

LIFE AS YOGA

Discourses at Chorwad

VIMALA THAKAR

Translated into English by
DEVENDRA SINGH

MOTILAL BANARSIDASS
Delhi :: Varanasi :: Patna

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

Great souls on earth are sojourning and one of the rarest of them all is Kumari Vimala Thakar, a collection of whose tape-recorded discourses originally delivered in Hindi at Chorwad in Saurashtra appears in the present volume. Her theme is the life of the spirit but her exposition is entirely different from that of the philosopher, the preacher or the man of religion. She talks of the life beyond the senses, the mind and the intellect. Neither men of learning, theoreticians, dogmatists nor those versed in esoteric practices interest her. She has no use for sectarianism and institutionalisation. She talks of a new dimension of life, of friendship, love and a direct apprehension of the truth and the totality through understanding and watchfulness. She describes a state of consciousness following the dissolution of the ego. She is the herald of a new dawn and looks forward to the birth of the new man who loves freedom and the infinite and has the courage to fix his attention on the limitations of the body and the intellect. She talks of nothing which she has not lived.

Naturally there is a unique freshness, directness, flow and intimacy in the vibrating truth of her utterances which it has been my endeavour to reflect faithfully while preserving the tone, the nuances, the idiom and the atmosphere of the English language.

I owe a debt of gratitude to Padma Vibhushan Thakur Jaideva Singh who has himself travelled much in the realms of the spirit and to the proprietor of Messrs Motilal Banarsidass who took a keen and kindly interest in the production and publication of this book.

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L I F E A S Y O G A

B O O K I

**[Five Discourses and Four sets of
Questions and Answers]**

Chorwad, February 1971

Discourse I

Of the misconceptions about the spiritual life there is no end, whether in this country or the world abroad. Our first duty, therefore, is to get rid of them, to smash the entire network of illusions that warp the vision and vitiate the mind. We must liberate ourselves from the shackles of the habits we have formed and by which our minds are conditioned. If the vision is not clear, we cannot see any thing as it is in itself, in its purity. Unless delusions are removed from the mind, we cannot have a clear concept of what we see. If the senses are caught in the meshes of habit, that which the mind receives cannot find spontaneous expression in our conduct and relationships. The three things we need in life, therefore, are a vision free from illusion, a mind free from impurity and senses free from the fetters of habit.

For a vision free from illusion the first thing to be grasped is that the spiritual life is not something about which we have to gather facts and information. It is something to be understood and apprehended. It is not something to be experienced. It is something to be apprehended integrally with the certitude of conviction. Anybody who harbours the notion that the life of the spirit is a matter of gathering knowledge and information will not go beyond the stage of developing a kind of intellectual curiosity. Curiosity is a desire to know with the help of the intellect. Curiosity is interested in facts, not the truth. It is after the accumulation of knowledge, not the certitude of a settled conviction. This is something about which we must be very clear in our minds. We cannot cook

a meal if we are not familiar with the qualities of the ingredients—the salt, the sugar—that go into the making of it. In the context of the spiritual life we have to provide a fare for the nourishment of the self in the flesh and blood of our own bodies. Therefore, it is important to see that the life of the spirit is not a matter of collecting knowledge, nor is it something about which we have to satisfy a curiosity.

Curiosity casts a powerful spell on the intellect. What is it that attracts the senses? A meal is served before you. The desire to eat it is awakened. Your eye catches sight of beauty. You want to enjoy it. You hear a piece of music and you want to store it in the ear. You see lovely apparel. The desire to wear it is aroused. Even so there is nothing which attracts the intellect so much as the desire to gather knowledge. Collecting information, gathering knowledge, storing it in the memory this is the game the intellect revels in. It makes no difference whether the intellectual belongs to the West or to the East, whether the knowledge is embodied in the six systems of Indian philosophy, Nyaya, Vaisheshik, Sankhya, Yoga, Purva Mimamsa and Uttar Mimamsa or it is a work of Jung or Adler. Life is not the province of knowledge and curiosity is related to knowledge and memory. Understand this clearly and once this is understood all your wanderings and runnings about in pursuit of the desire to gather knowledge will cease.

The intellect sends men running about for its own satisfaction no less than the senses do. The intellect is very keen. It draws upon the accounts and experiences of others for its own thinking. The acquisition of knowledge is nothing but the picking up of accounts and expositions supplied by others. It is a natural quality of the intellect to lift the theories of this man and the conclusions of another. Don't they go in for readymade clothes? The intellect too is for ever going in for ready made goods. Mark its ways closely.

If there is one thing which holds you back from the manly endeavour of creative effort it is the intellect. It tells you 'Let us go out and gather knowledge from this source or the other, and fashion our conduct in the light of the knowledge thus secured'. But the ego intervenes at this point and says,

'No, the spiritual life is not a matter merely of accumulating knowledge. It belongs properly to the sphere of experience.' And now the lure is on a subtler level. Those among you who have given thought to it must have observed that both thoughts and emotions are gross substances. We cannot call a thing the vibrations of which could be recorded by instruments as any thing but gross and material. The vibrations produced by thoughts, the glow emitted by them can be recorded. They have been recorded, vibrations not only of words uttered but also of thoughts unexpressed. And so a thing seized by an instrument cannot be termed as anything but gross.

Very well, the ego tells you, 'The spiritual life is not a matter of accumulating knowledge. Its proper sphere is that of experience. I shall, therefore, acquire experience, experience not only on the physical level which is the level of the senses but on the higher levels beyond the senses. I shall realise the self, I shall realise the Brahman (the Supreme Reality) in forms manifest and unmanifest, I shall enter the state of samadhi (the state of abstract meditation and yogic trance), I shall awaken the power of the *Kundalini*, I shall pierce the yogic circles.'

The ego moves on two feet—'I shall do', 'I shall not do'—the will to act, the will not to act. Not-doing too is an act of the ego, and, therefore, renunciation is as much a bondage as indulgence. Both are efforts of the ego. Only in one case the path is the path of indulgence, while in the other it is that of resistance. But what moves is the ego, the journey all the time is that of the ego, not yours. It is the ego which rejects knowledge and curiosity and the ego again which persuades you to go in for experience as if experience were the true state of life. Experience is not the true state of life. The true state of life is existence, not experience. Experience is a chance wave raised above the sea of consciousness, not the stuff of consciousness itself. It is a tremor caused on the sea of consciousness by a gust of the wind of the ego. It is not the genuine state of immutability which is objectless, changeless, idealess. It is not the state of pure existence, while the spiritual state is to be and to stay in the state of pure existence. There is no room in that state of pure being for

doing, enjoying, renouncing or accepting any thing. A man is mightily pleased the moment his ego persuades him to go in for experience. He eagerly sets out to find the person who will provide the experience and suggest a technique, an occult or esoteric or yogic practice, a 'charm', an elixir, a prayer, a formula. And the one who brings results in the shortest period of time is accepted by him as the tallest among the saints. The standards and measuring rods he sets up to assess the value of the spiritual life are designed only to find out who can provide an experience and how soon. It is the same line of thinking with which we are familiar in the world of every-day affairs. In the every-day world a man looms large in our eyes because he can mint money most quickly!

The spiritual world is not the world of trade and commerce where you calculate profits and losses. But the ego is wholly occupied with striking the profit-and-loss balances. Look at those who are chanting the name of the Lord. Do they chant it for the love of the Lord. Do they repeat the name for the sake of the divine nectar of which it is full to the brim? No. So many repetitions will open up such and such inner wheel and the experience this opening up will bring is what they are after. The quest all the time is that of new experiences following the acquisition of new powers or entry into new realms of sound and light. Satiated with the pleasures of the flesh, they seek entry into the world of the unmanifest. But the aims, the purposes and the methods are the same. What then is the difference between the life of the world and the life of the spirit? There is quite a flourishing market today for this type of 'the spiritual life'. But to my friends here I must say 'Beware'. I am not suggesting that experiences of the kind referred to here are not to be secured. It is one thing to go through experiences which come in your way naturally and spontaneously but to be running about to secure them is an entirely different affair.

It is generally said that the spiritual life can be entered into only through experience. I should like to talk to my friends here about some thing which is beyond experience.

Experience is to be had in a realm which is very much on this side of the mind. What is 'experience', if we do not have it on the level of the mind and the ego? Does anyone go out to secure experience out of 'nirvana', out of self-extinction in the Absolute? An experience is a happening in life. Something happens which you recognise, identify, compare and label as good or bad because at the back of your mind there are certain associate standards of evaluation, certain measuring scales by which you judge and declare that a certain experience is good or bad. There are bound to be happenings in life. Happenings are an indivisible part of life. But all the time we are anxious to interpret them in terms of knowledge already acquired or in terms of what is said in the scriptures. The attempt to give them a meaning and to judge yourself in relation to others in the light of these meanings is the process by which we convert a happening into an experience. All this labelling and grading of experiences as major or minor, superior or inferior is entirely for the benefit of others. It is all an effort of the ego. The spiritual life is not a matter of experiencing any thing.

It is likely that I do not know quite a few of those who have gathered here, specially among the newcomers. I do not know what has brought them here. If any body has told them that they are going to have certain experiences, they have been entirely misled. I have nothing to give by way of an experience. I claim no credit for my presence here. If you can convert my presence here into an opportunity to attain, anything, it will come about as a result of your own endeavour. I will have no hand in it. Of course, there is my love for my friends but it does not have any social value. It cannot be 'cashed'. Do you know how they cash it? A social or religious or spiritual relationship is established—a relationship like the one between husband and wife, leader and follower or in the spiritual context between the teacher and his disciple. This relationship is the current coin, 'the currency'. Isn't there a monetary system at the base of the modern economic structure without which it will go to pieces? Even so the structure of all the religions and so-called spiritual institutions rests on the establishment of relationships. By 'cashing' love I mean the attempt to build up relationships. But this will not

work in the spiritual sphere because the spiritual life is non-dualistic, a matter of pure existence. So what value could relationships have in the spiritual sphere? And you have found your way—it is very kind of you—to a person like this?

I am not saying that nothing will come out of our association here. Something will happen but whether you will be able to experience it and to express it adequately in words is a different matter.

In order to keep the vision free from illustrations, the mind free from impurities and to liberate ourselves from the fetters of habit it is best that we should be quite clear in our minds about the spiritual life. There is nothing to be 'obtained' in the spiritual sphere. The talk about gaining something, the desire to gain, the desire to establish a relationship and make an exhibition of it—all these are acts of the ego. It is the ego which directs your steps to a spiritual camp to listen to discourses. Ours emphatically is not a camp. This is an opportunity to meet and live together and capture joy beyond the dimensions of the mind. As far as obtaining anything is concerned there is nothing to be obtained. Attainment could happen. Do you see the difference between obtaining and attainment? There is a world of difference between the two. Attainment is a happening. Obtaining involves effort. There is the perception of having obtained something. There is a purpose, there is an effort, there is the perception. That is why I am telling you there is no question of obtaining anything here. Attainment is a spontaneous happening, something which is so much a part and parcel of your life and being that it would be impossible to view it in isolation. You are not even aware that an attainment has come. The glow of attainment is suffused and reflected in the senses of the body and the mind. Spontaneity is its quality. You do not have to set it in motion. You do not have to declare it. Obtaining and attainment are two different dimensions of life. It is not easy to efface the scars left on the unconscious mind by the purposeful effort involved in the process of obtaining something. How shall I put it? I am sure you are familiar with scars left on the physical body. Have you ever noticed the scars left on the consciousness?

Have you ever observed the impressions left on the mind by ideas and desires? Have you ever been in the proximity of your self? Have you noticed how grievously bruised and lacerated is your mind? How various are the injuries it has been receiving? Kabir must have had something of the kind in his mind when he sang "I wore this scarf (of the body) carefully and put it back in the state I found it."

The fact is you are not at all familiar with the internal structure of your body. You have no idea of the wounds and injuries it has received. The necessary sensitiveness is not there in you and you do not want to encourage it. Getting and spending, rearing a family, acquiring a status in society—all this leaves you no time for sensitiveness. You have a time-table laid out for so many hours of various types of activities during the day. If an hour has to be set apart for the service of God, you will say, "Well, I could spare an hour for Him too, and sit in silence and repeat the name and close the eyes provided in return, He will reveal Himself to me". But we forget that bargaining will not do in the spiritual field. The bargainer never gives himself up completely. And in the spiritual world he who showers love on others loses himself completely. The surrender is total. There is no stopping on the road, no half-way houses. You have to go the whole way. You cannot say, 'I shall go so far and no further'. It is a play in totality. And so, do see the difference between obtaining and attainment. It is possible that as a result of certain happenings in the realm of the supersensuous and regions beyond it, you should come by certain attainments. But this is not 'obtaining' anything. How charmingly various are the shapes and the forms that words are apt to assume! You have just noticed what obtaining means. There is a purpose, there is an effort and there is a perception. This is the process. There are certain materials which go into the making of an earthen pitcher. Even so you obtain a thing as the result of a well-defined process. You procure what you do not have, and you have to identify what you procure. All the time obtaining involves a process of acquiring and reaching out to grasp something. Attainment is not acquiring whether the thing to be acquired is knowledge, a material object, an inner capability, or a yogic perfection.

There is always an element of violence involved in the process of acquiring or seizing a thing, violence to yourself or to others. Love has no place to stand on in such a process. Love is a stranger to all those who are engaged in acquiring. Life will feel like being suffocated in the context of acquisition. The flower of life blossoms in the soil of spontaneous attainment, not in the arid wasteland of obtaining and acquiring.

And so if the motive behind your orientation towards the spiritual life is a desire to obtain or acquire something, kindly retrace your steps and go back to the life of the world. When the shadow play of obtaining and possessing and the lure of a life of indulgence cease to interest you, go in for the heady wine of renunciation. There is nothing you could secure or possess here, nothing whatever. You want to enter into the totality and at the same time to stay out of it. You want to get a hold on Life while staying away from it. This desire to obtain is a sort of a device to establish a subtle relationship with the universal power and consciousness. 'I am here, the universal consciousness is there. I shall go out to secure it, win it, earn it. Don't we go out to earn money or wealth, or knowledge. Much in the same manner we go out to have experiences. I am stressing the point, because the root of the matter lies here. Unless the poison lodged at the root is unearthed and thrown out, nothing is going to happen.

Therefore, in this spiritual journey be sure what is it by which you are impelled—a quest or a curiosity? The spiritual life is not a child's play. It is not like taking a course of beauty treatment for a few days and behold your complexion changed. No, it is not so easy as all that. It is not a matter of gathering knowledge or experience. It is something you have to understand with the certitude of immediate and spontaneous conviction.

We have just seen the difference between obtaining and attainment. Let us see the difference between 'obtaining' and 'understanding'. Take away the outer coverings in which words are enveloped and look inside, into their inner structure.

It is a sheer waste of energy to indulge in the fireworks of speech unless there is a thorough familiarity with the meaning and the shape of the words. The moment you speak some bodily energy is spent. Every word said has its own chemical reactions on you. So beware of them? Dealing in words is more dangerous than playing with fire. Words have their own ways of intoxicating you.

What is it that they do in the name of education today except that through words and ideas they induce a state of intoxication in themselves and in others. Life is not to be moving about in a state of intoxication. Life is an adventure in manliness. It means the creation and establishment of harmony between the rhythm of your own life and that of the totality. It is walking in step with the Totality. Life is for the wary and the awake. It is not for those who are in a state of intoxication. Understanding is the comprehension of the vibrations that occur simultaneously in the Totality, that is, the mind, the body and the consciousness beyond the mind and the body. The vibrations of understanding are interwoven in the whole being of the individual. Any understanding of the true meaning of life as it lies before us in the form of an object or a challenge or an invitation involves vibrations in the Totality and not only in the body and the mind. That which causes the vibration is the understanding and such vibrations do not go waste because they result in instantaneous conduct.

It is impossible that conduct should not follow in accordance with understanding. It is possible to gather knowledge and not to act upon it. Look at the scholars and the learned men. Their shoulders are bent with the load of learning. But they cannot live in accordance with what they have learned. Consequently they are torn with indecision, conflict and struggle within them. One part of them is full of accumulated knowledge, while another is stuffed with inherited traits and conditionings and there is no harmony between the two parts. Such is the state of chaos and anarchy within them. Burdened down by knowledge and enveloped in the smoke of anarchy they are unable to see even that which ties directly below

their eyes. The dust of the inner chaos flying about them warps the vision.

The vibrations that take place in the whole being of the individual following true understanding are very powerful indeed. They have a dynamism of their own. There is no time gap between the true understanding and action in terms of it. No incentive is needed to induce the course of action that must follow. The vibrations that are caused see to it that action in accordance with it follows. The moment of illumination is transmuted into the moment of action. No time gap intervenes. So friends, the spiritual life is a matter of right understanding and true comprehension. There is nothing more to do for the simple reason that you are not there to do anything. Our brother (Sri Kishan Singh Chowda) told us this morning that when you are in the state of utter humility your whole being is like a piece of thirsty land. His words were 'a piece of parched land'—thirsty and eager and restless.

It is all very simple. Why should they make it so complicated? Life which is happening every moment and which is constantly in moment has to be understood. Now what is this understanding? If it is not knowing, what exactly is understanding? Suppose what we call knowing is the thing as understanding. How does even this understanding come about? And what is the medium we need to be able to understand? For gathering knowledge the medium is the intellect. For securing experience the medium is the ego. Is there a medium for understanding also? See, the kind of questions that come up in the mind? Is there a vehicle, medium, an instrument for understanding? Generally we single out a part of our being and give it the name of an instrument or a medium. If at this moment my whole being is moved, something happens, there are vibrations in my whole being, then for me, in any case, it is impossible to disengage myself and look at it in isolation. And that is the reason why people say, 'Tell us about the proper medium or instrument for understanding, in other words, tell us about something which we could identify as the intelligence or the mind or the ego out of my whole being. We ask for a system

of logical reasoning which could be put to use to find out how exactly to understand. And if I tell them 'In the process of understanding your whole being will be totally involved,' they are completely upset. The whole fun of understanding is gone. If the whole being in its totality is involved, then who will stand away and look at it? Who will be the witness? In other words even as we are passing through the act of understanding we would like to witness the act. This is the kind of approach which has hitherto remained with us as a settled habit. We know nothing about an act in which we could be involved with our whole being. The moment of the totality is something with which we are entirely unfamiliar. We are familiar only with a life lived in parts and fragments of our being.

We take a meal to satisfy our hunger or a glass of water to quench our thirst. People ask me to point out some such means or method of understanding. And I say, "This question of means is unscientific", Understanding comes. It is a happening, a movement. It is not you who understand. It is wrong to talk in terms of 'I understand'. We are right as long as we say, "I know"—there is the act of knowing and the knowledge we have. The triangle of the doer, the deed and the method of doing is there. There is the experience, the experiencer, the method of experiencing and the result of the experience; we are all familiar with the triangle. We wish to encompass all life in a triangle so that any thing that takes place should fall within the triangle. I should be there, the method too should be there and I should witness the result. Life is not to be lived like that. So, what is to be done?

Understanding is a happening. It happens. And you can place yourself in the state in which it could happen. The means is that you should place your body, mind, and intellect in the state in which the act of understanding could happen. Means and method have no other meaning and during the two or three days that we are here, what we will do is to see how this understanding does happen, how we could put ourselves in the state in which spontaneous understanding could occur. For instance love is a happening, so is beauty, so is music. Is any one of these the result of anyone's personal effort?

The singer imagines that it is he who is singing. But he who truly savours music knows where the soul of music resides. The purification of the nerves leads to the purification of the body and the heart. If the singer's mind is not obsessed by the idea that he is singing for others, if he sings for the satisfaction of his own soul, he goes on beating the seven notes of music in harmony with the unbeaten sound within him. What happens as a result of this process is music. But if there is a lack of natural ease in beating the notes, if it is necessary for the musician to put in effort to draw out the notes, then he may go on persisting in the vain effort to draw them out. Music is a flowering into life. It is not the handiwork of anyone's effort. The beauty of the spontaneous happening which is music depends on how the musician stands in relation to the space between two notes. You may go on exercising the vocal chords for years and years even as the apothecary pestles and grinds his drugs. But you will not be able to give life and vitality to the notes within. Music will not be born, if the notes are not spontaneous and the musician is not in tune with the silence between two notes. So music is a happening. So beauty too is a happening. No artificial efforts could create beauty because it is the fragrance of life. Even so understanding is a spontaneous happening.

You cannot create love which is the beauty and fragrance of life by artificial methods. Even so you cannot bring understanding into being by any amount of personal effort and activity. You can go into the samadhi (yogic trance) of your choice, you can awaken the *kundalini* and acquire particular powers and experiences. Both in the worldly and the other-worldly realms there is something which is made and something which is unmade. But in the realm of the spirit there is nothing which is made or unmade. In spontaneity there is purity, the greater the spontaneity the greater the purity. The good that there is in life, the good that there is in beauty is born of spontaneity. And if there is anything that comes out of understanding it is this that the door, the dimension of spontaneity is opened up.

We do not live the spontaneous life. Just examine all that you do from morning to evening and see how many of

these acts are spontaneous. Do we even look at the person in front of us without our vision being coloured by some desire or opinion or prejudice, or judgment or leaning? Even out love is vitiated. Do we know how to see things? Excuse me for this plain speaking but to those who are sitting close to me here I must speak out my heart whether you like it or not. Do you know how to see things? Is your vision ever free from desire? I am not talking at the moment about the attitude of the person who is detached or indifferent or a mere witness. Time was when I would talk about this witness-attitude but now all that is past and gone. A year is a long time. If you remind me even of what I said four months ago it all sounds like the echo of something that has flown down the water. You are reminding me of water that has turned stale. Do you want to restore freshness to flowers that have gone stale by artificial methods?

All our lives we are engaged in preserving our experiences and keeping them fresh by artificially sprinkling the water of memory over them. They have ceased to retain their original smell and fragrance. Do you call it life—this effort at the preservation of a phantom freshness in something that is withered and gone? Therefore, do I say that any thing which is not spontaneous is impure, artificial, devoid of goodness and virtue. I am not saying that this is the ultimate truth. If and when I arrive at a higher realisation, I shall declare it. Who knows there is something hiding itself beyond spontaneity. But for the present I talk about the state of spontaneity, a state beyond *nirvana*, beyond the dualities, beyond liberation. If some one talks to me today about this side of the mind and the side beyond the mind—all that sounds like an old story. 'Be your own lamp'—all that sounds like an old, forgotten, far-off story. Toys and playthings do not look well in the hands of those who are mature and of age. They have ceased to interest me. It is no longer possible to express myself in that language.

There is but one aim of what I have understood—spontaneity, naturalness in whatever state you are, be it one of sleep, deep sleep or awakening.

It is no spontaneity which abides while you are awake

but breaks down when you are asleep. And it is no spontaneity which abides while you are at a particular place, in the company of a particular individual but not in the company of others.

So in the world of the spirit you have to understand. Understand whom or what? That is the mystery. The form of the self is not different from the form of the universe. When we talk about the universal form we are apt to look outside and to imagine that the journey is in the direction of the universe outside. The direction of the journey is a really inside and, therefore, it is your own self that you have to understand. How beautiful is man? What a miracle is the human life? (In fact all forms are dear to me whether it is a crow or an ass, the black colour of the crow or the long ears of the ass. I am charmed by the pervasive quality of the Divine Being which can be discerned in the uniqueness of every form.

But the human body is a great beautiful thing. This human body of flesh and blood is a God-given opportunity. It is a living, moving opportunity for understanding and attaining the self. Let man start at his own end to see what all lies within him, how far is it possible for him to see with his senses, the mind, the intellect, the body and the brain.

Just as a railway train or an aeroplane has its own range of speed, so also do the activities of the human body, mind and intellect have a range and limit of their own. How far can they carry us on this journey of the spirit? And where the mental and intellectual capabilities cease to work, what is the kind of capability which we have to wield?

