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PREFACE

The daily sessions which the Swamiji holds with varieties of visitors to the Ashram attract people from different parts of the country and abroad, since these occasions provide to people a homely atmosphere to express their longings, their questions, their enquiries and their difficulties which range over a wide area of human life. This book consists of the answers that Swamiji furnished to the queries of the visitors during a period of several years, which have been tape-recorded, transcribed and edited for the purpose of publication, since it was the wish of everyone that a book of this kind, when it reaches the hands of seekers of knowledge, would remain as an interesting guide-book, a medium of reference, and even an entertainment on an intellectual and spiritual level.

It is hoped that this new publication, novel in its kind, will adequately bring relief to the seeking spirits who long for enlightenment.

THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

Shivanandanagar
17th March, 1997

DR. FAUST

[Explaining the contrast between Self and worldly existence]

As Faust, the Doctor, longed for widest range
Of knowledge, power and of glory great,
Surpassing known limits of human ken
And sold the soul for exchange world's treasures,
So mortal wealth summons the mortgaging
Of Spirit calm and inward unbeheld.
The learned Faust sat up visaging things
And wondered at the joys that power grants,
To possess which became his passion's peak.
When mind's intent on what it craves and broods
Becomes the master, objects assume life.
There, then, the gangs of all that one renounced
On poverty's account do rise and speak
In all the sweetness thought can fathom e'r.
The love consciousness pours on its contents
Builds up the bridge across to outer forms,
And ushers in the vista Faust awaits.

A darkened shape clothed in the worst of dreads
Presented itself as the lord of gifts,
To chagrin first of Faust and his horror
Whom, then, he quoth, "Who art thou standest here?,"
"I am thy wish, the granter of all boons,
Ask now thy loves, thy greeds, thy joys, thy hopes,
In one instant thou wilt thy askings find
At once here and now in abundance."
Faust quailed in glee at omni-powers chance,
When that the awesome form did quickly quip
And said, "But thou shalt also give returned
Something, though that be paltry in quantum
To what I rain on thee as royalty."
Faust thought awhile and pondered what he had
To in return exchange for what he got
From Daimon dark who offered all the world
To Faust with all its colour, sound and joy.
"Why thinkest thou, thou hast thyself thy soul.
Give it to me, and all the glories take."

So quoth the Dark One to the chagrin Faust's
For knew he not if there was soul at all,
And if it is, where is it's habitat.

Musing again in thought if soul there is,
Faust offered it, if it was there at all,
For lost he none in losing soul for world,
Which lay unfolded in its variety,
As thousand heavens rolled up in one's palm.
“Take it, then, from me, whatever worth it is,
Thou sayest 'Give,' and I ask you to take,
For I see it not, this thing soul you call;
Have it from me, if thou canst see it here.”

The Genie laughed and waved his magic wand,
A cracking creak tore up the standing Faust,
Who felt he lived in Death's promising land,
Where “not to be” is glory's enthronement
And “not-oneself” is oneself's achievement,
Where objects shine as Faust's own dear heart,
Whose heart departed planting itself “out,”
As hills would break and rend themselves to dust,
As peaks to splinters get reduced at once,
As earth's bowels their boiling flames vomit
To make an end of solids into gas,
As oceans lap up their own mass in glut,
As all creation swallowed its own flesh,
And danced in glee o'er that repast of self.
What happened none can envision or speak.
If Death paraded as the King of kings
By drinking life and blowing up all light
In deep darkness of loss of sense and mind
That great marathon speed of void's plenum
Would scarcely touch what Faust experienced then.

When Self to not-self transformed ensouls life,
Midnight does shine as blazing solar heat,
Movement forward is form of retrograde,
The right as left and left as right becomes,

The high is low and lowest is highest,
To be in others is to be in Self!

Such is the fate of one who runs to things,
To what Consciousness sights as “another,”
Lo, mark, and then beware of what is wealth—
The not-self is it—Self is what thou art.

Chapter 1 ON FREE WILL

SWAMIJI: It has been well said that every particle of our body—call them cells, or whatever they are—are concretisations, manifestations, solid forms of the cumulative force exerted upon a particular center called the human individuality by the total action of the planets and the sun. So, you are a child of the solar system. You are not born to any father or mother and all that; these are all social interpretations of your position, but you have a larger stellar relation. You are a citizen of the solar system.

We should not be under the impression that the sun is so far away, the planets are invisible to the eyes, and stars are still further. It is nothing of the kind. There is no distance in this electromagnetic field of the stellar region, the solar atmosphere. “Electromagnetic field” is the description we can give of the manner in which the entire atmosphere works. It is not visible to the physical eye. So forceful, so powerful is this influence that it concretizes itself in certain forms which are called individualities. They may be the forms of the plant kingdom or animal kingdom, or human kingdom.

But, there is something more about it. The entire structure of space-time is the parent of how the stellar system operates. Space-time is a complex existence which far surpasses, in extent and range, the whole world that you call the solar system or the stellar region. It is the influence exerted by the very operation of this endless space-time complex that congealed itself in the form of the solar system, the Milky Way, etc., and further down to the bodies like ours, so that we are little, tiny drops in the sea of electromagnetic force generated by what you call space-time continuum. So, you are not sitting in Rishikesh, nor in Delhi, nor in any other place. There is no such thing as earth. It is only a name that we give to a concentrated form of cosmic energy, of which we are a part.

We are born into this body by the cumulative action of various forces. One of them is the food that we eat. The mother's diet has a great influence upon the formation of the child in the womb. Whatever diet you may conceive in your mind is a form of earth principle, water principle, fire principle, air principle, and space-time principle. These put together act upon a personality, and we cannot say whose children we are, to which country we belong, what our nationality is. Our father is somewhere else, of whom we have no knowledge, and about whom we do not think one minute, as if He is redundant.

Every atom of space has eyes. There is cosmic intelligence pervading everywhere. This cosmic intelligence which is ensouling the entire physical cosmos can be interpreted as something cosmically in relation to the intelligence pervading your personality. Dr. Rao or Krishnamurty—they are not what is visible to the eyes before a photographic camera. “Dr. Rao has come.” It does not mean that a six-foot physical body has come. It does not mean that. It is a significance; it is a meaning, isn't it? Or is it a fleshy, bony individual walking—because there are many such individuals in the world. The significance is what you call “yourself.” There is a meaning in you; that meaning is what you are. This meaning is the creative force behind our existence, so that we exist not because of our individual initiative which appears to be there. The so-called initiative of ours, the effort that we put forth, is an impulsion that comes from the center of the cosmos. If that center does not operate, we cannot lift a finger; it will collapse. The finger does not lift, and the legs do not walk, merely because of the food that we eat or the medicines that we take. It is because of the permission that has come from the center. If the whole body is sick, every limb of the body also is sick.

Dr. P.C. Rao: Swamiji, is this permission only to act, or to act in a particular manner?

SWAMIJI: To exist itself.

Dr. P.C. Rao: To exist, and to act in a particular manner, too?

SWAMIJI: That also. Now, why should it permit you to act in a particular manner? That also is another question. It can permit you to act in some other way also than the way in which you are working. That is conditioned by your previous incarnations. Why do mirrors reflect different kinds of light?

Dr. P.C. Rao: I want to ask a few questions. I do intellectually comprehend the message that you have given me, because I am also capable of thinking abstract thoughts. Now, the books that I have have helped me at least in arriving at a hypothesis—what I think is a hypothesis. And this is the very thought every day I go through. If this is meditation, I am going through that meditation. But, before I come to the next step, if you say that I am here because of the force given to me by an external force. . .

SWAMIJI: Yes, yes, yes. It has formed you and conditioned you and made you what you are, including the circumstances in which you are born and even the length of your life, and the mode of your existence, and the manner of your action. Everything is conditioned by that.

Dr. P.C. Rao: If everything is conditioned by that, I become an agent.

SWAMIJI: You are not an agent. It itself is doing it. There is no such thing as Mr. Rao or anybody. It doesn't exist. You see, when the finger is moving, the finger is not moving. It is the whole body that is ordering it to get up like that. So, we are like fingers of this cosmic force, and it orders that you move in this particular way. If the finger had, by chance, a consciousness of its own, it would think it is moving independently.

Dr. P.C. Rao: This analogy may not hold good because if I were to order from a central point this finger to move, the finger does not act on its own. The finger does exactly what I indicate. It does not have an independent existence, Swamiji.

SWAMIJI: That is what I am saying. There is no independent existence for anything.

Dr. P.C. Rao: No. If that is so, then, while I go through various births and deaths, where do I evolve separately from the messages?

SWAMIJI: The whole point is that births and deaths should not take place, really speaking, if this consciousness is already there. But, somehow or other this takes place because this consciousness has not been implanted properly in the individuality. The ego functions as if it is outside.

Dr. P.C. Rao: But who has implanted it?

SWAMIJI: That, nobody can say. It is like asking who created the world.

Dr. P.C. Rao: You said that in the Canadian lawyer Larry's questions. Exactly the same answer has been given.

SWAMIJI: Somehow or other the spark or the part has assumed an independence; that independence is called egoism.

Dr. P.C. Rao: But you say ultimately it has not. It appears to exist, but it does not.

SWAMIJI: It should not be there and it is not really there also. If this personality called the ego appreciates this position, it will surrender itself to the total whole, to which it belongs, of which it is a part—why a part? It itself is That. Then the whole force of the cosmos will enter it and you will feel an inner strength which cannot be compared with any other strength that you have in this world. So why I am telling all this is, in one minute you are in a state of meditation, provided you are able to collect your thoughts and put them in the proper context. It doesn't require one hour. Immediately you are That—you are just that which you are contemplating on.

Dr. P.C. Rao: Therefore, I am thinking of me being That, or That being me, or whatever the whole thing is.

SWAMIJI: And also, when you say “That,” you should not imagine a distance between yourself and That. There is no distance. It is a total integration of consciousness where distance is abolished automatically.

Dr. P.C. Rao: So, you want to concentrate on the fact that there is no distance between you and That—that you are That.

SWAMIJI: Yes; there is no distance between anything. It is one Being. So this one Being is what people call God. There is no God outside.

Dr. P.C. Rao: This is where the intellectual exposition gets, in me anyhow—while I do understand the proposition that That is not divisible, I arrive at the root through different ways, but I arrive at the same proposition. I suppose this is very close to the Upanishadic principles. Now, once I come to the conclusion that It is not different from me, I am still unable, because I am still pursuing the logical path as to how I have to come to the separate feeling that I come to feel that I am separate, and that is where you say that we cannot take this enquiry beyond a particular level. In other words, it

cannot be explained as to how we have come to feel that we are separate from That.

SWAMIJI: The difficulty is that we are unable to go beyond the level of the comprehension of egoistic personality. In whatever way we think, we assume that we are existing. Even the consciousness that “I am meditating”—that also must go.

Dr. P.C. Rao: That means you must dissolve yourself. Now the other thing is that somebody else does this thing and it gives the principle of life. Life itself is infused in you because of that particular thing. Independent of that, you are nothing. Then, also you are not allowing me to go logically on that principle and say, “If I am not independent of that and it is controlling me, the one who is controlling me should control anything.”

SWAMIJI: He does control everything.

Dr. P.C. Rao: If He does, then why should I be thinking and get blamed for anything at all?

SWAMIJI: You will not get blamed for that, provided that you are sure that you are not doing it. But you are not sure of it. You feel that you are doing it. If that kind of total inseparable identity with the whole is felt by you, your actions cannot bind you. The Bhagavad Gita is that only.

Dr. P.C. Rao: But coming to that conclusion, I must cross these hurdles.

SWAMIJI: That is up to you. You can adopt any method. The Bhagavad Gita is this much: No action can bind you, provided that vision of the cosmos is before you.

Dr. P.C. Rao: It is my way of looking at it. While the proposition that there is a Universal Principle, and It is indivisible, is logically arguable (that far I am prepared to go), the relationship between what is called individual and the Universal I think depends upon. . .

SWAMIJI: You see, there is a conceptual relation, but not a real relation. And conceptual relation is not. . .

Dr. P.C. Rao: It is only after you go beyond the concept that you feel you get integrated with that principle. First you have to go through that evolution, thinking process.

SWAMIJI: That is meditation. Again and again assert that position.

Dr. P.C. Rao: Swamiji, whatever you say gets implanted in me and I don't leave it. I keep thinking this every day, but yet I have not evolved into that.

SWAMIJI: The very fact that you are able to understand that shows that you have evolved enough to make it a part of your life.

Dr. P.C. Rao: I am not satisfied with that, Swamiji.

SWAMIJI: You are not giving sufficient time to think.

Dr. P.C. Rao: Either I am not giving sufficient time to think, or I have really come to a stage where I am unable to break through.

SWAMIJI: You are not unable to understand; you can understand it. The only thing is that you have to assert it in your consciousness. And you are not going to be a loser. You are actually going to be a gainer by that. Your dimension will be enhanced, and why should you say that you have no time to think while it is the thing that you are actually aspiring for? Don't you want to become a larger person of a larger dimension? How can you say that you have no time?

Dr. P.C. Rao: Otherwise, this enquiry would have been given up.

SWAMIJI: Don't you like to be promoted? You should not say, "I have no time to think of it like that." You will certainly find time if you are going to . . .

Dr. P.C. Rao: I do find—it is not physically finding time. I have, to some extent, read all your books. . .

SWAMIJI: It is not actually the question of physically finding time. It is the quality of thought. It should just take possession of you, as when a person is drowning in water. Only one thought will be there at that time. You will be thinking nothing else.

Dr. P.C. Rao: The Canadian lawyer's questions are very much my questions, and they will continue to be my questions. In terms of intellectual satisfaction, the Canadian lawyer's questions, his wife's questions, still continue to haunt me because they happen to be my own questions.

SWAMIJI: It is everybody's question.

Dr. P.C. Rao: The answers you have given have not completely dissolved my doubts.

SWAMIJI: You have to ponder over that again and again, and the whole thought should sink into your feeling, so that you are living that thought. You are not simply thinking it, you *are* that.

Dr. P.C. Rao: And then the environment in which I live, as we were discussing—the Sankaracharyas and various intellectual or religious leaders, etc.—they go about their activities, but it doesn't generate the amount of faith that one hopes these leaders do.

SWAMIJI: They are unnecessarily interfering in matters which are to nobody's good. There is no benefit. No purpose is served by that. They come so low to the segmented social level. It is not their duty also. They are supposed to inspire you spiritually in a divine manner, not interfere in political governments. That is not their duty. What is the purpose? Why are they so much interested in it? Though political activity is worthwhile, there are other people to do that. Why are these people doing that? If everybody becomes only a politician, then who will be there to think and impart knowledge? Everybody can become a businessman. Then, what will happen?

Sri C. G. Krishnamurty: But then Swamiji, how about the *gunas*? If no two human beings are the same, and if all of them are parts of the same whole...

SWAMIJI: In that condition of your deep meditation, the *gunas* will cease to operate. The *gunas* will not operate at that time. If at all there is some *guna*, it is *sattva guna* at that time. No *rajas* and *tamas* will be there at that time. Only when you assert your individual personality, the *rajas* and *tamas* will come. *Rajas* and *tamas* are characteristics of the ego consciousness, whereas *sattva* is of divine consciousness. And gradually they will evaporate. What is

the time now? We sit for meditation and you can also sit. We sit at five o'clock, from five to six.

Dr. P.C. Rao: Reading-wise, I read practically all of your books, and I read the message directly given to me by you on each of my visits. They make a very deep impact on me. But yet, I am still a doubting Thomas you may call it—I am a person who has to be intellectually satisfied.

SWAMIJI: I think to a large extent you have been satisfied.

Dr. P.C. Rao: No, Swamiji. In other words, I am satisfied up to the stage that there is a Universal Principle, and that It is indivisible—that there is no birth and death, etc. Up to that, logically it is arguable.

