ourselves away from things. We have stood outside the scheme of things in our judgement of values, while we are already a part of the scheme of things. All perceptions, judgements and evaluations become inscrutable mysteries on account of this initial difficulty that has been created, namely, a separation of the percipient from the object with which it is organically connected, basically. For instance, a finger of the hand becomes aware of another finger of the same hand. If we were to take for granted that a particular finger of a hand has a consciousness of its own, and we conclude that it can perceive the existence of another finger of the same hand - what would be its attitude? What would be the real relationship between one finger and another finger, given that one finger can see another finger outside it? We know that one finger is different from another finger. But the consciousness of one finger in respect of another finger would be charged with its basic awareness of its connectedness with the whole body, which it cannot look upon as an external object, so that even the other finger which it perceives cannot be called as a real external object, though it is an object for all practical purposes because it can be seen.

This is perhaps the significance of perception from an organic point of view, while what happens in our case, at present, is that this organic connection between the seer and the seen is lost sight of, and we have only a mechanised form of perception where there is a false evaluation projected on the object by the mind which is perceiving it, on account of its losing contact with the vital issue which is involved in perception, namely its connectedness to the object. Whether in attachment or in aversion, the mind is not properly related to the object. It has an improper relationship with things, both in love and hatred. The impropriety of this relationship arises on account of its false disconnectedness from the object, and we cannot properly understand the way of controlling the mind if we cannot understand the relationship that the mind has with the object. It has a twofold relationship. On the one side, it stands as a perceiver of the object and is obliged to regard the object as an outside something, which is the very meaning of perception, of course. But, on the other side, there is a basic similarity of nature between the seer and the seen, which is the reason why there is the very possibility of perception at all. A consciousness of the object would be impossible if the seer of the object is basically disconnected from the object. Basic disconnection would not be permissible. An utter isolation of the subject from the object would defeat the very purpose of all perception.

Consciousness of an object implies a basic connectedness between the subject and the object. It is this connection that pulls the object towards the subject, and vice versa. We have an undercurrent of unity among ourselves, on account of which we sometimes feel a necessity to sit together and work in a unanimous manner. We have the urge of unity from one side, and the urge of diversity on the other side. The diversity aspect is emphasised by the senses, and the unity aspect is emphasised by the nature of our consciousness. The essence of our consciousness is unity par excellence. It is the basic existence of a unity of consciousness behind all perceptions that is responsible for the perception itself, and is also the reason for loves and hates. But the emphasis given by the senses is the other way round. They assert diversity of things and make externalised perception possible. So in the attraction that the

subject feels towards the object, two elements work vigorously - the diversity aspect and the unity aspect. The attraction is possible basically on account of the structural similarity between the subject and the object. But the need for being pulled by the object, or getting attracted towards the object, arises on account of the perception of diversity, or the duality of subject and object.

If unity is the whole truth there would be no need of perception, and the question of attraction would not arise, because the subject has basically become one with the object, and is one with it. Where there is an utter unity of the subject and the object, neither perception would be there, nor any kind of love or hatred. If there is utter isolation, even then there would be no perception. If we are really disconnected from all things, we can neither see anything, nor can we have love and hatred towards things.

If we are really one with things, then also it is the same thing. So either way, whether we emphasise the unity aspect or the diversity aspect exclusively, we find that there is no perception, and no love and hatred. Perception and love and hatred are hybrids born out of a mixed-up attitude that has arisen on account of a transference of values, by which what is meant is, a little of the unity aspect is transferred to the diversity aspect, and a little of the diversity aspect is transferred to the unity aspect, so that we live in a very utterly false world of created counterfeit circumstances. Neither do we live in unity, nor do we live in diversity. Then, where are we living?

We have created a world of our own - that is *jiva srishti*. Utter diversity is not possible; utter unity is also not possible. So we have created a world of our own, like *trishanku svargam*, and here we are ruling like masters. But inasmuch as it is not based on facts and cannot be substantiated finally on logical grounds, it shakes from the very bottom, and so we are very unhappy right from the beginning. We are unhappy when the objects are not with us, we are unhappy when the objects are with us, and we are unhappy when the objects leave us. So when are we happy? Unhappiness is there because the object has not come. Unhappiness is there because the object is there, but the fear is that it may go. So even when it is there we have a fear, "Oh, how long will it be there? I may lose it at any moment." And when the object has gone, of course, there is unhappiness. There is an undercurrent of joylessness in every experience of the individual, because the very existence of the so-called individual is itself an illogical something. It is an unwarranted assumption and something which cannot be finally justified, either logically or scientifically.

What is an individual, which we call the percipient? It is an abstracted group of characters, tentatively isolated from a larger set or group of characters to which these former really belong - an act that has been perpetrated mysteriously for the purpose of playing a drama, we may say. We have falsely isolated ourselves. Even that isolation is not a real isolation, because a mere abstraction of a few characters from a group of larger characters cannot be regarded as real. It is only a closing of one's eyes to certain existent conditions. We can ignore the presence of things and conditions which are not conducive to our present purpose, but why this purpose itself has arisen is a very difficult thing to answer. This is *maya*, as they call it, a peculiar jugglery that has been projected by no one. Neither can we say that God created it, nor can we say that we created it. It is somewhere; and how it has come, neither can we say, nor can anyone else say. The inscrutability of the relationship between the individual and the cosmic, the difficulty in ascertaining the connection between appearance and reality - this is called *maya*. To put it in more plain terms, the relationship between the subject and the object is itself difficult to understand.

We cannot understand what our connection is with anything at all, and so we are in a helpless condition. Therefore we cannot even control the mind, because controlling the mind is an adjustment of the modifications of the mind in respect of the object of its cognition, and the object of its cognition is not properly understood because of its unintelligible character. Everything then becomes difficult, and our efforts become a source of failure in the end. Success does not seem to be forthcoming, because it is not clear to us what is the right direction that we have to take.

What is the mind to do, what are we to do, what is anyone to do in this prescription of yoga called 'mind-control'? Are we to subjugate the object, destroy the object, absorb the object into ourselves, or abstract the mind from the object and not cognise it? In an act of mind-control, what is to be done? Are we satisfied if we merely become unaware of the existence of the object, which is what is usually known as abstraction of the senses and the mind from objects, or is there anything to be done in respect of the object itself? This question arises on account of the necessity to understand the extent of influence the object exerts upon the subject, and the extent of influence that the subject exerts upon the object.

For all practical purposes, we can agree with the author of the Panchadasi and conclude that we need not interfere with the scheme of things from the point of view of *Ishvara's* creation. People can be there, and things can be there - they have to be there. We have to change our attitude, which means to say we have to reorganise the method of the working of our own mind inside, in respect of existent objects outside. This is only a tentative answer, and not the final answer, because we have not yet finally given the judgement as to the nature of things. We have temporarily accepted the existence of a world outside us, just as we temporarily accept the meaning of an 'x' in an equation in algebra. Though the 'x' itself may have no meaning ultimately, it is a necessary assumption which solves the question, and afterwards it cancels itself.

So, in the end, we will find that while the acceptance of the existence of things independent of the mind by way of what is known as *Ishvara srishti* may be necessary for the solution of our problem, the world also will modify itself accordingly when the individual advances further, because all spiritual advance is a parallel advance both from the side of the subject and the object. It is not only one side that is evolving. The evolution of the individual is, at the same time, a corresponding evolution of all conditions in which the individual is involved, including society and the world.

CHAPTER 21

RETURNING TO OUR TRUE NATURE

Ātmanā vindate vīryam (Kena II.4), says the Kena Upanishad: Energy comes through the Self. This is a very significant saying of the Upanishad. We gain strength through the Self. Energy does not come merely by eating food, but it comes through the Self. The Self is the source of energy, and all energy is identical with the extent of 'being' that we occupy in our consciousness. The amount of 'being' involved in our consciousness is the thermometer with which we can read the energy that we have. What amount of 'being' is identified with our consciousness? That is the amount of strength that we have within ourselves. But, at present, the amount of 'being' that is identified with our consciousness is only about one foot in width and six feet in height - the bodily prison. Within that limit consciousness moves, identified with that amount of being only. So we have only as much energy as the body has, and no more than that.

We have managed to limit our consciousness to the being of the body. Anything external to the body is not us, and so anything outside the body does not belong to us. Therefore, the mind runs after the objects saying, "Because it is not mine, I want it." To want what does not belong to us is not a justifiable attitude. How can we ask for a thing which does not belong to us? And if it really belongs to us, we need not ask for it. The thing outside either belongs to us, or does not belong to us. If it does not belong to us, we have no business to ask for it. How can anyone ask for a thing that does not belong to him? Are we thieves? If it is ours, why do we go on asking, "I want it. I want it. I want it"? What is the meaning of 'wanting'? What is the significance of desire, or the asking for things? It has no significance. It is a hybrid which does not belong either to this side or that side - somehow or the other it seems to be hanging in the middle, like an apparition.

Energy becomes diminished due to object-consciousness. The more we become object-conscious, the weaker we become in body, in mind, and in every sense. The reason is that even the little energy that we have gets depleted by the activity of the mind in terms of the objects outside. The energy that is with us is very little; it is not much. Our energy is only as much as the body is in its quantitative measurement, and even that is depleted through the rays of cognitive action by the mind. Cognition is something like the projection of rays of light, just as the rays of the sun proceed from the sun. In an act of perception, as it was pointed out, the mind envelops the object, and in this act of enveloping the object, it also manages to draw the attention of our consciousness and drags it towards the object. Thus, a part of what we ourselves are - or sometimes the whole of what we are - gets transferred to the object of perception, and it is quite obvious how our strength gets transferred to the object. In any act of external love, energy diminishes because of its getting transferred to the object of love, so that one who thinks of an object intensely, particularly with an emotional attitude, does a great harm to himself or herself. It is not a simple or an innocuous action that is taking place when we emotionally cast a glance on an object, even with hatred or dislike for the object. In any intense consciousness of an object outside, the indivisible structure of our true being gets artificially divided into parts, gets dismembered, and we become an artificial personality.

Knowledge, in the true sense of the term, is regarded as identical with power, identical with virtue, and identical with happiness. Wherever there is knowledge,

there is power; wherever there is knowledge, there is righteousness; wherever there is knowledge, there is happiness. But, in ordinary parlance, we find that a so-called man of knowledge, these days, is not a man of power. He is a simple man, in his own house, with a little family, though he may be a highly qualified academic man with all knowledge that we value in this world. However, he may not be a righteous man merely because of that knowledge, and he need not be a happy man, either. In this context, knowledge is not found to be identical with either power or virtue or happiness, because knowledge is not 'being', and that is why this entire catastrophe has taken place. Knowledge is power and virtue and happiness only when knowledge is 'being', and not otherwise. The condition of 'being' must be fulfilled - this proviso is very important.

So professorial knowledge is neither happiness nor power, and it is not virtue, because it is external to the being of the one who professes that knowledge. It is like an attribute, or even like a load, as we may call it, which does not actually become a part of one's own existence. The value of a person increases to the extent of the increase in the dimension of his being. This is something inscrutable, a thing which people do not bother about very much. It is a secret into which people are not initiated by anyone, at any time. We do not understand what it means when we talk about 'being' and its commensurability with consciousness, etc; it all sounds like Greek and Latin, which make no sense at all. But really it makes all sense, because that is the secret of success, of happiness, of energy, of even the attitude of justice and righteousness.

The practice of yoga is a master key to open the portals of an experience of all these supreme advantages mentioned, for which the dimension of one's being should be expanded. That is all that has to be done, and there is nothing else to be done. If we think of it very deeply, we will find that it is a very, very simple matter. It is not a very complex or complicated mechanism. Yoga is not as difficult as it is made to appear. It is the simplest of things conceivable because it is nothing but the character of Truth. But it is also difficult, merely because of this reason - it is the character of Truth; and it becomes more difficult because this character of Truth is inseparable from what our own Self is. So, Truth and Self are one. As a consequence of the meaning of the great aphorism of yoga, *yogaḥ citta vṛtti nirodhaḥ* (I.2), we are also told, *tadā draṣṭuḥ svarūpe avasthānam* (I.3). Perhaps these two *sutras* sum up yoga entirely. Yoga is the control of the modifications of the mind whereby one establishes oneself in oneself. This is the sum total of yoga, and there is nothing else.

We are not established in our own self on account of our transference of our self to objects by means of perception, cognition, attachment, etc. We are not our own self - we are somewhere else. We are not where we are physically seated; we are where our mind is. This is important to remember. We should not say "I am here", merely because the body is here. Tell me where your mind is; there you are, really. The physical location of a person is not the locality of the real being of the person; the locality of the real being is the 'being' of one's consciousness. Where is our consciousness? There our being is. Why do we say "I am here", when our mind is somewhere else? So, this aspect is more important than our physical presence or a mere arithmetical assertion of our being somewhere from the point of view of the body only. Wherever the mind is, there we are. Wherever the consciousness is, there we are, because where the mind is, consciousness also is there. As mentioned, where *vṛtti-vyapti* takes place, *phala-vyapti* also takes place. So where our mind is, there our consciousness is; and where our consciousness is, there we are - the matter is

clear. Though I am sitting here physically, I may be in Swargashram, really speaking, if my mind is thinking of an object there. It may be anywhere, even in a very distant place. Our consciousness gets transferred to some other location, by which we mean the object we are thinking of, the selfhood, which is ordinarily identified with the physical body, gets lifted up artificially from the body and is psychologically transferred to the physical location of the object outside. So we are restless whenever we are conscious of objects.