Are the capability and the wielder of the capability two different elements or is it that the self is at once the capability and its wielder. This has to be understood, the field has to be explored. In so far as words can put it over I shall do my best. I have already said that there is nothing to establish here, nothing to entertain you with, no desire to cast an influence. If you leave this place influenced by me, this will be to my eternal shame. He is a demon who exercises his influence on others. The moment a man is influenced, he is

suppressed. And it makes no difference whether you exercise your influence on another by pointing a gun at him, storming at him in anger, holding out the authority of a legal document, making a show of some miraculous super-sensory powers or under the intoxication of some of your yogic attainments.

Only the person conscious of his attainments can cast his influence. Anyone who is not so deformed cannot cast his influence. The moment influence is cast upon you, it is all over. The moment you have come under an influence, your quest for the self is diminished and suspended. That is why I insist on a limited audience. The number of those in the audience determines the form of the relationship between the speaker and the audience. However authoritatively one may talk before an audience composed of thousands of people, the relationship which is established, between the speaker and the audience can only be one of authority. Collecting a huge gathering is like driving a horde of beasts with a rod. It makes no difference whether the rod is wielded in the name of a spiritual or a political leadership. The individual is lost there in the crowd.

Here we are carrying on a communication with forty or fifty people and, therefore, no influence is exercised on their minds. It is possible that their perception is intensified or that they get some inspiration. But when a man is influenced, the awakening of his genius is withered the moment it begins to flower. Here we have the atmosphere of a family. I was very pleased by what our brother said this morning. Let us live in the atmosphere of love, a family-like atmosphere, for five days; and we shall be able to see if we have gathered here to consider these matters of import out of curiosity or in the pursuit of a quest, to obtain something or to understand.

We need all the three—a vision free from illusion, a heart free from taints, and free senses. It will not do if any of these is wanting. This much for today. When I am in the mood I shall talk about matters that follow. I do not give discourses. This is my communication. If you like you may ask questions

or start a discussion. Do not hesitate. I do not put forward any claim here that I shall give the answer to your questions. I and you together shall try to understand the questions you will put. Questions are the flowers blossoming on the current of life. I have so much respect for my friends that it is impossible for me to take the questions they put to me lightly whenever I am in a gathering of friends. But do put your questions in all seriousness and without inhibitions. There is no question that could be wrong if it has arisen out of a genuine quest.

February 11, 1971

Questions and Answers

Question : Thoughts give rise to sounds. After they have formed themselves into sounds, do thoughts undergo a renovation or transformation or are they dissolved somewhere ? Where and into what form are the vibrations of thoughts and the vibrations of sound converted ? We can see that certain thoughts have occurred from the forms they assume. We do not know where they come from and we are unable to find out what is the energy into which they are converted. Where do thoughts come from ?

Answer : Thoughts arise in the memory which is their source. They arise out of the memory of accumulated conditionings and the knowledge stored in the unconscious and subconscious. When the senses come in contact with objects there are two kinds of results ; (1) Firstly, the desire is awakened to perpetuate and maintain the continuity of the pleasurable vibrations which are born out of the contact of senses with objects. This desire inspires thoughts. Most thoughts are aroused out of the desire to preserve the pleasurable vibrations born out of the union of the senses with objects. Man wants to so arrange it in life that he should get the pleasurable vibrations as often and as long as possible.

Secondly, there are vibrations that are not pleasurable but painful. The air is very hot. Your skin cannot bear this. The vibrations caused on the skin when it is touched by heat are painful. Thoughts arise out of the desire to destroy or to escape from these painful vibrations as quickly as possible. The motive behind is either to escape from or remove pain. That is how thoughts arise. Desire strikes against the blood-cells

of the brain. Each desire causes a tremor in the sensory nerves. The moment this tremor reaches the brain some knowledge or experience or conditioning stored up there is aroused. Thoughts and feelings cannot be personal. All of them are collective. The conditionings formed by collective methods and stored within you come into being. The process of coming into being of these conditionings is known as thinking. Neither the mind nor the thoughts nor the feelings are personal. All of them are collective. Out of this collective acquisition inside you, you make use of some which you choose, picking up the ones you think are desirable and rejecting those you think you should discard. You have to dye a piece of cloth. You choose the colours with which you are familiar and select a design. Similarly you weave the dress material and design of your life by picking up thoughts and feelings which are not sovereign but collective and which lie there stored within you. The thoughts are not yours. They rise out of the memory.

No thoughts are aroused without words. It is around words that thoughts are aroused. Take the case of a wordless thought.

I am not talking only of words heard by others or which others could hear, not these only. What is known as a wordless thought is a word none the less even though it has got stuck up within you. There is the word which is beaten and comes out and there is the word which is not beaten and stays within. The word that stays within you is termed word-less because it is not heard. But a word that is not heard is not silent. It is not an absence of word. So thoughts come with words, and are uttered. If the word is uttered and is heard by others you call it thought. But if it has stayed inside, it is thought which is word-less. But even though it is not heard, the word is there none the less.

The question has been asked 'Thoughts come, where do they go when they are gone?' Well, only two things can happen. Either you act upon them or you reject and suppress them. If you act upon them, then they enter your blood, your bones, your marrow, your fat, your nerves. They dissolve in your blood, your molecules. You have acted upon them, that is, the vibra-

tions of the thought and the word have coalesced, but they are not destroyed. They are dissolved but they do not go out of existence. You act again. The chemical tension and pressure which is brought into being puts you under a state of compulsion. Thoughts give rise to tension and pressure and no one likes to remain in tension or under pressure. So in order to remove the tension man must indulge in some sort of activity. Vibrations of the sound of thoughts, followed by chemical pressure, followed by action in accordance with it—this is the process. Thought, word, sound, sound vibrations, their chemical reactions, the tension and pressure brought in its train and the resulting action. Look at the full circle!

Now consider the other case when you do not act upon the thought and reject it because it is wrong or it does not come up to social norms or your parents do not approve of it. The thought has taken birth and once it is born where shall it go? Where will you conceal it? You may say that if you do not utter it this is to keep it in hiding. Thoughts cannot be kept concealed. The moment they rise, their chemical reaction is set in motion.

The rise of thoughts and the setting in of chemical reactions in the body occur simultaneously.

Don't entertain the idea that because thoughts and feelings occur inside you, therefore, they do not lead to any results. If an antisocial thought arises, you may not act upon it out of cowardice. You may not speak out when you are seized with anger, hatred, or envy or when you feel like abusing, or coming to blows or turning violent or murdering some one. But the words unuttered must find a place somewhere. They will create tension and pressure, which mean certain chemical results will follow.

When thoughts, words, sounds, all are gone what is the concrete reality you are left with? It is the tension and the pressure. They are closest to you. The tension and pressure which are there in the body are the concrete realities. Now what will you do with them? You are not going to act upon them, nor are you going to provide them an opportunity to step aside by opening the doors of activity. Inevitably

there will be an attempt to hide the tension and the pressure. It will be a matter of personal taste what veils and masks are taken up to cover them. There is an infinite number of veils and masks. There are as many masks and disguises as there are men, and as many kinds of them. Those without any particular preferences will deliberately wear a mask of dullness and apathy as if nothing had happened within. But it is there boiling up, rising up like a gale, like a storm, and you want to hide it away under a veil or a curtain of indifference.

Many people make such attempts and if there are two people equally lacking in sensitivity the attempt succeeds. They say 'How completely detached he is. What a stoic? Not a muscle on his face is twitched in the face of the direst of calamities?' Little do they know about the storms that rage within, the chemical reactions that follow, the effect on the digestive system, the eyes, the brain and the blood cells, the secretions of the pituitary glands and every thing. If a thing happens, it is impossible that results should not follow.

So they put on pretty thick coverings of indifference and inactivity. They think they could hide it, that is, they would not place themselves in situations and company where their reactions might be detected. They would step away in the effort to hide away the tension and the pressure. But it is not possible to step away. Life will hold you by the neck and force you back to face them. You simply cannot escape. Where will you go to? There is no place outside life where you can go to. So this escapism under cover of indifference and apathy does not work. It leads only to frustration. All the faculties of a man, his very personality are withered. The potentialities within him do not grow. There are lots of such men who are committing suicide every moment of their lives.

Then there are those who are not escapist. They say, "I shall see to it that others do not detect the pressure on my mind". In other words, they want to fight the tension and pressure instead of covering them up. There is the group which says, 'I shall destroy them, crush them, burn them, smother them.' But they succeed only in raising a set of counter-tensions and pressures. For instance, if they feel angry or violent, they would take the vow of non-violence, arousing a

new pressure, that of non-violence, to resist the violence. The vow they take is only to create another artificial tension and pressure and set a counter-movement in motion. The counter-movement is started within by taking up a vow of living up to certain ideas, ideals or beliefs. A motor-power or engine is thus provided to keep up activity in furtherance of the new vow.

Each vow or rule or discipline which is imposed from without generates its own pressures and tensions. To destroy this tension, pressure and chemical condition some artificial means have to be restored to in order to build up a chemical condition which will serve as an antidote. A vow of celibacy or *sanyas* or renunciation is taken.

I fail to understand what place vows could have in life. Vow, determination, firm determination—what are these? Is life an enemy to be fought down and defeated with arms in hand? Is it a battleground? Life is the supreme ally, the supreme friend. Must we open up a channel of communication with it, or enter into competition with it? Is it to be befriended or antagonised?

As it is we have been always taught to keep ourselves in constant readiness to meet the challenge of life. 'Learn this, learn that. Fight particular situations in a particular manner. When you are angry do this or that. If there is an emotional disturbance then criticise it in a particular way.' This is the line of teaching we are fed on from infancy. Do you know what conditioning really is? It is the creation and setting into motion of an artificial tendency which may be intellectual, physical, or mental. You may be angry within but you must put up a smiling face to the world without. And this can be done.

If a fellow is clever and skilful he will be able to do the thing even as actors play a part on the stage. I have a friend who is a distinguished actor in Holland. We are very friendly and he often comes to our camps. He had occasion to appear in a play based on one of the novels of Chekov. That day he was in utter grief because he had lost his only son. The boy died in the morning and he had to appear on the stage in the

night show; his role was that of the chief character in the play. I asked, "How will you be able to acquit yourself on the stage tonight?" He replied, 'Witness the performance and let me know'. He got me seated in the front row. And he played so well that it was impossible for anyone in the audience to get even an inkling of the fire that was raging within him. 'The death of an only son! And this kind of acting.'

Those who are strong in body and mind are able to do it. But they have to pay the price. There are folds and wrinkles made on the inner structure of the man's body. The clever, skilful, strong men who are able to accomplish this have a double life, one within and another without. And they are able to manage both the inner and the outer lives simultaneously under various names, in the name of polite behaviour, or culture or good conduct or religion or country or tradition. But that which is there within is not obliterated. The pain, the anguish of a son's death cannot be obliterated. It is there. Only an additional problem, that of carrying the burden of the tension involved in facing the world outside, is created.

So those who want to smother one tension by bringing a new one do not succeed in removing the first one and have to live with not one but two tensions. And both these tensions must exercise their pressure on the body. So as soon as the vibration of a thought, or that of the sound of a word is brought into being, it is converted into some tension or pressure. If you go into action, the tension and the pressure are worked out; but if you do not act, upon them, they and their chemical actions get transformed.

Question : All our actions arise out of a purpose behind them. It is impossible even to imagine an action without a purpose behind it. If there is no purpose, is it possible for action to follow?

Answer : All our activities arise out of a purpose. There is a world of difference between action and activity. Activity is that which we do under compulsion. The movement which takes place, when the bodily senses are driven by certain emotions and impulses, is activity, not action. Bodily movement

made under the influence of excitement and impulses is forced activity. It is not free and sovereign. It is not action.

All activity arises under compulsion or subjection and it is always out of only a part of your being. It is not born out of your whole being. Action is born out of your whole being. Activity results out of a part of you. Action is sovereign, activity is dependent. This distinction is to be properly understood. So action does not have a purpose behind it. Activity must have a purpose behind it. There is no activity without a purpose. You are hungry, instantly there is a purpose. You cook a meal. Activity results, the activity of eating the meal. Satisfaction follows, a result is secured. Without a motive or a purpose, there is no activity. Motives and purposes are perturbations, the will to do or not to do a thing. It makes no difference whether you will to do a thing or will not to do anything, will to enjoy or to renounce. These are secondary matters. But without a purpose or a motive there is no activity. The question asked is, 'Whether action without a purpose is possible? Is action possible, if the driving force of a motive and purpose is missing?'

As it is, man is familiar only with his body and mind. With the consciousness beyond the body and the mind he is entirely unacquainted. All our acquaintance with ourselves is confined to the ego. This Surendra will say 'My name is Surendra. I am Surendra'. But 'Surendra' is only the name given to him by his parents. The name Surendra serves only to identify and distinguish him from others. You may say he is handsome and fair, that he has fine features. All this describes only his body. If Surendra takes it into his head that it is he himself who is handsome and good, he would be utterly mistaken. It is only his body that is handsome or ugly, but he imagines and others, including his parents, support him in imagining that it is he who is handsome or ugly or dull or sharpwitted. Now this dullness or sharpness describes the quality of his intelligence, not him. It is not that you become black if you wear a black dress or white if you put on a white one. These are only the outer trappings, the apparel donned by you which may be liked by one and disliked by another.

It might please one and repel another. What happens is that you begin to think that this approval or disapproval by others represents your own nature. But these are only beliefs held and ideas entertained by society. If you accept these ideas as representing your own nature, your own self, then you do not know yourself.

What you call the 'I' or 'the ego' is only a symbol. Just as your name is a symbol, similarly what you call the 'I', this word 'I' and its companion 'thou', are symbols. For the practical purposes of life it is necessary to use the terms 'I' and 'thou', 'this' and 'that'. These symbols used for the purposes of practical human intercourse are facts of life but they are not the truth.

Egoism means the crystallization of the 'I' idea. The identification of the 'I' with the body, the mind, the ideas, and the inherited conditionings comes to be so well crystallized, that you are led into the belief that there is some entity called the 'I'. Now this 'I', this crystallized 'I'-feeling must have a purpose. It cannot do without it. It has no use even for love without a purpose. And it is an entity which asserts itself powerfully. King and beggar alike are for ever holding out their palms in supplication to ask, "What shall this act of mine, the deal I am entering, give me back in return?" Whether the relationship is one between a mother and her child, a husband and his wife, a leader and his follower or one between two friends, a relationship will always take the form of a deal and a bargain. It is the way of the 'I'. The 'I' will not function at all without the incentive of a purpose.

The moment you turn the key of a purpose the 'I' will appear, enter the field of activity and look for a very clear picture of that which it is going to get in return. If this picture is not in sight, it will refuse to act. It will say, 'I shall do this and that but give me the full picture. Tell me beforehand what shall I get in return and when and how and where'.

Now there is a dimension of the consciousness entirely different from that of the ego-centred consciousness where you are in your own, your true state. Like your hands, feet and eyes, your mind and your intellect too are but instruments, not

yourself. The ego too is an instrument of yours, a tool, a machine which should be used in the manner the scientist uses his own instruments. It is because we do not use the ego in a scientific manner that there is so much of conflict and struggle and war at home and abroad. We have no understanding of the use, the scope, the field of the ego. Beyond and entirely different from the ego-centred consciousness, there is a level of consciousness where the 'I' does not come in between. That is a level at which there is no man and woman, no form which could be given a name or described, no element which could be analysed or elucidated, nothing in the light of which it could be identified. There is such a level of consciousness and it is Consciousness itself. As it does not have a centre, it does not have a circumference. Limits and circumferences are there only when there is a centre. The existence of a centre leads to the formation of a circumference.

Anyone who creates a centre shuts himself up in a prison house, because every centre must have its circumference. Whether this circumference is manifest and known to you or not is another matter. So there is such a level of consciousness and there is no one stationed there to tell you, 'It is my consciousness, my knowledge, my experience'. 'I' and 'my', 'I' and 'this', 'our' and 'yours' are forms unknown to this level. It is not that there may be such a level. There is such a level.

After the unfoldment of this level and your installation in it, you as you, you as embodied in a particular physical frame—a man or a woman—as one endowed with certain special qualities, as one who is learned or ignorant, affluent or indigent, cease to exist.

Man's eternal endeavour has been to go beyond the limits of the mind, to secure liberation and at the same time to retain his 'I'-ness. He has always aspired to go beyond the mind, become one with the Supreme Being, declare that he is the Brahman, the Liberated one, the Bodiless and yet continue to maintain his 'I'-ness.

In other words, he would like to attain the state of bodilessness and at the same time preserve the identity of his ego. This is not possible. This is a contradiction in terms. This is like

saying that the sun should shine in its full glory on a moonless night. The ego-centred consciousness has its uses. You cannot maintain the physical body without it. At least that is what man has maintained hitherto. I am not going into this matter at the moment and it is difficult for me to say whether I shall discuss the point during the present session of this camp. But it is possible to utilise the senses from the centreless consciousness without putting the level of the ego-centred consciousness into use. It is not necessary that the senses should come back to the body consciousness from the state of *samadhi* before they can be utilised: The senses could be put directly into action even while one is in the state of *samadhi*. Only those activities will be carried on which do not have a purpose or a motive behind them, being solely directed to keeping the body in tact. It would not be necessary even to direct them because all the intelligence and sensitiveness of the soul descends into them. The soul itself becomes embodied. It is difficult at this level to say that the senses are separate from the soul. The soul takes on a body. And it is possible to live and to act without reference to the ego in this state when the soul itself has assumed a body-form. This is the true state of spontaneity.

It is possible to act without bringing knowledge into use. Knowledge is indirect but in that state there is a direct relationship between seeing and acting. The seeing blossoms forth. But it is not my purpose here and today to attempt a description of that state. What I am answering at the moment is the question, "How is it possible to act without a purpose behind the act?" Well, such an action is not possible in the state in which we are.

In the present state we are slaves of the mind and the body prisoners of our thoughts. The mind and the body must have a purpose to be able to function. They will not go in even for the life divine without purpose. But this is not the final state of man.

In his present state man is unevolved and today all the world over there is a hunger, a thirst, at least in the ranks of the young, for a life in dimensions beyond the mind and the intellect. They aspire to live, to stay in and to act in a state of

consciousness which has not been vitiated by any conditionings. So action which has no purpose behind it is possible. The actions which are carried on against the background of the mind are partial and therefore, they cannot be without a purpose. They cannot be total. All mental activities are mechanical, partial, tainted, motivated by a purpose behind. They are tainted because they are born of the ego. Only that which arises out of the purifying fires of non-duality and can be seen by a vision purified by love is at once pure and an action.

Question : We live generally on the level of the mind. What are the constituents of the vision beyond the mind ?

Answer : We generally live on the level of the mind. You ask me about the components of the vision beyond the mind, a vision which is not a product of any activity of the seer but which arises out of the impact of the seer's total state upon objects outside him. Well, let us see first what are the components of that which we see on the level of the mind. If we understand aright that which happens here, then an understanding of the known helps an understanding of the unknown. It is the ignorance of the known which creates the fear of the unknown. This is not an aphorism. It is a brief description of the truth. So let us see what are the components of what we see here. The first component is the presence of a purpose. Open your eyes and look at anything *without a purpose*. If your mind wanders, it is elsewhere, it is not interested, this is not seeing. You must see but there should not be any purpose behind it. Let it be any thing on which your eye alights—a bird, the waves of the sea, the limitless expanse of the sky, the transparence of the rays of the sun. Look at the bottomless sea of consciousness in the eyes of the man in front of you. Then alone will you realise that it is possible to see without a purpose or a desire. You see, but there is no desire behind the seeing. As we are constituted we will not step out even for a walk unless there is a purpose behind it—the purpose that a walk will improve our health. So it is with a set purpose that we go out even for a walk. It is not we who walk, it is our purpose that is out on a walk. Even

if we go to the Himalayas it is because it is necessary to rest and recuperate after prolonged and strenuous work for a whole year. Even if we go to Nature or to God, some purpose or desire must accompany us. What have we got to do with God, if we don't have something to ask for? Why should we go to a saint or a yogi if we do not seek some favour, some extraordinary powers, some perfection in super-sensory realms? Why shall we go to adepts in mystical and magical practices, if they are not able to give us relief in an hour of difficulty and distress? A husband will not speak to his wife or a father to his son if it does not bring him comfort and relief. Such is the debased and tainted life we live. Our seeing is tainted and poisoned at the source.

So a purpose is the first constituent of our seeing. Another one is our disposition which again is linked up with a purpose. It is a chemical state which you may term variously as nature, disposition or mode of feeling. Let me make this clearer. Two persons enter a garden of lovely roses. They would like to have them. One of them is rather masterful and he will say, 'What is it that is holding you back? Go forward and pluck them.' His masterful nature is joined to his purpose and he will have what he wants. That is how his mind works. And what he does in the case of a flower, he will do in the case of an individual. There may be a variation in the mode of expression but there will be no basic difference in the mode of going about the business. If a man is grasping and possessive in the case of a flower, he is not going to be very thoughtful in his dealings with men. Is it possible that a man who does not exercise discrimination in the use of his own senses and faculties will live in amity and friendship with others? Life is one. Life is Total. Life is indivisible. Is it possible that those who curse one another in private will act in a spirit of close cooperation in company? It is impossible. Those full of lust and desire in private cannot behave as lovers in company. Life has its laws. What is there within you is bound to be reflected. What after all is conduct? It is a reflection, a projection of the state of your inner being.

Thus your natural disposition goes hand in hand with your purpose. The first fellow will say, 'Pluck the rose and

don't worry about the owner'. The other person will say, 'Let me look about. There must be a gardener here. We can make a request.' The difference in the mode of feeling of the two makes a world of difference in their mode of conduct, even though the purpose they have in view is the same. So there is always a mode of feeling along with the purpose.

And let me point out a third constituent of seeing—duality. In all seeing the seer is here and the thing seen is there. This 'here' and 'there', this distance of an intervening space is there all the time. In all seeing on the level of the mind the seer is here and the thing seen is there. The idea 'I am the seer' is there, 'I am seeing', that is, activity is there. 'I saw the object', that is, there is the memory of the experience. How very complicated is all that. The object is there. The seer is here, in between there is space, that is, time. 'I am the seer'—that is, an awakened purpose for the I, a mode of feeling and the perception of the ego. Notice the triangle. 'I am seeing, I am speaking, I am worshipping, I am hating, I am loving—in all this you are conscious of your being, your acting and of the act done. It is as if man were a walking triangle of the doer, the doing and the deed.

So what I want to say is that there is this duality, this distance between here and there. And this sense of duality is a source of tension. Whenever there is this sense of two separate entities, there is bound to be tension within you. Duality creates tension and the feeling that you are the doer arises out of this tension of duality. The feeling that you are the doer leads to the bondage of action. All these are inevitable consequences flowing from our present way of seeing. In realms beyond the mind there is no seer. You can see now how the triangle disappears. Let it disappear—it is a triangle which must disappear. There is no one who sees.

There at the centre of consciousness there is nothing like the ego and a centre. There is no one who sees and no act of seeing. Seeing there is a happening, a happening in totality. As far as we are concerned we are the doer even while we see, 'the seer'. Don't we say in our egoism, 'I saw the truth, I secured liberation, I realised God, I stay

in the state of *samadhi*? Even if we would enter the mystical state of the absence of mind, or the pure spiritual state of *turiya*, we would like to keep the ego alive. We would like to keep the ego awake even while we are passing through a spiritual explosion or revolution so as to be able to talk about it to others and demonstrate and propagate it. They want a spiritual transformation, a complete change. They would like that everything should change except the ego. The ego must be preserved in a separate area; it must not be touched. If all else is changed and the ego remains intact, he would be able to witness the process of transformation and to report to others that he is transformed. This is not possible.

In the consciousness beyond the mind there is no centre of the ego and, therefore, no seer or doer or enjoyer. In their absence there are no activities. Activities are not possible there. It is seeing in a state of non-duality. Seeing is born of the union of the universe within with the universe outside the physical body. It is a *union*, not a relationship. As long as we are in the realms of the ego, it is possible to forge relationships. The ego is not at ease without establishing relationships and bringing others into the net. The ego spreads its nets wide under a variety of names, in the name of the world or in the name of spiritualism, or religion, or country or service. It would die, it would not survive without doing this. So it is not a relationship I am talking about. It is a union, a union of that which is outside the physical body with that which is within.