SWAMIJI: But you must know the conclusion from that.

Dr. P.C. Rao: That is the stage of the Universal and the individual. You know in Christianity, Hinduism—I think each religion tried to explain this very relationship, and they have done so in their own manner, but sometimes I feel perhaps this is only intellectually explained. So, for me, you could say I am somewhat confused.

SWAMIJI: When the intellect asserts itself in deep contemplation, it becomes feeling, and if the intellect and the feeling go together, they can create a flash of what is called intuition. Intuition is nothing but the blending together of intellect and feeling. They are generally acting separately. What we understand, we don't feel; and what we feel, we don't understand. It should not be like that. They must act together parallelly, so that it may be one action of understanding and feeling. Feeling is nearer to you than understanding. Feeling is what you are, actually speaking. Into that the understanding has to sink. This is what they call the process of *sravana*, *manana* and *nididhyasana*. Whatever we are discussing now is *sravana*, hearing. I hear what you say, and you hear what I say. Then you cogitate over this matter and sink these thoughts into yourself. Finally, you be that thought itself; that is called *nididhyasana*. This practice has to be carried on throughout the day, not merely for a few minutes in some *puja* room or anything. Even when you are working in an office, what prevents you from stopping for one minute and putting the pen down? For one minute think this, and it will inspire you. Then start the work. It requires one minute. You put the pen down.

Sri C. G. Krishnamurty: I found that in my experience in the Tribunal.

Dr. P.C. Rao: When you get that feeling, your actions differ essentially from what you do now because informed as you are by that feeling, it should reflect in your actions. If I feel I am separate, everything is separate, the feeling generates different activity in me. The way I look at things, the way I react to things, whatever I think, is going to be paramountly different from when I realize that everything is That, and I am That, you are That, and I am no different from That. Is it not, Swamiji? In other words, it is the thought which regulates your activity, which gives character to your activity. Now, if the feeling of divisibility, that you are different from me, obtains in my mind, is the part which controls my activity, my actions would be selfish.

SWAMIJI: Certainly they would be selfish if things are different.

Dr. P.C. Rao: But when the controlling thought is that the entire universe is operating through me and I am that. . .

SWAMIJI: Then your actions will be impartial.

Dr. P.C. Rao: Altogether impartial. Therefore, from the types of activities we engage in, you can determine the thought that is propelling you to do these things. Is it not?

SWAMIJI: Yes.

Dr. P.C. Rao: But in terms of the activities I undertake, though it gives me great relief on several occasions, or it makes me resist attempts to influence my thinking, and this I trace to the concept “Look here, I should not do this”—I have not yet stopped doing things which I would intellectually consider to be undesirable. Therefore, the controlling thought, while it intellectually appreciates, it has not really started controlling my. . .

SWAMIJI: Yes, yes. I understand. You will have no problem like that if you actually enter into it. You start doing it. The problems also get dissolved automatically.

Dr. P.C. Rao: I know—provided I go through that stage.

SWAMIJI: You start it. You decide, “I have started it.”

Dr. P.C. Rao: It is as though I am at the doorstep but yet not opening the door.

SWAMIJI: No, it will open; it will open. Truth always triumphs: *Satya meva jayate*. And if these thoughts are the truth, they will succeed, and nothing else can succeed. Only, you have to have some little faith that it will work. It will certainly work. The whole atmosphere will change. All shall be well.

Dr. P.C. Rao: I am still in search of that thing, and I am hopeful that light will dawn on me.

SWAMIJI: You should not have any doubt whether it will work or not. It will work.

Dr. P.C. Rao: I am greatly reassured, Swamiji.

SWAMIJI: If you want something, you must assert that it has already come: "It is already with me." This is one of the psychological techniques people generally suggest; and it will immediately come. If you intensely want a thing, it will come.

Dr. P.C. Rao: Whatever activity I do, I never abandon it. That is why I am able to do certain things which I think ought to be done. So, I am still hopeful that this sort of pursuit will lead me to some destination which is what I am looking for.

SWAMIJI: Actually, this is the thought that has to be in your mind always. Whether you are in the motor car, or the office, or taking lunch or dinner—it is the vital thing that sustains you. You cannot keep it segregated.

Dr. P.C. Rao: I don't. It would not be correct to say that I disengage myself from this thought at any given point of time. It may be that temporarily at that particular point I am thinking of some problem. . .

SWAMIJI: No. . . Due to problems, the intensity of the thought may diminish at some time; but, nevertheless, it will be there.

Dr. P.C. Rao: It is there, Swamiji. In every day of my activity, it is there. But something is shrouded in mystery still. Some dark area is still not resolved. Some doubt is still there. I have to put a spotlight on that and see what it is.

SWAMIJI: The spotlight is the affirmation of the Universal Being. That is the light, before which no darkness can stand. And, the affirmation of the Universal Being is done by the Universal Being only. It is not done by you. You have gone into It when you think like this. Actually, who is meditating? It is not Dr. Rao meditating. It is meditating because you have already entered It. You have become part and parcel of It, so you are not meditating. There is no such thing at that time.

Dr. P.C. Rao: True. But, as you said, until you realize that you are That, you will continue to believe that you are meditating.

SWAMIJI: No, that duality you should not create.

Dr. P.C. Rao: I am not creating it. But it exists because the other proposition has not yet dawned on me. SWAMIJI: It has, to some extent, dawned in you. Only, you have to assert it vigorously by repeatedly thinking it. Once you have entertained it in clarified form in your mind, again you should not leave it afterwards, because the ego has such a power that it will immediately throw some dust over your thought and assert itself more and more than even the thought of God Himself. The ego always parades its importance and makes you feel that it is more important than anything else. We are feeling that the world is nothing to us—the world is something outside us, unconnected with us; it is taking care of itself and we mind our business. This is what we are thinking. Totally independent we are. We can walk on the road with arms thrown, and nobody can talk to us. But it is not like that. Even the earth is controlling you. You cannot walk on the road totally independent like that. The very gravitation of the earth is controlling your movements. There is no freedom like that, except in a cosmic sense. Man's boast that he is independent of things and he can do whatever he likes is a vainglorious feeling. You cannot even walk on the road until the earth permits it. Such is the majesty of the structure of the cosmos. It is a very important thing to remember. If the earth is not to pull you adequately down by its gravitational force, you would be floating in the air. And, if the sun were not to pull you equally from above, you would be stuck to the ground; you could not lift your foot afterwards. So, they mutually collaborate and create a situation where you can move.

Dr. P.C. Rao: These are the laws of nature; they are immutable.

SWAMIJI: And still, we are thinking, “I will go for a walk.” Who is going for a walk? You tell me. Somebody else is helping you to push yourself.

Sri C. G. Krishnamurty: The mysterious thing is how thoughts are generated.

SWAMIJI: Thoughts are generated by body consciousness. You think that there is a body. The consciousness of a body is called thought. Otherwise, there is no other thing except that. Affirmation of this body is called thought, mind—consciousness concentrating itself in a particular location of space and time. That is individuality; that is the mind.

Dr. P.C. Rao: Suppose you let things happen as you wish—you don't try to control anything—you just do whatever you want, on impulse.

SWAMIJI: What is the meaning of “whatever you want”?

Dr. P.C. Rao: Whatever you want—whatever your impulse tells you.

SWAMIJI: That impulse is an egoistic impulse.

Dr. P.C. Rao: If it is egoistic, let the activity also be guided by that. What is wrong with egoistic activities?

SWAMIJI: Unless the ego has surrendered itself to the Cosmic Being, it cannot help you.

Dr. P.C. Rao: No. But why do you want to get help? Let things happen in the way they are happening.

Sri C. G. Krishnamurty: Or, to put it another way, what is the meaning of the word “help”? How do you define help?

SWAMIJI: There is a difference between impulse and knowledge. They are two different things.

Dr. P.C. Rao: Let your ego control your activities. What happens?

SWAMIJI: That is what is happening in the world. Everybody is doing that work. Then he ruins himself. The person gets ruined. He will have a clash.

One ego clashes with another ego. War takes place and destruction takes place.

Dr. P.C. Rao: All right. Let it.

SWAMIJI: Then rebirth takes place. It will go on endlessly. There is no end for this. A mistake that is committed once. . .

Dr. P.C. Rao: Let rebirth take place. Perhaps people would like to go on being born, and then get reborn, as they are against dissolving yourself into a higher principle.

SWAMIJI: That shows the bankruptcy of education in their mind. They are spiritually bankrupt.

Dr. P.C. Rao: I thought at one time you also said, “Don't think that you are going to reform the universe itself, whatever is happening—good, bad or indifferent. There is no such thing called bad or good.”

SWAMIJI: But it can work through your individuality also, if you are in a state of unison with that. You can be an instrument in the hands of that power, when you are in unison with that in your deep feeling. They will propel you to act. These are the incarnations and the prophets, as they are called. They are individuals but they are working under the command of a universal force. The whole universal power is concentrated in one individual; that is an incarnation—like the entire power of the sun getting concentrated through a lens and acting at a particular spot. They are called super-human beings. The individuality is there for all purposes of perception, but they are treading in the heavens, actually speaking, because they have consciousness of earth as well as heaven at the same time. That is a peculiar state of *jivanmukti*, as they call it—you are liberated, and yet you are conscious of the whole of creation. It is an intermediary stage between ordinary human consciousness and Absolute consciousness. That is what is called incarnation consciousness, *jivanmukti* consciousness. It is an intermediary stage where you can become a cosmic worker, a world savior, as they call it. All the saviors of the world, the incarnations—Krishna, Christ, Buddha, whoever they are—they were intermediaries in the cosmic force, which operated through this physical individuality of theirs, as visible to the eyes. They were not thinking through the body. They were thinking through a larger area, and so we call them incarnations. That is, “incarnation” means the concentration of universal force in a particular

body. And, you can also become that. You may become a world savior, a prophet, an incarnation, if the thoughts of yours are cosmic thoughts. And, you will not think in any other manner except that way.

Dr. P.C. Rao: By your own endeavors you can improve the quality of your perception.

SWAMIJI: You may say, yes.

Dr. P.C. Rao: This is the proposition. Is there a role for individual efforts?

SWAMIJI: When That operates through you, you should not call it an individual effort.

Dr. P.C. Rao: But if I want to lay down the proposition like this—because you are all the time telling us that you should improve constantly, improve and move towards that principle, ultimately realize that you are not different from That, and you are That, and there is no subject-object relationship. You are evolving from something baser to something higher. If this is the correct understanding of what you have laid down—therefore, there is a role for me in this, a role for me to evolve.

SWAMIJI: There is a role for you as a representative of that force—like an ambassador of the Cosmic Being.

Dr. P.C. Rao: Yes, but then, still it is my role. If I don't make this, the cosmic force is not going to help me. So, therefore, I have to create this. . .

SWAMIJI: No, “my role” means that it is not your individual role. You are not having your own personal will. You are only an instrument in the operation of it.

Dr. P.C. Rao: If I am an instrument, then let that divine force guide me. I don't make any individual effort.

SWAMIJI: When you think, you will know that It is thinking through you. You will know it. Sometimes you say, “he is possessed by divine forces.” You get possessed by that, and you can know that it is working through you, somebody else is speaking through you.

Dr. P.C. Rao: Why don't I invite the divine force to enter and say, "Now let us move forward."

SWAMIJI: It will do that. It can do whatever is necessary for the evolution of the total universe. It is not doing it for the welfare of any particular individual. There are no particular individuals.

Dr. P.C. Rao: Then, why should I meditate, Swamiji?

SWAMIJI: So that you may know that it is the truth. You are always thinking you are somewhere, in some place. You have to remove that idea. There is a peculiar habit of the mind asserting itself as located in some place, in a particular form, in a particular condition, etc. This must be removed.

Sri C. G. Krishnamurty: What Dr. Rao says is if I am That, why not let That guide me in the proper line?

SWAMIJI: It will certainly guide you.

Sri C. G. Krishnamurty: If that is so, then why should I meditate?

SWAMIJI: It will guide you only after you become one with It. For that, you have to meditate. The government protects and guides the ambassador, but for that he has to become the ambassador first.

Dr. P.C. Rao: But, the ambassador is different from the government. He only carries out the instructions of the government. He is not the government himself. Government is a larger entity.

SWAMIJI: That is true. So, he is acting as a representative of the government itself.

Dr. P.C. Rao: Therefore, I asked at the very beginning, "Am I the agent?"

SWAMIJI: In one stage, you are the agent. There are three stages.

Dr. P.C. Rao: If I am the agent, I carry out these instructions. I can't be held accountable at all. I am not answerable to anybody.

SWAMIJI: Certainly you are not accountable, provided you are having that consciousness.

Dr. P.C. Rao: Then it is conditional; you have introduced a proviso.

SWAMIJI: Otherwise, if in the middle you start thinking you are Mr. Rao talking, then it won't work.

Dr. P.C. Rao: No, if I am the ambassador, I know that if the government gives me instructions, it is as the ambassador of that country; I go and give it. And if these instructions don't fructify, if nothing comes out of it, or bad comes of it, I can't be held responsible because I merely carried out the instructions given to me by my superior.

SWAMIJI: He is responsible only if he does something contrary to the government ordinance.

Dr. P.C. Rao: Yes. But you are also saying that I cannot even act contrary to the direction. You are incapable of doing so, because it controls.

SWAMIJI: Sometimes it is possible in the intermediary stage to slip into ego consciousness. If you are continuously maintaining a universal consciousness, you are not responsible for anything. But that consciousness is not maintained always. Sometimes in the intermediary, earlier stages, the mind slips into ego consciousness and mistakes can be committed. Even Lord Krishna said, "I cannot repeat the Gita a second time." He came down from that level. When Arjuna said, "Speak to me once again," He said, "No, no. You are a foolish man."

Dr. P.C. Rao: If you slip into it, while logically pursuing this, doggedly pursuing it, it means are you acting contrary to the instruction of. . . Even that slipping into that former direction—are you accountable?

SWAMIJI: You will not slip after a certain stage. It is a force of individuality. For ages and ages we have been living in this body, so it is having its say, even when you are meditating and insisting that "I am also there." To overcome that feeling of body consciousness. . .

Dr. P.C. Rao: One can reconcile and say that it is the divine wish that it be like this.

SWAMIJI: You are not simply saying that it is a divine wish. You know that it is a divine wish and you will never feel that you are doing anything at that

time. It all depends upon what you feel in your mind. What are you feeling? You will feel that you are not doing anything independently.

Dr. P.C. Rao: I somehow feel that you have to say that you can't do independently of the divine principle. You are also saying that you can get out of this. And when you get out of it, there is a dissonance between you and the principle and, therefore, the grief. Isn't it? That is how it is. Then the person realizes that if I am totally controlled—I am a puppet in the hands, as it were, of the higher principle—then, if I am a puppet, I can't go beyond that stage. I am always whatever I do good, I do bad, I do anything.

SWAMIJI: But, there is no good and bad at that time.

Dr. P.C. Rao: No. Until that realization comes, you will still say whether he is doing something good or something bad, it is all on account of the operation of the divine principle.

SWAMIJI: Your operations will be for the cosmic welfare. It cannot be called good and bad action.

Dr. P.C. Rao: But you should first think that you represent the higher principle.

SWAMIJI: Not merely think it—you have to be inundated with that thought and you will not think in any other manner.

Dr. P.C. Rao: So, until that state, duality is there?

SWAMIJI: Then you are responsible for what you do.

Dr. P.C. Rao: This is what you said: In other words, as long as you remain ignorant, you are the *karta* of your actions. You have to reap the fruits of your actions. Is it not what you said, Swamiji—notwithstanding the basic principle that you cannot do anything independently of the divine wish?