The restlessness arises on account of our rising up out of our own selves and becoming artificially one with something else, in an act of love or hatred. So a person who loves or hates is restless and cannot have peace of mind. How can there be peace of mind when it has gone out of itself and is moving here and there in a region which does not really belong to it, which is not its jurisdiction? In this act of transference of selfhood into the object outside, many things happen simultaneously. When the self goes, everything goes - there is nothing left in us afterwards. Just as when the king goes, the whole palace goes - the retinue goes, the army goes, the police go, friends go - everything goes. Nothing remains behind when the king goes. Likewise, when the self goes to the object, there is nothing left in us afterwards. We have become paupers, bankrupt utterly. We have lost virtue, we have lost power, we have lost happiness, and we are on the verge of death. Death is gripping us, because death is only a name that we give to the utter subjection of self to objects. That is also called suicide, the destruction of one's own self. *Atmahatya*, or one who kills his own self, is not merely he who cuts his throat physically, but one who does something worse than that.

Physical destruction, or annihilation of the physical personality, is not as harmful as the annihilation of one's real being, which is the being of our mind and consciousness. All values in life are centred in consciousness. Whatever worth we see, or meaning we see, or significance we see in the world, is in consciousness. Where consciousness is absent, life loses its meaning. Inasmuch as every meaning is in consciousness, we have to study its functions and try to do what is necessary to keep it in proper order. To keep consciousness in proper order would be to see that it does not become alien to its own self, which is what happens when it is intensely conscious of an object. We become foreigners to our own self when we are too much engrossed in a consciousness of objectivity, which is the cause of a peculiar psychological tension in which we perpetually find ourselves. When the mind is withdrawn from the object, consciousness also gets withdrawn because, together with the action of the mind in respect of the object, consciousness has moved towards the object.

In the reverse action that we are attempting - namely the withdrawal of the mind from the object - a simultaneous withdrawal of consciousness from the object is also effected. As consciousness of an object is a loss of energy, the withdrawal of consciousness from the object should effect an increase of energy. When the river flows in various directions by multiplying itself into small streams or channels, its velocity, energy and force gets diminished, but when it is channelised in one direction, its energy increases. When we block it completely by building a bund across it, it rises and swells up, manifesting a capacity, a force and an energy which is larger and greater in extent than what we could see when it was moving ordinarily like shallow water. So the more we withdraw our minds from objects, the more we become strong in ourselves, like the river which wells up on account of the bund that is raised against it. If all the ramified channels of the river are blocked, if it is not

allowed to move at all in any direction, if the movement of the waters of the river has been prevented completely, it then becomes a heightened profundity of a vast mass of water which can be harnessed for any purpose that would be regarded as useful.

In a similar manner, we may say that when the channels through which consciousness gets ramified, on account of various types of objective perception, are withdrawn by an act of *bund* that is built against it through self-control, energy wells up within us. Instead of the tendency of water to move forward to where it is not, it may be said to return to itself when its passage of action has been blocked externally. In a similar manner, the mind or consciousness which exhibits a tendency to move to a place where it is not, is made to return to its own true nature by an act of self-control, by the process of mind-withdrawal, and its energy gets doubled, tripled, etc.

This withdrawal of the mind from the object does not mean unconsciousness of the presence of the object. This is also an important thing to remember. When we are not conscious of the presence of an object, it does not follow that we have withdrawn the mind from that object. Yoga is not any kind of unconscious state. If someone is unconscious that he is a king, he cannot be called a king. He may be a king, but he is unconscious of it. If he is in a coma, what is the use of being a king? Therefore an unconscious act is no act at all worth the while, and so any act of self-control, or withdrawal of the mind from objects, is not an absence of the awareness of the presence of the object, but a conscious condition by itself.

In every stage of yoga, consciousness is awake; it is not sleeping. We should not allow consciousness to sleep at any time. Sometimes it can sleep when we occasionally force it to withdraw itself from objects, and then it gets into a mood of grief. The mind gets into a condition of unhappiness because we have compelled it to withdraw itself from its object of love. Then it plays a trick like a small schoolboy who will not do what we want him to do. If we ask him to go to school, he will not go to school - he will not do anything that we ask him to. He will revolt. Similarly, consciousness can play the very same role as a truant boy, and not do what we expect it to do. "You don't want me to contemplate the object, so I will not do anything else either." This is the language of the mind. "All right, I will not think of the object. You are not allowing me to do that, so I will not do anything else either." Like a very naughty servant who recoils upon the master, the consciousness will recoil upon us and we will be none the better - perhaps we will be worse.

So sometimes a deliberate withdrawal of consciousness from the objects by an act of will-force may not be equivalent to what we are expecting through the practice of yoga - the *cittavritti nirodhah* - because we should not allow the consciousness to enter into any mood of negativity on account of its withdrawal. Let us suppose that today we have to fast. If we do not get food, we are unhappy. To some extent the mind is not joyful; somehow or other it tolerates the idea of fasting and hopes that it passes as quickly as possible. This is the attitude that the mind will adopt. "Oh, I am caught up in this stupid technique called yoga which is harassing me from all sides and not allowing me to enjoy the values of life. What shall I do?" What the mind generally does when it is forcefully withdrawn from the object is that it enters into a *tamasic* condition, a torpid state where it does not think anything at all. This can be mistaken for a condition of yoga, and sometimes even for a condition of *samadhi*.

A mind which does not think about anything is not in a state of yoga. It might be better to think of an object than to be in that *tamasic* condition, because a person who neither thinks nor speaks, who does not say anything at all for days together, is a

dangerous person. One must be afraid of him. He is not in a state of yoga. He can suddenly erupt, just as an atmosphere which is cloudy and dark can suddenly erupt into flashes of lightening, thunder and hailstorms. This moodiness of the mind is a dangerous condition, and it is very easy for the mind to enter into that state. And generally, this is what happens - a subtle unhappiness suddenly arises in the mind due to its withdrawal from objects.

Why it is unhappy? It is unhappy simply because we have cut off the centre of its joy. The joy of the mind is the object, and we have severed its connection with the object that is the centre of its happiness. Naturally, it is unhappy and very grief-stricken, and it has no chances of fulfilling its desires. We have very carefully cut off its connection with the source of its happiness. It then becomes a maniac - a kind of neurotic with suppressed feelings. It can become a glutton; it can oversleep; it can fly into a passion of rage; it can attack; it can become anti-social; it can even condemn God, creation, and all of human society. The mind can do anything when it is in a mood of desperate defeatism due to a forced withdrawal compelled upon it in the name of self-control or yoga practice.

So we know the advantages of yoga, as well as the dangers that follow when it is not properly understood. The control of the mind is a conscious activity willingly undertaken by the mind, and not any kind of unconscious recoiling of parts of the mind due to unwillingness. We are always concerned with consciousness. This is a very important aspect of the matter. In the practice of yoga we are attempting to increase the depth and the extent of our being by a widening of the purview of consciousness. So we are concerned with consciousness, with which 'being' is attached automatically. No type of unconsciousness is called for here - there is no automatic action taking place as in a mechanical movement, but a conscious, deliberate and well-thought-out condition in which we are very vigilant. We do not withdraw ourselves from objects because somebody asks us to do so, or even because the Bible or the Bhagavadgita says to do so. Such withdrawal cannot succeed; it will end in failure. There must be a flowering of consciousness from within itself in an acceptance of the logical necessity for self-withdrawal. If we do not feel a necessity for it, it cannot be done. Otherwise, it will be a pressure exerted upon us, resulting in failure of some sort or the other.

Self-control, which is the withdrawal of consciousness from objects, is meant for the good of our own selves. It is not a punishment that is meted out to us, though it looks very painful in the beginning. *Yattadagre viṣamiva pariṇāme'mṛtopamam, tatsukhaṁ sāttvikam proktam* (B.G. XVIII.37), says the Bhagavadgita. In the beginning it very bitter to the taste, like a poison that is forced into one's mouth. In the end nectar will be showered upon us, but we are in a state of agony because we do not know when the end will come. In a state of helplessness, we do not know what is actually happening to us. The unhappiness or the venomous character of the initial stage of yoga is due to an apparent severing of oneself from centres of happiness. Therefore, we must be prepared for it, just as we subject ourselves to the treatment of a doctor.

When we go to a doctor for the treatment of an illness, we do not ask for immediate happiness. It is a kind of painful treatment that is meted out to us with injections, bitter drugs, as well as by cutting us off from our usual diet. All kinds of unhappy things are told to us by the doctor, but we deliberately subject ourselves to hospitalisation and treatment because - *pariname'mritopamam* - afterwards, joy will come to us. We will be in a state of health because of this present subjection in the form of pain. The mind should, therefore, be educated in this fashion. In its thoughts

of objects the mind is in an unhealthy condition, and its imagining that the thought of objects makes it happy is misconstrued.

Many people, even sincere aspirants, think that there is a justification in sense-contact because it brings release of tension. There is an erroneous feeling among many well-meaning people that sense-contact brings happiness as a result of release of tension. It is not true. Sense contact increases tension - it does not reduce tension. That it reduces tension is a wrong notion. As a matter of fact, it is a heightened tension that causes an apparent happiness in the perception of an object. When we are highly tuned-up, we are worked up into a peculiar nervous condition which makes us feel that we are happy, but it is a drunkard-like happiness. A person who has drunk a lot of liquor may find himself in a state of happiness, but we know how far removed he is from real happiness. His drunken happiness is due to a nervous condition which has been artificially introduced into him by a whipping-up of the nerves by striking them and hitting them with a rod so violently that the nerves have no other choice than to rise up in a state of irritation, which titillates the consciousness and makes him feel that he is happy - though he is not really happy. In every act of sense cognition, such a nervous condition is created temporarily, and the nerves are not in their natural state when there is sense-contact. As the mind moves towards the object, and as the consciousness follows it, the bodily conditions also get turned into a new state altogether. There is a change in the muscular movements, in the nerves, and even in the breathing process, and even digestion may get upset if one is intensely in affection or hatred.

So, this artificial condition of the psychological system of the nerves, the muscles, etc., brought about on account of intense attachment to objects through sense action, should not be mistaken for happiness, because there will be a sudden fall afterwards. We know the condition of a drunkard who suddenly reverts to the condition of non-drinking, only to find that he is in a worse condition than he would have been otherwise.

Because of a perpetual identification with artificial states, we have forgotten what a natural state is. We have been in artificial conditions right from our birth, and so it is natural that we mistake it for what is our true nature. Hence, when our true nature is introduced into our body and mind, we mistake it for something artificial, and so in the beginning it may all look very difficult, and quite awful for the mind to swallow. But it is advisable that a little bit of discipline be followed in the interest of the genuine health of the total personality that will ensue, together with an increase in power and happiness. This is our aim.

CHAPTER 22

PRACTICE OF YOGA - THE LIFE AND GOAL OF OUR EXISTENCE

In our discussions on the subject of the control of the modifications of the mind - which is the central function in yoga - we found it necessary to make abundant reference to the objects of the mind, because the restraint of the modifications of the mind is automatically a severance of mental relationships with objects. We were also trying to find out what an object is, what its nature is, and what are the various aspects of which an object can be constituted.

In this context, I am reminded of a very important verse from the Yoga Vasishtha which says: *yathā rasah padārthesu yathā tailam tilādisu kusumesu yathā 'modas tathā drastari drsyadhīh (Y.V. I.3.43):* The object is in the subject in the same way as fragrance is in a flower, oil is in a seed, and taste is in objects. This is a very strange definition of an object. We usually have a notion that an object is a solid, substantial something staring at us from outside - something very hard, real, and tangible - such a thing is an object. But here, according to this definition, which is a little novel, of course, the object is in the subject as fragrance is in a flower. It cannot be said that fragrance is something standing outside the flower, staring at it, or even tangible in the sense of a separate object. The object is not a substance. This is what the Yoga Vasishtha wants to convey in this verse, and it is this confusion in the mind of not being able to understand the real meaning of 'object' that makes it difficult for anyone to control the mind. The object is not a substance; it is not a thing. The people who are seated in front of me cannot be called my objects. That idea arises due to some confusion of thought.

From one angle of vision, anything that is seen by the eyes may be regarded as an object, but the Yoga Vasishtha goes into a deeper aspect of this question and tries to remove the confusion in the mind concerning the true nature of an object which binds the consciousness. You, as persons seated here in front of me, are not my objects, because that which makes you an object is only from my point of view; it is in my head, my brain and mind, and not in you. This is very subtle and has to be carefully understood. Though you are a person seated in front of me, you need not be an object of my mind unless my mind reacts in a particular fashion.

The reaction of my mind towards you in a particular manner is what constitutes the object of the mind, and not you as persons in front of me. You may ask, "What do you by the 'reaction' of the mind? Are we not objects because you see us? Am I not an object to you because you see me?" No, I am not the cause of your bondage, and you are not the cause of my bondage, taking you or me independently as self-existent 'somethings' unrelated to externals, to which reference was previously made when a distinction was drawn between *Isvara srishti*, the creation of God, and *jīva srishti*, the creation of the individual. It was pointed out that bondage does not lie in the creation of God, but lies in the creation of the individual. By that is meant that the reaction of the mind in respect of something which it regards as outside it, is the source of bondage and the source of joy and sorrow, and the thing taken from its own point of view is neither a source of joy nor a source of sorrow.

Now, when it is said that the object is in the subject, something like fragrance is in a flower, it is implied that the object is inseparable from the subject. By 'subject', we

mean the mind which cognises anything that is external. The cognition of an external condition is the objectivity involved in the mind - this is the cause of bondage. The substance itself is not the source of bondage. It cannot give joy; it cannot give sorrow. The attitude of the mind towards that something which it is obliged to regard as an object is the source of joy, and the source of bondage. These conditions of perception, conditions of cognition, are really the objects.