Union, *samyoga*, is the joining together of equable things rightly. Relationship is a bondage, not union or *yoga*. So it is a union with the universal consciousness. It is like the union of the drops in the ocean. When a union is effected between the universal consciousness and the consciousness dwelling in the body, the nectar-vessel of the human body, something happens. This is what is seeing. There is no sense of two-ness, no duality there and where there is non-duality there is no doer, or enjoyer or seer. Seeing then is a happening. I was using the word 'action' a while ago. But I am no

longer where I was a while ago. Leave this word alone. There is bound to be some looseness in expression when the seeing is not pure. Even if we deviate by a hair's breadth from the truth, we do injustice to it. The savour of the truth is spoilt. So it is not an action which takes place. Leave the words 'action' and 'activity' alone. It is just a happening. A happening happens.

There is no seer, and nothing which is seen. There is only a union, a meeting and the vibrations, the pulsations of the meeting.

There is a seeing, that is, the meeting of the ego-less, humble consciousness in the physical body of the individual with the universal consciousness. You may label the vibration, the pulsation resulting from this union as seeing, or behaviour or the unfoldment of spontaneity or love. The happening will not recur. It is not a relationship which will continue, or which could be imprisoned in a frame. It cannot be held in captivity. Life as it is at this moment will not be the same the next moment. Every moment a newness is born. Such is the eternal divinity of life. Even so every moment of the happening which results from the union of the individual and universal consciousness is unique and unparalleled. That is why there is a freshness in the life of the man who knows how to live. There is a freshness and fragrance in all his moments, his voice, the very expression of his eyes. You want to know what are the constituents of the seeing beyond the level of the mind? Well, its constituents are non-duality and absence of tension.

Question : What should be the form of a discerning and intelligent society in this country? What is the place of the family in such a society?

Answer : The Industrial Revolution may not have come to this country but it has cast its shadow in the form of industrialisation all right. To a certain extent industrialisation has occurred, thanks to the British and their adopted offspring who have been ruling the country since 1947. In the industrialised structure of society which has been set up in the wake of large scale industries and a centralised economic system, there is no room for the family. Four or five generations have passed by during the 90 or 95 years following the introduction of Western

education recommended by Lord Macaulay. Naturally the values of life of these generations have changed. The family unit cannot survive the changes that have come about in the ranks of these generations. The family does not go well with a money-minded mentality and a family can be set up only on the foundations of love. Today money is everything, money, not wealth because there is a difference between money and wealth. So this is another reason why we see that today there is only the body of the family in the cities, not its soul. It is the coffin of the family which we see in the cities. The essence, the life, the purpose are gone, leaving behind a few throbbings here and there. There is a third reason. Man in the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century has become a rebel destroying old values and ways of life. All over the world, in Europe, in America, in India the accent is on the demolition of accepted values and ways of life. But the rebel cannot be a revolutionary. There is a fundamental difference between rebellion and revolution. Rebellion is negative. Revolution is creative. Of course there is an element of negation in it but the dominant note is creative. Negation in the interests of reconstruction is one thing. But in rebellion, negation comes first. The rebel will destroy first and let construction take care of itself. In the context of the rebellion oriented mentality of today the institution of the family unit has gone to pieces. Wherever the abolition of the family has not been brought about on systematic lines, it has disintegrated and broken down into a thousand pieces.

This is true of the cities. In the rural areas the traditional families continue to stay imprisoned in cages.

They cannot get out of them. Whenever there is a way of escape, boys and girls fly out into the cities. The main features of life in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are, an organised economy craving for the pleasures of the senses, glorification of the bodily life, and rebellion against the established order. So young men and women today are gravitating towards the city. Only some of their shadows are staying behind in the villages. Those who want to escape and are unable to do so are frustrated and they have to live with their frustrations. There are joint families staying back in the villages but life has gone out of

to them and the flickering flame is kept alive only with the help of the oil of tradition. Only here and there do we come across the old joint families. Some ten years have gone by since I went out on an all-India tour. Before then I used to go to every nook and corner of the country. I have seen the joint family in all its beauty, dignity and glory in distant Bengal. In the concentrated lands of Gujarat towards Saurashtra I saw joint families in all their glory. Also in some places in Bihar, I have seen them all. Those days are no more. I am not familiar with the position as it is today. And it is useless to talk with imperfect knowledge. Suffice it to say, the family as a unit is no longer alive. You were talking about a family system for an enlightened society. That is why I am telling you there is no system. It is a state of anarchy. The joints of the joint family system have broken down and you are trying to keep it in a standing position by bandaging the injuries. This is the family system as it is today. You have to think anew to rehabilitate the system.

The West tried to make the individual the unit of society but the attempt failed. It had to revert to the unit of the family. But that is not your question. You want to know how an enlightened society could be organised. I say there must be a base on which to build a new society. You have to address yourself first to the task of creating among you a total man, a perfect, man. Let him be born first—this vital, living cell. Then alone could you hope to have families founded on love and affection. So the birth of a new man must precede the organisation of a discerning and intelligent society. The word the questioner has used is the Sanskrit word 'pragya-sheel'. 'Pragya-sheel' does not mean intellectual. What a sweet word it is. I do not know if the questioner used it with a full knowledge of its connotation or just vaguely and carelessly. In English the word for 'pragya' is intelligence and for 'buddhi' the intellect. My commentary on the word is that 'pragya' is that which reveals and brings you in direct relationship with the truth of life. The man with 'pragya' is one who lives in the light of this revelation and is in direct touch with life from moment to moment. What a beautiful, sweet word is 'pragya'.

Learn to savour the form, taste, fragrance and flavour of each word with all your senses. So, for an enlightened society we must have enlightened men, men who will go beyond the intellect, men who will have the intense sensitiveness to bear with the facts and the truth of life when they are in close and direct contact with it. As we are, we are terrified as soon as we come in direct touch with life in the slightest degree. We prefer life to reach us through the windows of theories, rules, vows, resolutions, conclusions. We are non-plussed if life touches us directly. So you must get rid of the disorder, the anarchy prevalent in the family life of today as quickly as possible. Family life has to be built anew on new foundations. To build such a foundation we must have the total man.

Question : Is going beyond the mind some sort of an unregulated explosion? What is the kind of right remembering which will bring it about?

Answer : Transcending the mind is a happening which happens. It is an explosion that takes place. It is not the result of effort and activity. It is not to be obtained or secured. It is an attainment. It happens accidentally—but man has to be present in his totality for this attainment. He must keep his totality unimpaired. You want to know how to do right remembering? Isn't that your question? Constant, right remembering of whom? Whom do you want to remember? Remember God? What a question! First you will engage yourself in the task of keeping God apart from you. Next you will make the manly effort of remembering Him and then ask for the explosion, as a gift in return. But why this tortuous and difficult exercise? The kingdom of the universe, the kingdom of Consciousness—are you separate from them? That really is the great illusion. We were talking yesterday about a vision free from illusion. Didn't I tell you this morning that we are joined to this endless flow of the universe beginning from this body of the five elements and extending to our ideas, emotions, conditionings and the subconscious? We are not separated at all. Our separateness is not of the kind which would allow us to take a stand in the separateness. It is not given to you to maintain your separate entity, and to be entirely cut off and

free from the universal consciousness. The truth of life is that you are an indivisible portion of the universal consciousness. Your corporeal frame is just a unit of the universal body of God. All of us are limbs of God. So how is it possible to keep yourself in separateness so as to do the remembering? Where will you stand away to remember? Outside God? Outside the Universe? You have entirely wrong notions about remembering the name of God. And if there is right remembering, do you know what would be the result of right remembering? Says Tukaram 'I am God embodied.' This according to Tukaram is the truth about remembering the name of God. But we are interested in repeating the name, not the name-itself. All the while we are interested in calculating the number of times the name has been repeated and the esoteric experience that will follow such repetition. Our attitude is that of a bargainer. We are bargaining with life. But a bargainer does not attain Life. Life is attained by those who throw themselves into it completely. "Namah Sivaya" (Obeisance to Siva)—they repeat. Do they care what is Siva, what is the field of the vibrations of 'S'? The vibrations of sounds have their particular fields. Remembering the name is creating a circle of sound vibrations round you. Remembering the name has its use for the purposes of purifying the atmosphere round you and the five elements within you. But we don't know even the meaning of Sivaya. We are not familiar with the science of vibrations. Nobody cares for the science of sound vibrations. Remembering the name for them is a matter of following a traditional practice. Well, you may do this sort of remembering, if you like. You may repeat 'Sri Ram Jaya Ram Jaya Jaya Ram'. Who cares to see what the letter 'R' stands for, where is the seat of the sound 'R' when you utter it, how the utterance affects your systems of blood circulation and respiration. You say 'Namah Krishnaya, Govindaya, Namoh namah' 'Namo Bhagwate Vasudevaya' (Obeisance to Krishna, to Govinda, to Bhagawn Vasudeva). You have only to see and understand inwardly the meaning and your life will be transformed. What is 'Bhag' and who is Bhagwan? What is Vasudeva and what is Vāsudeva? What is the act of obeisance (namah)? Gyaneshwar says, 'I dropped my empty vessel into the river and when it came out it

was full to the brim.' Similarly if I go to make my obeisance I should be full of the consciousness of self-realisation, when I rise up. This is obeisance and salutation. We make our obeisances all our lives and continue to remain empty because we are concerned only with the act of obeisance, not its essence. Establish direct contact with the truth and the Reality. Then you will not have to make an effort to get transformed. Transformation will occur.

You want to know what is the utility of right remembering? Friend, every thing has its utility if you have a full awareness of that which you are doing.

However, as far as the earlier part of your question is concerned, an explosion happens. Learn to watch the mind. Having learnt to watch the mind, watch the conscious, the unconscious and the subconscious mind. Salutation means watching the experiences, the conditioning, the knowledge with which the unconscious and the subconscious are stuffed. No ideas that you are the doer and the enjoyer should be allowed to take hold of you; otherwise you will revel in experiences and get stuck up there.

If the state of watching is not disturbed then there is nothing more to see after you have seen the unconscious and the subconscious. There is no object left which is to be seen. When there is nothing left which is to be seen, the seer is automatically set at rest. It is not that he has to be brought to rest. He does not have to assume the role of one who witnesses, meditates or detaches himself. There is no object to see towards which he should take up these attitudes. He is in a state when both the seer and the object to be seen are not there.

There are no directions and, therefore, no destination; no purposes and, therefore, no inclinations and in the absence of desires there is no question of liberation either. It is a state in which the unit called the ego which takes up attitudes is absent. Such is this state a state almost of total annihilation—a bottomless pit, a darkness which no light of experience could penetrate and light-up. The power of a deep and vital silence

envelopes the Totality. It is in such a state that the explosion happens. It is not like collecting some ammunition and cannon balls and putting them into a gun to secure an explosion.

If the (spiritual) explosion of revolution is man-made, it is no explosion or revolution. It is no transformation because transformation is a happening. Anything which has a real importance in life is a spontaneous happening. There is very little that man can do about it. The little that is done by him is insignificant, petty, vile; while that which happens spontaneously is divine and glorious.

Question : What is meant by taking refuge with a good teacher (guru) ?

Answer : That is an important question. Listen to me with total attentiveness. There is life, not thinking, behind what I am going to tell you. It is the nectar of life put into a vessel of words. Please do not listen to my words armed with the weapons of logic and do not cover them up with the perfumes of the imagination. It is a matter of secondary importance whether you agree or do not agree with what I say. I shall be grateful if you simply lend me your ear.

Who is a guru (teacher) ? It is a sacred word. And who will take a *guru* ? Who is a disciple ? Are teacher and disciple some permanent states of consciousness ? Is there a 'caste of teachers and disciples like a caste of Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas ? Guru is a status, a state of consciousness. When the infinite possibilities of divinity lying hidden in man are in flower, simultaneously the fragrance emanating from such a flowering represents the status of the Guru. The essence of the life of such a person are utter humility and egolessness which put him in direct touch with life. It is a state of consciousness which is fully ripe, without any immaturity whatever. There is no place for ignorance in it. Even knowledge has no place in it. Knowledge too is a form of ignorance according to Vedanta. Not only ignorance but even knowledge is not there. Not only inference, even experience is not there. No one lives there in separation from the universal consciousness. Only complete egolessness and utter humility are there within the human frame. There is a vacuity within, vacuity that is a

flame of light. Such a person is a flute in the hands of the Lord. People imagine that there is some flute carved out of a piece of bamboo which Lord Krishna holds in his hand. The flute in the hands of the Lord is the life of the person who is utterly humble and completely devoid of the ego. The universal consciousness speaks through and echoes forth its notes through this flute of a fleshly frame.

You say you will seek refuge with a good Guru. Whose support will you seek? There is no one there whose support or protection you could seek. Anyone who is conscious of having attained the status of the Guru is not a Guru. When youth shoots forth out of every limb in your body, you don't have to declare to all the world that you are young. Your speech, your gait will proclaim your youth. It is your youth which walks and smiles. It is not necessary to advertise the advent of the spring. Look round in the forests and the gardens and the fragrance all round you will declare the advent of the spring. Even so, when the spring time of maturity arrives in your life, life bursts out in all its glory and fragrance but there is nobody to be conscious of it, because there is no ego.

What you see is only the physical frame of the Guru's body and, therefore, you imagine there must be someone within, some entity which is separate from the universal consciousness, conscious of its separateness and keen to make the futile attempt of safeguarding its separateness. There must be someone there, before you could have him as your guru. Who is there in whom you will seek refuge? He is a state of consciousness, he is like a signpost on the road, an arrow pointing out the way. The body of the person who lives in the Status of the Guru is a sign-post, read it and proceed on the journey onward. But you can proceed only if you have attained the status of the disciple, that is, if there is the quest within you. Do you imagine that it is an easy thing to be a disciple? It is even more difficult than attaining the status of the Guru.

Discipleship means a quest, an intense desire to understand, a restless longing to search out the Reality. Discipleship too is a state. The meeting point of quest and experience is the meeting

point of the teacher and the disciple. It is not the meeting of any two individuals. It is an entirely erroneous notion that there is a meeting of the teacher and the disciple. It is an illusion. It is a meeting of two inner states. All those who suppose that it is a meeting of two individuals will cling to each other. On the disciple's part there will be a feeling that a momentary quest has come to an end, the guru on his part will become conscious of having attained a state of maturity. However there is no teacher there, nor a disciple.

In the state of discipleship, the state of quest too, the individual is no longer there. Only the fire of the quest remains. It is a very purifying fire, this quest. It is fuel which burns down everything in your body. Who cares to keep this sacred fire burning? If you are able to keep the quest alive even for one out of twentyfour hours, it is something of an achievement. But if the flame of the quest is kept alive for all the twentyfour hours, how will it be with your desires, your ambitions, your relationships with others, your position and status in society? As we are, we are interested only in the facts of life. Nobody cares for the Truth. We are locked in the embrace of facts. It is only rarely that we cast a careless momentary glance at the Truth. No one likes to renounce the security of facts for the insecurity of the truth?

The state of discipleship is a state in which you have to keep the fire of quest burning constantly. Your discipleship lasts only as long as the quest is awakened. For the rest of the time you are no longer a disciple. For the rest of the time you are like any other man.

And in the case of the Guru too if he is unable to bear with his state of maturity, he descends to the level of the ego. He begins to feel that he is a teacher, that he can be the refuge of another, that he can transform others. He falls from the status of the Guru. No longer is he a Guru.

This has to be understood. The word has been grossly misused, just as the word 'love' has been misused. So dirty and debased is the word 'love' now that one would not like to touch it with a pair of tongs. Anyway, the words 'disciple' and 'teacher' stand for two states, the one for quest and the other

for pure existence and eternal liberation. One would hesitate to use these terms any longer, because they have been grossly twisted and distorted. You will say, 'Kabirdas says that we must take refuge with a Guru.' Those who say so are entirely wrong, even if it is a Kabir who is saying it. In fact Kabir could not have said this. 'If I say he is outside' says Kabir, 'He would appear to be part of the world outside ; if I say He is within it would be false. The truth of the matter is that He is immanent. He is to be seen outside and within. He envelopes all. He is the all and eternal.'" Whom then shall he designate as the Guru ? With whom will he ask you to take refuge ? Does anyone take refuge with that which is both outside and within, that which is all and eternal ? Is he a person with whom you would seek refuge ? And if you go out to take refuge what about your quest? It is the ego which seeks refuge. Quest does not seek refuge. So what you have to do is to light and keep alive the fire of the quest for the truth and the Reality within you. Keep it alive for all the twentyfour hours. If the quest is kept lighted and burning evenly at all levels, its vibrations will attract the person who has passed through the experience and lives in a state of perfect egolessness. The vibrations of the quest for the truth have a power to attract very much like the magnet which has the power to attract iron. You will be attracted or your quest will attract him. You may put it as you like. Quest and experience unite. It is a union at once true and blissful. It is the union of Shiva with Shakti, the union of the individual consciousness with the universal consciousness, the union of the bodily unit with the universe. There is no duality there. Non-duality comes to life there. There is Love. It is a sacred happening. That is why I say before you utter the words 'teacher' and 'disciple', let your tongue be rinsed ten times in the waters of the Ganga.

There are some cheap ways of becoming a Guru nowadays. You get acquainted with the unconscious, your *kundalini* is awakened, you come to acquire some super-sensuous powers and some skill in transforming these powers mechanically and you become a Guru. This is a matter entirely different from what I am talking about. There are teachers of *hatha-yoga* like

the teachers in the academic schools. How can the mind search out the teacher I have been talking about ? It is impossible to search him out. When the mind goes out on the search of a teacher, its choice falls on one who is congenial because he and his methods suit your desires and purposes. The mind wants a refuge and it looks out first of all for a beautiful body, whether male or female. There is a pleasure in looking at a beautiful form and hearing a sweet voice or touching a smooth skin. So the mind is lured by the body in the first instance. You fall under the spell of the man's eloquence, style, poetic language. You go a step further and try to find out his doctrines and philosophy, his techniques and consider what exactly could be obtained from him because you are out to secure, not understanding, but something tangible. It matters little whether it is your senses that seek gratification, or it is your mind. The only difference is that in the first case your desires are gross and in the other only a little less gross. Or you go further and the ego secures some extra-sensory experiences. And the person who can provide these becomes your Guru. He can set up a regular organisation or found a sect. The truth cannot be publicised, the most that is possible is that when you are in the state of love, you may enter into communication with the other person. It is not possible to attempt even an exposition. It is the job of the professional commentator on the scriptures and the epics like the Bhagavata and the Ramayana to expound. Only in the case of the narrator of the religious epics, the exposition is implicit, while the exposition of the philosopher is explicit. But there can be no exposition of the Truth. Could you expound love ? At the most there could be communion in the dimension of love, in a language which is both inadequate and faltering and before an audience where the number of people present is not at all a consideration.

So give up the search outside. Don't go out to find the person endowed with the mature state of Guru-consciousness. Light up the flame of enquiry, intensify it, keep it alive. Life will do the rest. Either the person whose life, speech and training are in consonance with your own way of life and who is capable of satisfying your quest will appear at your door or

life will pull you out to him. Don't worry about the event of the meeting. Prepare yourself, deck yourself up for the meeting, that is, purify your body and mind. Life will take care of the rest.

Question : How is 'Karma' (action) to be found out ?

Answer : Do you mean you need not act, need not bestir yourself choosing to stay as you are, without giving a thought to your way of living, your physical activities, your nourishment and relaxation, expecting the Lord to take care of it all ? Why are you so keen to cut yourself away from Life and the Lord. why this delusion ?

Take up the torch of your own responsibility and the reality of the Lord and the Universe will keep you company. If you leave it to Him to do everything, you are in a state of utter ignorance and stupefaction. You leave everything to the Lord, that is, you throw out a challenge to Him—'Let me see how He does it.' Why do you challenge the poor fellow ? What harm has he done to you ? God is there within you too. Life is there within you. Why do you pass on the burden to Him ? Have the scientific approach, the proper approach towards life. Live the total life. Keep up the flame of enquiry and for the rest you need not worry.

Question : If there is the necessary devotion and eagerness of purpose, will the power of the *kundalini* be aroused automatically ?

Answer : What if I say 'yes' ? Suppose my answer is 'yes', what then ? You will be in a state of restless expectation all the time. Whenever you will repeat the Lord's name or go into meditation, you will be eager to see if the *kundalini* has been awakened. If meditation is disturbed, you will be disappointed. Half the time you will be engaged in thinking of the signs of the awakening and in making sure whether the symptoms have appeared. You will fall a victim to the mental disease of persuading yourself that the symptoms have appeared, even when it is merely a shadow of the experience and not the genuine thing. You will be caught in the meshes of an illusion.

I am not saying that there is no scientific method behind the practice of the *Kundalini*. It has its own mathematics and

science. But what is the utility of my giving you an answer in the affirmative or proceeding to expound the process. You will be only in a state of perpetual expectation. And in the process of analysing your expectations you will give up what you are doing. You will indulge in day dreams. You dream by night. You will start dreaming during the day too. Half of your life is not lived because you are asleep by night. And you will waste the day time as well. Man has no idea how the human body is constituted in its totality. They teach you physiology, the science of keeping good health and the rest of it in the schools—all on the physical and superficial level. They have been conducting researches in psychology in Russia in recent years and have built a camera. Some expert has made the machine. It photographs seven bodies inside the outer physical body. It photographs not only the gross body but also the subtler body and the energy-body. Those engaged on research work in this connection will tell you that probably there is an endless number of such bodies and we do not know what happens to the inner bodies once the outer body is dead. The latest work on the point is 'Psychic Research behind the Iron Curtain' published in 1970.

This means that our ignorance about the structure of the body is colossal. Some people in India, Tibet, the Caucasus and Egypt practised Yogic methods thousands of years ago relating to the awakening of the *Kundalini* and the opening of the *chakras*.

They developed certain methods of awakening the power known as the *Kundalini* which lies stored at the base of the spinal chord. Such methods are known both to *Hatha yoga* and *Tantra*. Suppose you do not practise any of those methods. You attain the precise state of the body and the mind in which the power of the *Kundalini* would be aroused in the natural way. The state you will attain will be one of extreme sensitivity. And it will be a state which will not last only for a while. The intensity, the boundlessness of this sensitivity will remain uninterrupted in whatever state you may be, whether you are awake or asleep, in a state of deep sleep or even in the fourth state of the pure, impersonal spirit.

The *kundalini* is awakened only as a result of the unlimited acceleration of sensitivity.

But its movement in the body is by no means a pleasant experience. It has to travel upwards through the passage of the artery of the body between the veins on both sides of the spinal chord. This power is very subtle, subtler than the ether, subtler than what you term as electricity or electro-magnetic waves. It is subtler than the electromagnetic waves moving in your body and flows, not through the sensory nerves, but nerves subtler than these. There is a great deal of chemical disturbance in the wake of such a movement. That is why I told you yesterday that this spiritual business is no child's play. The quantity and proportion of the five elements are changed. Sometimes it is the fire element that is aflame; at other times it is the element of the ether that seeks unfoldment. There are occasions when the earth element is depressed and your physical body would look like that of a man who is ill. If you try to get over this condition by medical treatment, the results could be more disastrous than you could calculate. So the awakening and the movement of the *kundalini* is a spontaneous happening. It is not a field in which effort and industry are of any help. But when it is set in motion spontaneously, the person who could manage and control the consequences is bound to appear. It is the law of life. Don't you think that it is only water which finds its own level. Intensity and sensitivity also seek and find their own level. They would surmount every barrier and constraint, pierce the distant horizons and find their level. It is the law of the universal creation.

February 11, 1971

Discourse 2

Why do we sit here silent and speechless with our bodies in a steady posture? It is not for meditation because meditation is not an action which could be effected. Meditation is the state of totality. It is not any mental or physical activity. When activities are carried on under subjection, they are subservient to the senses. But the state of totality is sovereign, self-earned, dependent on your own self. Once you enter this state there is no possibility of getting out of it.