SWAMIJI: Even then, it remains an abstract acceptance, but the body asserts itself as “me.”

Dr. P.C. Rao: Asserts itself from what? From the divine wish?

SWAMIJI: No, it rejects the divine wish.

Dr. P.C. Rao: Can it?

SWAMIJI: It is doing it now in a foolish manner.

Dr. P.C. Rao: Its ability to depart from the divine wish is what makes the principle somewhat difficult for us to follow.

Narayani: But it is not against the divine wish that you are appearing to depart from it.

Dr. P.C. Rao: So, therefore, everything is on account of the operation of the divine principle?

SWAMIJI: Finally, it is that only.

Dr. P.C. Rao: If that is so, what happens is that anything that is happening in this world. . .

SWAMIJI: Everything is happening due to its action.

Dr. P.C. Rao: This is what I had said in the beginning because when the Lord reveals Himself in His total existence—you see, what you consider to be good, bad, indifferent, everything as it is, the universe as it is, is seen.

SWAMIJI: No part of the universe can be called good or bad.

Dr. P.C. Rao: So, therefore, what happens is that whatever you see now, a departure from—this is Kali Yuga. It has evolved from Treta Yuga, Dvapara Yuga—and then, the bad is more than the good here in this age. This is nothing but that.

SWAMIJI: It has its own plan, yes.

Dr. P.C. Rao: Very difficult, Swamiji, to evolve into the various. . .

SWAMIJI: This is the discussion of the law commission of the universe.

Chapter 2

BEAUTY AND THE PSYCHOLOGY OF DESIRE

Lyle: Swamiji, I have a question about beauty. You have written that beauty is a mild manifestation of the soul. I find myself always looking for beauty, and I want to know how I can work with that as part of my sadhana.

SWAMIJI: Beauty is the characteristic of that object which exactly fits in as a counterpart of the lack in the mind of a person. There is a kind of lacuna in the mind, and the exact counterpart of it is the beauty of the object. It is a purely psychological question.

There is a particular lacuna in the mental structure of a person which keeps that person restless, unhappy, etc. Though everyone is unhappy in some way, the cause of that unhappiness is not uniform in all cases. The restlessness and unhappiness may be caused by different factors in the case of different persons, and a corresponding object must be presented before that particular type of mind in order that it may be made to feel happy.

What looks beautiful to me may not look beautiful to you. People sometimes get attracted even to ugly things. What you may consider as ugly and uninteresting may be an attractive thing for another person, because he/she is in a different kind of mental make-up. Each one has to find out what it is that attracts. Unless you are hungry, the food will not be satisfying. Your particular kind of hunger will determine the kind of diet that you need.

Unhappiness cannot be removed by a uniform remedy or a common medicine for all people. Either you find out yourself what you are lacking, or you try to know it through the help of some person who can guide you and analyse your mind in depth. Once you know why you are unhappy, you can also know the remedy, and you will know what kind of beauty you are after.

Lyle: The curious thing about beauty is that it is undefinable.

SWAMIJI: It is not that beauty is spread out everywhere in the world so that people can go and see it. It is not visible like that. It is visible to the individual eye only, and not to the common perception.

Beauty is not independent of the observer. Actually, there is no such thing as beauty. It doesn't exist. It is like taste. There is no such thing as taste; it is only an action of a particular thing upon the working of the taste buds in our tongue. If the taste buds don't operate, nothing will be tasty. The object as such is not tasty. There is nothing sweet, nothing bitter. There is no such quality in objects, but they act upon a particular structure of our physiological operation, and they feel palatable or otherwise. The world as such has no quality. It is impersonal—neither good nor bad, neither beautiful nor ugly. We react to it due to our own unique structural make-up.

Lyle: Then, in what way were you saying that beauty is a mild manifestation of the soul?

SWAMIJI: It is a manifestation of the soul, something like a square rod entering a square hole, when, immediately there is a sense of perfection. The soul is nothing but the symmetry, completeness and harmony of consciousness. If we thrust a round rod into a square hole, there is no perfection in the act. The round rod should go into the round hole only. There is some kind of want in the mind of a person, which craves for its fulfilling counter-correlative.

The soul is not a substance. It is consciousness, a feeling of completeness. The consciousness of completeness is the soul. There is no soul outside or inside; consciousness *is* the soul. The soul is not directly acting. It has to act through the mind. So, whatever we perceive or conceive is the mental operation. The mind reflects the soul, and only then we become conscious of certain things, but we are incompletely conscious; we are not “completely” conscious of anything since the mind is rarely an undivided function.

There is no sense of completeness in any of our perceptions. Just as when the sun's rays pass through a defective set of spectacles we will not see things properly, we will also not see things properly when the soul is reflected through a defective mind. When the mind is set right, and the defect is removed by bringing before it the exact counterpart of its lacuna, it appears as if the soul is reflected entirely. That entire reflection is the feeling of satisfaction. Then we call that medium beautiful, tasty, nice. It is a deep psychological process.

The need will differ for each person. The kind of perfection that you need will be quite different from another's. And you can't love the same thing for all times, either. Even one's own wish will change according to circumstances. You can never be happy with the same thing throughout life. That is not possible. Our longings are fickle, not of a uniform type.

Lyle: Swamiji, how can we sublimate desires?

SWAMIJI: You will never be able to sublimate the desires until that which they seek is given to them. The important point is how you will give them what they want. The manner of supplying their demand is your wisdom.

You cannot suppress a desire; no desire can be buried down. If you suppress it, it will create further trouble. You have to fulfil it, but how you fulfil it is the wisdom of the seeker.

Sometimes you may supply its need even by not giving it literally what it wants. If you literally start supplying all its demands, then it will be a very difficult problem. Sublimation is different from fulfilment. Fulfilment is a direct sensual process, whereas sublimation is a spiritual integration.

The mind wants some particular things, not all things at the same time. The mind does not want the whole world to be given to it. Nobody asks for the whole world; so every desire is intriguing in its working. When you are prepared to give it the entire thing, it doesn't want it; it will want only certain particular chosen things. This is the sign of lack of wisdom behind any kind of desire.

There are simple desires, strong desires, permissible desires, depleting desires. Desires which deplete your energy should not be fulfilled. Those which are harmless, like wanting to take a cup of tea in the cold weather, will not harm you in any way; but there are other dangerous desires which may exhaust you completely and make you weak. Such desires should not be fulfilled.

From the point of view of a *sadhaka* (a spiritual seeker), gradually the mind should be educated to feel satisfied with the whole, rather than a part. If you ask for particular things, you will never have an end for these desires, because today you will get this particular thing, and you feel that you are satisfied; tomorrow the very same mind, like a dacoit, will want another thing. If you start supplying the demands of a dacoit, today he will want

your purse, tomorrow your house, the next day your land and, finally, he may want your life. So, you cannot go on satisfying the highwayman.

Desires are such things, and you should educate them. Introduce educational ways of thinking, holistic thinking. Don't give just particular things to the mind, but try to give wholesome things. Finally, nothing can satisfy you, except God Himself. All other desires are futile, and they will only bind you into more and more troubles. You must educate the mind to have trust in God and feel satisfied with the beauty of God.

We were discussing about beauty. God is the most beautiful object. No object in the world can be as beautiful as God, but we have been taught by religions that God is an old man, the Creator, Father in heaven, with a long beard; how can He be beautiful?

No religion openly holds that God is beautiful. He is rather a judiciary, lawmaker, a terror sometimes, ready to dispense justice, but no religion says that He is a beautiful person. Here is a mistake of religious teachers. We go for beautiful things, rather than a judiciary.

We must accept that God is the most beautiful, and no beauty can equal that beauty. Then the heart will feel satisfied with that perception of the most beautiful thing before us. God is not merely grand or magnificent; He is also beautiful! Let the heart accept it. Then you will see the desires subside, and you will ask for nothing in the world afterwards. Any other method is not going to be successful.

Lyle: My mind says that God can't be conceived.

SWAMIJI: You can psychologically conceive Him by adjusting the mind in a wholesome manner. Anything that is wholesome is God. God does not mean something far away from you. It is the characteristic of wholesome thinking, total thinking, and not partial or fragmented thinking. *The object of perception should be included in the process of perception itself.* It should not stand outside you. Our perceptions are partial as long as the objects stand outside the process of perception.

We don't see things properly; we see them partially, as isolated from us. Objects are not really isolated. They don't stand outside the process of perception. You have to educate yourself into the conviction that the object of perception is included in the very process of perception. This is the

holistic thinking that I am mentioning. Then you will not desire the object as an “outside” something. When the object is included in the very process of perception, how will you desire it? The desire ceases immediately. *Sadhana* is also a process of education. One must be very careful in thinking, and not think in a haphazard manner. It is a difficult art, but you will be happy if you succeed in it.

Lyle: So, we should try to include the object in the subject?

SWAMIJI: What you see with your eyes is included in yourself, in some way. We are unable to understand it because we think through a finitised form of the mind. There is a process by which we are able to know that the object exists. If you analyse that process, you will find the object does not stand outside you. If it is totally outside you, you would not be even conscious that it is there outside you. It is an integral process taking place in perception. This itself is a kind of meditation.

Lyle: Swamiji, in the process of meditation, do you suggest a sequence to draw the mind into *pratyahara* concentration?

SWAMIJI: This is explained in the *sutras* of Patanjali. There are two types of psychological processes dealt with in modern days, in what we call abnormal psychology and general psychology. All thinking in terms of a particularised desire for anything in the world is abnormal perception. Thinking of objects without any particular desire for anything is general perception. If I look at a wall, I don't have any particular desire for the wall; but if I see an orange, there may be a desire to eat it. So, these are two types of thinking. The mere consciousness of an object without particular emotional reaction towards it, and consciousness of an object with emotional reaction towards it, are both reactions of the mind called *vrittis*.

The emotionally charged *vrittis* are called *klishtha vrittis*, by which the author means pain-giving psychoses. Pain is caused by the feeling that you have not got it, while you would like to have it. Secondly, you have pain even after getting it, from the fear that you may lose it; worse still is the pain when you have actually lost it.

So, the object of desire is always a source of pain. When does it give you pleasure? Anyway, such desires and ways of thinking are *klishtha vrittis*. These have to be dealt with in the beginning. You asked me the sequence.

The pain-giving ones should be dealt with first, just as in medical treatment, acute diseases are treated first, and the chronic ones later.

Suppose a person is breathless, and also has eczema. You don't treat eczema at that time; you treat the breathlessness first. So also we don't bother about general perceptions of mountains and rivers and all that, though they are also *vruttis*. We have to deal with acute conditions first (desire-charged *vruttis*), which have been classified by Patanjali briefly into objects which you like, and objects which you dislike. Both are connected with desires. The desire to have and the desire to avoid are both desires only.

Actually, you cannot desire a thing unless you do not want certain other things. You exclude certain things automatically when you go for certain chosen things, and those things which you exclude become the objects of dislike or hatred. So, love and hatred go together; they are like the obverse and reverse of the same coin. The one cannot be without the other.

These are two types of *vruttis* connected with likes and dislikes, as Patanjali mentions. There is another *vrutti* which takes the form of fear of death. All struggle in life seems to be towards the maintenance of oneself towards survival. By some means or the other, one wants to survive. With all the glorious possessions of the world, one does not wish to be threatened in regard to one's life. Fear of death, love and hatred for things, and egoism, self-assertiveness, I am first and everybody else afterwards, are considered by Patanjali as pain-giving *vruttis*.

Every seeker of truth, spiritual seeker, *sadhaka*, should dispassionately analyse these psychoses. If you want things, make a list of all those things and find out the ways and means of handling them. All the other *vruttis* mentioned also have to be taken independently, one by one. They should be dealt with in such a way that they do not cause harassment in ordinary life. Very rarely do people succeed in controlling these abnormal *vruttis*.

Even if you succeed in having no such abnormal longing for things, you will have the general perception of an object outside you in the form of the world itself. That has to be dealt with as a second stage. This is more difficult than the earlier one. You may somehow withdraw your mind from desiring things in some way, but how would you withdraw the mind from being conscious of the world itself? That has to be dealt with by *samadhi* or

samapatti. There are stages of meditation prescribed by Patanjali. I have detailed these processes in my book, "Yoga As a Universal Science."

These desires have certain peculiarities. They do not always manifest themselves openly. Often the desires have very good intelligence. They know that a frontal attack does not always succeed. They lie in ambush and, when you are unaware, suddenly pounce on you, and you will be caught by these desires even without your knowing that you have been so caught. Suddenly you will start doing something and later you will repent, because you were not circumspect about the possibility of hidden desires.

Desires can also be dormant, like a sleeping thief. Or, when you try to corner them from every side by your meditations, they may become thin, attenuated, as if they are going to die, but they can again become robust when the occasion for it comes. A starved thief also is a thief only; he may eat well and afterwards become robust.

Also the desires may appear sometimes, and disappear at other times. When they disappear, it doesn't mean they are absent; a thing that is out of sight is not necessarily non-existent. And sometimes, they openly come and face you. So, they can be sleeping, attenuated, interrupted, or directly attacking. These are the ways in which desires catch hold of a person. One has to pass through many years of struggle in order to get over them.

In case you, by your maturity of meditation, succeed in overcoming these abnormal longings, you will have the problem of the consciousness of externality itself. That is a very serious matter. The universe has to be identified with the Self in deep meditation so that the phenomenon of externality is absorbed into universality of perception. Briefly, this is the sequence of how you have to handle your mind.

Lyle: I have been thinking that in the sitting process itself to first take care of the *tamasik* and *rajasik* mind.

SWAMIJI: These abnormal desires are a mixture of *tamas* and *rajas*. The mere consciousness of an object without desire is a *sattvik guna* or quality operating. If you are conscious of a tree in the forest, it doesn't harm you in any way; yet the consciousness of it being outside you is an important matter. It is a *sattvik vritti*, but it is a *vritti*, nevertheless.

Merely because you are bound by a golden chain, it doesn't mean that you are not bound, and the *sattvik vrittis* must also be overcome. So, from *rajas* and *tamas*, you go to *sattva*, gradually.

Lyle: And after that, don't you still have to be neither in *ida* nor in *pingala*? You have to establish in *sushumna*.

SWAMIJI: They will take care of themselves by your meditation. You need not even think of the *ida* and *pingala*. Actually, they are effects of thought. The channel through which you breathe is a consequence of the manner of your thinking. When the thinking is corrected, the *prana* gets corrected automatically. You need not bother about it at all. You just ignore it. It will go into the *sushumna* automatically.

The first and foremost duty is to take care of the thoughts. The *prana* will be next, and it won't bother you much. The trouble is from the mind only. It has to be considered first. All yoga is a mental operation finally, an adjustment of thought integrally.

Lyle: In the process of meditation, I find the mind in a *tamasik* or *rajasik* state. What can I do at that time?

SWAMIJI: At that time when actually *tamas* and *rajas* are supervening and they are very troublesome, stop the meditation. Take a cup of tea, have a little stroll on the verandah, take deep breaths some ten or fifteen times, and sit again for meditation. After that, the mind will start concentrating once again. It has entered into *tamas* and *rajas* due to the fatigue felt in meditation. It got exhausted, like a horse pulling a cart for a long distance. After some time the horse will halt and then there is no use of simply hitting it and making it go further.

When the mind is tired or unwilling, you should not meditate. If it is exhausted, take rest. If it is unwilling, you find out the reason for it. It wants something else other than what you are doing.

Lyle: Usually it can be worked through, can't it?

SWAMIJI: When it is turbulent, you cannot meditate. If it is a little distraction, well, just keep quiet for a few minutes and then restart. For ten or fifteen minutes don't meditate; keep quiet, take a deep breath and start again. Sometimes you can munch something, so that it may be satisfied. The

mind wants satisfaction, not too much harassment. Then, afterwards, you sit for meditation. It will come down.