Emmanuel Kant, a very great German thinker, wrote 800 pages on this very subject - the distinction between a thing as it is in itself, and a thing as conceived by the mind. The thing in itself is outside the phenomenal perception of the mind. Kant made out that the thing in itself cannot be known at all, because it is noumenal and not phenomenal. It is the precondition of all phenomenal appearance, and it cannot be known through the apparatus that belongs to the world of phenomena. This is something like the distinction between *Isvara srishti* and *jiva srishti* - they are almost on the same level. The conditions of cognition are the source of bondage - this is our point. These conditions have to be distinguished from things in themselves and, therefore, it is futile on our part to blame other people or to regard other people as sources of our experiences, either positive or negative.

Persons and things outside are harmless existences created by God, and they should not be regarded as tools or instruments for our experiences, and we should not foist upon them conditions which arise in our own mind on account of a reaction that we set up due to peculiar situations in which we find ourselves. If we carefully go into it, we are in a subjective world to a large extent, though we seem to be in an objective world for practical purposes. We have made a mix-up of things; we have mixed up the real objective world with subjective reactions and have made this world to be what it is today - a source of anxiety for us. We are not happy with things, not because there is something wrong with things, but because we are unable to tune our cognitive conditions to the existent conditions of things as they themselves are.

I am again reminded of another famous verse from the Isavasya Upanishad which says, *yathā tathyato'rthān vyadadhāc chāśhvātībhyas samābhyah* (Isavasya 8): The Supreme Being has created the world in the way it ought to be created. So it is futile for us to make complaints against it, and to think, "It ought to have been something else. The whole mountain should be full of honey. Why is it full of thorns? God in His wisdom could have smeared it with milk or honey so that we could go and lick it every day. Why has God created thorns so that they may prick our feet when we walk? Why has He created mosquitoes? Why has He created snakes?" One funny man put this question to Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj: "Why has God created mosquitoes? What is the purpose? How do they serve any benefit?" Swamiji laughed and said, "It is to punish you people. Otherwise, you will become very proud; so, there is somebody to punish you." He gave a jocular answer to a jocular question.

We are unable to appreciate the significance of things on account of our inability to attune our conditions with the conditions of things outside, and we have our own set of preconceived notions which we try to project into the existent nature of things. This projecting process is called objectivity - that is the real object. If we go into more philosophical aspects of this question, space and time are the objects. This is the final answer to all these worrying questions. A man is not an object; a woman is not an object; a thing is not an object; a dog or a cat, a tree or a mountain are not objects. Space and time are objects. It is these that create in our mind the notion that there are objects. If space and time were not there, perhaps we would all fuse together into a single existence. But for the existence and operation of space and time, we would

not be individuals seated here.

If there are devils, these are the real devils - space and time - and they are such atrocious factors that they have entered into the structure of our brain and our mind, and our understanding of every blessed thing in this world. The conditions of knowledge called space and time are ruling the whole world. The rulers of the world are not presidents or prime ministers. Space and time are the rulers of the world. Space and time make everyone dance to their tune, and it is to space and time that everyone has become slaves, puppets and subjected themselves wholeheartedly. We not only act and work in accordance to the demands of space and time, but we even think and understand only according to space and time, so that our brain itself is in space and time. Who, then, will save us from these subjections?

Ordinarily speaking, there is no remedy for this illness, because the illness has gone into the brain of the doctor himself. So, who will to cure the disease? But there are mysterious techniques of self-adjustment. They have to be called mysterious, indeed - not to be understood in academies and colleges. Even the great thinker Kant concluded by saying that there is no solution to this problem. His work, *Critique of Pure Reason*, ends in a kind of agnosticism, because when we try to understand things purely through reason, we find that problems are insoluble. Problems are insoluble because reason, which is the tool for solving problems, is involved in that which causes the problems - space and time.

Space, time and cause are the conditions of objectivity. The necessity to think only in terms of magnitude, extent, three-dimension - that is subjection to space. We cannot think for a moment of anything that is not possessed of magnitude. Everything has the three dimensions - length, breadth and height - so it is impossible to conceive of anything that has not got at least one or two of these three factors. This is the three-dimensional way of thinking. Minus these three factors, there is no thought. Also, we are always in time; we cannot conceive of timelessness. We are in the past, we are in the present, and we are in the future. Can we think in any other manner? This idea will never leave the mind. Why is it so? Well, they are the conditions of knowledge.

Also, everything is connected to something else - something comes from something. There is an effect from a cause - a cause produces an effect. Something depends on something else. This hanging of one thing on another is the causal relation, and the necessity for anything to exist in a particular point of duration is due to subjection to time, and that which makes it impossible to think except in terms of magnitude is the subjection to spatiality. It is this subjection of the mind to these conditions of knowledge that is really the object, so that the object is a kind of disease in consciousness, and is not a substance. This is why the Yoga Vasishtha says that the object is inherent in the subject, like fragrance is in a flower, like oil is in a seed, like taste is in an object, and rules out the concept that the object is outside somewhere. The conclusion is that the object is not outside, but is only inside the head. This is why we are worried so much. All of the objects that are harassing us are inside our brain, and not outside. So there is no need of making complaints. We cannot complain against anything in this world, because if we make a complaint, we are complaining against our own way of thinking.

This is a very important issue before us, where we are ready to take up the practice of yoga in its aspect of the restraint of the modifications of the mind or *vrittis* - *yogaḥ citta vṛtti nirodhaḥ* (I.2). The *citta vṛtti nirodhaḥ*, or the restraint of the modifications of the mind, is really the regulation of the modifications of the mind in respect of what

the real object is. A particular modification of the mind is nothing but the shape that the mind takes in respect of an object which it perceives or cognises. So, a modification or a *vrutti* is a shape of the mind, a mould into which it is cast, a particular structural pattern of thinking. This is called a *vrutti*. Why is it that we are so worried about *vruttis*? Why should we restrain the mind? Why does the necessity arise to control the modifications of the mind?

The necessity arises on account of a *vrutti*, or a modification of the mind, is a particular shape into which the mind is cast, and to which that mind gets attached as if it is a very real, substantial something. Attachment is the immediate consequence of the mind having been cast into a mould. Why the mind gets cast into this mould is a different question. It is due to previous *samskaras*, impressions of previous experiences, the *prarabdha* that operates now as the result of previous actions taken in the many lives through which we have passed earlier, etc. Umpteen reasons exist as to why the mind takes such a shape at all, although this is not the point. Rather, the point is to know how we can prevent the mind from taking these shapes and getting identified with them. Every time the mind takes a shape, it gets identified with that shape and puts on a mood.

We have various types of moods. At times we are melancholy, and at other times we are drooping; sometimes we are sinking; sometimes we are happy, and so on and so forth. All of these moods are nothing but the identification of our consciousness with a particular mould or shape into which the mind has cast itself for a particular reason, at a given moment of time. The difficulty is that as long as the consciousness goes on getting identified with these moulds at every moment of time, its attachment to individuality gets hardened, gets intensified more and more, and it is made to wrongly believe in the reality of a physical body and everything that is externally connected with it, so that the true nature of consciousness, which is universality, is always hidden, submerged beneath the waves of mental modifications. The waves are so many in number that we cannot see the ocean at the bottom. The ocean floor cannot be seen, owing to these waves which are themselves the modifications of the mind. They are so small, of course, compared to the depth of the ocean, and yet they can simply cover the surface to such an extent that the ocean may become invisible for all practical purposes.

Thus, the restraint of the modifications of the mind is a very technical affair and, therefore, it is also a very difficult affair. It is not physical isolation in the sense of a physical distance between one thing and another thing that is called withdrawal of the mind from objects. When we are physically away from someone or something, it does not follow that we have withdrawn ourselves from the object. We have concluded that the object is not a substance and, therefore, the physical distance of the substance does not amount to much. What is important is the state of mind in respect of that which it regards as an object. Even if the substance, which it erroneously regards as an object, is millions of miles away, the mind can still cast itself into the mould of that shape, and nothing can prevent it from doing so. We can get attached to something which is thousands of miles away, or we may not bother about a thing which is immediately in front of us, if it is not of any consequence to us. So, physical distance is not of great consequence here; it is not important. What is important is the interest that the mind takes in the particular thing which it calls an object, or regards as an object.

So, it seems that the restraint of the modifications of the mind is an internal adjustment that we have to make, and not merely a physical running away or a

physical isolation from the object, which will not mean much because something is happening inside us of which we are mostly unaware. We are totally unaware of what is happening inside us, but we are always conscious of foisting these conditions on outside substances and imagine that these conditions arise from outside substances. This is called projection in psychoanalysis - a very diseased condition; it is not a happy thing. We project internal conditions on external substances, and then evoke those conditions from those imagined objects and then have attitudes towards the objects as if they are the causes of our joys and sorrows. It is this projection of the conditions of the mind on external points in space and time that is called *samsara*, that is called bondage. This is called earthly existence; this is the source of mortality.

How are we going to start the technique? How are we going to control the mind under these conditions? One of the methods is to educate the mind, disillusion the mind from these misconceived notions it has about objects. We have a thoroughgoing wrong notion about things, and this notion has to be set right first before we try to do anything with the mind, because as long as there is a particular conviction in the mind, it is difficult to get out of it, since conviction is a deep-rooted feeling and experience that it is real, and one cannot run away from the real, as we know very well. So, first of all, what is essential is to know whether our convictions are real, or whether they are unfounded. Mostly, they are unfounded. By a critical analysis of the perceptual and cognitional process, philosophically, we come to a startling conclusion that conscious relationships, which are projections of the thinking mind like rays emanating from the sun, are responsible for the experiences that we are undergoing every day.

Our experiences are nothing but the processes of the mind which we are undergoing from morning to evening. So all of our experiences are internal because they are conditions of consciousness. They are not coming from outside. Experience is nothing but a state of consciousness, and if it is dissociated from our being, it would cease to be an experience. Whatever is inseparable from our being becomes our experience. Inasmuch as our being is one with the conditions of thinking, feeling, willing, etc., and these very conditions are the objects of our experience, they constitute experience by itself. All of these subjects are very beautifully dealt with in such scriptures as the Yoga Vasishtha, the Tripura Rahasya and such other mystic texts where we are taken to another realm altogether, different from the imagined realm in which we find ourselves. The *adhyasa*, or the superimposition of attributes, which we wrongly bring about by transference of qualities from the subject to the object, and vice versa, is the cause of a confused sort of experience which becomes difficult for us to analyse critically.

We have come to a certain level of understanding about this subject, and it should be easier for us now to tackle the mind in a more appreciable manner. This is the reason why students of yoga, advanced seekers of Truth, content themselves in being absolutely alone. They want to be left alone to themselves. People go to caves and mountains, to isolated *kutirs*, etc., unconcerned with anything in this world, because they have now understood that the problem is inside only - it is not outside. There is no use moving from place to place and contacting things for the purpose of inner reformation. Such a reformation cannot be brought about by any kind of spatial or temporal travel, because the problem is inside, like a disease inherent in our structure, and a disease cannot be cured however much we may move physically from place to place or contact things outwardly. Ultimately, yoga is the digging out of the roots of this disease and adjusting our existence with the existence of things in

such a way that there is harmony between the inside and the outside.

The stages of yoga are stages of establishing harmony between the within and the without. The more harmony is felt and experienced between the within and the without, the more universal we become in our comprehension and experience, because when this harmony is established perfectly, there remains nothing to differentiate us from the outside world or creation. When this imagined distinction between the inside and the outside is lifted up totally, the outside fuses into the inside and the inside fuses into the outside. Then, there is neither an object nor world outside, nor is there a 'you' either. The word 'you' is dropped out completely. There is no 'I', and there is no 'you', because the 'you' is the object and the 'I' is the subject, and the distinction between them is completely removed by a gradual tuning of the conditions of knowledge to the conditions of the object.

This is a very strenuous process because, on the one hand, it requires a complete shedding of all previous notions about the things to which we have been wedded as if they are ultimately real; and on the other hand, it requires a strenuous practice every day so that the old impressions may not come and invade us, again and again, and stultify all the little good that we have done in a few hours of meditation. If we do some four or five hours of meditation today in a good mood and imagine that we have come to a very stable understanding of the true nature of things, and then do not do this practice for another five days, all these five days of the absence of practice will throw mud on the little success that we have achieved in three hours of meditation today.

To repeat the great admonition of Sage Patanjali, the practice is to be continuous. It should be unremitting. It should be strenuous. It should be endowed with immense ardour and affection. And, it should be the life and goal of our existence, so that it is our father and mother who shall take care of us, and we cannot forget it. Such is the practice of yoga. When it is continued for a protracted period, the flower shall blossom, and the sun of Knowledge shall rise.

CHAPTER 23

THE INTERNAL RELATIONSHIP OF ALL THINGS

In certain mystical circles, a very interesting comparison is made between the mind and a wild bull. A very wild bull cannot be controlled. It is very ferocious, and we cannot even go near it; it will gore us if we try to approach it. Controlling the mind is something like controlling a wild animal. It can be done, but the method is very tactful; it is not a direct, frontal approach. The example given in mystical circles is that if we find a very ferocious bull and we want to bring it under control, we do not approach it directly. So also it is with the control of the mind - we are not going to directly attack the mind. A direct attack is not a wise attitude, because the mind reacts in a very violent manner if we approach it with an injudicious understanding of its likes and dislikes.