Why do you sit here every morning and evening? There are two things in view. The first thing is that silence is a primary substance essential for the sustenance of the body, the mind and the intellect. To nourish the body you give it food, water, light, warmth and open air exercise. Similarly it is absolutely necessary to provide to your body, mind and speech the nourishment of the subtle ethereal substance beyond action and inaction known as *akasha* in which the element of silence thrives. Without such nourishment the mind cannot be healthy, pure and sound. No one whose mind and intellect are loose and weak could attain the state of meditation. In the state of meditation all the doors and levels of consciousness—the conscious, the subconscious and the unconscious—are thrown open. All the accumulated conditionings and experience lying hidden within, come up on the surface and if the body and the mind are not sound and healthy then an encounter with these levels of consciousness will bring either illness or lunacy. It is not a child's play to pass unharmed through experiences beyond the senses. The intensity of the experience could break

the body and upset the balance of the mind. You can see hundreds of such unbalanced and crazy young men and women wandering all over the world today.

The spiritual quest must have at the base a sound body and a pure mind. Those who do not have these should not come near it. They should go to the religious organisation and the temples and take lessons in morality and good conduct. It would suit them better to make a slow and leisurely study of the texts of the scriptures and follow them as best they can. It would keep them occupied. But the spiritual quest is for the brave, the warrior : You cannot play with it. That is why you have to provide the nourishment called silence to the mind and the intellect.

Your body is engaged all the 24 hours in some form of activity or inactivity. Let us give it rest at least for an hour or so in the evening and the morning.

You will find that your body does not know even how to sit or stand. It has not received the necessary training. There is the flat earth below but how to keep the body steady above it, you do not know. Those with weak nerves cannot do it. If the joints and muscles are strong the pressure on the nerves will be lessened. I hope you have observed the body of a yogi and that of an athlete. The difference between the bodies of the two is that the sinews of the athlete are thick and strong, while the yogi has a slender body. The yogi is strong as steel but his muscles and nerves are not thick. The fat round the bones is dissolved and the joints are tight like a rope, so that when he stands up, you would say his body was supported on a network of springs. We do not give the necessary exercise and training to the body so as to make it full of agility and sprightliness.

If there is a perfect way of keeping the body firm, well-moulded and well-ordered in all the world, it is Yoga. So when you sit in a steady posture with the body erect even for 20 minutes or half an hour, a rhythm is established in your breathing. When you sit straight it is the best posture to keep the spinal chord erect. The best sitting posture is attained when the spinal chord is erect and the belly is drawn in because then the solar plexus and the base of the spinal chord

close up to meet. When the vital breath is drawn in during respiration, it moves up and down the entire body from top to toe, and as you exhale, all the air in the lungs goes out with some force. The circulation of the blood undergoes a process of purification and a rhythm is established in the exhalation and the inhalation of the breath. The entire process is automatic and this is the first fruit of sitting in the erect posture.

The aim is that the body should be steady and held in a natural position, free from pressure. And it is my experience, even in this female frame of mine, and without any special training in yogic exercises that one could sit in one posture for 72 hours at a stretch without any discomfort : It is only a matter of training the muscles, the marrow and the nerves of the body. And so this training in sitting will bring about a change in the manner you stand as well. There will be a sprightliness, a dignity, a charm in the manner you will sit and stand. Your sitting and standing will be a yogic practice. Your body is not a carcass which you carry about from place to place.

There should be a harmony between the manner you sit and stand and speak. You should observe whether the words you utter are soft, sweet and beautiful or harsh. A word has to be beaten up before it is uttered. Everyone beats the word when he uses the lips. The question is 'Do they fall from your lips like flowers or do you beat them up against your lips like the washerman beats a wet garment on a piece of stone ?' You do not beat them, you really beat them up to death. How you utter the words—that is the whole art. That is life. Life is what you do and how you do it every moment that you live. All the beauty and sweetness of life is unfolded from moment to moment. It is not that you live carelessly all the twentyfour hours and life would unfold itself in any one of these hours.

So if you will sit for an hour in a steady and stable posture, your movements will acquire a charm and elegance of their own, a sort of silent, sweet music. Secondly, your breathing will be rhythmic and your blood will be purified automatically. Thirdly, you will come in contact with silence and space. Words go to sleep in the vacuity of space. There must be a time for words and voice to rest and sleep. You give rest to the body in sleep, you give rest to words in silence. We live

night and day in the midst of the action and reaction of sound and words. Put words to rest in the vacuity of space. And in that wordless space, take in the substance called silence. Thoughts and emotions are not the only substances. Silence too is a substance. Let the mind which is nourished all the time on ideas and emotions for once taste the flavour and the fragrance of speechless silence. We sit here morning and evening to take nourishment from the silence of space. The space outside provides nourishment when we step out into the open air; the inner space is to be secured in silence.

If there is any substance which is closest to the self, it is space and to establish yourself in it, it is absolutely necessary to put your speech to sleep. It is not only the articulate utterance but also unuttered speech which will disappear in silence. As long as there is speech, there are words. And as long as there are words there is ignorance. So it is a course of treatment. Put speech by means of words to sleep, establish a direct contact with space and derive nourishment from it every day. Do not labour under the misconception that if you shut your eyes, seeing is at an end, or if you shut your mouth, speech is at an end. It is not so. It has its uses. You have to undergo a training in these practices. But in the beginning speech is not put to sleep. Thoughts and feelings continue to arise. They are like waves rising on the surface of speech. Feelings too are expressions of speech, no less than thoughts. Experience is the sound of an emotion—have you ever listened to this sound? Have you listened to the speech of unexpressed thoughts? What a deal of anarchy do they start within you? The spoken word, the thoughts spoken out and expressed in words cause anarchy and disorder outside. Experience, emotion, ideas cause disorder and disturbance within you. It is only when both these kinds of anarchies are set at rest, that the doors to the state of meditation are opened. This journey within is very romantic. This quest of your true state is full of poetry and beauty. It is not only in the Himalayas, the Ganga, the Jamuna or the valleys of Kashmir that beauty resides—and it is scattered all over. For once, look at the beauty the Lord has scattered in the world within. You have only to turn your eyes within, to embark on the journey that is endless. You are

inspired to embark on this journey only when you realise that the entire mystery of the universe cannot be unravelled by the intellect or the mind and the brain. The powers of the mind, the intellect and the brain are very limited. They are mere machines which enable you to remember or grasp. The body of this big machine has its limitations. Its components are man's experience, knowledge and conditionings from the beginnings of time to this day. Just as so many things go into the making of man's mind. So this machine of the mind and the intellect is just an instrument, a means and it has its own limitations. What are the limitations?

It can see life only between the two points of birth and death and not beyond them. You are sitting here. All that you can see with your eyes is the space limited between two walls. You cannot see beyond the walls. You can secure information about what is beyond or make guesses. If those who have gone out and seen things for themselves bring you some information it is at best knowledge gathered on good authority. But all your direct preception of things must remain confined to what is there between the two walls.

After all what is it that you do when you build a house except that you put limits on space. You put limits on space to own a particular territory as your country or a particular construction as your house or dwelling. But all this business of building and 'making' is only a process of putting limits on space. Surmounting the limits and crossing over to the life beyond limitations is a happening which takes place only as a result of divine grace. All that man can do by his own efforts is to put limits on space, time, and relationships and to be well pleased that he has defined time, territory and relationships, which only means that he has cribbed, cabined and confined his consciousness.

So be sure that the mind and the intellect are just instruments. Unless the egoistic pride that these could assist you in unravelling the entire mystery of cosmic life, is removed, you can make no headway on your journey onward. All pride and conceit are devices of ignorance to beguile you. It is more difficult to remove the pride of the ignorant than that of the wise. So observe closely the first limitation of the intel-

lect. It can see only by limiting life to the space between the two points of life and death. Your intellect cannot see beyond death because it is a physical eye. It can see only within certain limits and not beyond them. To see beyond, you must have a telescope. To see beyond the intellect you must enter meditation and open the third eye. Then alone can you face directly the life beyond death. Life did not commence with your birth and it does not end with your death. Birth and death are but two points and life extends beyond them.

The intellect labours under a second limitation. It looks within the frame work of cause and effect. Causes are further divided into immediate and remote causes and so the analysis goes on and on. The idea of cause and effect is there all the time. I should like to know how you can trace cause and effect in life. How many of the causes will you be able to trace and how far? You will trace the agent, the instruments, the doer, the relationships and when you have done all this, where will you arrive? In other words once you embark on this enquiry, the number of the causes which remain unknown will always be greater than that of the ones you are able to trace. So you will arrive at an unknown number of the causes you could not trace and name this number of unknown causes as Fate or the Divine hand or Destiny, or Nature. But whatever the name you choose, the difference is only one of grades. It is more a quantitative than a qualitative difference.

An event takes place in life and you go out to find out a cause somewhere in your family or village or country and that will be the limit of your endeavours. Even inside the country it would be no easy matter to trace out the cause. It would require an amount of subtlety, resilience, sensitiveness and intense concentration which would be too much for you. You will next proceed to trace out a cause which is hidden somewhere in your relationships with others. But the chain of causes will not end there, for the simple reason that your vision does not encompass the limits of the area in which the causes of an event lie concealed. There is life and universe beyond the range of your vision. Can you see the links this world has with the moon, the stars, the planets and the relationships

the various elements, earth, water, fire and ether have with each other? How dense and deaf is man in tracing out the causes within him? Man today is so disintegrated that he is unable to trace the causes within his own body and mind. How can he see the relationship between himself and the unending flow of causes in the universe? And how will he trace the effects of these causes?

There is no end to man's pride and egoism. He thinks he knows and can do every thing. But his resources are so limited and his mind is so unstable that he can know or see precious little. So there is life beyond the theories of cause and effect which you have formulated for the purposes of logic, and this life cannot be fitted in the four corners of the limited intellect. Without realising this truth the fire of a true quest cannot be kindled. The mind and the intellect have their uses. They are fine instruments and they could serve some very good purposes in life, if they are kept healthy and sound and in good trim. In fact we must maintain all our senses in the most perfect condition. All our attempts at self-expression will be with their aid. Nothing is to be tabooed.

But we must realise that life is not limited to these instruments. If there are several apartments in your house, you move in and out of any one of them with perfect ease. You know that there are a number of rooms in the house and you do not bewail the idea of having to move out from one room to the other or from the first floor to the ground floor. Similarly when you will move in and out of the physical senses, the body and the mind, you will find that life does not consist of only the intellect and the mind, nor are these the only powers which can reveal the meaning of life. There is much more beyond them. So the intellect cannot see without bringing the sequence of cause and effect into play. In other words, the intellect cannot see without bringing in the idea of time.

This brings me to a third limitation. We limit life between the boundaries of life and death and those of cause and effect. The third limitation is put by importing the concept of Time. The intellect and mind have built this vast expanse of Time.

Man invented this concept of Time thousands of years ago for his own convenience. If the sun-god appeared it was day, if he could not be seen, it was night. And he went further to talk of sunrise and sunset. Look at man's capacity to indulge in fancies. That which never rises and never sets was made the subject matter of poems on sunrise and sunset. Darkness was dubbed as the night. Night and day are but expressions of man's preferences and poetic nature. They are facts but not the truth of life. So the intellect builds up an imaginary construction but cannot see into it. It is unable to take in the totality all at one time, and tries to see it by breaking it down into parts. One part is the individual life, another the social and yet another the economic life. It cuts down life into pieces and then makes an attempt to sew up the pieces together with the needles of theory and philosophy.

It is the job of the philosopher and men of learning to cut the indivisible cloth of life into pieces and then sew up the rags together.

How agonising must be the sight of all this for those who live the total life. It was not Meera alone who had to drink the cup of poison. It is the portion of all those who live truly. They have to live with such draughts of poison. The nectar of compassion emerges out of such agony. It was not only Siva who had to hold poison in his throat. Every one who lives and sees truly has to do it. It is his portion in life. It is his destiny. He must drink down all the pain and agony that enters the cup of his attention and he must convert it into compassion even as the cow converts the fodder it takes into milk. If you have ever seen one who has lived truly, you will have observed that he is drenched through and through in compassion.

So this conceptual instrument called Time is brought into being by the intellect. Day and night, today and tomorrow all this is the play of the intellect. They call it *maya* (illusion).

To know the relative as the absolute is *maya*. To treat the infinite as the finite is *maya*. There is no lady called Maya whom you can go to and meet in the next room. I and you

are the ones who create 'maya'. Are we any different from the spider who spins a web round it and gets caught into its own creation? What endless webs are we spinning in a single day! So life is neither today nor tomorrow. It is itself. It is being, it is existence which you cannot qualify by any adjectives. You cannot describe or analyse it. So the intellect cannot see without the aid of the concept of Time and once it brings in Time it has to bring in the idea of cause and effect also. If there is Time, there must be Space. The two are indissolubly bound together. Both exist under a single covering that of the intellect. In life there is no substance or reality like Time.

Just look at it like this. We have formulated notions like five minutes, ten minutes, one hour, two hours. We have invented the numerals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and started establishing a relationship between them. We have built a whole science of mathematics on this basis. We conceived an imaginary point without any length or breadth and built the whole science of engineering and technology on the basis of this imaginary point. Having imagined the point, we went on to image a continuity of points to make a line followed by triangles, squares, octagons. All your houses are built on this basis. Just as science has built huge constructions on the basis of the point which is false, so also you have built on the point called Time, your days and weeks and years and centuries, and the whole structure of *maya* (illusion).

I fail to understand how 'maya' means 'the false' and that is why I cannot understand Shankara, who says that the world is *maya*, or Einstein who propounded the theory of relativity. The intellect is unable to see and that is why it brings in the concept of time and numbers. In life there are no today's and tomorrow's and no one or two or many. Life is itself and it is only for purposes of order and organisation that these concepts have arisen.

I shall not elaborate the point here but the intellect cannot unravel the mystery of the universe for the simple reason that its field is limited. It should be allowed to operate only within the confines of its own region. For understanding life beyond its range, the intellect, its terms and its memory should be put to sleep in the regions of space. The life breath finds rest in

samadhi, the body in sleep and the speech in the state of silence. As soon as words are laid to sleep an unruffled chemical state is induced. When words are asleep conditionings, thoughts, emotions all are laid to sleep. Then the chemical state of the body will be in a condition fit for the act of seeing. It will be this state then, not you, which will see.

There is such a chemical state within us. The practice we do here in the morning and the evening is designed to awaken this state and remove the obstacles in the way. What we do here every morning and evening is not silence. It is not meditation. Please do not use expressions that are entirely wrong.

'I observe silence'. 'I go into meditation'. Please do not indulge in such misleading talk. If someone kills another, they call it murder. But it is no murder, if you murder facts. Don't we murder facts all the time by disregarding them, and neglecting the truth. The truth of life is withered if we insult, disrespect and disfigure it by trying to embellish it by exaggeration. As I have told you before, heroic effort is needed to present the truth in its authenticity. And for this you need the utmost humility and purity.

We have been brought up in the midst of illusions and misconceptions. So we have to put in our own efforts to educate ourselves anew.

When friends meet together for self-education, their very presence at one place makes for cooperation. They cannot but cooperate. Today they have reduced even cooperation to an act. Love is achieved by mere presence. The vibrations of love and affection give rise to an electric wave within you and an automatic process is set in motion. That is the *raison d'être* for religious camps and communion. Do not think that someone will come and make a present of anything to you on a platter. Only he is the fit person to speak at such camps who lives in silence. The person whose instrument of speech is silence is the only person who could be helpful to you to some extent. So whenever we meet I wish and I suggest that we should sit in silence, even if it is for only half an hour every morning and evening.

December 2, 1971

Questions & Answers

Question : What are your views on Circumstance, Destiny, Action and Nature ?

Answer : The original Sanskrit word 'paristhiti' (circumstance) is made up of two parts 'pari' or 'paritah' which means nearby and 'sthiti'—that which is there. The collection of all that is there all round and near you—environment, objects, persons, emotions, ideas is known as circumstance. Note the prefix 'paritah' (nearby) carefully. Near by whom? Nearby the 'ego', not the self. Let us get at the word meanings first.

The next word is "Prarabdha" (Destiny). The original Sanskrit word is made up of two parts 'prak' and 'arabdham'—that the beginning of which has already been set in motion, not only the beginning but the course and the operation of which has already started. You know what is meant by the beginning and the course of a movement. Its swiftness or slowness, its direction are all predetermined. So 'prarabdha' or destiny is something which has been already set in motion, something the pace and direction of which are pre-determined.

The third word is 'Karma' (action) that which is done from the root 'to do'. The theory of Karma (action) has a special importance in the Hindu and Vedic philosophy. The theory has been dealt with in the Jaina scriptures also. We were discussing the relationship between cause and effect this morning. It is the same principle differently enunciated—that there is no escape from suffering the consequences of that which is done or has been done. Action, however, is not merely physical action in the narrow sense, action involving the movement of your hand and feet. Action could be expressed or unexpressed. It could be manifest or unmanifest. Action, therefore is not merely that which we do through the instrumentality

of our physical body. Words uttered in speech are not the only actions. Words not uttered are also actions. These too lead to results. There is a whole world of words unuttered. In fact that which arises in the mind is also *Karma*, whether we give expression to it or not. Any waves or vibrations rising in the mind are actions. Action is not limited to that which we do consciously in the waking state; it extends to what takes place in your sleep and dream. Now you will see how vast is the sphere and field of operations of actions. And you cannot escape the consequences of anything that happens in this sphere, whether the action is conscious or unconscious, voluntary or forced, something you do willingly or unwillingly. Whatever takes place in the totality of your being, whether in the manifest or the unmanifest world, is action and its consequences follow both in the subtle and the gross world.

Even if you do not do something yourself and merely persuade someone else to do it by merely dropping a hint, the act done is yours as much as his. You have a part in whatever is done at your suggestion, even if you do it by making a gesture or winking your eyes, or just conniving at it. The desire is yours though the doer is someone else. Don't you get things done by making others the tools of your purposes? You are bound to share the consequences of actions done by others, even if you only acquiesce in or connive at it.

I am not saying all this to frighten you and don't get frightened. If a thing has to be understood let us understand it threadbare. We must pursue the enquiry as far as intellectual subtlety can take us. And when the intellect fails to take us any further, the intellect will automatically settle down in peace and in that moment of peace the doors of that which is beyond will be opened up. You will not have to step into it. Someone will take you by the hand and usher you into it. You have to be helped and escorted only as far as the intellect is at work. So I have been discussing the point threadbare with a purpose—to take with you the help of the intellect as far as it will work. There is nothing in this to frighten you. Hopes, expectations, desires, ambitions, wishes are there within us and we are so clever that we effect purposes through others, our

husband or wife or child or friend or follower or disciple or devotee.

The fourth word is 'nisarg' i.e. nature. What is Nature? Just as there is nature outside, the nature made up of the five elements, earth, water, ether, air and fire, so also do we have a similar system within us. And when and wheresoever there is an imbalance in this system, something happens as a result of the imbalance. Within and without are words coined by man. In fact, there is nothing like within and without. You cannot see the structure of the body under the skin and you call it 'within', and that which is visible to you is 'without'. In fact there is no within and without in life. Life is all pervasive. This division into within and without is born of the limitations of our sight. There are seers for whom there are no differences of 'within' and 'without', time and space, myself and the other.

This body of ours is reared on cereals sown and grown on the earth which goes into the making of your body and mine. We are the offspring of the same earth and sky. It is the heat of the same fire which assimilates the food in my stomach and yours. The moisture in my body and yours is derived from water drawn out of the same reservoir of water. This language of 'mine' and 'thine' is an invention of man; otherwise we are as closely connected with the universe as a whole as our hand is connected with our body. This talk of indivisibility, unity, non-duality is not just poetic fancy. It is the barest truth, the concrete reality. Only you must have the vision to see this unity. Just as the strings of a musical instrument are attuned to the notes of music, so also the music of the universal consciousness reverberates through the universe based as it is on the five elements. And you and I are the notes. So Nature means all that there is within and without, the entirety, the totality.

Now the question is, 'How are circumstance, destiny, action and nature related in life? In the first place, circumstance is man's doing. Circumstance is the handiwork of man. All that there is around and nearby is what man himself has built up. Different individuals create different circumstances out of any

one fact of life. The fact remains the same, but the environment, the enveloping atmosphere built round it, will differ with different individuals. In passing I would say that you determine even the family in which you take birth. You do not see your birth and, therefore, you do not see the circumstances but it is possible to determine the parents and the family. They are determined. A man and a woman are in a particular state when they come together to bring forth the child. The state of the mind and personality of the woman and the man will catch the corresponding vibrations in the universal consciousness at that particular moment. The character of the child to be born is decided at the moment he comes into the womb, and its education starts there. His fate and circumstance are decided then and there. But I shall not go into the question here. If I go into the question, I shall talk about something which I have seen but which you will begin to test in the light of logic or imagination or what has been said in the scriptures. And so I shall not go into the matter beyond throwing out a hint. The circumstances surrounding the self, that is, its thoughts and mouldings are there all round it. It has envelopings without end. There is the outer covering of the body. This is the outermost covering made up of the five elements. There is an inner covering or garment of ideas, emotions and conditionings. Beneath it again there is the garment of sentiment which too is a substance. Next to it there is the covering of silence on entering which you talk about *nirvana*, liberation, identification with the Supreme Spirit or beatitude. There is the state of freedom from all ties. So there is a covering of silence and space too. All this constitutes circumstance and then there is the environment outside the body. All your ties with your hearth and home, your family, your means of livelihood, your circle of friends, your ways and values of life, all these are your circumstances. Then there are those around you—their values and standards, the form and set-up of your relationships with them. Now you will see how far-flung is the reach of circumstance. View the word in its totality.

We have to study each word inside out. If we will ask each word softly to unveil its meaning, it will unfold itself. It is a

joy to unfold the meaning of words. The whole universe is unfolded in the process of understanding a single word. Enough, if even a single word is properly known, not only known but experienced and inwardly grasped, grasped not only in the sense that you know its origin and derivation but in the sense that you have reached the truth, the sweetness, the vitality, the life there is at the root of it. Let it be only a single word but it must be experienced fully and properly. It must be pronounced, experienced, grasped, retained properly.

How could we get the fullest satisfaction out of a word? As we are, we cannot get the fullest satisfaction even out of our meals. So as I see it, man is a hundred per cent responsible for building up the circumstances in which he is placed. However, at the moment I shall hold you responsible only for fifty and not the entire hundred per cent. The responsibility for fifty per cent of the shape of the circumstances in which you are placed is yours. It is very easy for you to indulge in self-pity and say, "What can I do, the circumstances are not in my favour." Circumstances come in handy to enlist support for not doing what you do not want to do. They are like a poor, silent, unquestioning peg on which you can foist anything. We complain that the times and circumstances are unfavourable but it is we who create the circumstances and man must see this clearly.

The primary attitude and the angle of vision proper to the spiritual life is that our life is our own responsibility and there can be no real quest in the spiritual life, if we do not have the will and the courage to undertake the responsibility. It is only the mountaineer who knows the trials involved in scaling the heights with all the luggage on his back. And living your life is no less arduous a task than scaling the heights of the Himalayas. If you want to scale the heights you have to take up the responsibilities involved first.

I am the architect of the circumstances all round me. The nature of my husband or wife or son or friend or daughter is not my responsibility. But the responsibility for my response and reaction and the resultant conduct towards their nature is

very much mine. What we do as we react to the conduct of others is the whole point. We allow all the threads of our life to be held by others. Our servant holds the strings. If he does not turn up, we are wild. If he turns up, we are pleased. If he does not turn up, we are full of grievance and conflict within us. The milkman is late by half an hour and the state of our disposition is in his hands. We do not know what to do with the hell of agitation and restlessness raging within us. Our wrath will be visited on anybody or any thing coming in our way. For half an hour there is an inferno raging inside us and whose responsibility is it? Not that of the servant or the milkman. We are responsible.

We curse circumstances and the times. The times are such that the servant and the milkman do not turn up in the morning, and youngsters do not pay any heed to us. They are the ones responsible. I am a liberated soul. I am entirely free from responsibility. Such an individual cannot go out on the spiritual quest. The spiritual quest is a way of looking at life. It is a state. It is not action. And we put everyone from the servant to the grocer in the ambit of circumstance, and retire to a temple for an hour's meditation with closed or half open eyes, chant a hymn or listen to a religious discourse. This is how we discharge our responsibility. For the rest of the twenty-three hours it is a life in the midst of circumstance. It is an entirely wrong allocation of time.