Sometimes, if it is very difficult and it is not coming down at all, go to sleep for a few minutes; then get up and start meditation once again. You have to employ various methods, as you treat a naughty child which will not at all listen to anything. You have to employ various methods of controlling it. Sometimes you have to fulfil its longings; sometimes you have to use educational methods; sometimes you may give a medical treatment, etc. You have to use your intelligence in understanding the problem.

Lyle: Do you suggest *pranayamas*?

SWAMIJI: They are useful to some extent, but not completely. You cannot control the mind merely by *pranayama*. How will you remove your desires when they are strong, merely by the breathing process? Simultaneously you must work with the mind also. *Pranayama* is necessary as a secondary aid, but is not the complete solution.

Lyle: Swamiji, how can we try to sublimate desires?

SWAMIJI: First you must find out why desires arise. Why should desires arise in the mind at all, if you conclude that they are not good things? If they are good things, there is no need of sublimating them. If they are not good things, why are you allowing them to rise? You deliberately manufacture them under the impression that they are good, and at the same time you say that they are not good. So, you have a dual attitude towards them.

Now, who creates the desires? Are you deliberately creating the desires, or are they, in spite of yourself, coming up? That you have to find out first. It is a process of self-analysis. The deep root of the desire has to be found out.

Lyle: I think they are from basic urges.

SWAMIJI: When you use the word “basic,” you perhaps imply that these desires are inseparable from your very existence as a person. That is the meaning of “basic.” Your existence as a person implies the existence of these desires, also. So, that would mean that they will go only when you (as a person) go, because they are inseparable from your very existence.

How will you go? The personality of yours should cease to be; then the consequence in the form of these desires also will cease, according to our analysis. When the cause goes, the effect also goes. The whole question is the very existence of the person as an individual psycho-physical existence. That has to go. That has to be sublimated, not the desires. The poor desires are only henchmen of the very existence of the person. The chief culprit is the existence of the individual himself, and the desires are only offshoots of the existence of the person. That is to say, the sublimation is not of the desires, but of the personality-consciousness.

The personality-consciousness can be sublimated only by transcending it in a universal consciousness. You are conscious that you are a person named Lyle, and it is a very wrong definition of yourself. This is a nomenclature of the physical personality. As long as this physical personality persists, your problems also are going to continue. If you want to get rid of these problems, you must be sincere in handling this issue. You should not just say something and forget these things afterwards. Your physical existence itself is a problem, and that has to cease.

The individual existence ceases only in Universal Existence. It cannot cease anywhere else. So, when your meditation is fixed on the consciousness of Universality of Being, the individual consciousness gets merged into It and transcended. Together with that, the desires also get sublimated at one stroke. This is the highest technique that one can think of. There is no other solution, finally. All other solutions are temporary and a make-shift. The final solution is only this deep meditation on the Universal Existence, before which no problem can stand. The whole thing vanishes like darkness before the sun.

Chapter 3

ON MEDITATION AND SERVICE

Ronald: What is the purpose of meditation? What is the goal, and how do you know when you have achieved this goal?

SWAMIJI: You should answer your question yourself. What is your method of meditation?

Ronald: I try to be as quiet as I possibly can, and watch my breathing, and then slowly go to the *mantra*. I move from the breathing to the *mantra*, and then try to think it without verbalising it—in other words, hear the *mantra* without any physical movement or physical manifestation—and then, as the thoughts come up, try to act as a disinterested observer. I try not to identify with any one thought, to observe the thought but not cling to it, and then to allow the next thought to emerge.

SWAMIJI: You say that you are trying to go inward, but why do you want to go inward? What do you gain by it? What is the purpose that is in your mind?

Ronald: I want to go inward to appreciate my own being, unmodified by external influences. I want a greater awareness of that thing called my Self.

SWAMIJI: What is the meaning of “going inward”? Are you going inside your stomach? Where is your Self at this moment?

Ronald: My Self is right here. The whole entity encompasses the Self, but I want to become more fully conscious of it—to have a more complete sense of it as opposed to an intimation of it.

SWAMIJI: Do you mean to say that you are not conscious of your Self just now? When you say that you are Ronald, is there not a consciousness of your Self?

Ronald: In a superficial way.

SWAMIJI: Why do you say it is superficial? Is it not a reality?

Ronald: It is a reality, but I would say that there are stages of reality.

SWAMIJI: I am glad to hear all these things. Very good. Now, do you mean to say that your real Self is hidden deeper than the Ronald self? The Ronald consciousness is also a kind of self. You are saying that it is superficial, and meaning thereby that your real Self is deeper than the Ronald consciousness. How far deeper?

Ronald: That I don't know. And I don't know how one knows if one has arrived.

SWAMIJI: Suppose you reach the deepest level of yourself. What happens afterwards? That is the answer to your question of what is the purpose.

Ronald: I would say that I would be a complete person.

SWAMIJI: Will you still be conscious that you are Ronald when you have entered the deepest level of yourself?

Ronald: I would say yes, because if I didn't, it would mean that in that stage I would be limited. I wouldn't have a grasp of something that I had a grasp of before.

SWAMIJI: It means that when you have gone to the deepest level of yourself, you will also be aware of all the other levels of your self which you have transcended; so, you will have a multiple-personality consciousness at that time. You will not be having a unified consciousness, but a multiple consciousness of all the layers of whatever you could be. You will feel that you are many things, instead of being one thing.

Ronald: Well, I would say that it would be a sense of there being many aspects of something, but that it would be one entity there.

SWAMIJI: You mean that these aspects are conceptual, or really existing?

Ronald: Well, they are conceptual.

SWAMIJI: Then they are not really existent levels. They are only some ideas of yours.

Ronald: Well, if you operate on a concept, then it becomes a reality.

SWAMIJI: Now, here is a great question. Is thought identical with reality?

Ronald: Well, if the thought enters the world of action, then it becomes a reality.

SWAMIJI: You have a thought that the world is outside you. You think that the world is there before you. Can you say that the thought itself is the world, because thought is identical with reality? Is the thought of the world, or is thought itself the world?

Ronald: I would say that thought is of the world.

SWAMIJI: Then the concept is not identical with reality; they are two different things. Anyway, you are asking me what the purpose of doing all this is, and you answered your question yourself by saying that you feel complete when you go into the deepest level of yourself. Do you feel that you are satisfied with this answer?

Ronald: Well, I haven't achieved it.

SWAMIJI: No, but when you achieve it, you feel that you are going to be complete. A sense of completeness will supervene in your personality, and that is the purpose of meditation. This is what you think?

Ronald: Yes.

SWAMIJI: Whatever you have told me about this purpose of meditation is perfectly all right, but there is something more than that. You have reached only one stage; even if you go to the deepest level of your self in the sense that we have tried to comprehend it, this is not the end of the journey. There is something further. There is something greater than one's deepest self because the word "me" has come. As long as these "I, you, he, she, it" terms continue to persist, we have not reached the ultimate aim of life.

In the ultimate existence, there is no he, she, it, I and you. Nobody will say "my Self, your Self," etc. These ideas are empirical, tentative, relative, connected with personality-consciousness, and the Self is not a person, it is a Super-Person. I am giving a hint that there is something more for you to know than the level you have reached now by this analysis. It will take some time even to understand what this great thing is.

Knowing your deepest Self is identical with knowing God Himself. That will be a terrifying thing to hear! How will knowing the deepest level of my being be the same thing as knowing God? You have an idea of God as the comprehensive Almighty, the universal omnipresent Being. Is He planted in my own heart at the deepest level of my being? Then what is my relationship with God? After having known that in that deepest level you will have a sense of completeness, the question still persists as to what the relationship is between yourself and God. That is the next step.

Whatever we have been discussing up to this time is the first step only. We have not touched the second level. The second level is what your relationship to the cosmos, and to God Himself, is. That is the next step.

There is a book called the Bhagavad Gita. It has eighteen chapters. The first six chapters deal with all these questions, about which we have been discussing just now—about the deepest Self and all that. The next six chapters, from the seventh to the twelfth, touch upon this other question of what your relationship to the cosmos and to the Almighty Himself is, and then there is something more about it in the last six chapters.

An in-depth study of this profundity is necessary. You cannot know the secret of things in a few minutes of discussion. That is why we say that for years you must be at the feet of a master to understand these things. Books do not always clarify these matters. It requires a divine blessing to come upon you. According to Indian tradition, this blessing comes through the Guru, and perhaps it may come through God Himself. It is a quest that will continue throughout your life. It is not a question of a few months or years, and it will continue until you don't have a single doubt in your mind. You are asking how you will know that you have reached it. That is a question of doubt. A person who has reached it will not have any doubt.

How do you know that it is daytime and not night, and how do you know that you are a human being? How do you know that you are Ronald? This is an intuitive perception, and you will have that kind of perception there. You will never have a question afterwards of whether you have reached it or not. A person who feels a doubt whether he has reached it or not has not reached it. He is still outside it. You have to be at the feet of a Guru for long years, and then these questions will be clarified.

We had also this humble blessing of being with a great master, Swami Sivananda. We have been with him physically for some twenty years, and whatever peace of mind we have today is due not to study, but due to being with him. The personality of the master exudes an energy and a kind of blessing that is indescribable. You don't know what this blessing means, actually. You feel energised, clarified, elevated, strengthened, and a new light enters into you by merely having a contact with him and seeing him every day, talking to him, being near him.

Study of books is not sufficient. You may read all the library, but still doubts will persist. The company of a great master is necessary. Now you are on the right path, but it is still a long journey ahead. Be happy that you are on the path, but be also sure that you have to continue on this journey for a long time.

Ronald: Having been given this gift of life, how can we increase the quality of living?

SWAMIJI: It is a very serious question. Trees, animals, insects, and human beings live. Perhaps you have observed a difference in the quality of living among these species. Though the tree lives, we seem to be living in a better way than a tree or an animal lives; but in what way are we better? We breathe, and animals and plants also breathe; we eat, and animals and plants also eat. We sleep, and they also sleep. But apart from these phenomena, what is the speciality in a human being? Various answers have been given.

A human being can think, and argue the pros and cons of a situation, which animals and plants cannot do adequately. We can infer the future from a present condition, which prerogative is not given to the animals fully. There is also another aspect of the matter. We want to live, but why do we want to live? What is the harm if one does not live? What is the reason behind this insistence on being alive? What do we gain by being alive?

Ronald: Well, one would hope that one's life has a purpose.

SWAMIJI: Now you have touched a vital point. We feel that by being alive we will be able to fulfill the purpose for which we are alive. Now, what is that purpose?

Ronald: I would hope somehow to make the world a little better as a consequence of having been here.

SWAMIJI: Oh! You mean to say that we are alive so that the world may become better because of our being alive?

Ronald: Hopefully.

SWAMIJI: Are we here to make the world better?

Ronald: I think we are here to make a contribution to the world, and to others. How to do that effectively, and at the same time feel at peace with oneself, so that you are not making a sacrifice when you are doing it, not punishing oneself.

SWAMIJI: Now, what is it that the world is lacking which we are in a position to give to it? It appears that the world lacks something, and we have it; if we give it, the world becomes better. We have something which the world does not have. This is what you mean. What is it that the world is lacking and we have?

Ronald: The world can be an impersonal place, and we bring a certain personality and intimacy to it.

SWAMIJI: You mean personality is superior to impersonality?

Ronald: I would say so.

SWAMIJI: Here is a question we cannot answer in this crowd of people sitting here. This is a serious question being raised about whether it is correct to say that personality is superior to impersonality. This is a metaphysical question. Perhaps, it goes deep into the spiritual depths of all existence. Can we say existence is personal or impersonal? Personality perishes; and if that is the case, you cannot call it superior to impersonality. Anything that is perishable is not worth having, and if our personality is perishable, I think we should get rid of it as early as possible. What is the good of hugging that which is perishable? And the consciousness of something being perishable brings us face to face with something which is perhaps not perishable.

What is it that is not perishable in this world? If we can contribute something to make anything imperishable, that would be a great thing. Being ourselves perishable, what imperishable contribution can come from us? Who can expect anything worthwhile from us, when we ourselves are perishable? When our life itself is in danger, what contribution can we make to the world? At any moment, anything goes. The whole world is evolutionary, subject to destruction of a prevailing condition. It is in a state of flux and permanent movement, giving no indication of permanence anywhere. If every moment is a fluxation and a movement towards destruction (which includes our own selves also as personalities), where is the purpose in life? There is something imperishable either in us or in the

world or in both things which we are pursuing, and if anything can be regarded as a worthwhile purpose in life, it must be something which is imperishable in nature.

Perishable things cannot be regarded as purposes in life. Nobody will go for perishable things, because at any moment that perishability will catch hold of our necks. So, there is something imperishable which is keeping us alive, and insists that we should be alive. This desire to be alive continuously is a touch of imperishability working in us. Perishability cannot speak because every minute it dies. I cannot speak to you, and you cannot speak to me, if there is only perishability in us, because thereby every second we are demonstrating the worthlessness of our existence. But if we are alive for three minutes at least, that would show that there is something more than perishability in us. The perishable cannot exist even for three minutes; it goes in one second. But that does not happen. We are continuing to exist, which shows that there is an imperishable in us, and we must find out what that imperishable thing is.

I think the quest for the imperishable is the purpose of life, and if that can be achieved, we can make that contribution also to the world. What is the use of giving a perishable thing to the world, and imagining that we have done some great good? Everything in the world has some element of eternity behind it; otherwise, it cannot exist. When we say that evil exists, we are saying that there is a divine element also behind it. Eternity is there in the midst of the temporal things that we see in the world. First, it is necessary for you to exist in order that you may serve the world. Are you sure that you are going to exist?

Ronald: Well, I am existing.

SWAMIJI: You are existing for how long? For how many minutes? If you say that you are going to exist for another fifty years, who gave you the guarantee?

Ronald: No one.

SWAMIJI: Then why are you assuming that you will live for another fifty years? How can there be such an ungrounded assumption?

Ronald: I am not making an assumption that I will live fifty years.

SWAMIJI: It is there, implied by the statement that you are going to contribute something to the world. It is a very important question. Unless you are sure that you are going to exist for a considerable period of time, the question of contributing to the world does not meaningfully arise. If that assurance has been given, it is wonderful; but let it be there. Otherwise, it is a futile attempt to go on saying that you will contribute to the world when tomorrow the man will breathe his last. There is some flaw in this doctrine of service to the world, which has to be found out. The man himself will not be there. What contribution can be made afterwards? There is something more in life than service, unless you interpret service in a different sense altogether.

Ronald: What do you mean by “more in life”? That implies that there's an awareness of what that something is.

SWAMIJI: I am thinking that I have spoken enough now. We should postpone this subject for another time. This is a serious matter, and it should not be discussed in a slipshod manner. It is a question of life and death, as they say.

What is our future? Let the future of the world be anything. What is your future, and what is my future? Let that be clear first. We shall think of the future of the world afterwards. We have not created the world, and we are not supposed to be so much concerned with it. Let the Creator of it be responsible for it.

Who created the world? Has He any responsibility over it? Or has nobody created it? If you believe in a person who must have created this world, can we say that He has some responsibility over it, or has He shoved the entire responsibility on you, or on me? Let us think over that matter also.

Somebody created the problem of the world, and we are responsible for it? Is it a justice? If God or somebody who has created this bad world expects us to share His burden and suffer for it, He is not a very wise person, nor is He a charitable person, also. Why should God create an evil world and expect us to rectify it?

There is something serious about this question. First of all, let us decide whether God has created such a world. Secondly, has He created an evil world so that we have to work for removing its defect? Is it true that our

service is required by the world, or are we so egoistic in imagining that we have the power to redeem the world? These are important questions. Before we talk further, these questions have to be answered.