What do we do with a wild bull? The teacher says that fencing should be raised all round the bull, maybe half a furlong radius from the bull, without going near it. Now, what has happened? We have limited the movement of the bull; it cannot go outside the fencing. The first step that we have taken is that even without touching it or going near it, we have restrained its movements. After some time, we should go on frequenting that place so that the bull can see us. It has seen us so many times, and whenever it sees us it starts hissing and rushes towards the fencing as if it wants to attack, but it cannot attack because we are outside the fence and it is inside. But still it is ferocious, and it has an intention to attack if possible. What do we do? We bring something that we know bulls like to eat, such as green grass, or perhaps some *channa* (chickpeas) or some other eatable, and we throw it in front of the bull. Whatever we throw, it hisses and makes faces, looking at us with red eyes as it eats the grass inside the fence. We go on doing this every day.

Though the bull is very ferocious, it is getting acquainted with our face, and it begins to sense that something desirable is coming near it every day, namely, green grass, etc., and not only is the same person bringing it, he is bringing it at the same time, which is better still. Then, what happens? It comes near the fence and eats the grass, perhaps even from our hands, though we are still outside the fence and it is inside. It gets used to our coming near it, and it is able to recognise us as the person who has been coming with the good intention of feeding it, not intending any harm. So, slowly it draws nearer, the ferocity having cooled down. Then, inside the fence, it thrusts its snout to sniff us, and takes the grass from our hands. We may even touch it with our hands, though we have not gone inside but remain safely outside the fence. We touch it and pat it, and it does not look at us with the very same ferocious attitude as it used to earlier. Then we may open the gate a bit and touch it little more, though not entirely going inside.

Finally, we may be able to touch the bull's entire body and stroke it as well, and because it has understood us, it does not attack. We might even be able to sit on the bull while it walks about, and even ride on it afterwards, says the teacher. That ferocious animal has now come under our control to such an extent that we are now able to ride on it after a long, long practice. Similarly, so is the way of controlling the mind. Just as we cannot deal with wild animals directly, we cannot deal with the mind directly. It is a very ferocious thing.

So, in the beginning we put a fence around the mind, and we do not allow it to go

beyond certain limits. We allow it to move, of course, and we give it freedom, but only within a certain limit. That circumference of the limit is what is called spiritual discipline. It is not a hard and painful discipline, but a systematised regulation of the activities of the mind within a given ambit of function. For example, let us say that we live in a sacred atmosphere, perhaps in Benares, Uttarkashi, or Rishikesh, and have decided, "I am not going out of Rishikesh." This is a limitation that we have put on the mind - that we will not go anywhere in India, or anywhere else in the world. Just as we put a fencing round the wild bull, we have put a limitation upon the movement of the mind. "I will not go more than ten miles from this place. I will remain within a ten mile circumference." Then we go on bringing the circumference nearer and nearer to the centre until we are able to give a more restrained discipline to the mind than it was given earlier.

What are the functions of the mind going to be? This is another restriction that we have to place upon the mind. Though we may be staying in Rishikesh or any particular holy place, what are we going to do there? This is more important. This 'doing' is an action of the mind. The limitation put upon the functions of the mind is an internal restraint brought about in addition to the external restraint of confining it to a particular atmosphere, such as the disciplines of *swadhyaya*, *japa*, *dhyana*, etc. When we study sacred literature like the Srimad Bhagavata, we give a wide range of freedom for the mind to move among ideas which are many in number. The story of creation and the history of the great heroes and masters described in the Srimad Bhagavata Purana, for example, allow the mind to move freely, but yet within a limited range. That is, the mind will not go outside the range of the thought provided for in the Srimad Bhagavata Purana. Though there is freedom inside this range, it is a limited freedom.

Swadhyaya is a great limitation. But a still greater limitation is the *japa* of a mantra, where we do not give as much freedom to the mind as we give to the study of Srimad Bhagavata, etc. We do not go on hearing stories or reading tales that are likely to allow the mind to think many thoughts. During *japa*, we cannot think many thoughts. Maybe two or three ideas at the most may come to the mind. During *dhyana*, of course, we would allow only one thought - not even two or three thoughts. This is a tremendous restriction that we have brought upon it.

But, as in the case of the wild bull, we should not act upon this discipline immediately. It has to be done with great caution, taking a long time - perhaps even years, if it is a very turbulent case. The mind has desires and certain needs, both of which have to be provided for by a reduction of quantity and quality, gradually, day by day, until it can acquiesce to the most restrained form of diet that is given to it. If we live with a Guru or in a holy monastic atmosphere, the practice becomes easier. But if we live independently in the thick of a city, doing whatever we like, then the practice is more difficult because we have given license to the mind to do whatever it likes. But within the restrained atmosphere of a regulated discipline, in the company of wise people, the practice becomes easier.

We have to always remember that all this practice and discipline is a great blessing that comes upon people when they have evolved in the process of the rise of individuality, from the lower levels to the higher, until they come to the human species, as they call it - and even as a human being, to a very advanced state where the mind can comprehend abstract principles, instead of clinging to concrete forms. *Manuṣyāṅāṃ sahasreṣu kaścidyatati siddhaye, yatatāmapī siddhānāṃ kaścīnmāṃ vetti tattvataḥ* (B.G. VII.3), says the Bhagavadgita. Among thousands of persons - out of

many, many thousands - one person may be able to strive, to put forth effort in the direction of the liberation of the soul. Even among those who are striving, only one may actually succeed.

All are not called to this glorious achievement. Due to the immensity of restrictions and disciplines that are necessary in order to purify the consciousness, and the insistence of the various constituents of individual nature, this practice becomes difficult. There is a tug of war, a constant battle going on between us and the forces outside - sometimes one side appears to win, and sometimes the other side appears to win. This war goes on until the forces of divinity gain the upper hand by continuous, protracted and arduous practice.

A very pertinent point that we have to bear in mind is that, success or no success, the practice should be regular. We should not complain to ourselves, "I have been practising meditation for years and years, and no appreciable or tangible result has followed," because we cannot determine whether any result has followed or not. The result need not necessarily be visible to the physical eyes because, as it is said, spiritual growth is always from the inside and not from the outside. We cannot see spirituality shining outside. It starts illumining our personality from within, as is the case with any kind of growth. All growth starts from inside, and it manifests itself on the outside much later, after a long time, such as the growth of a tree or the growth of any organic substance. There is an internal, structural transformation taking place right from the root, from the bottommost seed onwards, like the ripening of a fruit, for instance. After a long time we will begin to see its ripeness outside - maybe after many, many years.

In the well-known work of H.G. Wells, *A Short History of the World*, reference is made to the life of Buddha, and there he beautifully expresses the difficulty which Buddha felt and how it became impossible even for a person like Buddha to know that he was advancing at all. He was advancing, but he could not know it - he was blindfolded in his movement. The analogy given by H.G. Wells is that the growth was from within, and the external eyes could not see it - even Buddha himself could not see it. Even the very day before the illumination, Buddha felt that everything was hopeless and that all his practice had ended in a waste. He had fasted, starved and undergone hard discipline and austerity for nothing. Nothing had come of it, and he had a subconscious feeling that he was going to die. "The day has come; this body is going, it is perishing, and all this effort, after all this time, has led me to this catastrophic ending of my life." Such was the reaction set up by the mind of a person like the Buddha, and that too just one day before the bubble burst. That very night, he had illumination. Yet, a few hours earlier he was feeling that all was hopeless. Just imagine, how is it possible?

We cannot see the rise of the sun until it actually rises; before that, there is only darkness. But there are inklings, such as the dawn and the dusk, where we feel sometimes the coming in of a Glorious Presence. These inklings are not permanent features, however - sometimes they come like flashes, and sometimes they withdraw themselves. The difficulties of a seeker living with a competent master are much less, because even when it looks as if we are retracing our steps, we may be really advancing, and the Guru can tell us that. Sometimes it looks as if we are in a descent, but we are not going down; we are going forward. Let us suppose that we want to go to Badrinath. Sometimes we have to descend a hill, but we should not feel that we are going down. We are actually moving forward, because this descent down the hill is only a necessary step in the process of our marching forward towards Badrinath,

which involves climbing up the hill, and then again descending. Many times we go up and many times we go down along the road to Badrinath. It is a mountainous route, and the mountains have to be scaled.

Likewise, progression and retrogression, ascent and descent, and sometimes even a condition of oblivion may all be states of mind which we have to expect; and we should not be afraid of all these conditions. Whatever may happen to us, we should not fear, provided our practice is perfect in its technical features and the practice is regular and daily. Karmaṇyevādhikāraṣṭe mā phaleṣu kadācana (B.G. II.47); nehābhikramaṇāśo'sti pratyavāyo na vidyate (B.G. II.40), says the Bhagavadgita. When we do our duty with expertise and to the best of our conscience, understanding and knowledge, there should be no fear. The forces which are outside us, which have not come under our control at present, will automatically befriend us when we have touched their border by putting forth the best of our efforts from inside. In this practice, nothing is lost; everything is gained.

There is no such thing as a loss in spiritual practice. Everything is a gain, even if it be the littlest of gains. Even a single step, or even a half step that is taken, is a positive step, after all; and what has been given will not be withdrawn. It may be only a jot that we have gained - a microscopic, invisible, atomic achievement - but even then, it is an achievement. This is the glory of spiritual practice. And when the practice is perfect, which means to say that it is done daily, regularly, at the proper time and with the proper intensity, adopting the same technique and done with the same devotion - when practice is conducted in this manner, the result will take care of itself. What is called for in spiritual practice is whole-souled dedication.

When our entire being is devoted to the practice, there is nothing else that is required of us. This entire dedication may be of various intensities, according to the stage of our understanding and the condition of our mind. Whatever be the level of our understanding, the dedication must be whole-souled. It may be a child's whole-souled dedication, or it may be the whole-souled dedication of a genius - but nevertheless, it is entire. All that we are, the entirety that we are, offers itself in this practice.

In the context of our practice of the *japa* of a mantra or the practice of meditation, there is only one important thing to remember, and that is the question of whether the whole of our being is present during the practice, or just a part of our being is present. In ordinary practice we find that nothing we do can attract the whole of our being. Whether we are taking our meal, doing office work, going for a walk or having a chat with friends, we find that the whole of our being is not there - a part of the mind is always somewhere else. When taking a meal, we may be thinking of some office work, and when working in the office, we may be thinking of lunchtime, etc., so that some part of the mind is 'outside' the particular task that we are doing. This is not whole-souled work. But here, in spiritual practice, the dedication should be whole-souled. Everything that we are should be present. Our will should be there; our feeling should be there; our thought should be there; our understanding should be there; and, our love should be there completely.

Practically speaking, this whole-souled dedication to anything is impossible, because the mind does not know what is good for it or what is in its real interest. Why is it that we are thinking five things at a time, instead of one thing? The reason is that we are not fully sure what is good for us. We think that there is a little goodness - a little of this is good, a little of that is also good, and that a little percentage of good is found

in everything. So the mind goes on hopping like a frog from one thing to another, because it thinks, "Everything is good, so I may gain some benefit from that also." But, we have not found anything which is entirely good, which has everything we are seeking so that we need not go to other places. If we go to the ocean, we need not go to wells and rivers and ponds, etc. for water. Everything that we want is there because it is the largest quantity of water. However, such a thing has not been found by the mind. We have never seen anything in this world that can provide us with everything. We have never gone to a shop where everything can be found. We have to go to twenty shops to get twenty things, because each shopkeeper stocks only certain items; he cannot stock everything. Likewise, this world seems to be a shopkeeper with various avenues and showrooms, where particular things are available, but not everything is available. So this is the reason why the mind is trying this and that, experimenting with the different showrooms in various locations of the world and not sticking to any particular one.

In the discipline of spiritual practice, however, a type of rudimentary illumination is to be roused from within which will enable the mind to see all value in a particular ideal that it has taken for its meditation. The ideal that we choose for our meditation should be such that it includes every value; all value is present in it. This is a hard job, indeed, because in order to find all values in a particular ideal, we must first of all know the values that we are seeking in the ideal. What are the worthwhile values in this world? This requires a little bit of analysis of one's own mind - with the help of a good teacher, of course.

What is it that we want really in this world? We want food; we want water; we want a house; we want money; we want fame; we want security; we want beauty; we want aesthetic grandeur. What are the things that we want? We want deathlessness, finally. We do not want to die - we want immortality. We want all things for all time - this is what we actually seek. 'All things' means, that which is as vast as space; 'for all time' means, that which is as long as time exists. We want infinite possession for an eternity of duration; this is our longing.

Such a thing is not visible in this world. Nobody has seen any such thing in this world. Have we seen anything in this world which is as vast as everything, and which can endure for all time? Therefore, nothing in this world can satisfy us, because nothing can contain everything, and nothing can last for all time. But an ideal has to be engendered within us by a proper adjustment of our own understanding, so that in this ideal that we have roused within ourselves, in our consciousness, we find all worthwhile values. We find truth, we find goodness, we find beauty - we find everything. Truth, goodness and beauty are the highest values - they contain everything else. This, in the largest measure, must be found in the ideal that we have chosen for our meditation; it is all truth, all goodness and all beauty. Then the mind will not go to anything else. "Oh, everything is here. So anything that I could seek anywhere else is also here. Not only is it here, but it is in a better form - not in the rusted and dusted, diminished and distorted form as would be found elsewhere. Here, it is in a refined and shining form, in its truth and glory."