If we developed the ability to see that all that we do by way of action, whether it is physical or mental, expressed or unexpressed, is only part of our endeavours at self-realisation, there could be no end to the progress we could make. Progress would be round the corner. You could make it here and now. But what happens is that we do not make any headway, our endeavours do not avail, we do not evolve. Years pass by, one span of life follows another. You could go on taking as much time as you like. But when man accepts his responsibility in whatever state he is, awake or asleep or in deep sleep, the area of what is known as circumstance narrows down gradually and what remains with him is only his own responsibility, his own vision and the state of his own being. You are a free

agent and your own way of looking at things, your own state of being comes into play.

If you live in Ahmedabad or Bombay and do not like these places, it is your own choice. God did not ordain that you must take up residence in Ahmedabad or Bombay where they spend their lives in pigeonholes and never have a sight of the open horizon. Isn't this your own choice? It is sheer immaturity and childishness to suggest that somebody else is responsible. The aspirant must get rid of this kind of helplessness. It is you who decide your values of life, your calling and your business affairs with a full knowledge of the difficulties and disadvantages involved. The truth of the matter is that there is no such thing as circumstance. But for the moment and to meet you half way let me concede that your responsibility lies only to the extent of fifty per cent. The body you have is what you have inherited from your parents, a body with inherited traits— inherited diseases, weaknesses, tendencies, obesity, mental legacies like the wrath of your father or the envy of your mother. These hereditary traits are there, and I concede they are there because it is a fact, though not the truth. Let us proceed on the basis that it is a fact. Even so, if the aspirant after the spiritual truth is able to keep his vision clear and his aspiration steady and unruffled all the time, while he is awake or asleep or in deep sleep, the area of what you choose to call as circumstance will be narrowed down and the area in which you are free to exercise your responsibility will tend to expand and become comprehensive. The moment you own responsibility, you are free, your bondage is removed. Your sense of self-pity and martyrdom, which you carry about you like a load of complexes, will be gone.

So hold aloft the torch of responsibility. Feel that you are answerable for what happens and will happen in your life and you will notice that all your actions and relationships will undergo a complete change. If this does not happen, be sure that you have not attained a state of freedom and responsibility within you. You may fancy you are in a free state but no transformation is real which is not reflected in your conduct. You are only playing upon words and the imagination, if you

say that a change has been effected in you but the same is not reflected in your conduct. It is not the truth. If a change comes about, it is bound to be reflected in your life and conduct. If you place a light inside a coloured glass case, the colour of the glass case is bound to colour the light which spreads outside. Your body, your speech all acquire a quality of transparency and reflect the state within. If you are at peace within, you cannot be angry without. It is impossible that a man lit inwardly by spiritual aspiration should be seized with wrath and envy in his dealings with others. But man is afraid of shouldering responsibility, because he is afraid of freedom. No one wants to be free. They all want the security of their cosy, little nests, where others might look after them and their comforts. And it is not merely a physical sense of security that they ask for. They must be provided mental and intellectual security as well. It is not enough if they are shown the way and the direction in which they have to move. They would like to be led by the finger or better still to be transported on the shoulders of some one else. They will not shoulder their own responsibility. And this is man's greatest misfortune. This is why there is such a hankering after gurus and masters. That is how religious sects and groups come to be formed. That is why men are misled and betrayed because there is no dearth of those ready and willing to exploit human weaknesses. There is a reign of terror established by so called spiritual men all over the world today. They are like hunters lying in wait all round you to claim you as their victim, hunters in a forest of human beings.

I wish that my friends, those who are dear to me, should be wary and refuse to fall a victim to anybody.

If you take up the torch of responsibility, it will shed so much light all round you that no one will be able to prey upon you. But the moment you seek refuge, direction, support, the moment you feel like throwing away the burden of your own responsibility on some one else, there will be hunters galore ready to oblige you. Do you think 'surrender' means that you transfer the burden of your responsibility to the shoulders of others? This is no surrender or any kind of devotion. Surrender

der is the flowering of love, not an act of the ego. The moment you light and hold up the torch of responsibility, the sting of what you call Destiny is mitigated. Destiny, the Sanskrit word (Prarabdha) for which means what has already been set in motion in the past, something the pace and direction of which seem to be pre-determined, will no longer be able to sting you. The conscious mind is the topmost level of your consciousness. All that you have learnt at home and school, from the pages of the books of fiction or the screen and the stage belongs to the upper most level of your consciousness. Below it there is a level which could be called the unconscious level. All that you have inherited from your parents their physical and mental experiences, their unfulfilled desires, their thwarted ambitions, the conditionings of their caste and religion—lie embedded in this level below the conscious level. This is your destiny, the course of which has already begun. You have no special role as an active agent in this sphere. Below this unconscious level again there is the sub-conscious level. It is a level of consciousness which is not only below the conscious level but one which the conscious mind can neither experience nor interpret.

The collective experience of the human race lies lodged in it. All this is destiny and it takes a course of its own.

Man has lived on this earth for millions and millions of years. He has divided the earth into continents and named them. This is Asia, this is Africa, this is Europe, this is America. These geographical divisions into countries and continents are of your making. God did not divide them thus. We have apportioned the earth and the skies and are now going to apportion the moon and the sun. Anyway, the experience, the knowledge, the conditionings of the entire human race, including you and me, lie lodged in the subconscious of each one of us and any one who wants to, can digdown and look into this subconscious. It is true that the experience will be an inner experience. All the same, an experience too is a state of consciousness with all that happens in that state of consciousness. It might be an experience of Jesus Christ, or Lord Mahavir, or Lord Buddha or Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, or saint Gyaneshwar or

Shankaracharya. It is possible for us to see into and repeat what any man has ever experienced. But you can only see it. You cannot control and direct it. Destiny is not a thing which you could control.

But man has always been engaged in the vain effort to control and direct the course of a thing the direction of which is predetermined. You can see and understand it but you will never be able to control or suppress or obliterate or annihilate it. There is nothing that you can do with it. The desire to give it a fight is futile. It is no use giving vent to your wrath over it. Supposing the body you have inherited is diseased because your parents were diseased. You are physically weak. Well, try to keep it as fit as you can with the aid of medical science. But the problem is not that you have a physically weak body. The problem is that your ego is hurt, your feelings of envy are aroused. I have a weak physique. I cannot scale the mountains, I cannot swim, I cannot ride, I cannot walk out in the rains. All this is envy.

Man is unable to accept his destiny because he is for ever comparing himself with others and is thus full of envy. He cannot accept the realities of his life because all the time, by night and day, he is comparing himself with others, weighing himself in the scales. 'My neighbour has so much money. How much do I have? He has gained an experience. How much of this experience have I gained? My friend, if you will look at everything in the light of envy, it will all be yellow; or red if you are fired by anger. These perturbations colour your vision, your thinking, your belief. So the problem is not destiny. Why am I so and why is the other fellow not like this?—that is the problem. Envy is the problem, jealousy, the competitive spirit are the problems. We have not learnt to see and to accept ourselves as we are. We do not know our own value.

For evaluating ourselves we are for ever looking into the eyes of others to find out how much they like me, in what esteem do they hold me. What respect do I command in society? How many people rise up when I appear in public—only ten or a hundred? Do they notice me when I drive out

in my car? Shall we call him a living man who assesses his value by looking into the eyes of others? Are we commodities for sale in the markets of other people's opinions, values and beliefs? If they have a good word for us, we burst out like a blossom. If they speak ill, we wither as easily. If they put a garland round our neck, we rise in our estimation but if they pick up a shoe to hurl it to us, we feel degraded. Friends, the true aspirant and seeker is he who has given up peeping into the eyes of others. If you must peep, peep within and see and grasp the realities there.

Reality or destiny do not keep you in bondage. The bondage is not there. The poison of bondage is there in your attitude, your way of looking at things. The bondage is not in the world outside. There is nothing in the world outside powerful enough to keep you in thrall. But who can help you, if you yourself choose to remain in bondage? Where indeed is the warrior who could cope with the task of cutting down the bonds you are forging all the twentyfour hours. And these bonds are not iron fetters which could be cut down easily. They are more like the nets which the fishermen weave. It would be necessary to detect hundreds of points at which you are weaving them. One could go on cutting down the bonds all the twentyfour hours and still be at a loss where to apply the scissors because the bonds are woven out of your reactions, responses, emotions and thoughts all of which are matters which must remain unmanifest. If you accept destiny, that is, take it for what it is and understand things as they are, you cease to complain or to resist. An attitude of feeling aggrieved all the time gives rise to a state of perpetual conflict within you. This in its turn creates heat and sourness, a state of tension which pressurises the nerves. Endless are the evil effects of such an internal conflict. You seek a remedy outside, but the conflict, the grievance, the resistance is there within you and it is there that they must be identified and tackled.

If you will identify the root of the matter, you will see that the responsibility is yours. Therefore, do not engage yourself in cutting down the branches. Look at the roots. All that there is to be done is to be done at the roots and the roots are unmanifest. Have you ever cared to notice what a

mighty tree springs out of ever so tiny a seed. Just as the roots of the tree are lodged beneath the earth, so the roots of your physical body lie there within you. From the navel centre to the Brahma-aperture in the crown of your head, it is all full of roots. If you do not study what all there is from the root of the spinal chord to Brahma's crevice in the crown of your head, it will not help you to exercise self-control, follow rules of penance, take breathing exercises or draw in the senses from external objects. This kind of disciplining is like trying to keep the branches and flowers of a tree fresh and alive by pouring water over them from above. The process of the transformation of life must start from within. If you have understood destiny, you will be able to notice the habitual impulsion and perturbations that will come up to the surface in actual life. You will no longer remain helpless in the clutches of these impulsions. As their witness you will be able to notice that there is a distance between you and them. You will be in their presence but no longer in their prison. The impulsions of destiny and their driving force will pass out above your heads because life does not stand still. It is forever on the march. You are engaged in activity every moment of your life.

If, while you are engaged in an activity, you are able to detect instantly the habit impulsion or deviation from the natural state which has risen up under the influence of destiny, its power to torment you will be lost. Not that it will not be there. It will continue to be there, but it will not torment you. It will not throttle you. Formerly it used to hold you like a prisoner, but now it will merely co-exist. It will not be able to do a thing. Your response and your conduct will remain free and unshackled. Conduct which is free from the shackles of conditionings and contortions under the influence of destiny is possible. I am not arguing a point or propounding a theory or indulging in speculation. I am stating the truth which I have lived.

Who could be free from the workings of destiny? But the force of earned conditionings under the influence of destiny can be slowed down and diluted in the light of understanding and attentiveness. And a state is also reached when destiny

is reduced to a handful of ashes. Not only is its force slowed down, its very presence is reduced to ashes. You might treat it as you like, you might smear it on your forehead or trample it down under your feet. It can do you no harm. So there is such a state but it is a matter enveloped in mystery. It relates to those who have attained Yogic perfection. It is a state attained only when one has attained the pinnacle of the state of love, and not earlier. That, however, is a far cry. Let us talk about things nearer home.

The last question is about action. You are a victim of the actions of your parents. The child may still be in the womb of the mother, but the manner in which the parents talk about the child will affect it. They may feel that it is desirable or undesirable, they may have a sense of grievance or of pride—all of this will affect the child in the womb. Parenthood is an ugly thing in men's minds. They have taken away all the poetry and music of the relationship between man and woman. They live a life of utter beastliness. It is suffocating. When I move about among men and women in all stations and conditions of life I find nothing but disgusting hideousness and shallowness in their ranks. How could the lotus of love blossom forth in such an atmosphere? Only the malformation of intoxicating weeds could thrive in such an atmosphere.

Well, we are discussing the stage at which the action of parents begins to affect the child. As soon as a child is born we begin to describe his outer covering. He is handsome, or ugly, or slow-witted, or a dunce or clever. He does not take after his parents or brothers, and so on endlessly. They imagine that what they say or do cannot possibly affect an infant a year old. They do not know that the whole banyan tree is there whether it is in the form of a shoot or a seed. You have no idea that the process of the growth of the seed into the whole banyan tree has already been set in motion. And so you compare the infant, form opinions about it. If you are in a good mood you fondle him, but if you are enraged you throw him down on the floor. Do you think this violence, the aggression on your part will not affect him? If a grown up boy or girl misbehaves you say, "How good are their parents

but the children are unworthy." The actions of the parents are visited upon the children. These actions are their destiny and it abides with them all their lives

Well, the child grows up and is able to speak. At about the age of eight the child is able to take upon himself the responsibility of speaking, hearing and moving about. The role of the way of life in a particular society in determining action is a wide question. It is a fascinating topic. Well, whatever a child of eight will say or do is his action. He will have to take the consequences of any action he takes. You think that the chance desires that arise in your mind while you are on a walk, are not known to anyone. Do you think that if a desire or longing arises in your mind, you will not have to bear the consequences? You must bear them. The moment a desire arises in your mind at the sight of an object, the action is done and a complex has been formed. We are unable to live in the calm, unruffled state in which there are no ripples on the surface, no vibrations, no tremors. Day and night we are assailed by suppressed envy and desire. The waves of the ocean may calm down for a while, but the waves of desire, emotion and thought rising up in our minds are never set at rest. Man has received no training in the art of staying calm and unruffled. Man's mind cannot stay in a state that is not perturbed by objects, emotions and thoughts, a state of complete equilibrium. It may be that the mind is disturbed for a while if and when there is an occasion for action; but as soon as the action has been performed, we must go back into the natural, the spontaneous state which is free from objects, emotions, ideas and dualities. This is the true state for the mature human being. Therefore, understand this clearly that anything that arises within you will be turned into an 'action' the consequences of which you are bound to suffer. And there is no exact mathematical formula which could enable you to know when, how and through whom the consequences will appear. All around us there is an unceasing flow and you and I are connected with it. When the moment arrives for suffering the consequences, we say that a misfortune, a calamity has descended upon us. I fail to understand what is a calamity or a misfortune. The Lord is not sitting there to test us and put

obstacles in our way.

If we understand that what arises within us is also an action, we will not have the grievance against life which we have. Man will be wary and alert. The light of attentiveness will be there before him by night and day. He will stay in a state of unruffled and uninterrupted calm. He will continue to speak and do and walk but only when the need and the occasion arise. He will act but he will be stationed elsewhere. He will be stationed in the light of attentiveness and the calm of an unruffled spontaneity. And this, my friends, will be the starting point of a new life. It will not be the destination. But you will travel from birth into life and pass through death smoothly without falling a prey to it.

Then really will life start. Then only will you get down from the swings of pleasure and pain and enter the fountain springs of the Ganga of bliss. Then only will you leave the swing of dualities to enter into the non-dual state of love, the state of bliss. The purpose of the spiritual life is to attain this bliss, this state of love.

February 12, 1971

Discourse 3

I fail to understand why man does not give the highest priority to his freedom and independence. Why does he not have a restless longing and aspiration for his freedom and independence? Why is he so terror-stricken, so deaf to all that is around him? What is it that binds him down to the world and what indeed are the bonds that keep him tied down to it? Why is he so attached to his bonds and so thoroughly afraid of his freedom, It is something beyond me. Since I was a child of five I have tried to see where indeed are the bonds that bind us. It is all plain that anything which has a beginning must have an end, that which is constructed must disintegrate, and anything which is born must die. It is perfectly simple. All who are born must die, and all includes you. The hour of death will not arrive by your leave. It will not wait to see if you are ready. There are no time-tables for death. The yogis may have a time-table for the hour and the moment of their death, but for us, the lesser mortals, death arrives unasked and unannounced.

The dry autumnal leaves are ripe and eager to separate themselves from the tree. There is a gust of the passing wind, the leaf disengages itself from the branch and floats down into the laps of the mother earth. No pain is caused to the tree or the dry leaf that departs. It is all such a sweet and beautiful happening. By detaching themselves from the tree in the autumn the dry leaves are making way for the coming into life of new shoots. There is a built-in process of reconstruction in the very act of the separation of the leaf from the tree. But men will see other men dying all round them every day of their lives without giving a moment's thought to the hour of their own death. Death could arrive this moment and yet how

dense and unwise is man to forget all about it. Every day and all round him he sees that the human body is subject to disease and decay but it does not strike him that he too could lose his own health. Step by step his youth marches on towards old age. And what is old age but the great gateway to death. Nobody wants to enter this gateway like a guest going to a royal feast. Everybody approaches it weeping, wailing and crying, with bent head and bated breath and drooping shoulders. Why should the hour of death be so moving? Why cannot the hour be turned into a festive occasion? Why cannot we invest it with the spontaneity of the autumn season or the beauty of a glorious sunset? Why indeed should Death be such a disaster?

The truth is that death is really an indivisible part of life. Death, no less than birth, is an indivisible part of life. What is the charm of life, if it is not followed by death. When we are children we are ignorant. When we attain youth we are wayward and irresponsible. When we become old we are weak, loose and listless. So what is the time of life when we may live? When will it be the time to live? So, the first thing which has to be grasped is that anything which has a beginning must have an end. At one end of the line of life there is birth, at the other, death. Not all your efforts can avert it and it is not a calamity which we should be anxious to avert. So see clearly at one glance this entire line of life, that you are proceeding from one end of it to the other. Nothing in the world can hold a man in its bondage, if he has taken in at one glance the beginning and the end of this line. I am giving you a very easy solution, the master key. Seize it and no longer will it be necessary for you to look to others for guidance. As far as I am concerned, you will not find it even possible to ask for any guidance for the simple reason that I do not exist. I am an illusion, an illusion clothed in flesh and blood. So what kind of a refuge could I provide to any one? An emptiness is no refuge for anyone. An emptiness has been dressed in flesh and blood. It is like a musical drum which you could play upon. The sound it will send forth will be determined by the strokes you choose to give it with your fingers. The response to the pressure of your fingers will not be

my voice. There is no longer a my-ness left with me. So anything which has a beginning will have an end. Anything brought into being must come to an end and disintegrate. If you will live in the light of this truth and realize it in the totality, your life will be transformed.

The parents of Siddhartha had taken good care to ensure that the prince should not catch sight of disease, old age and death. The royal palace was turned into a prison house. Siddhartha's father was a king. So this was a palatial prison house. Your own prison houses are of smaller dimensions. When Siddhartha came out of his palace the first day he caught sight of a sick man. "What is this?" he asked. "This is illness, disease, my lord." "Is everybody subject to disease?" "Yes, diseases of all kinds, diseases brought about by men and gods or due to supernatural and spiritual reasons come in the way of every one, my lord." "Shall I too fall a prey to them?" "Yes, they are bound to attack you too." "Move the chariot forward", said the prince. The next person Siddhartha saw was a tottering old man with falling limbs and poor eyesight. "And what is this?" he asked. "Old age, my lord, the change the human body has to undergo. All human bodies are subject to it."

Each sight was bringing about an inward change in the prince. It is only the blind who do not get transformed when they see a thing intently. The only way open to a blind man who wants to know, is to gather information from others. That is all he can do with his blind eyes. We are endowed with eyes that are open and yet we act like blind men seeking information from others. We do not want to see. It is a pitiable state. We have eyes, open eyes and the power to see but we keep our eyes bandaged and are engaged in verbal bouts with others. It is impossible that you should see a thing directly and intently and no change should be effected within you.

So 'Move the chariot inward', said the prince. 'And what is this?' he asked, 'This is a dead body, my lord. They are taking it to the cremation ground. The body will be cremated. Everyone has to pass through this.' 'I too must come to this?' asked the prince. 'Yes, my lord.' 'Take back

the chariot.'

The day you are able to read, understand and inwardly digest the meaning of this great phrase, 'Take back the chariot' as great a piece of poetry as any in the world, your life will be transformed. Turn back the chariot of desire and thought and passion and ambition. Turn it back to its own dwelling place, the kingdom within you. Take the intellect back to intelligence, take sentiments back to love, take conditionings back to the ego and the ego back to the soul. 'Turn back the chariot'. Siddhartha was not seized with pain when he saw the sights. Those who are seized with pain in the face of the circumstances, the calls and the challenges of life will never make any headway on the spiritual path. They go neither forward nor backward. They stand still. Pleasure and pain never allow anyone to make headway in any direction. They keep you entangled in webs of their own making. And all those who are held in the vice of pleasure and pain will never know either true bliss or true sorrow. There is a difference between pain and sorrow. There is a difference between pleasure and bliss also.

So they never know what sorrow is. There are some ripples of feeling and at the moment it is painful. An adverse sensation is pain. There is a feeling which you do not like and this causes discomfort. The radio broadcasts an item of news relating to the loss of two hundred lives. Viewing scenes on a television set you learn that a large number of people in Vietnam were killed. 'How cruel, how ghastly', you say. The radio or the T.V. set is switched off and the next thing you ask is 'Which picture are they showing in the cinema hall today? Which party have we to attend this evening? All your pain is gone. Five minutes have passed by. The vibrations of pain do not last. Pain does not stay with you, nor has it the power to penetrate anywhere inside you. It is like froth and foam on the crests of a wave. You can neither bathe nor wash in it. It is merely a piece of ornamentation and ornamentation is not the soul of beauty. Artificial make-up is merely a futile attempt to make it appear that you are someone different from what you really are. Love and existence have nothing to do with make-up and ornamentation. Ornamentation could only

make what is really and truly sweet and beautiful rather ugly and dreadful. That is why the learning and the intellectual acumen of the philosopher does not touch the heart of the saint.

So what Siddhartha felt was deep sorrow not pain. He was drowned in sorrow. Pain does not abide. It is a reaction of the mind and the ego. There will be a day when I too shall fall ill, grow old, die out. Such a feeling gives rise to self-pity and self-pity leads to a sense of inferiority and helplessness. Self-pity cannot lead to anything but a sense of inferiority. It will never take you beyond pleasure and pain. It can only induce a sense of false martyrdom. A sense of inferiority and martyrdom does not give you power and energy. Sorrow on the other hand is a spark, a shining flame which will burn down all the rubbish that is there within you. So what Siddhartha did was that he linked pain, disease, old age and death with the totality of the human condition. He who is an aspirant engaged in a spiritual endeavour goes on linking the happenings in his everyday life from morning to sunset with the Totality. The man who links each happening with the Totality is free both while he is passing through the event as well as when the event has come to an end. Nothing can bind him. Failure to link up these happenings with the totality of life and the totality of your own being is the only bondage and to be able to link them up with the totality is the only freedom.

So you must remember that anything which has a beginning must have an end. This body of ours is not immortal. There is something within it which was never born and will not die. But that is something of which we are unaware. The body in which you dwell will be reduced to ashes. This physical structure will disintegrate. It is disintegrating every moment. And when you are able to see this fully and watchfully you will not fall a prey either to indulgence or renunciation. Neither attachment nor repulsion will hold you in its grip. There are people who say, 'Since everything has a beginning and an end, let us not be too much worried about how we live our lives for we are destined to die in any case. What is the use of making the present moment of our life beautiful for tomorrow we shall die. All is vanity and an illusion. Why

need we strive to have order and beauty and taste and music and human intercourse in our lives? Let us spend our lives somehow, anyhow.' This is not Life. I recall a moment in the life of an elderly saint whom I held in the highest esteem, saint Tukroji. He was suffering from cancer. I went to see him in his *ashram*. He was entirely illiterate. He knew as well as every body else there that death was at hand. I had known since my childhood that he woke up at about three in the morning. He kept up the routine even when death was so near. He would tell the doctor and the nurse in perfect composure, "Put me in a sitting position, sponge the body, change the linen and the bedsheets, light up the lamp and the incense sticks. It is time now for me to go into meditation." And this went on till the end. I paid another visit to his room. The nurse helped him to sit up. He was a Vaishnava devotee of Pandhari and in Maharashtra such a devotee puts some sandal paste on his forehead after he has taken his bath. And so he ordered the attendant to bring the sandalwood paste. When the unguents were brought, he asked the servant, "Where is the mirror? Do you think because I am going to die it will do, if I put the mark on my forehead in any haphazard way I like? Do bring the mirror also. As long as I am alive I am thoroughly alive, and when I shall die, I shall die as thoroughly. At the moment I am very much alive and shall sing my prayer songs in full style." So he must have the mirror placed in front of him. He knew well enough that death was near. He knew the day and the time when it would arrive. There could not be a physical condition more critical than the one facing him at the time. He had shrunk to a mere skeleton. He would vomit blood. But what an air of grandeur was there in his manner when he said, "As long as I am alive I am fully alive. Put the mirror before me." And his grand manner as he put the sandal paste on his forehead was an entirely amazing sight.