Is it the egoism of man that makes him feel that he is capable of serving, and making the world better? Or, is there some other thing behind it which makes us feel that we are to work for the world? Many have come, and many have gone, and they have left the world in the same condition that it was. Do you believe that because of the service of so many people, a world of iron has become a world of gold? Buddhas and Christs have come and gone. They have also contributed much to the world. What are you contributing further? Are you greater than Christ and Buddha?

Ronald: I think that, as we go along, the consciousness can increase and develop, but the world in a sense is neutral.

SWAMIJI: Is the world a bad world?

Ronald: No.

SWAMIJI: Then what is the contribution that you are making?

Ronald: The world is not bad, but it is men that affect the world. It is a neutral substance.

SWAMIJI: If it is a neutral substance, it is better you leave it as it is. Why are you interfering with it?

Ronald: It's the nature of man.

SWAMIJI: What is the nature of man? To interfere with things? Why should he? Why is he interfering with things which were created by somebody else?

Ronald: Just by the mere fact of acting, we have some effect on it.

SWAMIJI: What are we aiming at, finally? That should be clear first. Whether by contributing or not by contributing, what is the final aim? What are we aiming at? What is this contribution, the purpose, the final end of things?

This is a question of eternity, rather than a question connected with time. There is an endlessness behind all these processes we call service, life in the world, etc. We cannot discuss these matters in a round-table conference. We have to be sincere in this quest which is super-physical, super-social and to a large extent super-psychological. There is something in man which defies definition in terms of society and social relations. You are not merely a social unit; there is something in you which is above society, which is an eternity speaking through you, which is the reason why you feel that you are safe and secure and that you will continue to live endlessly in this world. That impulse has arisen on account of the eternity parading in the midst of temporality. We should not discuss things like this in a casual manner. They are serious things concerned with the future of humanity, and the future of the soul of the human individual. The impulse for service, for doing good, arises due to the involvement of every individual in the cosmic movement of Nature towards the Supreme Absolute. Here is the secret of all life and effort.

Chapter 4

TOTAL THOUGHT AND MEDITATION

Krishna Kumar: What is meditation?

SWAMIJI: Meditation is an integration of consciousness. It is not a routine or a ritual. It is not a religious exercise belonging to some religion. It is an opening of yourself to the final realities of life. It has nothing to do with Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, or any religion. It has no connection with any scripture, also. It is an impersonal act on the part of yourself, wherein you lift up your consciousness to a recognition of the fact that you are a temporary sojourning entity into eternity.

You have come from a larger realm, and will enter into the same realm after some time, which will indicate gradually that your existence has a kind of cosmic sweep. From plane to plane you have journeyed in your millions of incarnations. How many planes of existence have you crossed, through what forms of life, what types of experience; how many parents, relations, types of work you have had! All these things you cogitate slowly in your mind so that you start thinking along these lines, and you will not think you are Krishna Kumar any more.

This is only a temporary form that the cosmic form has taken due to some karma, some pressure of circumstance. Neither do you belong to Jaipur, India, nor to anything. You are a travelling cosmic force, like a meteor, coming from one plane and moving to another. Your thoughts have to be oriented along this fashion. Don't think like a man or woman thinking. We are ultimately, in what we call a spiritual sense, neither human beings, nor males nor females, but only forces of Nature which have concentrated themselves in certain space-time points, looking like individuals. This is how self-analysis has to be carried on. When you think along these lines, you will find that your mind becomes "total" instead of fragmentary.

Generally, nobody thinks in a total fashion. You always think of something other than yourself. It is taken for granted by the mind that what you are thinking is something different from yourself. If it is not different from you, there is no need of thinking it. You don't go on thinking yourself. So, every thought of every person is directed towards something which is assumed to be totally different from the process of thinking. This is a mistake.

From this little introduction about your being a sojourning individual in a cosmic setup, you will appreciate that you cannot even think unless all the atmospheric conditions of the cosmic condition are involved in the very process of thinking. When you think, it looks as if you are thinking like a cosmic being, because your mind is connected to all the circumstances through which you have passed in all your various incarnations.

They say if you can remember some thousand births through which you have passed, and all the relations which you had during these thousand births, you will find today that there is nobody in this world who is not your relative. Everyone is related to you in some way or other through the circumstance of some incarnation, some birth or other. This is why they say that the world is a single family. Though it is told in a socialistic sense, it is much more than that. It is really so. Like the various branches of a tree coming forth from the root, all these manifestations and forms of existence have come out from One Root.

I was just telling you about meditating, in my own way. We don't do meditation merely for doing it; we want to get some benefit out of it. There can be benefit only if your thoughts are harmonious with reality. If you dichotomise your thought from the reality of the world and consider it as an

external object, then it will be finite thinking, and finite thinking will produce only finite results. So, I am again coming to the point of total thinking, which is called meditation.

All the thoughts of everyone and of everything will be comprehended within the total grasp of your mind in this act. When you sit for meditation, what should you do? I am thinking of some object, person, situation. Your mind has to consciously, vitally, involve in itself the object which it is thinking; otherwise, you cannot even be conscious of the object. The very fact that you are conscious of some object outside you implies that it has already entered the mind. It has become part and parcel of your consciousness. Now, here is the technique of total thinking. You cannot think the object unless you accept that it is a part of your thought itself. Thus, the thinker is not Krishna Kumar. It is something in between the object and the so-called subject. It is a connecting link, transcendent.

In our ancient scriptures we use words like *adhyatma*, *adhibhuta*, *adhidaiva*, etc. *Adhyatma* is the thinking subject; *adhibhuta* is the object, but we don't know anything else. We think only two things. I am here and I am seeing and thinking something else. But you cannot think something else unless there is a connecting link of consciousness between you and the other object. The thinker is actually that connecting link. That is called *adhidaiva*, the superintending divinity. So, who is the meditator?

Now I am coming to another more advanced step. *You* are not meditating, because if you consider yourself as the meditator, you cut yourself off from the object. But I mentioned to you that you cannot cut off your consciousness from any object, inasmuch as, unless it is involved in that object, thinking is not possible. So this involvement-consciousness is a transcendent consciousness which is above both you and the object. Do you understand the point? It is a very subtle thing, and very difficult to catch that little crux of the matter.

You transfer your consciousness, as it were, to the middle connection, transfer your consciousness to the centre where you contemplate both sides, as if the body is thinking of two hands. This is the subject and this is the object, but the thinker of both is the body; so you are not one person thinking of another thing. Meditation does not mean thinking of an object; it is a transference of consciousness from the subjectivity of yours and from the objectivity of the object to a central point which is transcendent to both.

That is the divinity which is called *Ishtadevata*. You contemplate like this. This is what they call total thinking, and this is the essence of meditation.

Another Visitor: But Swamiji, I don't understand...

SWAMIJI: What I was telling is that your consciousness of an object implies the presence of a connecting link of consciousness between you and the object. Actually, the thinker of the object is not you. There is something else in the middle which thinks you and the object at the same time, which fact is not known to you, due to which you get stuck up with an object. You must transfer yourself to the middle point where you will also look like an object only, so that you have no attachment to yourself any more. Neither are you attached to yourself nor to the object; you are a totally impersonal, isolated, transcendent Being which is the *devata*, the controlling principle of both yourself and the other. And there are degrees of this involvement until it reaches the Absolute. This is how you have to meditate.

Visitor: But the mind gets tormented by thinking of other people.

SWAMIJI: It is tormented by any kind of thinking. Neither you should think yourself, nor the other. The torment comes either because you think yourself or the object. You must transfer yourself to another impersonal thing, which is neither you nor the object.

Visitor: Even when you are thinking of yourself?

SWAMIJI: Why are you thinking of yourself, as if you are protecting yourself? The protector is somebody else. The whole mistake is that you are representing yourself so much, as if you are the only important thing. This is not the important thing, nor the other thing. There is something else which is controlling everybody. You have to transfer your consciousness to God. God is sitting between yourself and the other thing, and He is the thinking principle. If that concentration can be done, all problems will be solved. Neither you should think yourself, nor another thing. This art is a difficult thing, but there is no other solution for it. It must be done with great effort, and there will be no problem afterwards.

Visitor: What is the difference between *total thought* and meditation?

SWAMIJI: They are the same thing. Total thought means a perfect form of thought, and meditation means the same thing. It is a total thought, not little

bits of thinking, one thing at a time. Generally, we think little things, but that is not correct thinking because when you think something, you exclude something else. You should exclude nothing and include all things in your thought; then it becomes a total thought. It is something like God-thought. That is the perfect form of thinking. Then you will have no troubles from the mind afterwards. There will be cooperative forces working together. If you exclude something, that something which you exclude will not cooperate with you. That is why troubles arise.

Visitor: But, Swamiji, in our general life...

SWAMIJI: General life does not mean imperfect life. It also should be perfect. You have been taught wrongly; your education itself is faulty, right from the beginning. That is why everybody is suffering. Technological education is not real education. One requires also psychological education.

Visitor: Swamiji, we have so many *mantras*.

SWAMIJI: That is a different matter. You may have a *mantra*, or no *mantra*. If your mind is not thinking correctly, even a *mantra* cannot help. Your mind should be adjusted perfectly, even to the *mantra*. Even the *mantra* is a total thought; it is not only one thing that you are thinking. All things are combined in the *mantra*. The total divinity is in the *mantra*, so even the *mantra* is a total thought. All spiritual practice is an attempt at maintaining total thought, complete thought, which is called perfect thought—or you may even say it is God-thought. Everyone is meant for that ultimate attainment. Nobody is excluded.

Visitor: The people and situations that occur around us—are they creations of our own thought?

SWAMIJI: These situations in which you find yourself are due to some actions that you performed in the previous birth. They react as circumstances of your present life. Present experiences are results of past actions—a previous birth or even a further birth backwards—something you have done, good or bad. If you have done some good, you are well placed and you are comfortable and happy. But if you have done something opposite, you will have pin-pricks, harassments, etc. You will get exactly what you have given to others.

Visitor: But, Swamiji, through our own experience, we always visualise; so our experience has a limit, and so our thoughts will also have a limit.

SWAMIJI: That is what I am saying. You must try to overcome that limit by learning the art of a new way of thinking, which is called the spiritual way of thinking, about which we have been discussing now. You have to forget all the old ways of thinking, and start a new way from today onwards. Then you will find a new psychological strength arising from your mind. You will feel confident in yourself; you will not feel diffident.

When you are sure that your thinking is correct, you will receive cooperation from all the forces of the world. But if you start excluding things one by one, those things will also exclude you. Then you will have difficulties. If I exclude you, you will exclude me, also. That is the law of the world. If I include you in myself, then you will also include me in yourself. This is how the world is working.

Visitor: Should we try to correct others?

SWAMIJI: Whether you are really expected to correct them or you mind your own business, that is left to your personal choice. There is nothing wrong with trying to correct others, provided you feel it is a necessity and also a possibility. Otherwise, you need not interfere with anything. But if it is an essential thing for some reason or the other, then you can, unless you are greater than those whom you are reforming, the effort may not lead to success.

Visitor: How can we know our level?

SWAMIJI: Your level is known from your desires. You can know what your desires are in one second. You don't express them, but you know them very well.

Visitor: But how can I refine them?

SWAMIJI: You cannot refine them unless you practise meditation on God. There is no other way for refining desires. Meditation, *japa*, prayer all mean the same thing, finally. They are only various ways of expressing one and the same thing. You cannot refine your desires except by directing them to God; then they become purified. Ultimately, your desire must be for God only.

We were mentioning about perfect thought. Perfect thought is God-thought, and that only is the way of purification. Desires are all selfish and they have to be converted into unselfish desires in the next stage. Then, the unselfish desires also should cease in the Universal desire for God. The desire by itself is not bad. It all depends upon to what object you are directing it. If it is directed to your personal physical gain only, it is selfish desire. If it is directed to the welfare of all people, it is unselfish desire. If it is directed to God Almighty, it is Universal desire. So all are desires only, but there is a difference in the manner in which different desires work.

There are three stages: selfish, unselfish and Universal. Gradually, you have to rise from the lower to the higher. Nobody, truly, works for God, and nobody works for other people, also. Each one works for oneself, and so mostly the world is filled with selfish people only. A few are unselfish to some extent. But Universal desire is unthinkable. Such a thought cannot arise ordinarily in the mind of a person. A person who entertains a Universal desire cannot be regarded as a human being. Such a one is super-human.

When desires cause pain, you should remove them. When desires cause pleasure, they also should be removed. There are two desires—those that bring pain and those which bring pleasure. Both are bondages. By stages, gradually, they have to be eliminated.

Chapter 5

WHAT IS THE SELF?

Luciano: How can I know the Self?

SWAMIJI: If you know the meaning of what the Self is, then you will automatically know how to go there. If you know where Rome is, you will know how to go, also; but if you don't know where it is, it is difficult to go there. So, where is this Self sitting? If you are sure as to where It is, then you will also know how to go. Now, tell me where It is.

Luciano: The saints and sages say that the Self is everywhere.

SWAMIJI: OK. How can a person go to a thing which is everywhere? Suppose a thing is everywhere; then, where are you sitting? If It is everywhere, It is under you, also. Then, where are you sitting?

Luciano: On the Self.

SWAMIJI: Then why are you crying? You have already attained It. You are sitting on It and asking me how to attain It.

Luciano: But I don't see It.

SWAMIJI: You are not seeing It because It is everywhere. If It is only in some place, then you will see It. That is the whole problem. How can you see a thing which is everywhere, unless you also become everywhere? If you also become everywhere, then you will see that which is everywhere. You are only in one place, and the Self is everywhere, so there is a contradiction between your existence and Self's existence.

This contradiction has to be removed. Either It should be in one place, or you should be everywhere. The Self cannot become something in one place, so you have to become everywhere. Then you will "see" It. People who think alike will become friends. If you think in one way and That thinks in another way, how will you contact It? So you must think as the Self thinks, and what does the Self think? It thinks, "I am all things." Can you think like that? The essential point is here.

You are thinking that you are Luciano from Italy. This is the only idea that you have got, but this kind of thing cannot take you to the Self. As long as you are Luciano, and you are from Italy, then nothing will work.

But you are not Luciano, and you are not coming from Italy. You have not come from anywhere; you are just where you are, and you are not Luciano. You can be any other name, also. Somebody called you Luciano, and now you are saying that you are Luciano. Somebody can call you Joseph, and you will say that you are Joseph.

Luciano: So then I have all the names.

SWAMIJI: Then you have no name! So, don't say that you are Luciano. When you start going near the Self, all kinds of trouble will arise. A big storm of troubles will come up from all sides; as the Self is everywhere, the trouble also will come from all sides. If you are prepared for It and don't mind the difficulties that come, and you are bent upon It, you will get It. But if you are only experimenting with It and seeing whether you can get It or not, then It understands your mind, so It won't come. This is a very serious

matter. You will get It—no problem. But you have to pay a high price—many *liras*! But the Self cannot encash *lira*, and all that!

For travelling, for your passport and bank account, you may call yourself Luciano, but when you are sitting alone, forget this idea. You sit alone and look at yourself and tell yourself that you have all names so you have no name. But have you a form? You have two things, name and form.

Luciano: In the book you suggest to place the consciousness outside, between the object and the subject.

SWAMIJI: When you concentrate on any object, your consciousness is transferred to that object, and then the consciousness of you body becomes less. You are thinking too much of this body; therefore, the objects are cut off. But one of the techniques of meditation is to concentrate the consciousness on another thing. It may be anything. Then immediately the attachment to this body gets loosened. That is one method which is prescribed by Patanjali in the Yoga Sutras.