Thus the mind has to be educated in a spiritual sense. All interest is to be concentrated in this ideal. Here, we will have one difficulty - after all our effort of rousing in our consciousness an ideal of such a perfect character, we will find that we have a subtle feeling that the ideal is abstract and not concrete. This is another trick of the mind. It will tell us, "I will cut you at the throat one day or the other because you are trying to harass me like this." It will also tell us, "After all, my dear friend, all

this that you have is abstract. It is not concrete.” Again we will fall into a melancholy mood. “Oh, this is awful. I have only ideas, and no concrete objects.” This is a peculiar joke which the mind will cut, and it will laugh at us. It will mock our practice after a long, long period of effort, saying, “After all, what you have gained is nothing but concocted ideas.” This doubt will arise in the mind and we will become frightened, and think, “After all, am I a fool? Have I been deceived? Am I catching only ideas in my mind and getting nothing substantial or concrete in return? There are concrete things in the world and I am meditating on abstract ideas. Oh, what a pity!” This will bring us back to the old groove of sense-thought with such force that it will look as if we are dying, and we will not be able to understand what is happening to us. Here, a Guru is necessary.

In the beginning stages of spiritual practice, we will not find the need for a Guru. We think that everything is all right, “I myself am my Guru.” But when we go further, we will find that the difficulties are insurmountable; and there, we will require a guide. It is not true that we are catching abstract ideas - it is only a trick of the mind. The mind is trying to dupe us into a sense-groove to which it wants to direct our attention once again. The mind wants to send us back to that place from which we have come thus far with great effort. This is what it does.

Here, vigilance should be exercised. That which we are contemplating is not an abstract idea. One of the fundamental problems of philosophy, to which reference has been made earlier, is the relation of thought to ‘being’. The whole of philosophy, to put it plainly, is an attempt to find out a relationship between thought and being. What is the connection between idea and existence - what we call thought, and the concrete forms of the world? Is there a connection, or is there no connection? All these circus feats of philosophers, such as idealism and realism, etc., are only endeavours to solve this crucial question of the relationship between consciousness and its object - that is, thought and being.

We regard an object as ‘being’, and the consciousness as a thought of that object, because we have a subtle fear that ‘being’ is only in the object and not in consciousness. The consciousness is running to the object. Why did it run to the object? We think that consciousness has no being, that it is the object that has being. So, this poor consciousness is running to the object which has being, so that it may identify itself with being - because without being, it is nothing. What is the value of anything which has no being? It is almost a nil.

Consciousness wrongly and foolishly imagines that it has no substantiality inside - that substantiality is only in the object outside - so it wants to connect itself with the being of the object so that it may gain substantiality and existence. It wants to import the being of the object into itself (called *adhyasa* in Indian philosophy), which is a mix-up of perceptual experience that takes place by the transference of the illumining character of consciousness to the object, and the ‘being’ character of the object upon consciousness. We are left hanging in the middle - with a part of objectivity and a part of subjectivity in us. So, the human being is half subject, and half object: the conscious aspect may be regarded as the subject, and the ‘being’ aspect is the object.

Thus, we are hanging between the object and the subject. We have love for our own self, and we have love for the object also. How much love we have for the object, and how much love we have for our own self, is very difficult to judge. It depends upon the emphasis that we lay under different conditions. Here, the idea that the object

alone is substantial, and consciousness within is unsubstantial, is a misconstrued notion. It is due to an un-philosophical idea that has arisen in the mind in respect of its own position vis-a-vis objects. We have been brought up in an atmosphere of objects. Right from childhood onwards, we have been living in a world of objects only. The moment we open our eyes, we see only outside objects. We cannot see ourselves inside. Nobody, not even a child or a genius, looks inside at the mind or consciousness. So we live in a world of objects; and we have been taught to value objects as the only concrete and substantial things, and thoughts as only isolated accretions, as it were, that are intended to give some peculiar value to the objects.

It is now that we have to bring about a right-about-turn of this attitude. It is not true that objects alone have being, and that consciousness has no being. It is this wrong notion that makes us sometimes feel that what we think in our mind is unsubstantial and abstract. It is not abstract, because a thing becomes abstract when it is dissociated from 'being'; but it becomes concrete when it is identified with 'being'. Now, has consciousness being, or has it no being? Tell me. Can we say that the idea, or the mind, or the consciousness that we have, has no being at all? If it has no being, from where has it arisen? Is it a void, or a nullity? This is a very difficult thing for us to conceive. How can non-substantial consciousness arise from somewhere? It must have being. But, how can it be that the consciousness forgets its own being, and goes to the object to seek 'being' elsewhere? It is because the consciousness has forgotten the being that it is, and it has found it necessary to run into the being of something else. The being of consciousness is not an object of consciousness, and that is why consciousness runs toward something which it looks upon as an object.

Why is it that the being of consciousness is not an object of consciousness? It is because being is not separable from consciousness; and inasmuch as being is what gives significance even to consciousness, it cannot be projected as an object outside it. It is like a person who talks, but does not know that he has a tongue. How can he talk without a tongue? And yet, he has doubts: "Do I have a tongue?" How can we doubt the existence of a substantial something behind consciousness, when there is such a thing as consciousness? And minus consciousness, what is an object? Just imagine - even the being of the object, which consciousness is running towards, has a value only when consciousness cognises it, and invests it with understanding and appreciation, etc. Minus this, it is nothing. It is something inert.

Now, we have to go further into the deeper problems of the meditative procedures, which are nothing but procedures in the analysis of the relation between consciousness and the object. In the beginning, they look as if they are completely isolated things, where one has absolutely no connection with the other. Later on, they appear to be fraternal in their relationship, one requiring the other for existence and activity. And later still, they will be found to be inseparable in their character, and ultimately inseparable in existence itself.

These three types of knowledge or experience are described in the eighteenth chapter of the Bhagavadgita, where everything regarded as being dissociated is the lowest kind of knowledge, and where everything regarded as being related internally, by an interpenetrating structure, is higher knowledge. But the highest knowledge is that conscious experience where even internal relationship is not called for, but 'being' includes all the objects and stands unconnected with externality, but is perpetually related to consciousness. The last stage of experience is where consciousness need not run towards objects for being, but recognises the being of all objects within its own bosom. This is the goal of life.

CHAPTER 24

AFFILIATION WITH LARGER WHOLES

Among the many recipes that Sage Patanjali prescribes in his system of yoga for the control of the mind, a masterstroke is given in a single aphorism as a prescription for every type of mental modification when he says, *tatpratiṣedhārtham ekatattvā abhyāsaḥ* (I.32): The practice of one reality checks the movement of the mind. It means that the movement of the mind is due to its weddedness to various realities, and not to one reality. *Ekatattva* is one truth, one being, one substance, one reality - anything that is single and comprehensive. The practice of one reality is the ultimate remedy for all psychological modifications. But, as far as the human mind is concerned, there is no such thing as one reality. The human mind sees many realities and, therefore, it has manifold approaches to the various forms of reality which it sees in the world.

The mind moves only to realities, and never to unrealities. There is no such thing as the mind getting attracted to unreal things. Anything that it considers to be real becomes the object of its consideration and action. The subsequent transcendence of a particular concept of reality does not in any way affect the mind from getting interested in whatever level of reality it considers valuable at a given moment in time. In every stage of life the mind is confronted only by realities, because should it be convinced that its perceptions or cognitions are unreal, it will not bother itself about them. A reality is that which can fulfil a particular need at a given time; whether or not it is ultimately real is a different question altogether. A thing may not be ultimately real, and yet it may be real enough to satisfy a particular requisition of the mind under a given condition.

Sometimes we have false illnesses which can be set right by false remedies. The remedy and the illness should be of the same category. In dream, we may sometimes feel very hungry. It is possible that even after a heavy dinner, we may dream of hunger when we go to bed. Is this hunger in the dream real, or is it unreal? If it is unreal, we would not feel it. Why would we feel it if it is unreal? So when it is felt, it is real. We may have lunch in a dream. Is this lunch real, or is it unreal? If it is unreal, it cannot appease the hunger of the dreaming individual. We have a dream hunger, appeased by a dream lunch. The hunger in dream cannot be called real if we compare it with the waking state, nor can we regard the lunch that we have in dream as real when compared to the waking lunch. But that is a different matter; we are not asked to compare here. We have to take things as they are. The condition of the mind in dream, which makes it feel an intense hunger, is commensurate with the nature of the food that is given to it in that very same dream condition. The dream food can satisfy the dream hunger because they are in the same space-time level; they are not in different degrees of reality.

We should not compare the dream experience with the waking experience. There is happiness and sorrow in dream, as well; we can be overjoyed, or be in deep grief. Why should we be in joy or the state of grief in dream when the causes thereof are unreal? All the causes of experience in dream can be regarded as unreal, as we would all say, when comparing those experiences with the waking state. But if they are unreal, we will not experience them at all. The very fact that we experience them shows that we have drawn them to our consciousness and made them a part of our being.

So, the real is a peculiar set-up of affairs, a condition or an environment which acts

upon a particular state of mind and produces a particular type of experience. If in great fright we jump over a piece of rope thinking it is a snake, we may start perspiring and have tremors in the body. A false snake can create real perspiration. Although on a later comparative experience the snake might have been found to be unreal, when we perceived something to be a snake, at that particular moment of perception it was real enough to create a reaction in our physiological and psychological system. The mind has so many realities of this type in the world of experience, and because different realities satisfy different needs of the mind, it goes to these realities. We should not ask here whether this particular reality is ultimately real, because we are not concerned with it, and the mind is not going to accept this argument. The mind is not concerned with ultimate realities. It is concerned with realities as it sees them, conceives them and experiences them. So we can understand the reason why the mind is drawn towards objects which it considers as real.

Patanjali's point is that as long as diverse realities are cognised by the mind, it is impossible to withdraw the mind from them, because the mind has already been convinced that they are realities and, therefore, it has to relate itself to these realities in a particular manner. There is no question of control of the mind as long as there are realities which are multifarious in character. The rays of the mind, which go out in the form of cognition, can be drawn back and the energy of the mind is conserved - but this can be done only when there is a flowing of the mind towards a single reality. Our difficulty is that there is no such thing as a single reality in this world. Where is that One Reality, of which Patanjali speaks or advises? Every reality is as good as any other reality, under different conditions. The One Reality of which Patanjali speaks, and of which yoga speaks in general, is that transcendent comprehensiveness where the lower realities are subsumed so that the mind will not find a need to go to the lower levels because of the satisfaction it achieves through contact with the higher real.

The question may be asked, what is the higher real and what is the lower real? Here again, we have the analogy of the comparative reality between dream and waking. A beggar who has very little to eat in his waking state will not be sorry that he has missed his beautiful dinner in dream. Let us suppose a beggar was dreaming that he was an emperor, and a delicious meal was served to him in his dream palace, and suddenly he awakens to the discovery that he is a beggar on the street. Will he feel sorry and cry, "Oh, what has happened to me? I was an emperor. I was enjoying my life, but now I have become a beggar. It would be better to go back to that condition of emperorship." The beggar will not be grieved over his waking from dream. He will not think that he has lost something valuable, though it is true that he has lost a great thing - that he has lost his kingdom, wealth and joys and is now sitting on the street like a beggar. From a certain viewpoint, it is a loss. But the beggar would rather be on the street with a crumb of bread in the waking condition than to be rejoicing in emperorship in dream. This is because a higher degree of reality is experienced by his consciousness during waking.

What satisfies us is not dinner, or lunch, or a kingdom, but the degree of consciousness that is experienced. This is a very subtle point which we should not miss in our analysis. If a kingdom, retinue, army, dinner, lunch and whatnot can satisfy a person, then a dream kingdom would be much better than a waking state beggarship - it would be better to go on sleeping and dreaming about emperorship than to live as a beggar in the waking state. But he would rather be a beggar in the waking state than be sleeping and dreaming of emperorship. The penury and

hardship of the beggar in the waking condition does not in any way make that condition inferior to the dreaming state, notwithstanding the fact that in dream he had an imaginary kingdom to experience and enjoy.

The consciousness that is experienced in the waking state is superior in its degree or quality to the one that we are subjected to in dream. We are happy that we are awake, and what we are associated with is a different and secondary matter. The mere fact of getting up from sleep is a joy, because we feel that we are in a state which can be called a reality of a higher degree and inclusiveness than the lower one, which is dream. *Ekatattva*, or one reality, is that in which all of the lower values are included in a higher degree of comprehensiveness, just as the waking consciousness includes within itself all of the values of the dream world. Instead of contemplating upon the diverse values of the dream world, one would be content to restrict one's attention to the greater values of the waking life, because they include the lower values of dream. Although it is true that a comparison can be made between the dream life and the waking life and we feel satisfied that waking values are higher than dream values, there is no reality superior to the realities that are experienced in the waking world and, therefore, any further comparison becomes difficult. We are in a waking world, and we have not seen anything superior to this. This is the final thing that we have seen.

Thus, any further comparison to a still higher degree of reality - superior to the waking one - is unthinkable to us human beings. But we sometimes find ourselves in moods which give us inklings of the fact that there are things higher than what we see with our eyes. If there are not things higher than what we experience through the senses, why is it that we feel restlessness in our life? Why are we not content with things in this world? What is it that makes us feel that there should be something else, something different than what we are experiencing at present? The universal restlessness and anxiety, and the hope that is experienced by every human mind should be indicative of the presence and the possibility something superior to the present sensory experiences.

There cannot be hope or aspiration if something higher does not exist. It is the existence of something higher than all empirical life that draws us towards itself in a process called psychological aspiration or expectation of a better condition. Every day we expect a better state. Even a person sunk in sorrow imagines that tomorrow will be better, and that his condition may perhaps improve. It is rare to find people who are so pessimistic as to think that everything is dead wrong, and tomorrow will perhaps be worse than today. There is always a hope: "After all, tomorrow will be better. Conditions will improve, things will be better and I shall be happier." This hope is but a symbol, a significance of the existence of a condition superior to the present one. That superior condition is naturally inclusive of all the lower values. When we get something higher, we do not think of the lower - not because we have lost the lower, but because in the higher we have found all that was in the lower.