It shook me to the roots. He would not neglect the present moment because the hour of death was approaching. And all our talk about the hour of death is only an excuse for neglecting the present moment. It is as much neglect of life to give yourself up to a life of pleasure and indulgence as to be tempted

by the lure of renunciation. The person who gives himself up to enjoyment and is attached to pleasure is not free. But those who renounce the world and are unattached to it are also not free. There is no beauty, no sweetness, no skill and proficiency in the life and action of either the one or the other. The reason is that their minds are tainted by desire, and when the mind is tainted by desire, the vision cannot be free from illusion. Whether desire runs through channels of indulgence and attachment or through those of renunciation and detachment, an approach tainted by desire will not allow the vision to remain pure and unaffected. It makes no difference whether it is a desire for money and the pleasures of the senses or for religion and morality. An attachment is an attachment, whether you are attached to your wife and children or to your religious teacher, his disciples and his ashram. If relationship is a bondage, all relationships are bondages. How blind is man. A relationship is something to be built up. It has a beginning and an end. Anything which you have to build up must disintegrate. And this applies equally to things worldly and other-worldly.

This is not to say that you should not establish relationships and that you should not marry and set up a home. You can go in for these but all the time you must see clearly that what has to be started must come to an end. Go through the process. They do not know how to go through the process. They only know how to cling to a person or thing and to continue to cling as long as they are not forcibly severed and separated from them. They do not know how to get out of it. It is not only a child who goes to sleep with his toys held close to his breast. The grown ups too are given to holding the toys of worldly objects close to their pillows when they go to bed. The toys of the children are there visible to the eye. The toys of the grown ups—their desires and ambitions—may not be visible but the grown ups are not less keen not to part with them by day or night. They keep them clinging to their breasts as they go to bed and when they get up in the morning. But clinging is not living. If you are blessed with the good things of life, live well and put the good things to good use. Look at them steadily and with open eyes. Pass through the

pleasures they provide and have done with it, so that their memory does not vitiate the next moment. If it is pain and suffering and restlessness through which you have to pass, go through these too in the grand manner like the master you are without any sense of inferiority, so that you are not tied down to their memory.

If a man does not act under a sense of helplessness, he is free by nature. But there are those who even marry to meet the wishes of their parents. People take up service or enter business or set up a home and complain that circumstances forced them, there was no way out, they were helpless. If all your lives you are acting under a sense of helplessness, when will it be the time for you to live freely and fully? You say that there are the needs and demands of the body and you have to fulfil them. Very well do fulfil them. But why should you be carrying the burden of a sense of guilt all the time? If destiny has placed you in a certain relationship, understand this clearly that these are bodily relationships in which destiny has placed you. You will have your portion of misery and bitterness, of things you will like and those you will not like. In this wide world things will not take shape as you would wish they should. There will be successes and disappointments, praise and blame. And when they blame you, why should you hold down your head in shame?

Success and failure are foreign to the language of life. These are words which belong to the language of society. Society has introduced these terms to measure and assess its own activities, this thing is praise, this other is blame, this is victory, this other is defeat.

Very well, what I want to tell you specially this morning is that anything which has a beginning must have an end. This body has a birth and must have its death and there is no knowing when the hour of death will arrive. Anyone who has understood this well will develop a sense of attentiveness which will stand him in good stead every day and every hour of his life. He will be vigilant and wary and all who are wary and vigilant must necessarily be efficient and skilful in all that they do. If you are driving a car on the crowded roads of Bombay or New York

or Paris or London, you will be watchfulness personified. You will identify yourself with the car completely as if the car were part and parcel of your being. Your body, your eyes, the toes of your feet will behave as though they were limbs of the motor car too. It would be hardly necessary for you to keep your eyes fixed on the accelerator or the hand-brake or the foot-brake. Your body will be all eyes and ears. You will be watching all the time the movements of those ahead and those behind you in the mirror in front of you. You will know the quantity of the petrol in the tank and the position of the gear all the while. What a state of perfect attentiveness will all this mean? You are not a person so many feet high but one who is one with the body of the car. The self is pervasive and the self reflects its pervasiveness. This is true as much of the motorist as of the aviator.

I was travelling back to Delhi in a Boeing 747. It was a big plane complete with stairs, a lounge, a library, a garden and a theatre hall. There were some 410 passengers aboard. I was curious to see how the pilot operated the machine and went down into the cabin to watch him at work. I was amazed. I was stunned when I looked into the keyboard. How did he remember what each key was there for. He held the lives of so many hundreds of people in his hands. Unless he were in a state akin to that of *samadhi* (Yogic trance) he could not possibly manage it. What perfection of pervasive skill and efficiency? He was flying the plane at a height of 45,000 feet. How extensive was the range of his attentiveness? The lives of 410 passengers had entered into his own life and the movements of the plane were in unison with the working of his own nerves. I am giving you only an instance. Imagine the consequences, if he were to lose his concentration. The motorist on the ground has to cope with only the traffic on the streets of Bombay. This man had to manage a whole world before him. At the moment he was one with the universe around him. He could not but bring the utmost attentiveness and skill to bear on his task. And skill in action is Yoga. There is no way out for you, my brethren, except to be a yogi in life.

Life will turn you too into a Yogi. Develop attentiveness

and Yoga will enter into you. I am not telling you fairy tales. Link up every event that takes place in life with the totality. You are seized with anger. Fix your attention on the relationship there is between this anger and life. You instantly say, "It is my nature." But what exactly is this nature of mine? Examine the phrase, 'my nature'. What is this 'my' and what is 'nature'? When you say 'my', does this 'my' mean your sense organs, your mind, your ego? It is easy enough to say, 'It is my nature,' without knowing anything about what you are saying. You will use words without knowing anything about what the words mean. You will take a step without knowing anything about why you are taking it. You will get angry and say harsh things without knowing anything about why you are acting in that harsh manner. Does life consist in floating upon the oncoming waves of chance activity and allowing yourself to be played upon by them?

To be engaged in spiritual endeavour is to be engaged in practising attentiveness. Spiritual endeavour is training in the art of remaining constantly in a state of attentiveness. It is easy enough to tell your beads for an hour in a corner of your home. But when your husband or son or servant is standing before you, do you have the awareness that the same soul that dwells in you abides in the servant or the maid in front of you? Do you have this awareness or do you feel that you are the master of that person because you pay him a certain amount by way of salary every month? You may talk and talk ever so much but the truth of the matter is that if you do not treat him as an outright bondsman, you certainly do behave as if you had bought him out for so many hours. If he fails to please you, you feel you have a right to punish him because you pay him a certain amount by way of a salary. All your talk about the soul and the spirit is moonshine. Just pause for a while and notice the harshness of the language you use, the indifference in your eyes, the contempt you have for him. Get a camera or a tape-recorder or a film projector and have a complete record made of your behaviour during the twentyfour hours private life in a day and you will learn the truth about your real life. All the fond images that you have built up about your devotion to religion and your spiri-

tuality will fall to pieces. If there were a machine to record a graph of the waves of feelings and emotions that rise and fall within you and you were confronted with this record, you would know the truth about yourself. The image that you present to the world outside after shaping it carefully under the hammer blows of discretion and conformity to social standards of polite behaviour does not represent your real self. It is not the truth about you. If your wife or husband or son or daughter appears before you, how long do the feelings you have for them endure? At what point does your desire to rule over them step in? Beware of the Hitler, the Stalin, the Mussolini within you. What a deal of untruth and falsehood and aggression come into play in your dealings from sunrise to sunset. You do not aim a pistol at them like the Naxalites. But you do not need a pistol. The way you look daggers at others will do as well. The world would know nothing about the weapons of indifference, anger and jealousy you are wielding all the time, subtle weapons of which no one other than the wielder and the victim is aware. The way you walk about proclaims the deal of the desire to dominate, to possess, to exercise authority there is within you. Your looks, your gesture each one of the limbs of your body speaks out. All you have to do is to watch how each one of them behaves.

The essence of the spiritual endeavour is to give yourself training in watchfulness and attention. Spiritual endeavour is not a part time job. It is no spiritual endeavour to tell your beads a hundred and eight times. Telling your beads is all right as a device. Every medicine will bring results, so does any device you resort to. No sooner do you take resort to a medical treatment or device than your ego begins to measure and weigh, acquire and possess. You can go on playing this game of acquiring and accumulating endlessly. But this is not the spiritual life. The spiritual life demands constant watchfulness. If the shining light of watchfulness is kept alive you will view each happening as it occurs in relation to the totality. That is all you have to do. The rest of the transformation will take place automatically. And if you are also aware that there is no knowing about the end, this

state of watchfulness will abide with you without interruption. You will not lose touch with it.

It is all so easy and I fail to see why people should want to make it so complicated. Liberation is very easy. There is nothing easier in this world than liberation. There is nothing easier than spontaneity. But this utterly easy thing has been converted into something very intricate and complicated by scholars, priests and philosophers. To be held in bondage by the world, they would tell you, is the natural thing. The difficult thing is to be liberated. To labour under delusion, they say, is natural; but it is difficult to be watchful. I really fail to understand all this. Here we are among friends and I would not like to exaggerate things. Since I was five years old I have not been able to understand what it is that could bind us down to this world. How could anyone who knows that death faces him afford to live in a state of folly and stupefaction. And where is the time to try to ward it off? Why should man be so ignorant? It is the duty of a friend and a well-wisher to shake you out of the folly but for the rest there is nothing like my giving or your receiving any thing. In love there is no giving or receiving for the simple reason that where there is love there is no duality. Receiving is no less an act of egoism than giving. So there is no question of my giving or your receiving anything. It is all a matter of a friend shaking you by the shoulders and saying, 'Get up, brother, wake up. Time is running out. The hour that is gone will not come back again. What do I mean by saying it will not return? It will not return in the sense that processes within you are at work all the time, the atoms and particles are changing every minute. If you choose to tarry, your childhood will not care to wait for you. It will carry you into youth and adolescence. The stream of life will flow on. Youth will not wait because you are not awakened. It will not take care to keep itself in abeyance till you take care to wake up. It has already put you on the road to old age. And if you continue to postpone things even in your old age, death will not say, 'Spare the fellow. Give him the time to pack up. He is not ready.'

Death does not give anyone the time to pack up. It arrives

unannounced, takes you by the hand and takes you away. There is no better friend than death. It does not tarry. It is so eager and so impatient to take you in its embrace and to see that you are dissolved and made one with it, that there is nothing of you that is left behind. It is the great, the supreme friend.

It is only the body which is left behind like the skin of a snake. But the essence it carries away with it. So the great friend is waiting at the door. Remember this and all else will be perfectly simple and easy.

February 13, 1971

Questions and Answers

Question : It is stated with a great deal of emphasis that knowledge is a stumbling block on the spiritual path. At the same time everyone knows that knowledge is needed in life. What is the area where knowledge is needed and what is the point at which it becomes a stumbling block? Where is the dividing line between the knowledge we need and the knowledge which is an obstruction?

Answer : What is knowledge but a body of information? Of the truth it is not possible to have any knowledge nor even an experience. The truth can only be realised. You gather information about the facts of life, organise it under various heads and this well-ordered, well-organised, properly categorised body of information is called knowledge. Knowledge has no other meaning. If this knowledge of yours relates to matter, it is physics, if it relates to the earth, it is geography; if it is about the mind, it is psychology. There are so many sciences such as sociology, economics, politics, theology. People have gathered information about the self too and there is an entirely wrong term very much in use in some circles—'knowledge of the self'. To my mind the term is entirely wrong. There could be no knowledge of the self. But since the term has been used since the days of Shankaracharya, let us use it.

So knowledge is collected and well-organised information about the facts of life. But spiritualism is a search of the nature of your self. It is the attainment of the truth by an individual. The search for the self has very little to do with the collection of facts. You want to go to a village nearby. You will walk along the streets and bye-lanes built on the earth. Similarly if you go by facts chalked out for you by limiting truths, you

will certainly manage to keep alive but the search for the nature of the self has very little to do with facts. That is why knowledge is an obstruction and a stumbling block on the spiritual path of the quest for the self.

Take an example. You have read the Hindu scriptures and the Vedic philosophies, Sankhya and Nyaya; you have some knowledge of Yoga-Shastra and various observances and practices, of Uttar Mimamsa and Vedanta, you have read Confucius and the scriptures of Mahayana and Hinayana and the Jains. Now all this collection of information has become crystallised within you. But the search for the self has not yet begun. When you are a child no one is anxious to tell you, "My child, know who and what you are". Your parents and society are much more anxious that you should pick up their ideas and accept their beliefs. They will stuff the child with their own beliefs, disbeliefs and way of life. They will see to it that the child's mind and body are trained to pursue the paths laid out by them. Their one aim is to see that the sons and daughters should carry the tradition forward. Society which is interested only in the continuity of its own way of life will never tell its children, 'Go out and seek and find who and what you are'.

As it is, we are born with traits and experiences which we have inherited but even on the level of the conscious mind the whole anxiety is to stuff it with information. They will take no time in declaring that the soul is immortal without knowing anything about either the soul or immortality. They do not have the faintest idea of what the soul or the Supreme Being is. Without knowing anything about what they are saying they will not hesitate in declaring that the soul is immortal and that there is re-birth. They do not have any knowledge about what is birth or death but they know full well that there is re-birth. The reason is that collected information has become crystallised and they imagine that this information is their own understanding of the matter. The great mistake lies here. As I have said before the spiritual life has nothing to do either with holding certain beliefs or gathering knowledge. It has to do with the immediacy of apprehension and settled conviction which is an entirely different matter.

We have our knowledge relating to what is sin, what is virtue, what is moral, what is immoral, what is good, what is evil. We have been systematically instructed on these matters even as we are taught to distinguish various colours—this is black, this is white, this is red, this is green, this is blue, this is yellow. Just as they classify colours, they classify men. If a man does this, he is bad, if he does some other thing, he is good. This thing is sin, that other is virtue. So all this information is stored within us. That is why when thoughts and emotions arise within us we are unable to see them clearly for what they are. The moment they rise up we have a ready-made judgment about them. This is anger, something bad, remove it, suppress it, hide it. No body cares to pause and see what gives rise to the anger, what does it do to him from head to foot, what a deal of harm and damage does it cause to him. The first one to be harmed by anger is the man in anger himself, not the other person. But we are totally ignorant about the harm done to us. When you are seized by anger, and it permeates every nerve and fibre of your being, you are instantly turned into a lunatic. There is no difference between the way in which a lunatic and a man in anger behaves. In one case the lunacy lasts only for a few moments, while in the other, it lasts for all the twentyfour hours. That is all the difference there is. There is no difference between the lunatic and the person who is in the grip of anger or envy or jealousy.

So you are in a state of lunacy ten times a day and your weapons while you are in that state are what you say, do and think. But the eyes that could see this with clarity are closed and what we actually do is that we condemn anger as bad and start fighting with it. How can you remove lunacy by fighting with it? Lunacy is a problem by itself and you create another problem that of fighting against it. And where will you get the weapons with which to carry on the fight? You will go out in search of some rule of ethics, some injunction in the scripture, some magical formula. The anger will stay where it was in this confused struggle for securing weapons out of the scriptural texts. Life goes on as before. You come to face to face either with anger or with the consequences that follow in its wake. You drift through life, running about in search

of remedies.

So this knowledge which you gather and store will not let you live your life. You want to know the area within which knowledge has a use? Well, you want to go to Ahmedabad or to Bombay from here. You gather all the necessary information about the routes, the means of conveyance, whether it shall be a railway train or an aeroplane. Or perhaps you want to drive a car. You will want to know all about the mechanism of the car, the kind and amount of fuel needed, the way the machine is to be operated. The operation is mechanical and it matters little whether the mechanical instruments are man-made or God-made, that is, instruments manufactured by man or the sense organs, the mind and the intellect. Whenever a mechanical act is to be performed, we must certainly gather the knowledge connected with it. We cannot do without this knowledge and this knowledge must be both wide and accurate. There is no room for guess work and speculation. Your act will be efficient and effective in the measure your knowledge is exact and well-ordered. Lack of exact information is as much at the root of inefficient action as a faulty attitude of mind. Chaotic, disordered knowledge is at the root of inefficient action. You may have a great deal of knowledge but if it is disorganised and unsystematic, it will not serve your purpose. There are some housewives who have many things lying about in the house but when they need something in particular, they do not know where to look for it. They lose the opportunity to utilise it and this goes on happening throughout their lives.

The mind and the body are very good instruments indeed for mechanical activities, sound, dependable, delicate instruments; but they are no more than instruments. To use them to good purpose, you must have the necessary knowledge. Life would be devoid of beauty, flavour, skill, proficiency in the absence of knowledge. If we are slovenly, we will not know how to cook or eat or bathe well. We will drag through life carrying it about us like a load. And why shall we not live the present hour and moment? Why should we drag through life? Is life a catastrophe, a calamity to be suffered?

So we do need knowledge for mechanical activities. To be

able to use them properly we must know what the mind and the intellect are and the levels at which they work. If you do not know anything about the house you live in, the number of the doors and windows it has, you will lead the life of a miserable pauper even if your dwelling place is a palace. You may have every thing in your house but if you know nothing about the doors and the windows and how to open them to let in light and fresh air, you will be like the stray bird that flies in and out of it without knowing anything about what the doors and the windows are there for. Similarly if you do not understand your mind and your body, you will not know how to put your muscles, nerves and sensory organs to good use. You will not know the exact amount of ether and the vital breath you need to keep it fit and fresh. You will not know how much of solid nutrition your body needs and in what seasons and conditions of work. My friend, it is not only in music that we must have harmony. We need it as much in life and the man who can strike new notes and create new harmonies on the bodily instrument with its nerves and muscles is the man who really lives his life. Infinite are its possibilities and Yoga has to tell us something in this connection. We cannot do without knowledge when it is a question of using our mental and physical faculties efficiently. If we want to exercise the faculty of speech, we must know which of the five elements of physical body is being spent and how much of it. We must know how much of the element of fire or air is spent in speaking for an hour and how to make up for the loss of these elements. Our body and the mind will not keep fit and fresh unless we are able to see the relationship between speech and the body. We have absolutely no knowledge on the point and we go out to gather knowledge and ask questions about whether the Supreme Being is one or many, whether he is manifest or unmanifest. You know nothing about your own self and go out in search of the Supreme Being as if He were someone outside you. God comes running to him who has discovered himself and if you do not know your own self, God could hardly do anything for you even if He were to come to you.

So there is an area of life where we cannot do without

knowledge. If you knew the chemical reactions of speech, you would neither shout nor speak harshly. The sound of your own voice will grate in your ears. You will take the greatest care to control and regulate the flow, the density, the intensity of your voice. But what you are doing all the time is that you throw away and dissipate the vibrations of sound. If you know about the chemistry of the spoken word, the reaction on you and the person spoken to, your use of words would be governed and regulated by this knowledge. Life would be something beautiful. Man has not learnt how to live. If he knew what it is necessary to know about speech and thought and memory, his life would be different. He would know that when he thinks, he spends energy. Things happen and you ruminate over them all the day long. After you have passed through an event you want to taste and savour it over again with the teeth of memory. This is not the right use of memory. Memory has its use, if you want to locate a place in the town, or to govern a country or to perform a job in engineering. But it is a misuse of memory, if you sit idle and day-dreaming in your room and think of what you will do tomorrow or the day after. You will deal with tomorrow when tomorrow is with you. You may not be there tomorrow. Certainly planning has its uses and if planning is called for in a particular context, do plan but once you have done it, have done with it. Do not ruminate it all the time. It is a misuse of the memory, the speech, the muscles, the nerves to keep them perpetually in motion. The human mind and tongue are not like the tail of a dog which must be wagging all the time. Knowledge is needed to know how to use the body, the mind and the intellect. Do acquire the know-how and do put it to use. The application of the mind to grasp, retain or store anything in the memory is a mechanical act and for this kind of action we do need knowledge.

But we do not need knowledge in search of the spirit because the mind and the body cannot give us any aid in the search of the spirit. The search will be made while we are in the body and the mind but the body and the mind are not the instruments which will help us in the search. The conditions precedent for the search are a still body and a quiet mind

and if you will bring your knowledge into play, how could the mind be kept quiet. You cannot apply knowledge, without utilising the mind. Even 'search for the self' is a very loose phrase because search involves some effort on one part and that is not what is wanted. If we use the term 'self-investigation', this again involves some amount of effort. The trouble with words is that we have to import the language of the dualistic world to describe a state where there is no dualism. It is a position which cannot be helped.

It is only by living in the state of self-realisation that you can see what it is like. But people ask for a description of it in terms of words. It is a state in which you are. You stay with me and see that I am in that state. But we do not have the keen sensitivity which will transmute seeing into learning. Even when we have a sight of it, we must ask 'why' and 'how'. We must bring logic and guess work into play. We must have it all set out neatly in a frame work complete with the premises and the conclusions. And so it is a difficult proposition, if you are told that silence of the mind is a condition precedent to the realisation of the self. Knowledge is helpless, a broken reed in the context of the state of self-realisation. It is a state where the learned and the ignorant, the virtuous and the wicked, the saint and the sinner are all on the same footing—a footing of equality. As a matter of fact this equality is there all the time. The equality breaks down only when the self-realised state has been attained and the attempt is made to give expression to it. In the body of a Yogi it will find expression in one way, in that of the saint in another and in that of a good man in yet another. The difference will appear at the moment of manifestation but not at the moment of realisation because all relationship with the conditionings of the body and the mind is severed at the moment of realisation.

Realisation is a happening, a wave of the manifest rising up in the Unmanifest. It is like a spontaneous tremor on the surface of the ocean raised by a gust of the wind. At the point of manifestation all the notes in the instrument of the body and the mind will be brought out. When the medium of expression is a sense organ, differences are bound to appear in the manner of expression. There will be those whose sense

organs have been spoilt by over indulgence. There will be others who have lived a regulated life. The modes of expression in the two cases will naturally differ. But at the moment of realisation there will be no difference either in the character or the intensity of the happening. Differences appear only in the modes of expression after the happening. The learned and the ignorant, the wicked and the virtuous, the saint and the sinner stand on the same footing in the moment of realisation in the silence of the mind.

I hope it is clear now where knowledge is a help and where it is a hindrance. It makes no difference to me with whom I am dealing. You gather information about your motor car, your sofa-set, your house, your radio-set. I want to gather knowledge about you. I have to stay here with you for the next four days. I should like to know all about you and your antecedents. One of you is a Jain, another a Hindu or a Vaishnava or a Shakta or perhaps a businessman. I am keen to know about you because I want to make my knowledge about you an implement of mine. I should like to be well-armed and well-equipped with information.

Now look at it. Here is this table. You gather knowledge about this table and find that this table is a table today and will remain a table tomorrow and for ever. There is no change in its quality or behaviour. (I am aware there are scientists who will tell you that the table too is undergoing changes. Russian scientists have discovered a mind lying hidden in inanimate objects also. There is a sister in Russia who enters into a dialogue with the mind hidden in inanimate objects. She would place a candle in front of her and speak to it lovingly, 'Dear candle, I need light. Get lighted' and lo! the candle would be lit up of its own accord. There is the pair of her spectacles. She looks at them lovingly and the spectacles would rise up and settle upon her nose. Pieces of bread in a cup of water are transferred from one place to another. This sister has given demonstrations before international gatherings. She has sought to establish contact between the inanimate and the mind. So the changes occur in the inanimate world too. But that is not a subject we are discussing at the moment. I leave it there. You may say that I am not telling you what you ex-

pected to hear in this camp—that I tend to extend the canvas so wide that it embraces the whole universe. Well, it is difficult to narrow down the vision to a limited point. All this universe with its stars and planets enter the range of my vision and it is difficult to narrow it down. Much of my energy is spent in narrowing down the scope of the discourse. Even so do bear with me. What you hear may stand you in good stead one of these days and if it does not, you may leave it there.)