That thing which you are concentrating upon can be any object. It can be a little material thing, or it can be God Himself, or all the five elements, or the sun, the moon, the stars, space, time—to anything you can transfer your consciousness. Then, the attachment to this body gets loosened and becomes less and less. Slowly you will find that your mind spreads into a Universal state. This is one method of meditation. Here, the consciousness exists between you and what is outside you! Wonder indeed!

Luciano: When I try to concentrate on one thing, often the mind goes like a monkey.

SWAMIJI: It doesn't matter; let it go. Again you sit and start. Even if it goes again and again, it will come also again and again, by practice. Every day you eat food and every day you feel hungry also. Like that, it is the same thing. The mind goes again and again, but again you sit. Keep doing it, and you will see that it comes under control. Then one day you will find that you will be able to think only in that way. You will then not think in any other way. It is a question of repeated practice.

Luciano: At the end of the third discourse, you mention that all will be clarified if people can answer the question of where the Self is. But the Atman is everywhere, so how can I discover It?

SWAMIJI: Why should you discover It, if It is everywhere? That would mean that It is not everywhere. You are saying two things. You have to discover a thing which is not near you. If It is everywhere, how will you discover It, and also, who will discover It? Luciano is not there, because Luciano has gone into that which is everywhere; so who is discovering It? This is a very subtle point. If It is everywhere, where is Luciano at that time?

Luciano: He is nowhere.

SWAMIJI: Then what problem have you? If Luciano is not there, what else is there?

Luciano: Luciano has no problem because he is not there.

SWAMIJI: Then why are you putting questions unnecessarily? You have to sit with a Guru, and there is no use of only reading a book. You see, what I told you in two sentences is more important than the whole book. If Luciano is not there, the problem also is not there. Then who is putting a question?

Luciano: Nobody.

SWAMIJI: So you are happy!

Luciano: Yes!

SWAMIJI: With great difficulty you are happy! This point which has entered your mind just now, which has suddenly made you say reluctantly that you are happy, should be the object of your meditation. Day and night you must think this point: If the Atman is everywhere, nothing else is. The whole thing is that Atman, the pervading light everywhere, the dazzling light of the Atman which is the Universal Being, which is the Atman of everybody; there is only one Atman.

Go on telling this to the mind again and again so that the idea of Luciano and people, things and buildings and everything goes in one second. Go on thinking It again and again, and tell it also to the mind one thousand times. Don't think anything else for three hours every day and you'll see that something will happen afterwards.

Luciano: The problem is to expand my consciousness, because I think one of the problems is the separation between us and the Atman.

SWAMIJI: The separation arises because you are thinking that you are outside that Atman, but you have already said that you cannot be outside It. Your reason says that you cannot be outside It, so the feeling that you are outside It must be raised and merged into your reason. You cannot have two things, feeling something, and the reason saying another thing. They must come together.

That act of uniting the reason with the feeling is meditation. Go on driving that thought of reason into the feeling. Keep telling the feeling that you have accepted this point, that This is the only thing that you want, that This will give you whatever you want, and that you want nothing else. Tell the mind again and again, like a *mantra*. Do this meditation for three hours—in the morning, afternoon and night.

Don't create doubts in the mind. Write in your diary that you have no doubts. You have to go on telling the same thing again and again, because, otherwise, doubt will come and say, "No, you are not all right." When Buddha, the great Yogi, was meditating, some demons came to him and told him that he was a foolish man. Even Christ was told by somebody that he was wasting his time.

The reason should merge with the feeling. These should not be two different things. The feeling is very turbulent and troublesome. It will go on telling some wrong thing only. Though the reason says the right thing, the feeling will tell the wrong thing.

Luciano: Sometimes also the reason gives a wrong answer.

SWAMIJI: The reason needs to be purified by instruction from a Guru. Everybody has a reason, but that is ordinary, lower reason. We are now speaking of the higher reason, which accepts the universality of the Absolute and thinks nothing else. That has to be driven deeply into the feeling, all which is the process called meditation. If you can do it continuously and think nothing else in the mind at all times, then within a short time you will experience some great change in your life. You must wait for that day.

Luciano: So my first object of meditation must be that I am the only one, and that I have no doubts.

SWAMIJI: Yes. You write in your diary that you have no doubts. Every day see it, in big letters: "I have no doubts." If anybody tells you from inside that you have doubts, you say *no*. This will take you a long time; it is not an easy job. You must find time for it, and it will be all right in due course. If you persist in It, It will come to you.

The secret of success is that you can get anything you want, provided you want only that thing. But if you want two things, then you will get neither this nor that. Is there anything that you want entirely? It is difficult to find something like that, where only "that" is wanted. Nobody can live like that, with only one thing. There is also another thing, second thing, third thing, etc. So many things we want! But there is one thing, by getting which, you will get other things, also. All the waters of the world you will find in one thing, which is the ocean; so, find out that ocean.

Luciano: It is difficult for me to understand your image about drops in the ocean, and the separation between the drops, and the ocean made from infinite drops.

SWAMIJI: The ocean itself is one big drop, but it is also made of small drops; many little drops put together become an ocean. But actually, in the ocean, the drops don't exist; they are one integral whole. So, you may say there are no drops in the ocean, yet you can say it is made up of drops. Both notions are correct. Actually, the drops in the ocean are only conceptual. The mind says that there are many parts. Ideas move the world.

Luciano: So, also, in the world, I am separated from others.

SWAMIJI: It is like that. You have got a conceptual feeling of difference of one from another. Really, they are connected together into a vast ocean of infinite force. The people who are sitting here look like isolated people, even as conceptually you can imagine many drops in the ocean.

You have many cells in the body, but yet you are one man. The billions of cells make one Luciano. So, even if it looks like many, it is still one only. When there are many branches in a tree, the tree will not think that it is many trees. It is one tree only, though the branches are many.

The process is to become aware that there is one consciousness pervading everything, and it itself appears as all the objects. One tree appears as many branches, but is integrated by one tree-consciousness.

Similarly, you will feel the ocean of force as identical with you. All these things that you see outside you are part of that conceptually differentiated, but really united being.

Luciano: Yes, but different people have different manners.

SWAMIJI: Even if there are many varieties of branches (one is straight, one is bent, one is up or down), it makes no difference to the tree. There are people with defective limbs, yet they think that they are a complete whole. The consciousness is not of defect. The body may have some defects, but the consciousness feels that it is perfectly all right. Varieties of limbs do not make varieties in consciousness. Consciousness is one only.

Luciano: So what appears as the forms is only a question of appearance, and not substance.

SWAMIJI: Yes. There are big waves in the ocean, and small waves, yet it is still one single ocean. This requires deep thinking every day. A long time you must take for this meditation, and do study also, if you require it as a help.

Chapter 6 THE HIGHER SELF

SWAMIJI: When the drop dissolves in the ocean, at that time, what does the drop think? That experience is the Higher Self. Do you understand?

Malaya: But I am thinking that I am a drop only, Swamiji.

SWAMIJI: No. Who asked you to think like that? Otherwise, what is will power? A person has feeling, understanding, and also will. Do you know what will is? Will is determination: We determine that “it” is like “this.” You have sunk into the ocean, and this ocean is your Higher Self.

Malaya: The ocean cannot see itself?

SWAMIJI: Why do you want to see? How can you see what you are? You can see somebody else. How will you see yourself?

Malaya: The process of thinking is there, Swamiji.

SWAMIJI: There is no thinking. As long as you are a drop, thinking is there but the ocean doesn't think, because there is nothing to think. What is there to think? Only "itself" is there. All the drops are inside it, so what will it think? That is the Higher Self. The drop is the lower self; the ocean is the Higher Self. But it does not mean that the Higher Self is separate, just as the ocean is not separate from the drop. You are not applying your will. Perhaps you are not fully interested, also. The heart is not eager. Will is nothing but the application of interest.

Malaya: Understanding is there, but...

SWAMIJI: No, no. Interest, not understanding. There is a difference between understanding and interest. When you are interested in a thing, you will not forget it. If you are not fully interested, you will have so many excuses.

You cannot break a mountain. However much you may try, it will not break. But if you apply dynamite, it will split the mountain into pieces. That is, dynamite is the will, you have to acquire it. It will split the egoism; the whole thing will break. If you do not want it, that is a different matter. If you have a suspicion that it is perhaps not possible for you, then it will not be possible, also. But, if you say, "No, it is certainly possible for me," then it will be possible. What you feel you are, that you really are. You should not say it is difficult.

To carry yourself is not difficult; to carry another person is difficult—Oh, he is a very heavy person; who will carry him? But you can carry yourself, whatever be the weight. Even stout people carry themselves, but they cannot carry another person. So, likewise, there is no problem in handling yourself.

Malaya: Swamiji, in practical life...

SWAMIJI: There is no such thing as practical life. You are unnecessarily creating differences. That "practical life" is an activity of the lower self, and the lower self is included in the Higher Self. Thus, the activity also is of the Higher Self only. Then, who is telling me that there is practical life? There is no such thing as isolated practical life. It is the Higher Self only doing all these things. Do you understand the implication of it?

Malaya: Yes, Swamiji.

SWAMIJI: When the Higher Self does all your Magazine Department work, it is a cosmic action taking place. The whole world will throb when you go into the office. Actually you are not going to the office; you are entering into yourself only. The office is your own self. Wherever you go, you find yourself only, just as in the ocean, wherever you go, you find the ocean. Whether you go to a station, or market place, or dining hall, you are actually entering into yourself only. You should not say that you are going to the dining hall, and all that. There is no dining hall. You are entering into yourself, in various forms.

Malaya: There is no...., Swamiji?

SWAMIJI: That is entering of the self. The self enters into the Self. It is a metaphorical way of speaking. Everything is taking place within one thing only. You have to exercise a little bit of thinking on what it actually means. Do not say that you are going to the market, etc. You are going to yourself only, even when you go to the market. The market is inside yourself.

You think over it; a wonderful experience will come, and a miracle will take place. But, if you are doubting, then nothing will happen. “God is somewhere, and daily life is something else”—this is the argument of everybody. This is a silly argument, because the mind is not catching the point. “Practical life is something else,” you are telling me. There is no such thing as practical life. It does not exist. It is your own self moving within itself.

The huge ocean is there, and tremendous waves are dashing over it. The ocean will not say, “I am sitting quiet, but the waves are practical life.” The waves are not the practical life of the ocean. There is no practical life for it. The ocean is itself the waves. The waves are the ocean. The Self itself is all this practical life.

There is no such thing as secular life and spiritual life. There is no distinction. People make a distinction between earth and heaven, God and world, spiritual and secular. These do not exist, really. They are all tricks played by the mind, so that you may not do anything worthwhile. “I am working in a factory every day and I have no time to think”—you should not say that. You are not working in a factory; you are working in yourself only.

There is no factory outside yourself. Is your mind catching what I am saying?

Malaya: Yes. Swamiji.

SWAMIJI: You will be a different person in one day. You will not be what you are. For such a transformation to take place, it may take one day, or even less than one day. The whole earth will tremble, if you think like this.

Malaya: The mind has to ...

SWAMIJI: There is no mind there. It is consciousness. You are not a mind, nor a body, because in the state of deep sleep you have no mind, and you have no body. So, your real nature is pure consciousness, as it is in the state of deep sleep. So, don't say "mind" and all that. That is another "practical life" you are bringing in. There is no such thing. You have seen in the state of deep sleep that the body and mind are not there. Then, who was there? It was not Malaya existing there. He, also, was not there. Who was there? That thing you grasp and cogitate.

In sleep, you had no father, mother, relations, — nothing was there. Just, you were there. And, the state of sleep brought you such a joy that you would not like to have any other joy compared to it. Even a king cannot be so happy as a person who has entered into deep sleep, because he has entered the Self, the ocean of Self. And, you had no relations, no property, no friends, no body, no mind at that time. What was there? "You" were there.

This is what I call the ocean. Do not make a distinction between practical life and factory life, office life etc. There is really no such thing. See, this is a very interesting and important point. You must be always happy, blissful—everything is fine; nothing is wrong. Everything is good; all is well with me. Why should it not be? It must be. Nobody can create trouble for you. Who can create trouble? You are creating trouble for yourself, because you yourself are the trouble. So, why do you complain? The mind is very subtle. It cannot think like this. If it starts thinking thus, it will become giddy, and you will fall into sleep, again.

This is the highest purificatory process that I am suggesting. Your mistakes and your sins are all completely washed off by this kind of meditation. All the sins of many lives that you have lived are all cleansed, as

hundreds of years of darkness vanish in one second when the sun rises. The darkness might have been there for hundreds of years, but removing that hundreds of years of thick darkness requires only one minute of the rise of the sun. So, whatever be the mistakes that you have made in many lives, they have no consequence before the light of this kind of experience. All your old *karmas* are like mountains of straw. They can be burned into ashes by one matchstick.

Chapter 7 **THE GOOD AND THE BAD**

Malaya: How can I compare the good to the pleasant?

SWAMIJI: You have asked me this two or three times. I have already explained it to you. You have not heard what I said last time. Do you remember that you have put this question to me on what is the Higher Self and lower self? You are raising the same point in a different way. You asked me what is the Higher Self and the lower self. This is the same thing you are repeating once again—conquering the lower self by the Higher Self. The lower self is the sensory self, the physical self, the perceptual self. The Higher Self is the Universal Self, which is the only Self. As far as the lower self is concerned, there are many lower selves.

Many people are sitting here. They are all so many lower selves. One has no connection with another, as it were. But, there is an underground current of connection of all these lower selves. That is like the ocean of Self; that is the Higher Self. Nobody knows that It exists, because the sense organs are compelling the individual self to look outside. You cannot look inside and see what is at the back. If you see the back, you will see a sea of consciousness. That is the Higher Self. On That you must meditate, and if you do that, the lower self will get absorbed into the Higher Self. That is called salvation, liberation. It is a simple matter, if you understand it. You must meditate like this.

Malaya: What is there to enjoy, Swamiji?

SWAMIJI: I have already spoken on that previously. You are not really renouncing any “thing”. You are renouncing the “thing-ness” of things. You are sitting before me as a thing, but there is something in you that is not a

thing. You look like a person, but you are not a person, really. The personality of yours is a condensed form of an internal urge which comes from the Universal Being. This condensed form should liquefy, melt down into the original impulse, which comes from the Universal Being. You cannot renounce anything, because, only if you possess something, can you renounce it.

Malaya: Then, there is no question of enjoying, Swamiji.

SWAMIJI: You are enjoying yourself only, finally; and, that is the highest enjoyment. It is the merging of the whole thing into yourself, which is far greater than possessing things. You are not “possessing” things, but wish them to “become” you, because that is a greater joy than possessing things.

Even when a person desires a thing, the subtle desire is to “become one” with it. That is why if you hear that your object of desire is nearby, you feel happy. When it comes near, and you can see it, the joy increases; and when it is coming nearer still, there is more joy. When you touch it, it is still more, but even that is not sufficient. You cannot, unfortunately, go beyond that. You can touch an object of desire, but you cannot enter into it. That is why there is bereavement, suffering, death, birth, and all that following desires. The ultimate desire is to make the object melt into your being. You do not want to stand outside it. You want perpetual enjoyment, but the space-time complex which is outside prevents the object from entering into you, because every object is independent; so, how can it become your property?

There is no such thing as possessing anything. It is a foolish idea, but actually, the intention is to merge yourself with the self of that object, so that the two selves become one self of a bigger size. If all the selves melt together, it becomes a larger self. There, all the objects become the Self; then, who can compare that joy to anything else? It is incomparable bliss because the object has not been “possessed,” it has “become” you. Can you imagine what kind of condition it is? You will never lose it afterwards, because you are “that” only. Can you catch this point?