For the purpose of controlling the mind, we have to adjust ourselves to the concept of a higher reality. That is what is meant by *ekatattva abhyasah*, by which there is *pratisedha* or checking of the modifications of the mind. The introduction of the concept of a higher reality into the mind can be done either by logical analysis or by reliance upon scriptural statements. Great texts like the Upanishads, the Vedas and such other mystical texts, proclaim the existence of a Universal Reality which can be reached through various grades of ascent into more and more comprehensive levels. The happiness of the human being is not supposed to be complete happiness.

In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad and the Taittareya Upanishad we have, for instance, an enumeration of the gradations of happiness, which is a wonderful incentive for the mind to concentrate on higher values. In the Taittiriya Upanishad we are told that human happiness is the lowest kind of happiness, and not the highest happiness, as we imagine. We think that perhaps we are superior to animals, plants and stones, etc., and biologists of the modern world are likely to tell us that we are Homo sapiens, far advanced in the process of evolution, perhaps having reached the topmost level of evolution. It is not true. The Upanishad says that we are in a very low condition.

Essentially, the Upanishad tells us that all of the happiness of mankind put together is but a jot - only a drop. Let us imagine the state of happiness of a healthy, young individual who is the king of the whole world. We know that there is no such person as a king of the whole world, yet let us imagine such a person who is the emperor of the whole world. No one is in opposition to this emperor. He is vibrantly healthy and youthful, and has all the powers of enjoyment. Everything in the world is under him. What is his happiness? The happiness of this emperor of the entire world can be regarded as the lowest jot of happiness.

One hundred times the happiness of the emperor of this world is the happiness of the *pitris*, another level which is superior to the physical world. One hundred times the happiness of the *pitris* is the happiness of the *gandharvas*, who are celestial musicians in a world which is still higher than that of the *pitris*. One hundred times the happiness of the *gandharvas* is the happiness of the celestials in heaven - the *devas*, as we call them. One hundred times the happiness of these celestials is the happiness of Indra, the king of the gods. One hundred times the happiness of the king of the gods is the happiness of the preceptor, the Guru of the gods - Brihaspati. One hundred times the happiness of Brihaspati is the happiness of Prajapati, the Creator - Brahma. One hundred times the happiness of Brahma the Creator is the happiness of Virat, the Supreme. Beyond that is Hiranyagarbha, and beyond that, Ishvara, and beyond Ishvara is the Absolute.

So where are we in this scheme? What is our happiness? It is the happiness of a cup of coffee, cup of tea, or a sweet - which has no meaning compared to these calculations of astounding existences which are transcendent to human comprehension. When I say a hundred times, it is not merely a mathematical increase of the quantity of happiness; it is also a corresponding increase of the quality of happiness. As mentioned earlier, the quality of happiness in waking life is superior to the happiness in dream; it is not merely quantitative increase, but is also a qualitative increase. The joy of waking life is greater and more intense than the quality of joy in dream. So these calculations given in the Upanishad mean an increase of happiness one hundred times, both in quantity and in quality, so that when we go to the top, we are in an uncontrollable ecstasy of unbounded bliss.

The mind can be brought to concentrate itself upon higher degrees of reality through the reading of scriptural testimony, which can be corroborated by the inductive logic and deductive reasoning, etc. of our own analytical power. *Sruti* and *yukti*, as the great masters tell us, should both come to our aid in bringing the mind to a point of concentration on a higher reality than what it is experiencing now through the senses.

The urge that we feel from within to acquire more and more things, and to enjoy greater and greater degrees of happiness, is an insignia of the existence of such states

where we can have that type of experience. An intellectual urge, moral urge, spiritual urge and aesthetic urge are all indications of the presence of certain values which cannot be comprehended at present by the powers of sense and reasoning. There is an irresistible desire to ask for more and more, and we cannot ask for more and more unless this 'more' exists. We will not ask for an empty thing. The idea of the more cannot arise in a mind which has not sensed the presence of that 'more' in some subtle manner. The mind has various levels of perception. Although through the conscious level it cannot directly perceive the existence of these higher levels of reality, it can sense the presence of these higher realities through other forms of apparatus that it has within, and it is due to the action of these inward sensations that it feels agonised and restless in any given condition of lower experience.

If we are not possessed of even the least tendency to recognise a higher value of life, we will be happy - we will be perfectly contented. It is the impact of a higher state of life upon the present condition of existence that is the cause for our unhappiness and restlessness. If that impact were not to be there at all, there would be no contact between the present state of existence and the future possible state. When this contact is not there, there will be no asking for it, no aspiration for it, no feeling about it and, therefore, no unhappiness about the present state of affairs. So, we should be perfectly contented, but we are not; we are unhappy. We do not want the present condition to continue because we feel that there is inadequacy, shortcoming and all sorts of ugliness which we want to overcome and rectify, but which we cannot execute and achieve unless a higher condition does exist, and becomes practicable.

This is the conclusion arrived at by certain faculties of prehension which are operating in the subtle layers of the mind, invisible even to the mind itself in its conscious level. In our own six-foot bodily individuality, we have possibilities of the whole cosmic experience in a minute, microscopic form. The seeds of universal powers and achievements are hiddenly present in the cells of our own individual body. The vast tree of cosmic experience, the blossoming of universal realisation, is latent as a seed in the very fibre of our present individual existence. It is this that occasionally makes us brood over the possibilities of higher achievements in life and never allows us to rest contented with what we are at present. So, by these methods of self-analysis and study of scriptures, etc., we should be able to bring the mind back from its concentration on diverse realities of the sense-world and fix it upon a higher reality so that its distractions get lessened as much as possible.

A distraction is the attention of the mind on diversity. Concentration is the withdrawal of the mind from diversity, and its attention bestowed upon a more unifying system of values. As we go higher and higher, the diversities become less and less. They all get included in a more comprehensive system, which includes all of the diversities which the mind originally perceived as independent existences. This is how the mind can be brought from its usual meanderings in the world of sense and made to concentrate itself on higher realities. By educative methods it has to be told, again and again, that a higher plane does exist and is implicit in one's own experience. It is not outside; it is hidden, latent potential, and it can be manifest by proper methods.

Infinity is hidden in every grain of sand. It can be directly contacted by the mind, by the application of suitable methods or techniques. These techniques are nothing but the affirmation of Reality in every particular form of reality, which in ordinary life is mistaken for an absolutely independent existence. These so-called absolutely independent existences called realities, which attract the mind in different directions,

are aspects of a more comprehensive system which includes these realities.

Therefore, it would be profitable for the mind to pay attention to this higher system, rather than to pay attention to a single, isolated individuality which it has misconstrued as a whole reality by itself. No particular individual, nothing that is isolated, can be regarded as an entire reality. It is only an aspect or a face of reality and, therefore, it is not advantageous to the mind to engage itself entirely in any kind of action in respect of that particular form of reality. It is disadvantageous, because a part cannot give the whole.

It is, therefore, essential for the mind to affiliate itself with the characters of larger wholes, so that in these larger experiences it not only gains greater control over the environment and its own self, but also experiences a greater intensity of happiness, which follows automatically with the experience of larger dimensions of being.

CHAPTER 25

SADHANA - INTENSIFYING A LIGHTED FLAME

In the practice of one reality, *ekatattva abhyasah*, mentioned by Sage Patanjali in one of his *sutras* for the purpose of restraining the modifications of the mind, there are, again, grades of approach. The one reality is not necessarily the Absolute Reality, though that is the aim, ultimately. As was mentioned previously, a reality, for the purpose of practice, is that condition which can fulfil a particular need of a specific state of mind under a given condition. So until the Absolute Reality is reached, all other realities are relative realities. Every reality, as far as we are concerned empirically, is relative - subject to transcendence. Nevertheless, it is a reality to us, which only goes to prove that we are also only relative realities. We, as individuals, are not absolute realities and, therefore, we are satisfied with what is relative. We are not in daily contact with the Absolute; what we are in contact with is a relative reality. And inasmuch as the subject experiencing and the object experienced are on the same level or degree of reality, it goes without saying that the empirical subjects that we all are come under relative reality, and not the Absolute Reality.

In the concentration of the mind on one reality, *ekatattva*, what is intended is that the attention should be focused on a system or order of values which is immediately superior to, or transcendent to, the current state of affairs, the present state of experience, and the conditions through which we are passing through at this moment. Anything which can include particulars in a more organised whole can be regarded as a higher reality for this purpose. There are tentative realities created for the purpose of practical convenience by organisations, associations or systems which we have created for the purpose of subjugating the individual ego and compelling it to affiliate itself to a larger body to which also it ought to belong and is made to belong.

I can give you examples of quantitative systems which we create in our practical daily life for the purpose of overcoming the urges of the ego and connecting it with wider or larger wholes. A physical individual, or a bodily person, is the lowest unit of reality as far as our experience goes. An utterly selfish individual is one who looks upon the body as the ultimate reality, and the only reality - there is nothing else. Now, this is the grossest form of egoism, where the bodily individuality is regarded as the only reality and everything else is completely ignored. This is the animal's way of thinking, to some extent. The tiger has no concern for anything except its own personal existence, and it can pounce on anyone for the sake of its own security and existence.

The animalistic way of thinking persists in the human level also, and often - many times, in fact - the urge to assert one's bodily individuality vehemently gains the upper hand, though rationally it would not be possible for anyone to justify the exclusive reality of a bodily personality. Such was the primitive condition of people in prehistoric times, or Paleolithic times, as they say, when human beings were not yet evolved to the present condition of social understanding. In the biological history of mankind, right from creation as far as the mind can go, it is said that the evolution of the human individual, right from the lowest levels, included certain conditions of human existence which were inseparable from animal life. The caveman, the Neanderthal man and such other primitive types of existence point to an animal mind operating through a human body, where cannibalism was not unfamiliar. One could eat another, because the animal mind was not completely absent even in the

human body, and there was insecurity on account of it being possible for one man to eat another man. As history tells us, it took ages for the primitive mind to realise the necessity for individuals to come into agreement among themselves for the purpose of security. If I start jumping upon you and you start jumping upon me, both of us will be unhappy and insecure, and you would not know whether you will be safe and I cannot know if I will be safe. This sort of thing would be most undesirable.

It is said by anthropologists, historians of mankind's evolution, and political historians, that a state was reached when it was felt necessary to organise people into groups, and this was the beginning of the governmental system. A government is nothing but an agreement among people in order that there may not be warfare among individuals and attacks every day. Otherwise there would be chaos and confusion, and anyone could attack at any moment, for any reason whatsoever. Therefore, an agreement was made, an organisation was set up, a rule was framed and a system was brought forth under which it was obligatory on the part of individuals to obey certain principles laid down by groups, of which some people were made leaders. It does not mean that these leaders were kings or autocrats; they were the governors of law, the dispensers of justice, and the instruments for the maintenance of order in the group of people who found it necessary to bring about this system.

Here we have a higher reality than the individual, quantitatively speaking, though qualitatively we cannot say that there was an improvement. While there is a quantitative improvement in an organisation or a set-up such as a government, in the sense that an individual is made a part of a larger body so that the egoism of the individual cannot operate as forcefully as it could have operated when it was left alone and given a long rope, a consideration for the welfare of other individuals in the system becomes obligatory on the part of every individual on account of the presence of this order and system. So far, so good. From the point of view of the quantity of the reality that has been introduced into life - the mathematical measure of the order that has been set up - we can say that a society is a larger reality than the individual. A nation is a larger reality than a community, and the entire set-up of mankind, the international system, may be regarded as a still larger reality than a single nation. This is a quantitative evaluation of the reality toward which the human mind seems to be aiming, for the purpose of bringing peace on earth, happiness, etc.

But, this is not the type of reality which Patanjali had in mind, though this type of reality cannot be completely ignored. While it is true that a social system is a quantitatively higher reality than an individual body, because for obvious reasons life without it would be impracticable, it is not wholly true that an ordered society is qualitatively superior to the individual, which is the reason that insecurity within society still persists. Even with the best government there can be insecurity and unhappiness because, after all, individuals are behind this quantitative system called this ordered whole. A hundred million thinking people cannot always be qualitatively superior to one thinking man. After all, it is man who is thinking, and not God. We must know that. A hundred million people thinking, means only people are thinking - only man is thinking. So qualitatively, it is only human thinking, though quantitatively it has a larger force on account of the inclusion of many individuals.

This is a very interesting subject in political science, where political thinkers differ in their opinions as to whether there is a total absence of improvement in quality when there is social order, and there is only a quantitative increase, or whether there is also an element of an increase of quality in thinking. This has led to divergent opinions

among statesmen and political philosophers - right from Plato and Aristotle onwards, through to Chanakya and other thinkers in India - where the opinion swung like a pendulum. One side held that there is absolutely no improvement in quality, though there is a large improvement in quantity, and the other side thought that there is an element of qualitative superiority. We are not going to discuss this subject at present, as it is outside the jurisdiction of our current topic.

However, the point on hand is that a larger reality should also be qualitatively superior to the discrete particulars from which the mind is supposed to be withdrawn for the purpose of the practice of yoga. Though it is somewhat easy to bring about a quantitative increase in the concept of reality by methods such as the ones I just mentioned, it is a little more difficult to introduce a qualitative increase into the concept of reality. This is the main difficulty for everyone. However much we may concentrate on God, we will not be able to improve upon the human concept, even when there is a concept of God. So we feel unhappy even when we are meditating on God, because we have not improved the quality but have only increased the quantity, so that we may think of God as a large human individual - a massive individual, as expansive as the universe itself, for example. That is quite wonderful, but still this human thought does not leave us.