Well I was telling you that this table is a table and will remain a table tomorrow. You may gather knowledge about this table and deal with it on the basis of the knowledge you have gathered. But man is not a table. Man is a ray of consciousness. He is a lump of earth covered all over by the wires of the senses. He is not something inert. He is full of the rays and the light of consciousness. If you start gathering knowledge about man, what is it that you will gather knowledge about? About this ray of the supreme intelligence? It will keep on changing. It is capable of changing and the human body has value precisely because it is full of divine possibilities. The significance of the human body does not lie in its form and shape but in the possibilities of the divine lying there within it. And there is no knowing when and how he will change.

For instance, somebody comes to you and says something nasty in anger. It goes home and your ego is hurt. The thing has happened. The incident is over. Something or the other must have been at the back of it. The fellow could have been in a state of emotional disequilibrium. He might have been anxious or worried. It could have been a deliberate utterance or something escaped his lips unawares because the clouds of emotion are gathering within us and we are not watchful and alert all the time. Anyway, it has happened leaving a trail of unhappiness and ill-will behind. We are hurt and we are apt to nurse the grievance and store it in the memory. The moment when the words were uttered is past and gone but the unhappiness and the misery stay with us. You might have good reason for being happy at the present moment. But if the man who uttered the words were to appear again

at the present moment, all your happiness would disappear. Your heart would droop like a withered flower because you do not live in the present moment. You choose to stay and to remain stuck up and static in the moment that was sometime in the past. You refuse to move on. Your mind continues to think, 'When will the fellow appear again? When shall I have my revenge?' The man is not there but you cling to the emotions aroused by the incident. And that is why man is unable to live his life. He must remain clinging to one set of emotional reactions or the other. It would take a hundred lives before you are able to settle accounts on the score of a single grievance but man's only delight is to be forever reacting. Reacting and retaliating, man has little time for living. Somebody praises you. The praise arouses pleasurable sensations in your ego. The fellow leaves you. The echoes of the words he said to you are gone into thin air. But the sensation caused by the words said in praise of you abide. You cling to the dead body of those sensations. 'When will the nice man appear again? What will he have to say to please me next time?' All your time is taken in preparing yourself to receive the pleasurable sensation which his bouquet of praise will give you next time. For life and living you have no time. It makes no difference whether you choose to stay in the memory of a pleasant sensation or a painful one. If you are caught up in the accumulated memory of these sensations then all this knowledge and experience will be only an obstacle and a hindrance in the way of your entering into relationship with your fellowmen. You do need knowledge to establish relationship with a machine and to handle facts and carry on activities and transactions in the world of facts. But when it is a question of living, and living is the only question in the company of human beings, mechanical repetition will not do. It is not possible. Can you repeat what you were yesterday or this morning? Neither the morning nor the sunrise, nor the warmth, nor the ocean, nor you and I are the same. How can all that be repeated? A tape-recorder could do it, but how could we human beings do it?

The moment there is repetition in human relationships, life becomes mechanical. That is why all activity and attempt to

satisfy the craving for sensation leave us fatigued and exhausted. It involves so much repetition. Man is bored by all activity designed to satisfy the onrush of desires and the demands of the mind because he has to take recourse to a lot of repetition. There is no joy of creativity in repetition and man's greatest joy lies in the creative life. Every moment of his life he wants to create something. 'It takes on a newness every moment' is not a phrase signifying the beauty of outward nature only. It is much more a description of the nature of the self within. There is an urge, a yearning, an aspiration, a thirst for creation within and we want to extract this joy out of life by putting life into a duplicating machine. Once you have acted upon a thought coming up in your mind, all the juice that there was in the thought is dried up. It is like putting the stalk of sugarcane into a pressing machine. The juice is squeezed out and you throw the stalk away. Even so once you have acted upon an idea or emotion all the juice there is in it is squeezed out. If you act upon the same idea again, it will have lost all its true flavour.

For one who is sensitive, one who wants to live there is no joy in repetition. In life there is no repetition. In the realm of knowledge there is a good deal of it. Knowledge has its use where you are making hypotheses and building up a logical system. You want to build up a body of knowledge—a science of economics or politics or sociology or religion. You must unavoidably bring knowledge into play because there is a system and an order in these sciences. The people are held together by religion and you build a religion, that is, a body of well-organised ideas. You have to guess and argue and you must take recourse to knowledge. Scriptural texts, tradition, information have their uses there. But these methods are irrelevant in the context of the realisation of the self and the truth.

Question : Many people say that if we fix the attention on incoming and the outgoing breath, the spirit-current is likely to go astray. Shall we introduce the name in between?

Answer : The first thing you have to see is where does the incoming breath end and where does the outgoing breath begin. When you breathe, you inhale two elements. Firstly, you inhale

air with whatever oxygen and hydrogen there is in it. But if you are sufficiently sensitive you must have observed that you also inhale flashes of the spirit hidden inside the vital breath, explosion-like vibrations of the spirit. These vibrations are not the theme of the present discourse. But do you have any knowledge as to what these vibrations are? If you have no idea of the basic notes, how will you identify the melody? This is by the way. So, when we breathe, we do take in air but if the spirit element is not there in it, life could not be sustained. The body lives on what you take in and give out during inhalation and exhalation. But the air you inhale is not the only life-giving element. The life-giving element is the energy inside it. This air that you draw in and throw out as if from a bellow is not energy. You must see the distinction.

There are those who inhale and exhale the breath but do not take in energy and there are those who take in a lot of energy in just a few breaths. You must have training in the practice of unifying yourself with the energy when you breathe in the air. This is the secret of Yoga, the very essence. Inhalation and exhalation are only the mechanical parts of the practice, the outer form. Very well, you take in the breath. What is the route it takes once it has entered the nostrils? What part of it rises up above the forehead? What part of it travels towards the ear through the mouth, what part goes down the throat and enters the lungs and the abdomen? First study the movement of the breath drawn in. We will come to exhalation later on. It is a fascinating study with a lot of romance in it. This journey inside is a romance with life. You revel with yourself. But as you are, you do not enjoy even sitting alone with yourself. You are bored and uncomfortable.

Very well, you draw the breath in and out. But the questioner does not seem to be interested in the inhalation and exhalation of the breath. He seems to be more interested in inserting the name in between the incoming and the outgoing breath.

If you watch the breath closely as it comes in and goes out, you will discover that the slightest touch of the breath will bring out the sound, the unbeaten sound, running in the nerves

within us. There is a saying, 'Ram repeats the name for me. I sit pretty and relax.' Ram, that is, the energy within repeats the name and I feel easy. Some free and unfettered saint must have said this, Kabir perhaps. Who else could it be? These must be the words of an Avadhoot, that is a person who has washed and purified his whole being in its totality. So as the breath enters in or rises up it gives a stroke, a light, tender stroke. 'Stroke' is too strong a word for it. Shall I say 'touch'?

When we breathe in and breathe out, it is a stroke. When it is a Yogi who breathes in and out the stroke turns into a touch. I have used the adjectives 'light' and 'tender' to suggest that it should not be a stroke but a touch. As we are, our breathing is like the going up and down of the bellows of the blacksmith. Due to the stroke or touch or gentle pressure the elemental sounds in the nerves find expression. Some say these sounds are seven and others that they are eight in number. The *tantrikas* maintain they are eight. So these seven self-born and unbeaten sounds, which flow through the nerves and are unheard today, find utterance when they are agitated by the touch of the incoming and the outgoing breath. 'Hearing' means ability to hear them.

We use the phrase 'hearing, contemplation and meditation' without knowing what it is that is to be heard. Are we to hear the sounds outside us—Ram, Krishna, Govind, Shiva, Sarasvati, Kali? It has a use. But the real hearing is internal. As long as that which is to be heard is outside us, it could be a hindrance. When it is within, it is not an obstacle. Then it lights up the path to spontaneity. So the incoming and outgoing breaths unite and dissolve as in music. You have to notice the ascent and the descent and hear the self-born sound. To do this hearing there should be a slight interval between the inhalation and the exhalation before the next breath is taken. But what happens is that before the exhaled breath reaches a length of twelve digits, we draw the next breath. The rule is that you should not draw the next breath before the incoming and the outgoing breaths reach a length of twelve digits. But what we do is that the moment we push out the breath rather violently, we take the next breath.

A man breathes 21,600 times in twentyfour hours. By lengthening the breath we could reduce this number to one-third. So the Yogi will breathe only once during the time it takes the layman to breathe thrice. Since he can retain the air he breathes and there is an interval between the inhalation and the exhalation, the Yogi lives longer. It depends on you whether you take twentyfour hours or forty to take the 21,600 breaths that have to be taken. 'Yoga is skill in action' they say and they are right. I am not talking about any profound spiritual truth. It is just a device, a Yogic technique.

The question is, 'Shall we hear or shall we repeat the sound raised by the gentle touch of the incoming and the outgoing breath? The questioner wants to know if it would help if he were to put in the name in between the incoming and the outgoing breath. Where will you put in the name and who will put it in? If you will closely hear the sound of breathing, you will find that it is 'Om' or the 'Soham' sound. We are staying here on the seaside and you must have heard the reverberation of the sound of ocean entering your room through the windows at midnight. It is the sound of mystical syllable OM. The sound OM goes on within you in a similar fashion. If you will be in tune with this sound, you will know what the Yoga practice known as 'Surat-Shabd-Yoga' is. Then the spirit-current will not go astray. The questioner says the spirit current goes astray. It is already straying away and moving wayward in the dark alleys within you and it has got exhausted in the process. The followers of the Radhaswami sect have utilised this practice of '*Surat-shabd-Yoga*' to good purpose. Swami Pratyagatmanand has written a good work on the subject of sound and vibrations. In Bengali the work is known as 'Japa Sutram.' A translation in Hindi and an abridged English version of the work have also appeared. Those who have not tasted the sweetness of the unbeaten sound will never have any sweetness in the beaten sound of their speech. If you have met any Yogis during your travels, you must have noticed how soft, sweet and charming is their speech and intonation. So taste the delights of the unbeaten sound. There are no lights in the world outside like the light of the unbeaten sound. It is not a light like that of the sun, or the moon, or the stars

or electricity. It is not like any light which you have known or which has been described to you or with which you are familiar on account of associate feelings in your blood. So once you have tasted the flavour of the unbeaten light and sound, all its charm, sweetness, softness and flavour will enter into the beaten sound. After all life is a delight replete with flavour. And only the man of taste knows how to live life. The spirit-current will not go wayward then.

Question : Doctors say that the practice of *dhyana* (meditation) leads to certain intestinal troubles. Is it a mistaken notion or is there an element of truth in it?

Answer : It is not a mistaken notion. There is some truth in it. There must be some school or college-going youngsters in your family. The examinations are at hand and one of these students is frightfully busy preparing his lessons by day and night. He gave no time to his studies throughout the year and wants to make up for the loss of his studies during the previous twelve months in two months before the examinations begin. The fond mother gives him an endless number of cups of tea all over the night. It looks as if a calamity had descended upon the entire family. And this will be particularly so if the boy is honest and the family is not well-to-do. The members of the family will feel that they will not be able to meet the expenses of the boy's schooling in case he is unsuccessful. Naturally the boy summons up all his powers of concentration; his body is heated. Try to concentrate on a point for ten minutes. Concentrate on a point in the forehead or on the repetition of a name. The body is bound to be heated up, if all your attention and energy are concentrated on a single point. A stream will start flowing and you are not used to it. All through the year the boy was wayward and now that he concentrates the mind, his temperature is bound to go up. If the parents are wise and they take remedial measures in time, well and good. If they do not, the boy's eyesight will be affected. Look at the students when they come home from the examination hall after they have answered the last question paper. They look like having been rescued out of a slaughter house. They are thin and pale and shrunken. They lose sleep and appetite. If they had worked regularly and systematically

none of these evils would have followed.

We are not used to the state of meditation for all the twenty-four hours. The result is that when we go into meditation for one hour set apart for it, our mood is that of a wrestler entering the arena for a wrestling bout. All the energy that lay scattered in conflicting thoughts, desires and ambitions returns from the various sensory organs back to its point of origin in the navel centre. They are no more dissipated and scattered about. Even as the tortoise withdraws its limbs, the rays of energy which were scattered about in various directions of attention are withdrawn into their original point in the navel centre. When these rays were scattered all over, the attention was in a fluid state, a mixture. We could stand it, carry it about lightly. But when the rays of energy return in their totality and are fused into one at the central point, they cause a rise in the temperature of the body. We are unable to hold it in its totality. There is a rise in the body's heat, if we have really reached the silence of the mind.

For those who have never known in their life what the silence of the mind is, there is no question of their bodily temperature going up. Giving answers to a question has its hazards. If you are given to imagining things, you could imagine that you have attained the silence of the mind or that the *kundalini* has been awakened in you. I know men who imagine that the *kundalini* has been awakened in them but who are merely hysterical. The body is heated and they delude themselves that the *kundalini* has awakened within them. They are easily persuaded that the various symptoms are there. The realm of the spirit is no place for patients of hysteria and epilepsy.

A lot of hocus pocus goes on today under the name of the spiritual life. The spiritual endeavour is a serious matter. It is a matter of your life undergoing a complete transformation, a question of an explosion taking place in your life. It is no child's play. It is not that the *kundalini* will be awakened in a couple of days, you will go into *samadhi* on the third day and on the fourth day you will move about in the world like a liberated man. It is not possible. You can induce a state of intoxication by drinking. Similarly you can build up an

artificial state of lunacy by fermenting emotion and imagination. You may even succeed in staying in this artificial state for a while. But it is not the evolution of your total being. It is not the transformation of your life. It will not result in a total change of your behaviour towards your fellow-men. It is no revolution in life.

So I was telling you that when the silence of the mind is attained, energy in its totality returns to and is present there at the navel centre. What do you think will be the speed of this energy centred up in its totality? You are not used to running and I make you run. You will come back panting even if you have covered a distance of only one furlong. Your body temperature, your pulse-rate, your blood-pressure will go up. You are not used to scaling the heights of the mountains and you are made to ascend up the Girnar or even half way up the cliffs. The doctor who will examine you after you have done it will tell you that the heart-beat, the pulse-rate and the blood-pressure have gone up. The intestines will shrink. All this does happen. So when energy in its totality is set in motion at an incalculable speed, the temperature of the body is bound to go up. You have to take steps to bring down the temperature.

There are certain facts relating to the state of the silence of the mind which have to be managed and kept in mind. If you do not regulate your diet and way of living, the heat is likely to build up a diseased state of the intestines. Those who are unable to stand the intensity of the state could develop a wasting disease like tuberculosis. Sri Raj Chandra died at the age of thirty-five for want of a scientific viewpoint in the matter of his diet. The rate at which he lived was very fast. He had attained the status of the Jain Digambar devotee but the scientific rules of living and nutrition were simply not observed. He lived on just a handful of dry foodstuff. It was hardly enough to enable him to get over the heat of body. No steps were taken to supply remedial measures or provide the quantity and kind of nutrition he needed. His weight came down to a mere 64 pounds. Now if I say this, his devotees will come down upon me. I love him as much as any of his devotees do. A heroic man like him has not appeared in

Gujarat during the last five hundred years. It was a sensational act of heroism on his part to have disregarded all the formidable injunctions of the Jain scriptures and to have lived the life of a liberated man withdrawn from the world while choosing to remain a householder and a businessman. What a thrillingly heroic endeavour it was! Even hundred years have not passed away since he left us. But we have an appallingly short memory. All that we have done is to set up a few temples and images. At the most we will arrange a reading of the 'Atma-Siddhi-Shastra' on his birthday.

So there is something in what the doctors say. Meditation as such has nothing to do with the physical state in which some people land themselves. Their physical state has to be traced back to an ignorance of the laws of physiology. Why should meditation be blamed? You imagine that once you turn towards meditation, you no longer need any knowledge of the sciences of medicine and psychology. The spiritual life is not a one-sided affair. Spiritualism means the ability to understand life in its totality in the light of attention.

Question : What is true hearing and what is the relationship and sequence between hearing, seeing and awakening?

Answer : There are three words in the question and I hope the questioner has an idea of their beauty. True hearing, seeing and awakening—that is the order.

First what is meant by true hearing? You have ears and you hear sounds. But the knowledge that particular sounds signify particular words is acquired as a result of education and training.

For the person who does not understand Gujarati, a speech in Gujarati is all a collection of sounds. So is the case with Tamil. You have your telegraphic code of sounds and you pick up particular words out of particular sounds. So if you do not have the necessary knowledge, sounds will never be converted into a language for you. You hear a sound. Now what happens? The vibrations of the sound strike the ear. There are some people who hear only with the ear and not with their whole being. Sound really envelops you, the whole being. Very well, these vibrations of sound strike the ear, and this electro-magnetic instrument of yours is set at work. You

have your 'middle' ear. The sounds pass through it into the 'inner' ear. They strike these. The stroke could be gentle or hard. The pleasantness or unpleasantness of sound depends on the quality of the stroke. When the vibration is caused, its agitation finds its way through the drums. Have you ever witnessed the drama of the process of hearing? There is romance in it. Unless you study the part played by the sensory nerves and the motor nerves before the agitation caused by sounds reaches the brain, you cannot have an idea of how it all happens. I have used the word 'romance' advisedly. It is a worthwhile study. And anyone who has watched the process in the corporeal frame will be able to form an idea of the operation on the universal level as well. The universe outside the corporeal frame is only an extension of it. Anything which is not here in the corporeal frame is not there in the universe. And all that there is in the universe is here in the corporeal frame also. That which is here in the corporeal frame can be perceived. That which is there in the universe has to be guessed and inferred. So the act of putting a meaning into sounds starts only when the vibrations enter into the brain and strike at a certain point. A reaction is caused. The pleasantness and unpleasantness, sweetness or harshness of the sound is perceived the moment the sound strikes against the instrument of the ear. But we have to cover the ground from the sound to the word. The sensory organs are joined together from the ear to the brain. The sensory nerves of sight are joined to the eye. The centres of the various senses are there in the brain. Your ability to maintain the balance of the body, your perception of pleasure and pain, all these have a centre in the brain. There is no miracle in all this. These are entirely physical and chemical processes, actions and reactions taking place all the time. But we do not have any practice or training in these matters. It is easy enough to repeat words like hearing, musing, meditation but what exactly is hearing? How do you hear? What is the point at which you start interpreting the sounds you hear. Why is it that even as you are interpreting, certain reactions set in. Nobody cares to look into all this. Life means the eagerness to understand each event as it takes place. How will it be possible for you

to attain 'true hearing' ? Life is movement, the ability to connect each move with the one that follows. You have not lived the period of your life during which you have not cared to understand. You have merely grown, not lived.

Very well, the act of interpreting the meaning of words in the brain has started. This is the point at which the question of the purity or impurity of the interpretation comes up. How are these purities and impurities caused ? Stored up in the cells of the brain lie all kinds of previous impressions and memories in the form of chemicals and fluid matter. All your knowledge, your memories, your fundamental tendencies are stored up there. It is such a small thing to look at this brain but within it lies a whole universe. All the knowledge and experience which man has gained since he came upon the earth lies stored up there in the brain. In America they are trying to construct an artificial human brain. I am not talking about the electronic brain. They are trying this time to study the composition of the human brain. They have succeeded in producing chemical blood for purposes of making good the supply of blood in the body. They have reached the stage when they can manufacture the plasma and a living cell. They are now trying to manufacture a brain composed of the elements that go into the making of our own brains. Experiments now going on are directed towards storing this human brain with knowledge and conditioning impressions on the memory. In the United States, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Russia they are taking the next step following the manufacture of the computer and the electronic brain. You have no idea of the dangerous phase through which mankind is passing today. The landing on the moon is a small matter compared to it. What they are doing now with the inner world of man is something dreadful.

Stored in the brain of man is the accumulated experience and knowledge of all races, families and religions. It is man's destiny—your destiny and mine. This destiny is not merely that of an individual or a family or a race, or a religious group. Mankind's methods of conditioning, that is to say, man's methods of meeting challenges and invitations, all lie stored up there in the brain. These patterns of behaviour, these methods of dealing with situations and challenges were

evolved collectively by man and man's brain was stuffed with them. The Hindus did the job in a particular manner, the Muslims, the Christians, the Catholics, the Protestants did it in their own manner. And thus was the collective mind forged. The mind is not individual. It is collective. So the memory of all this is awakened when there is the impact of a sound vibration on the brain. All the conditionings and memories which you have earned or inherited from parents or the family or the race or entire mankind spring up and do not allow you to hear because the moment they spring up, chemical reactions are set in motion in the body. These are called reactions.

Mankind has carefully evolved and taught all these chemical and physical patterns of reaction. Man has taught them to the animals also, the cat, the dog, and the horse. Pedigree horses are bred and trained for riding on the race-course. Just as you train them, mankind has trained you. The moment you hear all these patterns of behaviour come into play. You like, dislike, accept, reject, renounce, enjoy, wish, desire. As soon as you hear and the sound is interpreted in the brain, you begin to reject, enjoy or renounce. The two operations are simultaneous. This will not let you 'hear'. When the hearing is pure, there are no reactions whatever. Hearing is pure only in case you get the meaning of the sound but these are no chemical reactions in the body. This is what 'true hearing' is.

Some people try to arrest or stop these reactions by taking up an attitude of indifference or that of a witness. Others try to stop it by force, by taking recourse to askesis or self-restraint or some kind of suppression or oppression. And there is another set of people who think that these reactions are their own selves and act upon them. I am talking about something which is entirely different. I am asking you not to allow the reactions which follow the understanding of the sound to be vitiated. Reactions will set in and reactions will also be set at rest like waves rising and subsiding on the surface of the sea. But the hearing is true only in case these waves of reaction do not make the understanding impure.

We really do not know what true hearing is. Somebody calls you, for instance. Your first concern is to decide whether he called you out of love or there was anger or indifference or

hatred behind it. Only after you have made all your calculations will you decide why he called you. His attitude was such and such and, therefore, my course of action will be this. You are not living life, if you are for ever calculating before taking a step. You have already made a guess on hearing the man's voice. You always decide the form of your reaction on the basis of some guess work or scriptural statements or tradition. Your behaviour is determined by these factors. You do not know what is true hearing. J. Krishnamurti has been speaking for the last half a century and it is evident that people have not understood him. This does not mean that he has failed. People who have been nursed on thousands of years of the flow of tradition cannot reach the depths of his profound sayings. We really do not know how to hear. How can people who are slaves and victims of the chemical reactions in their body truly hear? Understanding can have no place in them because reactions are taking place all the time and its life is depressed. You hear a word and your anger is aroused. A chemical reaction sets in. Watch the tension and pressure that is caused when you hear a word and your envy is aroused. Another set of reactions start. The bile is aroused. When you are in anger your eyes are blood-shot, there is tension in the stomach, over the ears. You are seized by ambition and there is fermentation in the body, you are intoxicated. Chemical reactions are going on all the twenty-four hours and you are poisoned and intoxicated. There could be no true hearing in such a state. You are not at all aware of the reactions and have no time to understand them. You imagine that all this is your 'nature, your behaviour.

Do you know what is bondage? To live in a state of inattention is the bondage. If there is attentiveness the hearing will be true.

The same applies to 'seeing'. Seeing is tainted sooner than hearing. It takes time for sound to travel to the ear and it is softened in the process. But when the eye sees anything, it is a direct encounter, a direct touch. The touch of the sight is sharper, more penetrating, more directly informative. It is like an X-Ray machine. You can deceive the ear, not the eye. And when the sight meets the object seen directly, the reaction is immediate. You take decisions, form opinions,

views, conclusions, theories, gather experience all at the same time. It takes more time for the sound vibrations to reach the brain through the ear than for the eye to see. So for seeing rightly you must be endowed with a great deal of sensitivity and the power to fix your attention. As a matter of fact you hardly ever see. In the moment of anger, it is not you who see the object before you, it is your anger which sees it, your anger, your envy, your ambition making use of the eye as an instrument. When your ambition is aroused in relation to a person or thing, the reaction which is caused in an offspring of ambition, though you imagine that it is your own reaction. A dead body too has a pair of eyes but such eyes do not see. So what sees is your emotion, your thinking, the chemical reactions taking place in you. You do not have a chance to see. Before you could have the chance all your accumulated knowledge, experience, conditionings step in. So there is no true seeing.