It is a wonderful thing to hear it. Even to hear it is a wonder. Go on thinking like this every day, and see what happens to you. Some miracle will take place. Every day you must think like this continuously, and go on brooding, asserting it: “It is like that, it is like that.” Then, you will see that some mystery will open up before your eyes. You will not be an ordinary

person afterwards. Tremendous joy, power, happiness, everything will well up from inside. Daily you must go on thinking like this, and do deep meditation.

Malaya: Swamiji, what things are good?

SWAMIJI: Some things are good because other things are bad; but why are other things bad, and this is good? This is not an easy question to answer. What is the meaning of being good? When you say something is good, what do you mean by that? It is pleasing to you; is it like that? So, does it mean that whatever pleases you is good? Can you say that? What pleases you may not be good, and what is good may not please you;—this is also possible. So, how do you know what is good? What standard will you apply for knowing what is good?

Finally, without going into details, if you want a quick and brief answer. That is good, which is good to your soul. Anything that is good to your soul can be called good; but, what is good to the soul? That is good to the soul, which will satisfy the soul.

What will satisfy the soul? Who will satisfy you? A person who is like you will satisfy you. If a person is different from you, he will not like you. So, what will satisfy the soul? That which is like the soul will satisfy it. What is there which is like the soul? What is the nature of the soul?

First of all, you must know that a soul is an all-pervading presence. So, anything that has the quality of all-pervading presence will satisfy it. Is there anything in this world which is an all-pervading presence? There is no such thing. Everything is in some place only. Nothing can be regarded as being everywhere. So, in that sense, nothing in the world can satisfy the soul. Even if you become the king of the whole earth, it will not satisfy you because the earth is not all-pervading.

So, anything that has a tendency to become universal will satisfy the soul. Though nothing is universal completely, there may be a tendency towards the universal in certain things. Anything that is attempting to be universal also will satisfy the soul. And, incidentally, that which is intending to be satisfying the soul must be imperishable, because the soul is not perishable. Perishable things cannot satisfy the soul. So, what satisfies the soul is an imperishable character in anything. The perishable character will not satisfy. There is nothing imperishable in the world; everything is

perishable. Only the quality which I mentioned as a tendency to become universal is satisfying.

A good person is that person who aspires for the Universal Being. He may not be himself a Universal Being; he has not yet reached that state, but he longs for it. A person who longs for the Universal Being can be called a good being. Ultimately, God only is good; and anything that is trying to approach that state also is good.

Anyone who enters the educational field is a person going for education. He may be in the kindergarten stage, or the primary level, or elementary stage, or whatever it is. Any step taken in the direction of education is education, whatever the degree of it. In the same way, anything that is having a quality of aspiring for that which is deathless and imperishable is good. So, only a spiritual seeker can be called a really good person. The other people have selfishness. Since you want nothing but what is imperishable—and the soul is imperishable—it will be satisfied in the company of those people who are seeking the Universal. The people may be perishable, but the soul in the person is not perishable.

Thus, all saints and sages are supposed to be good people in the sense that they are aspiring for the Universal. That is why you want *satsanga* with such people. You are not having *satsanga* with the body of the saint. You are having *satsanga* with the aspiration and longing that the saint has within. Actually, your soul is aspiring to be in company with the soul which is also aspiring. That is why you like saints and sages.

Malaya: Those who are not seeking God are not good people?

SWAMIJI: They will have some selfishness.

Malaya: They are not good?

SWAMIJI: No. Anything that is contradictory to universality cannot be regarded as good. It will perish. All the kings and emperors also will die, because they are searching for that which is perishable. The emperor will die like a miserable man; the king will die like a beggar. When he dies, he is like a beggar only. Nothing will come with him. The ownership of property, all wealth and greatness in this world, is ephemeral as anything else is. But, the aspiration will not die, because aspiration is the function of the soul. It will not die because it is connected with the soul.

Only a God-man is a good man; and, anyone who tries to be a God-man also is a good man. Even if he is only in the initial stage, taking only one step, he should be called good. He may not be a God-man, but he is trying to be a God-man. So, anything that has a tendency to universality is that which pleases the soul. Nothing else can satisfy it.

That is why you cannot be a real friend of anything—not even of your father and mother. One day you would not like them, for some behaviour of theirs. Parents do not like children, and children do not like parents. The liking is only conditional. Only under some conditions they like you; if the condition is broken, they will never look at your face. Suppose you behave in a funny manner with the parents; they will think that you are no good, and will not want to talk to you. Similarly, in your case also, if they behave in a strange manner, you would not like to see them. The love of parents and son and daughter, husband and wife, is a conditioned, perishable longing.

Nothing can survive in this world except the soul, because that is the character of universality. Other things in the world, any friendships you have, are perishable because they are located in the body only. Every love is perishable, because it is connected with the body of a person. But, if it is a love born of the soul, it will have a universal tendency, and it is a love of soul by soul—which is difficult to conceive.

Everything has a soul, but you must recognise the soul in it. You should not see that which is covering it. When you look at a person, are you seeing the body or the soul? What are you seeing? When you are talking to a person, to whom are you speaking? You are talking to the intention, the wish, the longing, the aspiration, the operation of the mind of the person. You are not loving the body of the person. His intention, his longing, his way of thinking, his vision—that is what you are attracted to. That is the point. It is idea that loves idea. It is not body that loves the body. Ideas attract ideas. Finally, the whole world is Idea only. You may call it spirit, or consciousness. Soul likes soul; God loves Himself.

Chapter 8 **WHERE IS THE SOUL?**

(Addressed to Roger, an Italian visitor)

SWAMIJI: Where have you kept the soul? Is it in your bag, or where have you kept it? Many people keep the soul somewhere, and then search for it elsewhere. They lose it elsewhere. By mistake, they keep it somewhere; in the railway station, or bank, or office, or somewhere they keep it. Then afterwards, they cannot know where it has gone. So, they are searching for it in Sivananda Ashram, but they can't find it so easily like that.

There was an old lady who could not see properly. She was almost blind. She was living in a small house without light, in a village with no electricity. She was poor and was living by sewing cloth with a needle. That was her profession. One day she lost that needle. It fell inside somewhere, and because it was dark, she could not see, as the eyes also were not good. She went outside into the bright sun, and started searching for the needle. Some people who came that way asked her what she was searching. She said that she was searching for the needle that she dropped somewhere. "Where did you drop it?" they asked.

"I dropped it inside," she said.

"But why are you searching for it outside, in the sun?"

"Because inside there is no light. Outside there is light, so I am searching for it here," she answered.

This is the story of the soul. It is lost somewhere, but the searching is elsewhere. Where do we search? We look for it in enjoyments of life: in living a comfortable existence; in trying to lengthen our physical life; in making more and more money; in increasing name, fame, authority, and power; in becoming king, minister, dictator, Duce, and all that. This is the way we try to find the soul, but we have lost it somewhere else. It is not sitting in the Duce, and all that. A Duce has no soul; he is like anybody else. You know what is Duce? But people want to become a Duce because they think the soul is there.

This whole world of perception is the light of the sun, and we are searching for the soul by moving from place to place, here and there, like the

old lady who searched for the needle in the light of the sun; but the needle is inside, in the dark corner of one's own heart. This is the story of the soul. What do you say?

But, we are not finding it in the dark corner. It is dark; there is no light inside. In the heart, there is no light. The light is outside in the sense world. We have got electric light, sunlight, moonlight and starlight. So, why not enjoy the light that is already there, and search for the soul outside? Thus, you go everywhere, travel the whole world twenty times, and try to find the soul, like the lady searching for the needle outside, but it is in the dark corner of the heart. You can meditate on the soul.

Chapter 9 **THE ABSOLUTE**

SWAMIJI: What will you sacrifice?

Visitor: All, if I can.

SWAMIJI: No. The Absolute wants you. It does not want anything else *from* you, it wants *you* only. You cannot give anything to the Absolute, because nothing actually belongs to you. You are alone in the world. There is no such thing as property; it is an illusion. Nobody can own anything. Each thing is independent, so you cannot give anything to God; you can give only yourself. That is the final thing, the sacrifice.

Visitor: Is meditation the only way, or are there other ways to reach It?

SWAMIJI: There are other ways also, but they all finally lead to meditation only. The final thing is meditation.

Visitor: What kind of initial way can we take to have good meditation?

SWAMIJI: Where is the Absolute at present?

Visitor: I feel that It is everywhere.

SWAMIJI: If so, is there anything outside the Absolute, or does only the Absolute exist? What about all these people sitting here? Are they inside the Absolute?

Visitor: Yes, surely, they are all inside the Absolute.

SWAMIJI: Then what is your attitude towards all things in the world? When you see a thing, what do you feel at that time?

Visitor: I respect everyone.

SWAMIJI: There is no “everyone.” You said there is only one Absolute, so why do you say “everyone”? Everyone has gone into the Absolute.

Visitor: Yes, I see the Absolute in everyone and everything.

SWAMIJI: If this thought can continue always, that is the highest meditation on the Absolute. But, sometimes if you start feeling that there are many things other than the Absolute, then the meditation will not be complete. The eyes which see things always say that there are many things outside the Absolute, so you cannot trust the perception. If you can convince your deep feeling that whatever you see is inside that Supreme (including yourself and everybody), that is the meditation. Then you can reach the Absolute.

Visitor: Is the Absolute like the infinite—that is, the more you approach the Absolute, the more It seems to go away?

SWAMIJI: No. You will go more and more near to It. It is not the infinite of arithmetic. It is the Infinite that is yourself, Itself. It is not like the horizon which, the more you go near it, the further it recedes. Here, the Infinite does not mean an endless thing, but an inclusive thing. It is not mathematical, it is spiritual. The Absolute is Pure Being.

Visitor: There are many doctrines. How can they put a limit on the Infinite, saying that It is only one way?

SWAMIJI: You cannot put a limitation on the Absolute. It includes all the doctrines. All the doctrines go inside It. Every doctrine can be accommodated into It. It cannot be limited to any particular doctrine. It is not an empirical concept. Pure Being is impossible to think in the mind, because It cannot be thought. You are thinking that you are outside the Absolute. If you are inside the Absolute, how will you raise a question?

Visitor: Is it true that only one truth exists, or several truths exist?

SWAMIJI: Only one truth is there, not several truths. There are several degrees of truth, but finally it is one only. It is now daytime. It is a truth, but it is not daytime everywhere in the world. So one truth can be here, and in another place it is not truth, also. It is true that you are a human being, but that is one degree of truth. Actually, you are a little pressure point in the cosmic sea; that is a higher truth. That is an example of degrees of truth. Finally, there is only one truth.

Visitor: We are always trying to find truth.

SWAMIJI: You have no other duty except to find truth. That is the highest duty.

Visitor: Some people don't believe that truth is here in our universe; it's in heaven.

SWAMIJI: Are they saying that this world is not true?

Visitor: We all have our own truth; it will lead to sects, or different religions which don't agree with each other.

SWAMIJI: That is a mistake of the human being. It is not the mistake of the world. The world has no religion. It is only human beings who have religions.

Visitor: Is it possible not to try to find truth, but only to live here, and only try to integrate oneself with the cosmos—to just feel a point in the cosmos?

SWAMIJI: That is a very great thing. If you can do that, there is no need to do anything else. That is the highest. Then there is no problem afterwards.

Visitor: How can we reach truth while we are involved in the materialistic society?

SWAMIJI: When your mind is saying that you must transcend this social involvement, you have already taken one step above society by the very idea that you have to go above it. And by deeper meditations, the consciousness will withdraw itself from social involvements, and you will go to the meditation state. Even in this world, you can do this meditation. In spite of human society and modern materialism, you must find at least one hour

every day to keep yourself alone and think like this. An hour's correct thinking will set right all the other troubles of the other hours of the day.

Visitor: While trying to find truth, I feel that there is only one thing to do, which is to love.

SWAMIJI: Love whom?

Visitor: All of creation.

SWAMIJI: That is the same as truth. Loving the whole creation is loving God Himself.

Visitor: Is it true that all actions in the world originate from the will of God?

SWAMIJI: It is true and not true, both, because as long as you feel that it is not true, it is not true. Even if it is true, you are not going to be benefited by that because your heart is not accepting it. If God does everything, you would not speak to me at all. You would keep quiet. Everything would be fine.

Visitor: I kept quiet for two days, sir, and today I am leaving.

SWAMIJI: The third day it has become false. You tell God, "For two days I waited for You, and the third day I don't agree with You." Everything is done by the will of God in a perfect manner. The whole cosmos is the Body of God. Just as this body is a manifestation of your soul, the entire universe is a manifestation of the Almighty Absolute consciousness; therefore, nothing can move without the central will operating. You cannot lift your finger, a hair cannot grow on your body, you cannot say anything, your breathing will stop, your heart cannot function, unless that will is there.

But (and the but is the important thing), no individual in the world may feel that this is so. You are saying that you have come from Delhi: you didn't say that God has come. The consciousness of your being a human being immediately creates other associations like being a man or woman, this action, that action, etc. How can these ideas arise in the mind of a person when no such action is really taking place, and the universe is acting simultaneously? It is incomplete knowledge of the total comprehension of the cosmos that makes us feel that "we" are doing the action. If your mind is

able to switch itself on to the cosmic setup, you will have no problem any more.

Visitor: If every action is the will of God directly or indirectly and, therefore, manifests itself, then that doesn't leave any room for free will of man.

SWAMIJI: Ultimately, what you call free will is nothing but the will of God operating.

Visitor: So, how can you blame someone for his past samskaras?

SWAMIJI: He feels that he has done it. If you ask him, he will say that it is his cow, land, property. Is there anybody who will say that this building belongs to God? We are bound and we are free in accordance with the feeling that we have in our hearts. If you say that you have done it, then you bear the consequences. But who will say that he has not done it? Every person who has body consciousness will feel that he has done it.

Your actions and your very existence are included in the cosmic action. So, whatever you do is part of that. But don't make the mistake of bringing your consciousness separately, as if you are doing it.

Visitor: But it affects me.

SWAMIJI: It affects you because your practical life is different from what you are saying or thinking in your mind.

Visitor: I can't help it.

SWAMIJI: Then there is no use of discussion. You should not talk on this subject, because practically it doesn't affect you. God cannot help you unless you believe in God entirely.

You have to go slowly, step by step, by detachment, unselfishness, charitableness, non-interference, by goodness of feeling in your heart and an ideal behaviour. That is the beginning of good conduct and the first step towards God. Then, afterwards, you do a little prayer, contemplation on these things that we have been discussing. Later on, actual meditation will start. God will take care of you.

Visitor: If the aim of man is to realise himself and finally be liberated, how does he explain this whole exercise, the cycle of predestination of man?

SWAMIJI: The whole thing that you have mentioned is included in the cosmic scheme, as all the waves and all the bubbles and ripples in the ocean are included in the ocean. You will find everything, at once, in that, and you will not raise a question thereafter.

Chapter 10 **TAPAS OR AUSTERITY**

Carlos: What is *tapas*?

SWAMIJI: *Tapas* is energy and heat, a force generated in the personality by preventing the sense organs from diverting energy outside in the direction of objects. The consciousness, the total quantum of your energy, is diverted by the sense organs outside towards objects of sense when you see a thing, hear, smell, taste, touch, or even think a thing. If you prevent the consciousness from seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching or even thinking an externality of any kind, the energy will not go out of your personality. It will be retained inside. Then you will feel strong, energetic, forceful. This process is called *tapas*, an inwardisation of power.

For the beginner, this much understanding about *tapas* is sufficient, but the highest *tapas* is to think like God Himself. When you can think as God thinks, that is the greatest *tapas*. You can imagine how God thinks; He will think in one Thought the whole cosmos directly, without the use of any sense organs (eyes, ears, nose, etc.). His very Being is His Thought; His Thought and His Being are identical. In the case of human beings, thought is of an object, but in the case of God, Thought is of Being Itself. This highest *tapas* you must reach one day, but in the beginning it is the withdrawal of sense organs, and creating energy in the system. Thus, *tapas* has an initial meaning, and also a higher meaning. Both these are applicable to the word *tapas*.