Even when we think of the Creator as a transcendent father, the anthropomorphic idea still persists and stultifies the aim at introducing a higher quality of thought into the concept of God. That is why we are unhappy even in meditation, even in our highest spiritual exalted moods. Even when we are exalted, we are quantitatively exalted; qualitatively, we are very poor. We are unhappy in some way or the other, and no one can make us happy. A tremendous effort is necessary to introduce a superior quality in the concept of reality. The difficulty lies in the mind being the only instrument that we have for doing anything whatsoever, and who is it who will introduce a higher order of value or a greater quality into this concept, other than the mind itself? But how can we expect the mind to conceive of a higher quality of reality other than the one in which it has found itself at the present moment? How can we jump over our own skin? Is it possible? How can we expect the mind to think of a reality superior in quality to the one in which it is living at present, and with which it is identified wholly? An immediate answer to this question cannot be given. However, there is an answer.

Sadhana is a very mysterious process. It is not like the ordinary efforts that we put forth into our workaday life. Every effort, even the first effort in the practice of *sadhana*, brings about an improvement. The impetus that is created by the first step that we take will carry us forward with a greater impetus towards the next step by the generation of a force which is superior to the powers of the mind in its ordinary operations. Also, there is a peculiar something in human nature which is called 'aspiration'. It is difficult to understand what it actually means. It is not merely a hoping for something in the ordinary sense. It is a surge of the soul's force from within, and we must underline these words, 'soul's force', for it is not merely the mental faculties. The soul's force rises up, wells up within us in a totality of action, drawing forth the whole value that we are at present, and pointing to something which is wholly other than the present whole from which the soul is being drawn.

The meritorious deeds that we performed in previous lives, the good *karmas* of our past produce a force called '*apurva*' in Mimamsa parlance. The good *karmas* of the past are present in the mind even now as a kind of *prarabdha*, and when the *prarabdha* is of a *sattvic* nature, it permits the rise of a novel type of asking by the

soul, which is called spiritual aspiration. It is this peculiar context - which is inscrutable, of course, to anyone's mind - which brings a person in contact with a Guru. How we come in contact with a Guru cannot be understood. It is worked up by mysterious forces from within that are associated with the good deeds of our past lives, etc., and which permit good actions in this present birth. Such forces make it possible for us to think divine thoughts and to take the initial step in the practice of yoga. It is this initial step, as mentioned, which is capable of generating a peculiar potency, enough to carry us forward to the next step. Like the chain reaction of an atomic bomb burst, every step is automatically an urge towards another step.

The more we practise *sadhana*, the stronger we become and the greater is our capacity to understand, to enlarge our perspective of thinking and to contact reality in deeper profundity. Many factors operate in spiritual practice. The good deeds that we did in the past is one factor. The other factors are the associations that we have established in society with wise people in this present birth, the practical experience that we gain by living in this world, the initiation that we receive from the Guru, and the wisdom that we acquire from the Guru. Finally, the most mysterious, of course, is the grace of God Himself, which is perennially operating, perpetually working, and infinitely and most abundantly contributing to the onward march of the soul towards its goal.

The practice of yoga is nothing but a conscious participation in the universal working of nature itself and, therefore, it is the most natural thing that we can do, and the most natural thing that we can conceive. There can be nothing more natural than to participate consciously in the evolutionary work of the universe, which is the attempt of the cosmos to become Self-conscious in the Absolute. Evolution is nothing but a movement of the whole universe towards Self-awareness - this is called God-realisation. Our every activity - from the cup of tea that we take, to the breath that we breathe, from even the sneeze that we jet forth, to the least action that we perform, from even a single thought which occurs in the mind - everything is a part of this cosmic operation which is the evolution of the universe towards Self-realisation. Therefore, the practice of yoga is the most natural thing that we can think of and the most necessary duty of a human being. Nothing can be more obligatory on our part than this duty. It is from this point of view, perhaps, that Lord Krishna proclaims, towards the end of the Bhagavadgita, *sarvadharmānparityajya māmekam śaraṇam vraja* (B.G. XVIII.66): Renounce every other duty and come to Me for rescue - which means to say, take resort in the law of the Absolute. This is the practice of yoga, and every other *dharma* is subsumed under it and included within it, as every drop and every river is in the ocean. In this supreme duty, every other duty is included. There is no need to think of every individual, discrete and isolated duty, because all duties are included in this one duty, which is the mother of all duties.

This peculiar feature of spiritual practice, *sadhana*, being so difficult to understand intellectually, cannot be regarded as merely an individual's affair. *Sadhana* is God's affair, ultimately. Spiritual *sadhana* is God's grace working. Though it appears that is individual effort, it only seems to be so, but really it is something else. Not even the greatest of philosophical thinkers, such as Shankara, could logically answer the question, "How does knowledge arise in the *jiva*?" How can it be said that individual effort produces knowledge of God? Knowledge of God cannot rise by individual effort, because individual effort is so puny, so inadequate to the purpose, to the task, that we cannot expect such an infinite result to follow from the finite cause. The concept of God is an inscrutable event that takes place in the human mind. Can we

imagine an ass thinking about God? However much it may put forth effort and go on trying its best throughout its life, the concept of God will never arise in an ass's mind or in a buffalo's mind. How it arises is a mystery. Suddenly, it comes.

It has been said that all great things are mysteries. They are not calculated effects produced logically by imagined causes, but are mysteries, which is another way of saying that all of this is unthinkable by the human mind. Knowledge somehow arises. One fine morning we get up and find that we are fired with a love for God. What has happened to us? Why is it that we suddenly we say, "Oh, today I am something different." Why we are something different today? From where has this inspiration come? Nobody knows what has happened. If we read the lives of great masters, sages and saints, we will find that they were all suddenly fired with a longing which they could not explain, and no one can explain ordinarily. That knowledge, that aspiration, that love of God has not come from books. It has not come from any imaginable source. It has simply come - that is all. How? Nobody knows.

Inasmuch as it is a super-logical mystery, there would be no necessity on our part to investigate the causes thereof and the methods thereof, logically or scientifically, beyond a certain limit, though logical and scientific thinking is a help to corroborate the presence of this aspiration. The aspiration is already present within us. It is not created by logical thinking and, therefore, such logical thinking is only a bulwark that we create to reinforce the aspiration that is already there. We already have a faith in God. We already believe that God-realisation is the goal of life. This belief has taken possession of us already, and now all that we do is only an ancillary process which is contributory to strengthening this aspiration and enabling it to become more and more potent and influential in our daily life. We cannot create a concept of God by any amount of effort.

Sadhana is nothing but the intensifying of this flame that has already been lit up in us by God Himself, ultimately. You have been led to this study due to God's grace. It is not because you have money to purchase a book. It is not money that has brought you these discourses, it is not your effort that has brought you to these discourses - it is nothing of the kind. It is a divine mystery that has operated in a very inscrutable and marvellous manner for a purpose which is cosmic in significance, and not merely individual, as we may imagine. You have been led to this study for a cosmic purpose, and a divine purpose, which is a coincidence and a collocation of factors which can be understood only by the Cosmic Thinker, God Himself. I have always been holding that, ultimately, it appears to be God who is doing *sadhana* for God-realisation, and nobody else can do it; and meditation is nothing but God thinking God.

CHAPTER 26

THE GUNAS OF PRAKRITI

Every fulfilment is the result of a necessary relinquishment. There is always a necessity to abandon something when we want to attain something. The attainment of an object always calls for a readjustment of conditions such that it is tantamount to an abandonment of those precedent conditions that are inconsistent with those necessary for the purpose of the longed-for attainment. The practice of *abhyasa*, particularly *ekatattva abhyasah* mentioned by Patanjali in his great *sutra*, is coupled with what is known as *vairagya* or the spirit of renunciation - a most difficult thing to understand, and a still more difficult thing to practise. What is it that we are going to relinquish so that *abhyasa* or practice may become steady and effective? Practise becomes ineffective and does not appear to produce the expected results on account of the absence of this essential requisite called *vairagya*, or renunciation.

Abhyāsa vairāgyābhyām tan nirodhaḥ (I.12): The control of the modifications of the mind is made possible by the practice of concentration on one reality, and by *vairagya*, or the relinquishment of falsehood. Within every one of our experiences in this world there is an element of falsehood, though there is also an element of positivity, on account of which they seem to be drawing our attention towards them. Nevertheless, they are covered over with dust, dirt, mud and whatnot, and these aspects have to be carefully eliminated from their essentiality. The difficulty in the practice of *vairagya* or renunciation lies in the difficulty of discriminating between false values and true values in life.

True values and false values get mixed up in such a way that we always mistake one for the other due to erroneous judgement and wrong perception through the senses. Our experiences are illusory and do not always reveal the fact behind them. We have various kinds of experience every day, and none of them can be called wholly true, though there is something in them which is elusive in character. Due to the mysterious character of this elusive something, neither are we able to get rid of these experiences, nor are we satisfied with them. We are in a set of circumstances such that we can neither completely get away from them to avoid the painful aspects that are present in them, nor can we completely wed ourselves to them on the supposition that there is something worthwhile in them. They seem to have a twofold character, one getting emphasised at one time and the other at another time, so that we swing from one state to another state without being able to get satisfied with any one in particular.

All of our experiences are ultimately of such a nature that they have to be abandoned one day or the other, says Patanjali. "The world is made of such stuff as dreams are made of," as Shakespeare put it. *Pariṇāma tāpa saṁskāra duḥkaiḥ guṇavṛitti virodhāt ca duḥkham eva sarvaṁ vivekinaḥ* (II.15). This is a pertinent aphorism of Patanjali, relevant to the practice of *vairagya* or renunciation. All is pain in this world, if we properly investigate into the truth of things. There is no real joy anywhere. Even the so-called joy is not really a joy - it is only a form of pain appearing as joy. If we know this truth, we will not run after the joys of this world. The joys and satisfactions of this world are pains coming in camouflage, deceiving us and putting on a counterfeit face so that we are kept under perpetual deception throughout our lives, and we are never allowed to open our eyes to see the way things are. The consequence of enjoyment in this world is painful, says Patanjali.

What is known as *parinama* is described in this particular *sutra*, pariṇāma tāpa saṃskāra duḥkaiḥ guṇavṛitti virodhāt ca duḥkham eva sarvaṃ vivekinaḥ (II.15): For a person of understanding, everything is wretched and painful in this world. If there is no understanding, everything looks all right and beautiful and happy; but let there be understanding, and we will see the truth of things. “Oh, it is horrifying! It is not as happy as it appears on the surface.” The consequence of joy is sorrow. It is very strange, indeed, that the consequence of joy should be sorrow. We rather expect that the result of joy would be joy only. No, not so, says Patanjali. Whenever there is an occasion for joy in this world, a sorrow follows it afterwards. If today we laugh, tomorrow we shall cry; this is how the world is made. Whoever laughs today shall weep tomorrow because of the peculiar features of which the world is made, and of which we have no knowledge, and cannot have knowledge.

The consequence or the result of happiness or pleasure in this world is grief or sorrow, the reason being that joys are not really satisfying. No pleasure in this world can satisfy us, because it is not a pleasure at all. It is a counterfeit coin that comes in the middle and tries to introduce itself in the midst of true values, just as a false currency note or a false coin can get mixed with the real ones and then pass as currency. The false values that deceive us are responsible for the grief that follows the pleasures of life. The pleasures of life are not really pleasures, because they are brought about by false causes. False causes cannot produce right results. Why are we happy? What is the reason behind our pleasure?

Every pleasure in life is an effect produced by a cause. If the cause is real, the pleasure would be real. But is the cause real? Go deep into it and find out. The cause is an inscrutable, un-understandable set of circumstances; and if we go deep into the nature of the cause of any happiness in this world, we will find that we cannot locate it. We cannot know why we are happy and where the pleasure lies. We are simply tossed from one centre to another centre - tossed with such vehemence and force that we have no time to think and our brains become giddy. If a person is to be deceived and not allowed to think properly, it is essential to brainwash the person. False ideas are hammered into that person, again and again, as some politicians are accustomed to doing, and this repeated hammering of false ideas produces such a habit of thinking in the mind that it loses control over its essential way of thinking. It is impossible to find the cause of happiness, by any stretch of the imagination. We are simply happy without knowing why we are happy. If we know why we are happy, then we will never have the occasion to be happy again, because we will know that there is something seriously wrong at the back of things.

We are pushed and pulled by forces of which we have no knowledge, and over which we have no control. Certain biological conditions inside are mostly responsible for our pleasures, or so-called joys. These biological conditions are connected with sociological and psychological states. We cannot understand all these things. Even the best sociologist or psychologist cannot understand them, because they are very, very deep-rooted. Our existence is a multi-faceted complex and not an indivisible unit, which cannot even be called this body. We are not merely a physical body. Connected with this physical existence is also a social aspect, and we are well aware of the degree to which we are connected to human society and how much its conditions can influence our joy or sorrow. We have a physical constitution, a biological set-up, and a psychological pattern of thinking, which is also influenced by a social order. And more than all this, there is the natural set-up of things - the conditions, or the rules or laws of nature itself.

These things press upon us from every side for a particular reason of their own, and to yield to a pressure is a joy. This is a very interesting thing for us to understand. Whenever we yield to a very pressing, emphatic, annoying and irritating compulsion, to which we have been accustomed for a long time and which we have made a part of our nature due to a habitual frequenting with it, we immediately feel a sense of relief from tension.