Tapas is conservation of energy; an increase of power in the system by sense control; withdrawal of sense organs; preventing consciousness from diffusing itself towards external things; and centring it, fixing it, in the Universality of Being which is God-Thought. This is the highest *tapas*. So,

there is nothing mysterious about it. It is a simple matter, if you can analyse it carefully. Yoga is not a mysterious thing; it is a simple process.

Tapas is nothing but what you ought to do in this life. You are not supposed to waste your energy, make yourself weak, and think of things which are not really there. We are mostly thinking about things which are illusions. The world is not outside you, nor are you outside the world; yet, you look as if you are outside the world, and as if the world is outside you. This is the problem before everybody. If you can remove this misconception that the world is outside you and that you are outside the world, then you will find that you are protected by the world.

Now the world is kicking you out as if you are an unwanted person, and you also want to kick it out as if it is something unwanted. It wants to maintain itself, and you want to maintain yourself. You are two contending parties. The subjective side and the objective side are opposing and warring. This is actually the *Mahabharata*, as they call it, the conflict between the subject and the object, yourself and the world. This is the *Mahabharata*, the *Trojan War*, the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, the *Ramayana*; this is any epic of the world symbolically described by poets and authors, and here is the conflict between yourself and the world described as epics. If this conflict continues, there is no way out of it. The *tapas* that I mentioned to you is a simple process of removing this conflict and establishing harmony between yourself and the world outside (between the subject and the object) by introducing a transcendent unifying force in between. This process is yoga, *tapas*, spirituality; this is religion, this is your duty in life, and this itself is the way to God-realisation. The whole of life is summed up in this little intricacy of human operation. There is no need of reading too many books. The matter is simple, if you go deep into it.

The world will flock around you if you are one with the world. You need not run after things; things will come to you. You will not be a slave of anybody afterwards, you will be a master. Now you have cut off the world from your consciousness, and so you look like a small, tiny, helpless person, but really you are not so. You are not a tiny, helpless person. Everything potential, great and grand is inside you. It has to be brought out by this process which is called *tapas*. The only duty in life, finally, is *tapas*, austerity, self-control. Without that, you can't succeed even in ordinary life. Even in ordinary work-a-day business life, some kind of self-control is

necessary. You cannot diffuse your energy completely outside and be happy.

Try to think “all” things. Don't think only one thing. Why do you think only a particular thing? Why do you bestow special attention on some particular thing while all other things are equally good? Let the thought be an inclusive one, in which you and the world are both included. Then it is a thought of transcendence. This is the highest *tapas*.

Visitor: What is the special kind of relation (if there is a relation) between the knower and what is to be known?

SWAMIJI: Between the knower and the known there is a knowledge process. Finally, the Atman is the knower, and what It considers as outside is the known. By “knowing,” you mean that you become aware of something other than what you are. Generally, when people say that they know something, they don't mean they are knowing themselves. The idea generally in the minds of people when they say they know something is that they know something other than themselves; the knower is different from the known in the ordinary process of knowledge. But if you analyse this whole process, you will realise that the knower and the known are connected by an intelligence, a consciousness; otherwise, the knower cannot come in contact with the object of knowledge. You can know even a mountain in front of you; the mountain is far away from you, yet you know that the mountain is there. How do you know that the object is there in front of you when there is actually no visible connection between you and the object?

If the mind that knows a thing is inside your body, then it is locked up inside the body and cannot know anything outside, beyond its own body. You cannot know another person sitting in front of you if your mind is only inside the body. How do you know?

The mind which appears to be inside your body for all practical purposes is basically a universal pervading intelligence. Your so-called individual mind gets connected with that universal mind in the process of knowledge, as in a broadcasting process, for example. In a broadcasting station, somebody speaks and a sound is made. This sound gets converted into an ethereal universal medium. What travels in space is not sound; it is a mysterious energy content that travels in space and is received by a receiver set somewhere else, where this ethereal thing gets reconverted into sound,

and then you hear a sound here. It doesn't mean that the sound is travelling in space. There is a universal principle connecting two terms of relation (the receiver set on one side, and the broadcasting station on another side).

In a similar manner, there is an unknown medium between the subject and the object. You can see the broadcasting station, you can see the receiver set, but you cannot see what is happening in between; it is invisible. In a similar manner, you can see yourself, you can see a mountain, but you cannot know what is happening between them. That “between” is a very important item. The mind that is universal operates between you and the object outside, and connects the individual mind with the object outside through the medium of its universality. If that universal principle is not to operate, you will never know anything outside your body. You would be locked up inside yourself only.

So, there is a universal mind operating everywhere, of which you are a part, of which the object also is a part. Finally, you must say that only one thing exists, which is the Universal Mind. If you can deeply concentrate on this essential fact, you will be thinking like a cosmic man and will no longer be thinking like an individual person. You will become a superman. This is how a yogi or God-man thinks.

Your problem is yourself only; you have no other problem. You require to be saved from yourself. The greatest problem is one's own self. Nobody else gives you trouble. Your ignorance, your foolishness, your individuality, your finitude, these are the problems, and they constitute what you really are. So, you have to be saved from that. One has to be saved from one's lower self, for the sake of attaining the higher Self. In the Bhagavad Gita's sixth chapter, the higher Self is said to save the lower self.

Chapter 11

UNIVERSAL ACTION AND DUTY TOWARDS OTHERS

Visitor: I have a question about your book Problems of Spiritual Life, about Hitler's action—if it was his action or not his action. You said:

“Ultimately it was not Hitler's action but yet he felt it was his, and so he paid for it. It is your feeling that binds you or frees you. It is not the action that you do that is important. Your feeling that is connected with that action

is important, your feeling that you are doing it. When you feel that you are doing it, you are responsible for it. Your consciousness is your bondage; your action is not the point.”

I don't understand when you say that your action is not the point.

SWAMIJI: The whole universe is acting perpetually for the purpose of the evolution of the lower categories into the higher ones. Actually, there is only one action taking place in the universe. This is why some people say that God is doing everything. The idea behind it is something like the action that the physical body does. For example, whether you lift your hand, walk with your feet, see with your eyes, eat with your mouth, digest with your stomach—whatever be the diversity of these actions, you will agree that it is one action being done by the whole body. In a similar manner, the universe, being a large organism (sometimes in religion they call it the body of God), all these diversities of action which differ one from the other are actions of the central force which is the will of God or the Centre of the cosmos.

There are not many actions taking place in the universe; only one action is taking place, regardless of who is appearing to do it. The problem is that each individual part imagines that it is doing it. It is something like the legs not agreeing with the eyes. You can imagine that they can assert and not give any credit for the cooperation received from the other limbs. Each one could say that it is independent.

The different limbs of the body do not quarrel among themselves. Each one performs its function, one totally different from the other, yet it is a total action of the body. In the same way, it is a total action of the Universal Centre that is operating the cosmos. But the parts of the cosmos, which are like limbs of the body of the Universal Whole, due to the egoism of their nature, appropriate everything to themselves: “I am doing it.” This is a dangerous thing, because the doing by the “I”-individually is always motivated by selfish ends for the pleasure of the body, ego, feelings and emotions, and then that action becomes either good or bad. If it is done only for the pleasure of the individual outlook, irrespective of what consideration it has on other people, it becomes a destructive activity. But the same person can do a good action also by taking into account the welfare of other people, all things.

There are people in this world who do bad actions and good actions. Really, neither good actions nor bad actions exist in themselves. These are names that we give by segregating different aspects of nature, like saying that seeing is better than walking.

From the spiritual point of view, real action is not anybody's action. It is one action that is taking place, and anything that you do is supposed to be thus offered to the Almighty. But be careful to see that you don't do it with feeling of egoism or any selfish motive. That is the commentary on this little recipe.

Visitor: So, the answer is from the spiritual view, but then in daily life there is this problem...

SWAMIJI: In daily life always we make the mistake of appropriating action to ourselves, and if you are a little *sattvik* in your nature, you may be doing it for the welfare of people; but if you are *rajasik* or *tamasik*, you may do it only for your pleasure. Then it becomes destructive. There are only two kinds of activity in this world:— constructive or destructive. In daily life, this is the drama of action. Individuals do either constructive work or destructive work, but really it is a transcendent action taking place, if you see it from a wider point of view.

Visitor A: What is the responsibility of a seeker towards others—the relationship between the responsibility of the individuals towards his or her own growth, and the responsibility towards other people?

SWAMIJI: What is the conflict? You have a duty to everybody. I cannot see any conflict. You have a duty to family members, the nation, society, God, your Guru. Now, in what way are they self-contradictory? They are only different forms of your obligation which you call duty, but they cannot be regarded as contradicting themselves.

Visitor A: But all these duties take time.

SWAMIJI: Let them take time. What is the objection?

Visitor A: But the amount of time that you devote to one as against the other...

SWAMIJI: No, you can do all of them, if you are wise enough. You can harmonise all these duties in a systematised manner, and you will find time. It is not true that you have no time. You have enough time; the only thing is that you have to organise these duties in a proper manner. It is not possible to have a duty and then have no time to do it; that is not possible. It ceases to be a duty if there is no time for it. If you consider it as a duty you have time for it. You will find time; otherwise, it is not a duty.

Visitor A: At the beginning, when one starts, does one start by working on oneself (focusing down on oneself, increasing self-awareness), in the hope that spiritual growth will take place, or does one serve others at the same time?

SWAMIJI: Yes, do it. What is the problem now? Self-help is the first help. Why do you consider it as a problem? Unless you are alive, you cannot make others alive. You must be alive first. So what is the difficulty? You see that you are safe first; if you are not safe, how will you make others safe? So, you are right. Take care of yourself, and then you gain strength enough to take care of other people. If you yourself are not there, then what is your problem? Understanding oneself is primary. Duty towards others is secondary; it comes afterwards.

Visitor A: May I give an example of what I was thinking? We all want a peaceful world; we all want inner peace, but we see a separation between the two.

SWAMIJI: It is not necessary that there should be any such conflict between outer peace and inner peace. You have to strike a harmony between these two, also. If you want to live in human society, you have to be in harmony with human society. If you say that you cannot be in harmony with human society for reasons of your own, then you should not live in human society. Isolate yourself from society completely, if it is true that you cannot get along with human society. But be sure that it is so. Don't come to hasty conclusions.

Is it possible for a person to live in the world dissociating oneself totally from human society? If you say it is possible, your problem is solved. But if you say that it is not possible—that you have to gain sustenance of some kind from human society, that your life is social, not merely personal and

individual, then it is your duty to make the sacrifice necessary for the purpose of your living in society.

You cannot have everything that you want. A little bit of sacrifice also is called for. If society needs something from you, you have to give it, as a sacrifice. Society also will make a sacrifice for your sustenance.

The government protects you, but also takes a tax from you. You cannot say that you will not pay any tax, but still the government should take care of you. There is a mutual collaboration between government and individual, society and the person, etc. I don't think any conflict is there, and it is necessary for you to strike a harmony between the two, the inner and the outer, the personality and the human society.

Visitor B: Swamiji, I feel that taking care of my family pulls me away from my *sadhana*.

SWAMIJI: You cannot call a duty as a problem. You should not complain against your duty. Don't you want to take care of your family? Who asked you to marry, and then complain afterwards? You deliberately enter into marriage, and afterwards say that a problem has come. You should not complain like that.

When you have done something, the consequence also is yours. You cannot have only fifty percent of it, and except the other fifty percent to go to somebody else. You have married with a specific rationality behind it. You have done it with a good purpose; what that purpose is, you know very well. When the consequence follows from that, you must take care of it also. How can you consider the family as a bondage?

Everything is a part of *sadhana*. Your walking, sitting, talking, any necessary unavoidable thing cannot be regarded as outside *sadhana*. If it is an unnecessary thing, you need not do it, and it is up to you to find out which things are necessary. You must use your reason there.

Free yourself from doing unnecessary things. You waste your time on things which are not connected with you. Keep yourself free from them. But if it is unavoidable, why do you complain? The word "unavoidable" explains the whole situation, and you should not say anything further afterwards. You must bear it without complaint. Bearing it with complaint is no good. You

must bear it without complaint; only then it becomes *sadhana*. If you curse and cry and then bear it, then it is not *sadhana*.

You should bear the troubles of life without complaining. If you ask for a thing, that is your responsibility. Suppose you are employed in some office and have to do hard work. It is not a very pleasant thing to go on doing hard work in an office for eight or ten hours. But you find out whether it is necessary to do that work or not. If you don't do it, what happens? You may be in a worse condition. So you stop your complaints; you do the work.

If you say that it is not necessary, then, you can give it up. It is up to you. Nobody forced you to go into the office and work, but you want to do it because you know the beneficial consequences are there, also. Pain and pleasure are mixed together in life. Even to eat a meal, have your lunch, somebody has to work hard in the field, plow the earth and grow the crop, thrash the husk, grind it, cook it. It is also a painful thing. So much work you have to do for a little meal. Now, is sweating and toiling in a field an unnecessary activity? Nobody likes to do such a painful thing, but if it is not done, food will not go into the mouth.

You cannot have only one side of the matter, so don't complain. Bear life for what it is. Even if you complain, who will listen to you? What is the use of complaining? It is called crying in the wilderness. It is no use, so don't waste your time in unnecessarily saying things.

Visitor C: Swamiji, I want to do some service in the hospital. Is it beneficial for my *sadhana*?

SWAMIJI: Now you are alive. Suppose you, yourself, are not alive, then who will serve? If you destroy yourself by illness, then who will do the service? You serve yourself first so that you may be alive, at least. If you don't exist, then who will do the service? The person must exist first. Suppose one defeats the very purpose of one's existence, then who will serve? Service is necessary, but the person who serves must be existing, and he will not exist if he engages himself in self-destructive activities.

Visitor C: What do you mean by *self-destructive*?

SWAMIJI: Anything that ruins bodily health, disturbs the mind, and obstructs aspiration for God. These three things are the self-ruining things. That which obstructs the realisation of God, that which disturbs the mind,

and that which spoils the health of the body—these three things must be avoided. Otherwise, suppose there is bodily ill health, then you will be in the hospital, and who will do the service?

The body, mind and soul should be intact first; then you can go ahead with service. But if that is not assured, then it is dangerous. Somebody else has to serve you afterwards, instead of your serving others. The boot is then on the other leg.

Visitor C: But sometimes when you serve others, you are also doing good to yourself.

SWAMIJI: It will not be good to yourself, unless you know the reason why you are doing service. You may be doing it for some selfish motive, or some egoistic satisfaction like name or fame. These are all important matters. Why are you doing service? Some subtle motive may be there inside. If the motive is not unselfish, service will not bring any benefit. Politicians also are doing a lot of good service, while they are doing it for their subtle benefit. It is not easy to do service with no motive whatsoever.

If you expect something in return, that is selfish action. Let anyone analyse this matter. Is this work done with the expectation of return of some kind, or do you expect nothing? If you expect nothing—wonderful; go ahead, but you should not expect even thanks. If you think that you have done so much and people should thank you, then it is no good. Why should anybody thank you? You have done your duty. They may not thank you, they may even insult you after you do service. You may receive a stone instead of thanks.

Visitor C: Swamiji, it is very difficult.

SWAMIJI: Then you must bear it. People who did a lot of service to humanity were killed by the very people who received the service.

Visitor C: How can you bear it?

SWAMIJI: It depends upon your motive. Who asked you to do the service? Do you want a stone on your head in return for the service that you did? If you are prepared for that, do it. Or do you want something else worse than that? There are people who did a lot of social service, and got a bullet in their head in return. Why did it happen? How is it that people who receive