Suppose you are carrying a heavy load on your head - perhaps two mounds of wheat. Upon throwing down the weight, you feel happy. A great joy has come because you have thrown down the load. You were unhappy due to the nervous tension caused by carrying such a weight, and when it is thrown, there is happiness. Can you call this happiness, merely because you threw off a load from your head? Very strange, indeed. When you had no load on your head, you were neither happy nor unhappy; you were not even thinking about it. Suppose I put one mound on your head, and then remove it - you would feel happy. The very moment I removed it, a feeling of happiness would come over you for no reason other than the act of removing the load and throwing it down. If the absence of a load on the head is to cause you happiness, you must be very happy just now. All of you must be terribly happy, because you have no load on your heads. How terribly happy you must be, and all because you have no load on your heads. But you are not happy. So why don't I just put a load on your heads, and then remove it? Immediately, you will be happy. Now, look at this strange, peculiar, causative factor behind your happiness. It is not merely the absence of a load that causes you happiness, in which case you would all be happy just now. I must put a load on your head and then throw it down - this is what you want.

This is what happens to us every day. A load is kept on the entire nervous system by social conditions, biological conditions and natural conditions, and we have no knowledge of any of these conditions. We are ignorant of social laws, ignorant of physical laws and ignorant of biological laws, because we are utter slaves of these conditions. An utter slave, a bonded slave, cannot know anything. He is simply an automaton, a machine driven by the master. The masters are these forces - the biological forces, the natural forces and the social forces. We have been born into these forces like bonded slaves. If my father was a slave, I am also a slave because I am his son - hereditary slavishness is continuing. So we are all slaves and slaves and slaves, to the core of our being. We are slaves to forces which are external to us, which compel us, impress upon us, press upon us, and we are forced to yield to this pressure. A yielding to a pressure from outside cannot be called an act of freedom.

So, a joy in life is not an act of freedom; it is slavishness that makes us happy. What a pity. Can this be called a pleasure when it is caused by a slavish mentality? When we yield to a compulsive external pressure, do we call it freedom? Where there is no freedom, can there be happiness? And yet, how is it that we are happy merely because of the absence of freedom? This is the reason why every so-called joy in life is followed by a real sorrow. Sorrow is at the back, and the joy is only an outer whitewashing that has been given to the real substance that is behind it, namely, subjection to forces, which is the essence of pain and sorrow of every kind.

The consequences of the pleasures of life are only sorrows. No person who is happy today can be happy always. Today's joy is followed by tomorrow's sorrow, because these pleasures have not been caused by real or true factors; they are unreal factors. Also, says Patanjali, there is an ensuing anxiety. When we are enjoying a pleasure, we have an anxiety in our minds, "Oh, something is not all right." Who is telling us that

something is not all right? If something is not all right, how can it cause pleasure? How very strange, again. Everything is strange if we go into it.

A person who is possessed of an empirical happiness has an anxiety at the back of his mind, because there is a feeling that this pleasure may pass away. How long will it continue? How long we can be happy? We know that it will pass away in a very short time, and so there is a feeling of anxiety, "Oh, it is going. It is bound to go, and after that, what happens? I will be left at sea. I will lose it, and I will be unhappy once again." The pleasure comes like a lightning flash and vanishes, and because of the apprehension of such a possibility, the mind is unhappy even at the time of enjoying. A rich man is unhappy because of the fear that he may lose his wealth one day or the other. He knows very well: "I will lose it; something will happen." So even when we are possessed of a large amount of wealth, there is a subtle insecurity felt within which is gnawing away inside at the subconscious level. Therefore, the consequence of happiness is sorrow, and there is anxiety even at the time of enjoyment of the pleasure, so we are not secure; we are insecure, even at that time.

Another contributing factor is *samskara*, an impression produced in the mind at the time of an enjoyment. The mind is something like a gramophone plate on which there are grooves. If we sing a song into a microphone and arrange the mechanism in such a way that a copper plate is manufactured simultaneously for the production of a gramophone plate, the grooves are formed on the plate. Then we can go on replaying this plate and our song can be heard a million times. We have sung only once, and it can be repeated any number of times merely because of the grooves that have been formed on the plate. These grooves are the *samskaras*, the impressions formed by a particular experience. So, if there is an urge for the satisfaction of a particular desire, and it is fulfilled temporarily by false means as mentioned earlier, an impression is formed in the mind of that condition which produced that temporary happiness. Then what happens? There is a desire to repeat that happiness again and again on account of the presence of that groove in the mind, formed like a gramophone plate. A particular experience produces a particular groove in the mind. A *samskara* or impression is formed, a *vasana* is generated, and this groove becomes the cause for a further desire to repeat the experience indefinitely. No matter how many times we go on repeating it, we will never be satisfied. The second experience produces another groove that calls for further experience of a similar type which, when fulfilled, produces a third groove, a fourth groove, etc., until there are grooves and grooves and grooves in the mind, so that the mind becomes a dustbin. It is not at all a clarified, clean slate. It is a muddled something, a hotchpotch, a confused heap of unclear notions and hazy impressions of past experiences which have made us what we are today - hopeless individuals who can know neither the beginning nor the end of our life. So, the *samskara* that is formed as a consequence of a pleasurable experience is also a cause of sorrow, because that will be repeated again, not merely in this life but even in future lives. *Pariṇāma tāpa saṃskāra duḥkaiḥ* (II.15): For this reason, everything is painful in this world, says Patanjali. There is a last reason that he gives as to why things are unhappy, when he says, *guṇa vṛitti virodhāt ca duḥkham eva sarvaṃ vivekinaḥ* (II.15): These experiences are caused by the operations of the *gunas* called *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. We do not know why we are happy, for instance. The happiness that we experience is due to a sudden and temporary surge of *sattva guna* in our minds, maybe for a flash of a second, and the pressing down of *rajas* and *tamas* due to certain reasons.

The motion of *prakṛiti* or nature is something like the movement of a wheel. We

know that wheels have spokes, and the spokes move together with the movement of the wheel, as in a cart. When the vehicle moves, the wheel also moves, and when the wheel moves, the spokes also rotate. The spoke that is up or at the top comes down, and that which is down goes up. So there is a repeated going up and coming down of the spokes of the wheel when the wheel moves, on account of the motion of the vehicle. Likewise, nature is in perpetual motion - it is not static. Nothing can be permanent in this world. Everything moves. And in this motion, what actually moves is nothing but a set of conditions or forces called the *gunas* of *prakriti*, or nature, we may say - *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*.

What are these *gunas*? These *gunas* are the constituents of nature, the substance of *prakriti*. The tendency to stability of a particular condition, inertia as we call it, is what is known as *tamas*. The tendency to movement or action, and an urge towards external things is called *rajas*. *Sattva* is a peculiar thing which cannot be properly analysed, because it is a state which supervenes when both the conditions of *tamas* and *rajas* subside. *Sattva* is an equilibrated condition of the mind that is neither static nor inert - of an unconscious nature - nor is it an urge towards an external something. In the state of *sattva*, we are neither urged towards an external object, nor are we unconscious. We can imagine what that state is. What is that condition of mind where it is not thinking of an object and yet is not unconscious? That is *sattva*. But that state is very rare, and we cannot be in that condition for all times; either we are thinking of something outside, or we are asleep. But, is it possible to be in a condition where we are not sleeping, and yet not thinking of an object? How many times could such a state be experienced in life? *Sattva* is a *via-media* between *rajas* and *tamas*, a balance between inert unconsciousness and a diversifying, externalising urge towards objects of sense.

These *gunas* of *prakriti* are perpetually in motion, like the spokes of a wheel. The evolution of nature is similar to the movement of a vehicle, and these *gunas* are the spokes of the wheel of nature. When there is evolutionary movement, a movement of everything in the world, these conditions called the *gunas* are also set in motion. These *gunas* constitute not merely the external physical objects, but also the mind inside. The mind is also a part of nature - it is not a subject, *par excellence*. The mind is an object, ultimately speaking. Though the physical object is external to the mind, the mind itself is external to consciousness. So, from the point of view of pure consciousness, the mind is also an object; it is not a subject, though it appears as a subject in respect to physical objects outside. Inasmuch as the mind also stands in the position of an object, it comes within the law of nature and is conditioned by the *gunas*; it is constituted of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. In this movement of the three *gunas*, the mind is also set in motion. That is why the mind is restless.

The mind never rests for a moment, because it is urged by the law of evolution. When the universe evolves, moves forward, the mind and body and every blessed conceivable thing is drawn, dragged together by the force of the evolutionary urge. In this motion, the *gunas* of *prakriti* are not in a state of balance. They are perpetually moving. There is up and down, progression and retrogression, coming down and going up, etc., so that there is an unintelligible activity going on both outside and inside oneself. When the *rajas* spoke comes up, we are distressed and distracted, agonised and disturbed, and are placed in a state of insecurity and unhappiness. Sometimes we are disturbed and unhappy, and the moment we get up in the morning there is the feeling, "Oh, something is wrong. I am not all right." We do not know what has happened to us. We put on a Sunday face or a castor oil face and don't want

to speak to anybody. If someone asks what has happened, we reply, "I do not know. I am not well." This is *rajas* coming up. Sometimes in the morning we say, "I do not want to get up. I will sleep. Don't talk to me." This is *tamas*. Either we do not want to do anything at all and would like to be in a torpid condition on account of the supervening of *tamas* in the mind, or we are dejected and in a melancholy mood due to the operation of *rajas*.

Occasionally, due to a coincidence of various rare factors, especially when the mind comes in contact with certain conditions that it regards as desirable, there is a cessation of the activity of *rajas* and *tamas*. There is no such thing as an object, ultimately speaking - it is only a set of conditions, and the mind also is a set of conditions. When there is a temporary compromise between the internal set of conditions of the mind and the external set of conditions known as the object, there is a sudden flash of similarity, a sympathy established between the mind and the object. Then there is a flash of a so-called imagined unity between the subject and the object and, in that instant, happiness is experienced like a flash of lightning. The flash of happiness is occasioned by a temporary subjugation of *rajas* and *tamas*, brought about by this momentary sympathy established between the mind and its object outside, due to the equilibrium or the equality of the frequency in the operation of the mind and the character of the object.

Buddhist psychology is very fond of emphasising that all things in this world are unsubstantial, by which is meant that nothing in this world is solid - the solidity of an object is only an illusion created by the sympathy that has been established between the experiencing of a mental condition at a given moment of time and the prevailing condition outside at a particular point in space, with which these internal conditions get connected. This connection, temporarily established, creates the illusion of a permanent and solid object in front of the mind, and it feels happy by coming into contact with it.

The happiness which the subject experiences in its connection with the object is due to a temporary pressing down of the *rajasic* and the *tamasic* activity of nature, and the sympathetic character experienced between the mind and the object outside. This condition will suddenly go down when the other spoke comes up, namely *rajas* or *tamas*, so that immediately after the joy there is sorrow due to the coming up of *rajas* or *tamas*. So, *gunavritti virodhat* - on account of the opposition of the *gunas*, which are never in a state of equilibrium, there cannot be permanent happiness in this world.

For all these reasons, God bless us, there is only pain in this world. Therefore, withdraw yourself from attachment to things and resort to true practice of yoga, says Patanjali.

CHAPTER 27

PROBLEMS ARE A STATE OF MIND

A very significant term is used by Patanjali in his definition of renunciation, namely, *vasikara-samjna* (I.15): Consciousness of mastery is called renunciation. It is very pertinent to note that he uses the term 'consciousness' where it is a question of detachment, self-abnegation or renunciation. So, renunciation means a state of consciousness - this is what is very important to note. It is not a physical distance obtaining between the subject and its object, but a consciousness which arises within the subject in respect of the object. That particular degree of consciousness of freedom from objectivity, which is a requisite for the practice of yoga, in the language of Patanjali is called *vasikara-samjna*. This particular stage of *vairagya* or renunciation that Patanjali speaks about - *vasikara-samjna* - is the highest kind of *vairagya*. Patanjali does not speak of the lower types of *vairagya* in his aphorisms, perhaps because he thinks that they are insufficient for the purposes of yoga.

However, we may make note of these earlier stages. It is not that we suddenly rise to this level of *vasikara-samjna*, which means to say, a consciousness of having gained complete mastery over the object of one's cognition and perception. This consciousness of freedom and mastery does not arise suddenly - it arises very gradually, by systematic effort. The necessity for renunciation in life arises on account of the difficulties that we experience in life. Whenever there are pressing problems, harassing and annoying situations in life, we try to get rid of them by certain methods. This is *vairagya* - a sense that arises within us which tells us we should be free from those conditions which cause these annoyances, difficulties, problems, etc.

The effort of the mind to find the cause of the problem is the first stage of *vairagya*. This is called *yatamana-samjna* - the consciousness of effort on the part of oneself to detect the causes of one's difficulties. Everyone has some difficulty, but what is the reason behind this difficulty? The problems of life are like effects produced by certain causes, and the remedying of these results or effects automatically implies the recognition of the nature of the cause or causes thereof, so that, as we know very well, when the cause is properly dealt with, the effect automatically gets controlled. What are the problems of life, and how do they come about? Though it is true that the details of the problems of life vary from individual to individual - they are not identical in every respect - yet, the major factors contributing to the problems of life are similar in every case. The minor details may differ, but the major aspects do not differ. So the mind tries to determine what these factors are. Instead of merely suffering the agonies of life, one finds it would be profitable to study the causes of these difficulties, and do one's best to remove them.

This stage of conscious exertion in the direction of attaining freedom from the causes of trouble is the first stage of *vairagya* known as *yatamana-samjna*. When effort is put forth in this direction for a protracted period, we start sifting the various pros and cons of the conditions that we undergo in life, and get at the root of things. Though a revolution may be set up by thousands of people, the leaders may be only a few in number. So when we try to find out the background of a revolutionary activity taking place somewhere, we are first confronted with the thousands of people causing the trouble, but we then find that the ringleaders are very few; and they must be tackled first. Likewise, though the problems are many and multifarious, no doubt,