It is easy enough to talk about 'the state of true hearing, seeing and waking'. What a grand phrase indeed. But the state is within you, and nobody is eager to create this state. You cannot have true hearing and seeing for nothing. You will have to be re-born. Of course you were born and once you are born you must drag your feet or run swiftly forward to the point of your death. But this is not living. To see truly you must train yourself in the art of seeing.

You talk endlessly about spiritual practices and the spiritual endeavour. It is really an endeavour in the art of seeing. Make a start with seeing your body and your mind. You do not know even how to see the body. This body is clean, that other is unclean, this one is that of a woman, that other is that of a male, this body is handsome or ugly, fat or slender and so on. That is all our seeing. So get trained in seeing truly. In other words, we must see a thing, or person or a challenge in such a manner that the chemical reaction which it sets in motion within us does not cause any perturbation in our breathing, or the process of blood-circulation. True seeing can be achieved only when you are in an unruffled state. But if you are ruffled and perturbed, the moment you see, the perturbation itself poses a problem and all your attention is engaged in get-

ting rid of it. The seeing of the object to be seen has to be kept waiting. How can anyone see if he is unable to maintain the poise of his body even for a minute, if his sight is wandering all the while, if he allows his thoughts and emotions to keep him perpetually depressed? Be sure, first of all, that you are in the unruffled state. You must know what really this perturbation is, how it is caused, how long does it last. Watch carefully as it is caused and as it subsides. The unperturbed state is the natural state. For hearing and seeing truly, the condition precedent is that the body should be in the natural and pure state.

How can the body remain in a pure state unless you take good care to satisfy its needs and give it proper nourishment and recreation. Purification means the purification of your entire powers of sensitivity. That is the one and the only power you need. You do not need the muscles of a wrestler or a warrior. What you need is the power of infinite sensitivity. Sound sleep and nutrition have much to do with it. Do not harbour the idea that you could eat and drink what and when you like, remain a prey to the blind urges of the body and yet enter the spiritual life by attending a few religious discourses or studying a number of books on religion. All you need in order to understand the meaning of what is written in the books is a keen intellect and a good dictionary. But this is not entering the life of the spirit.

So the calm, unruffled state can be built on the foundation of a sound body which in its turn is built up by nourishment and relaxation on scientific lines. Nourishment does not mean only the food you take. All that you see or touch or smell is nourishment. Your meals are a very gross form of nourishment. The air you breathe, the manner you go to sleep, the manner you get up refreshed in the morning, the amount of sleep you have—all form part of your nourishment. It is no sleep if it is full of dreams or if you have to resort to artificial means to induce it. It is like keeping a patient alive by keeping him in an oxygen box. Be sure that the calm unruffled state I have been talking about cannot be had without giving the body proper nourishment and relaxation on scientific lines.

No set rules which will work in the case of every individual

can be laid down. You want some set rules to be laid down for you and I must tell you that I have no set rules or methods to give you. Every one has to find for himself what would be the rules which will prove to be scientific in his case. You could say, 'Give us some set rules in the first instance. We will observe them and then chalk out the future steps'. 'My friend, if you have to cover a journey of 2,000 miles, the first step you take will be to determine the course of the journey and the place you want to land in' We do not give the thought we should to the first step. We are compartmentalising and categorising all the time. This thing is gross and material, that other is not. In life there are no such differences between the material and the spiritual. All that there is is life. All that there is is there in its totality at any one moment.

What then shall be the scientific rules we could observe for proper nourishment and recreation? First we must study our nature, the constitutional peculiarities of our body, our inherited traits and characteristics, our physical and mental qualities, the way we live and make our living. The kind of nourishment needed in Bombay will not suit a resident of Jaipur. The environment, the nature of your vocation in life, will make all the difference.

Mathematical calculations like those we make in matters of engineering will not work here. Family, tradition, regional differences will come into play. You cannot persist in the way of life to which you are used in Porbunder or Ahmedabad, if you happen to go to Switzerland. You will be doing violence to your body. Your sensory nerves are your own and what you eat will determine your nature. There is a close relationship between what you eat and the chemical perturbation or non-perturbation which is caused in your body. When there is a close and intimate relationship between two things, they come to be related as cause and effect. Everyone has to watch and study this relationship for himself. Then alone could anyone lay down the foundations of the body in which the calm, unruffled state could dwell.

There is another way out. Speech can create as much perturbation or the absence of it within you as improper diet and recreation. The chemical reactions caused by speech are

even intenser and more quickly set in motion than those caused by what you eat. You are talking within yourself all the time. Nobody hears what you are saying to yourself but a dialogue is going on there all the twenty-four hours. You are complaining against others and against yourself, praising someone and blaming another, devising ways of securing support for yourself and making an attack on or dominating another, pondering on what you want and how you could get what you want. There is an incessant speech going on within you. What you say to others is not even a hundredth part of what you are telling yourself all the time. How could you expect the chemical state within you to remain undisturbed with all this speaking going on within you? Every single word rising up within you must have its vibrations. The vibrations must affect the sensory nerves; if they happen to be intense, the effect will travel on to the muscles and the marrow.

Therefore, put speech to use only to the extent it is necessary. This is a kind of training everyone must receive. Let us see how speech is misused. Someone asks a question. You are unable to state the fact. See that you state only the fact. Only one man in a thousand can do this. State the fact not only about others but also about yourself. The truth is we do not see the facts. We are able to see only what we imagine in the light of our emotions, desires and ambitions. We are for ever colouring facts with the painting brush of our desires and ambitions. If you cannot see even the facts about yourself which are there within you, how can you see the facts relating to others. How can you 'report' or communicate them? Those who cannot stay with the facts even for a moment, people who will tell lies or exaggerate over small matters are incapable of communicating anything. It is an act of the greatest heroism to see facts exactly as they happen and to communicate them exactly as they are. It is an act of the greatest selflessness. But as it is, we treat facts as if they were a sort of capital fund which we can use or misuse to suit our purposes by twisting and distorting them before they are presented to us or to others. They are thoroughly vitiated before they are uttered. You asked me about 'true hearing'

and 'true seeing'. True speaking is equally important. But we are engaged by day and night in shaping facts to suit our wishes, desires and self-interest. How can we move on from facts to the truth in these circumstances? You talk about the silence of the mind. The essence of silence is the ability to see things as they are and to convey the facts seen exactly as you see them. The truly silent man is the man who has cultivated the art of seeing the truth as it is and expressing it exactly as he sees it. Silence does not mean that you speak for a while and keep mum for another while. Not speaking is not silence. It is not a negative act. It is a creative state. You could talk all the twenty-four hours and yet stay in the state of silence. Equally you may not say a word by day or night and be very talkative indeed because the activity is entirely internal. The sound of the words that are uttered is just a shadow or reflection of what is going on within. The speech takes place within, the sound that is heard outside is only a reflection of that which has happened within. Purity of life in the matter of nourishment and relaxation is the first step, a scientific use of speech is the next step. When these steps have been taken, the totality of your being will enter into and stay in the state which is described as one of undisturbed, unperturbed equanimity and equality.

How they have come to believe that equality is the essence of Yoga, I do not see. What they do is that they go into the nature of pleasure and pain, calculate the pros and cons and persuade themselves that both are equal. In the spiritual field there is nothing like persuading yourself or believing in anything. There it is all a matter of knowing and apprehending. It is not even knowing, it is a matter of understanding. Beliefs belong to the field of religion. Tradition has a place in religion or economics. Beliefs have nothing to do with the spiritual life. Knowledge has its use in philosophy. To know is to have knowledge. You can gather knowledge about various sciences, chemistry, the physical sciences, psychology, the social sciences, philosophy. Wherever suppositions, hypotheses, authoritative statements and tradition play a part it is the field of knowledge. Belief has to do with religion, knowledge has to do with philosophy. Science too, whether Eastern or

Western, has to do with acquiring knowledge. The spiritual state has to do with cognition and firm conviction. It has nothing to do either with knowing or believing. If this were not so, all the philosophers would be people living their lives.

Your question related to true seeing, hearing and awakening. I am not going to answer questions in the manner you put them. We must look at questions as if they were flowers. We must allow them to unfold themselves one by one. We treat questions like enemies to be attacked, weapon in hand, the atomic weapons of the intellect and authoritative doctrines. Questions are not like things to be demolished and replaced by an answer. Questions blossom out of life. Look at them as you look at your own offspring, lovingly. If you do so the question will unfold itself and as it unfolds itself the answer will blossom forth out of it naturally. It is impossible that the question should arise in the life of one person and the answer should come up in the life of another. The fragrance of the answer is to be had at the spot the question grows up.

The solution of a problem is the fragrance inherent in the problem. We imagine that the question is here and the answer is somewhere else. But it is not like a book on mathematics in which the questions are all there in the beginning of the volume and the answers are there at the end. You first look into the answers at the end and then solve the problems. What you do is to find out the answers first as given in the various systems of philosophy—Sāṅkhya or Nyāya, or the Bhagavadgita or the sayings of the Buddha. You do not care to live. Let me find out the answers first, living could wait. Life cannot be lived by imposing from outside the readymade answers of others on your own life. What pains me is this—that so many are born and so few are the ones who live. The opportunity to live is open to all equally. Why does man refuse to live? It is agonising, it is tragic.

The third word in your question is 'awakening'. Now what is awakening? Is it a term in relation to sleep and deep sleep? In other words, you are awake when you are not asleep? The awakening which in relation to sleep is only a shadow of the state of sleep? It is not the awakened state. If you are talking about the 'true awakening', you will have to

study the word closely. It is no use if you learn from me that sleep is a shadow of awakening or awakening is a shadow of sleep. See how the two are related. The one cannot exist without the other. There are those whose awakening extends to the state of *turiya*, the fourth state of the pure impersonal spirit. Awakening, dream, deep sleep followed by the fourth state of the pure impersonal spirit, that is the state of *turiya* when you are looking straight at the reality. There is the flash, the light of the truth in your eyes but your body and mind are unable to keep step with it. The body and the mind do not move at the speed at which reality is being apprehended. That is the state of *turiya*. Half of it is a state of consciousness and half of it is unconsciousness. Please do not imagine that the apprehension of the truth is entirely unattended to by its own risks. There are those who go into a state of fine intoxication the moment they have sight of the truth. It has a light of its own entirely different from that of the moon, the stars, the sun, fire or electricity. There is a fragrance in it entirely and always different from the perfumes with which you are familiar. When you are face to face with the truth you are seized by a fine state of absorption and intoxication. It is a state which gets settled down and entrenched within you. You are unable to put into words the truth you have seen. Your eyes are in a state of fine frenzy. The splendour of the intoxication is reflected in your eyes, your senses, your bodily movements and all this casts a spell on those around you. They say he is the rare one, the thoroughly inspired and intoxicated one. As it is, it is only an early stage in the spiritual journey.

If anyone has passed through this stage and wants to give expression to his realization, his language will falter and tend to be mystical. There is nothing mystical about the truth but he is unable to express himself adequately. The language is faulty, faltering, a poor vehicle for what he wants to say. Inevitably he indulges in the language of poetry. There is freedom and abandon in this poetry because the state of his intoxication seeks expression. But this intoxication lacks the clarity and steadiness of attention. Those who succeed better in the attempt at self-expression are the ones who clothe

their experience in terms of a systematic philosophy. They weave a garland of flowers nicely strung together. Some Arvind or Vivekanand is able to do this so that others may preserve it in some corner of their intellect. There are so many systems of philosophy like the six systems of Indian philosophy.

But with all this success in expression, it is not necessary that what has been seen should be reflected in a man's conduct and behaviour. The realization of the truth has a splendour of its own. It is reflected. A reflection is not the object itself. The spiritual life means the dissolution of the object. Few indeed are those fortunate ones who resist the temptation of giving expression to and systematising the truth, once they have seen it. Their one concern is to see how the truth could be lived and acted upon, how it could be manifested and expressed in life. Thus the truth can be expressed at all levels—the level of the senses, the mind and the intellect. It is not that you strike a note on the chord of your musical instrument now and wait for an hour before you strike the next one and the ones that follow. No musical harmony could be created if you act like this.

How can you have the music of life unless the very nerves and muscles of the body resound conformably to the truth realized? So 'awakening' is the state when the music of the realization resounds in every fibre of the body. I am not talking poetry here. I shall not tell you anything which I have not lived. It is a vow I have taken. I shall stop talking the day I feel I am drawing only upon my imagination. I shall declare that language is a useless instrument and I have no use for it. I shall speak only about what I have lived and to the extent I have lived it. I shall make no attempt even to embellish it. I shall present it as it is, naked and bare. You are familiar with the story of Shabari. She presented the plums to Rama only after she had tasted each one of them. The man whose sensibilities are keen and refined would know what that means. Anything which has found expression through speech or the senses is only a leaving a remnant of the original.

So when a truth is realized the vibrations of the realization

resound in the totality. The questioner wants to know how to enter into this state. I have already told you how habitual tendencies and conditionings vitiate and falsify the hearing and the seeing. What is the kind of care and attentiveness needed to see that the vision and the hearing are not vitiated? It is of the nature of habitual tendencies and conditionings that they keep you in bondage only as long as you do not fix your attention upon them and say, 'This is a hereditary trait, this is destiny, that is, a process which has already been set in motion.' It is when you come to believe that conformations and conditionings are your very nature, the stuff of your being that they forge themselves into fetters of bondage. There is no one who does not have his portion of previous conformations and conditionings. They are there operating all the time. But they are foreign substances, not your own nature. It has to be clearly understood that they are not the stuff of your being, your own reality but a substance which is foreign to you. They are not like a covering which could be peeled off. They have their own built-in inner structure. What you have to understand is that the materials that go into the making of this inner structure are your knowledge, experience and habitual tendencies. To set yourself free from the fetters of the body, it is enough that you see that this is so. They cannot be thrown out. They cannot be destroyed. They cannot be suppressed. They cannot be bypassed. They are there. These traits and tendencies forge themselves into a bondage and prove an obstacle only because the prejudice is rooted in your mind that they are your own self. You are born a Jain, or a Hindu or a Brahmin or a Christian or a Communist and you have inherited certain traits and tendencies. The bondage lies in imagining that because you are born in a certain family with a particular tradition or background, therefore, the particular tradition or background is your own self.

As long as you continue to remain in the physical body, it is impossible to carry on a warfare against habitual tendencies. They are there but they are not your real self. They are but the outer coverings and coverings go on getting changed. Today's atheist could turn into a theist tomorrow. It is not very difficult to change beliefs, the outer robes of

ideas, traditions, modes of emotional expression. You can put them on or off at will. But anything which could be changed is not your real self or the reality.

You say that you have attained true hearing and seeing and you are fully awakened but your previous tendencies and conditionings prevent their manifestation. You are merely making a guess. You imagine that true hearing, seeing and awakening do not have an inherent power and capability of their own. You are entirely deluded. If there is power in previous conditionings, thoughts and experiences, why should you imagine that true hearing, seeing and awakening do not have a power of their own? Emotional capabilities are limited by the senses, the power to think is limited by the brain but there are no limits to the power of understanding, perception and awakening. Stupendous is the power within them. Conditionings and habitual tendencies have no power comparable to that of true awakening.

It is true that frailties of the body and hereditary diseases are difficult to remove. Recourse to physical or Yogic exercises could help you in getting over them. Whatever the kind of the disease you have, you must not be constantly complaining about them. It is not the disease so much that pains you. Most of the trouble is caused by worrying why you are ill. Diseases could be cured but where is the doctor who could cure of worrying and complaining all the time? All the consolation which is offered to the sick is designed not so much to cure the disease as to put a stop to this activity of manufacturing complaints all over the twenty-four hours. So the limitations of the body will be there. And if the body is that of a sick man or an old man or a child, the modes of manifestation will differ in the matter of their speed and intensity. But the content will not differ.

Question: Kabir has said, "This scarf was worn by men and sages and gods. All of them used and spoilt it. But Kabir wore it with care and put it back in the condition in which he had received it." Is it possible that the scarf should never get spoiled?

Answer: Kabir could be wrong. 'This scarf was worn by gods and men and sages and all of them used and spoiled it. Kabir

donned it with care and he put it back as he found it.' This scarf of the human body made up of the five elements which the Lord wills should be worn by me, I am putting back at His feet in its state of pristine purity. You want to know if it is possible to keep both the inner and the outer structure of the body in a state of purity throughout life. Now what is meant by 'purity' here? I have told you if there is a hereditary defect or disease in the body, you will not be able to remove it. And that is not the kind of purity Kabir has in his mind. What Kabir says is, 'I have not allowed the spots of desire to soil this scarf—desire to enjoy, the desire to renounce. The desire to renounce is as much a source of disturbance as the desire to indulge and enjoy. In fact the egoism which leads to an act of renunciation is even more disturbing than the egoism which prompts you to go in for indulgence. So what Kabir says is 'I did not allow the taint of indulgence or renunciation or indifference or the egoism of being the doer to soil the scarf.' As we are, our scarves are tainted since the time we were children. We are victims of all manner of aggression against us in the name of upbringing and education. However, let us look at it from the point at which a sense of awakening dawned upon us because that is the point that really marks the dawn of life for us. Before that we really did not live and the scarf was tarnished already. The spots were there already, but you could wash them out. I hope you see the difficulty of applying the phraseology of the material world to matters belonging to the realms of the spirit. Words fail miserably. It is impossible to put over even a moment's experience of love into words. In the face of an uncommon encounter you are rendered speechless. For one thing there is the difficulty of expressing what is unmanifest, for another it is impossible to reach the stage of illumined silence unless you put words into service to the extent it is possible to do so. You cannot reach the stage of silence merely by suppressing speech. You cannot attain actionlessness merely by suppressing action. So we do have to take recourse to words and use them with a sense of responsibility.

Very well, this taint which is there with us in our body up to the stage we are awakened could be washed out by the waters

of the awakened state. The waters of the awakened state constitute the only true Ganga. It is necessary to be attuned to the truth. When you are in touch with the truth, the process of purification is set in motion automatically. The atmosphere, all that there is around you inspires and helps you to remain in the awakened state.

Suppose there is a room which has remained closed for ten years, and is, therefore, enveloped in total darkness. You enter it lamp in hand. Will you say that the darkness which has reigned there for ten years cannot be dispelled in a single moment, that the dust cannot be washed away? The moment you step in with the lamp, the darkness will be very willing to be washed away by the light. 'Washed away' is not the word. The darkness is turned into light. It is not destroyed. People have observed only the process of stone being turned into gold. They have not watched how light behaves with darkness. Get up early in the morning on a moonless night. There is total darkness and in a moment the darkness is lighted up. It is not that the darkness has been turned into gold. The light has imparted its own nature to the darkness. Even so are the taints of the body cleansed and purified by awakening and attentiveness.

You talk in terms of impurities accumulated in the course of innumerable births and deaths. Understanding purifies all that in a moment, once you have attained the state of understanding, it is for you to maintain it in a state of purity by your own effort. So if a taint has entered you and you have a perception of it, this perception itself is the starting point of purification. It is only the man who is awakened who could say, 'I was asleep.' When you say, 'I was asleep', you are saying, 'I am awake now'. So whether the scarf (the body) you wear is pure or impure is a matter in which you are helpless to a certain extent. But it is certainly possible that the moment you perceive that you are tainted and impure, that you are drifting in a state of forgetfulness and ignorance, you should be able to watch with eyes wide open the nature of the forgetfulness. And if you can do this, you have put your feet on the road to purification.

Further progress is made, if you allow this awareness, to be

kept alive on all levels. It is only those who are truly brave who can do this. It is not so difficult to attain awareness as to live in the light of awareness. People are for ever making compromises. What will those in the family or the caste or society say and think about this kind of living? How shall I adjust my past with the present life in the light of the new awareness? You would like to adjust the awareness so that it fits in with the needs of your own way of life. Realization and awareness are not very difficult but it is very difficult indeed to allow the realization to remain alive. We know that the foundation of life is truth but we feel that living in the truth will not work in our relations with the other members of the family. We cannot speak the truth in social and business dealings. Business interests, family tradition, all sorts of considerations come in the way. And so what we do is to cut truth which is the very foundation of life into pieces and put any one piece into service to suit particular occasions and purposes. Even these bits and pieces of the truth you will utilise only to the extent and in the manner your family or caste or society or business interests will permit. Life is not this kind of patch work.

We live as we like, transported by the vehicles of our sensual and intellectual urges. We spend an hour or two in the company of good men, listen to their discourses, read the scriptures and expect in return that this should be enough for the purification of our lives. If a drop or two of water is extracted by breaking down the boulders of a mountain ridge, this will not bring down the Ganga in full stream. It is only when the process of the dislodgement of the rocks is going on ceaselessly that the Ganga rushes out to meet the ocean. In the context of the union of the finite with the infinite, if the drop should say to itself, 'I have travelled enough. Let me stay here', this will result in the formation of only a little pool, not a river. The meeting of the finite with the infinite is a different matter. The journey is eternal. So what stands in the way of our living in the awakened state at all levels is timidity, the fear in men's minds, or perhaps an infatuation for the falsehood they have come to entertain. But this is not possible. It is not possible that understanding should dawn upon a man

and his life should remain unpurified. Understanding is like a flame of fire, the great purifier, full of the alchemy of love. The moment understanding finds expression in conduct, it is turned into love. Do not think that man cannot attain the state of purity. Man has to face challenges as they come in his way and it is possible for him to stay in the state of inner purity and act in the light of this state on every level of the human personality. It is not that only Kabir could put back the scarf of his body unspoilt and untarnished.

You have mentioned Kabir. Take the case of Tulsidas in his youth. How sex-ridden was he ! To meet his wife he took hold of a snake to ascend stealthily up the walls of her house and entered her room upstairs: And what a goddess like the Universal Mother was this wife of his. She said "You love this mortal, fleshly frame of my body so intensely. How much better would it be, if you cherished all this love for the Lord. Why this infatuation for this perishable body?" The words went home like the point of an arrow, and he wrote the Ram Charit Manas which has transformed the lives of millions. And do not imagine that the scarf of Tulsidas reached the Lord in a lesser state of purity than that of Kabir. Kabir asserted the fact like the forthright man he was. Tulsidas looks at his past and says, "Who could be more wicked and crooked and full of lust than I was." This is not a description of the moment of his departure from life or the extinction of life. What he says is "Lord, I was like this, but thy infinite grace has transformed me completely." His is the language of humility. Kabir is blunt and forthright. And this is how life changes. Last year I had an occasion to go to Gangotri, the source of the Ganga in the Himalayas, and happened to meet an old saint about 100 years old. He was a Bengali by birth. We talked and I said, "Good saint, you have been living here in the Himalayas for so long. Let us have the pleasure of hearing you." "Yes", he said, "I have been living here for the last 75 years." "What brought you here?" I asked. He replied, "My father lived in Lahore and was a Government officer. I received education in Lahore and took my M.A. I had a Punjabi friend who took me to his home in the summer vacations. We went out for a walk and some-

one told us that a faqir was staying there at the time. We went to see him and found that he was reading the story of Laila and Majnu. We were surprised and asked him why he was reading a love story. He said, "Do you know the story ? Majnu loved Laila. His parents did not like this. They thought that the warm blood of youth coursing through his veins had gone to his head. If the veins were cut and some of the warm blood was let out, this would bring him back to his senses. So the vein was cut down but not a drop of blood was let out. Everybody was amazed. What had happened was that the blood-vessels of Laila, who lived four or five hundred miles away, burst just at the moment and such a quantity of blood was let out that Laila became unconscious. The fakir asked, "What sort of love would you call this ? Is it entirely gross and physical ? And if love between a man and a woman could be so powerfully responsive that you cut the blood vessel of one and blood flows out of the veins of the other, how much more powerful would be the love which is directed towards God who does not reside five hundred miles away, who indeed resides within you."

The saint went on to say that he and his friend went straight to the railway station and boarded the train for Amritsar. From Amritsar he came to Rishikesh and journeyed to the source of the Ganga in the Himalayas. And that was the end of his journey. He never left the place. So when impurity is washed away by understanding which is full of love, our scarves can be kept pure and clean. Perhaps our scarves will not be quite as shining as that of Kabir. The scarf of one who was never moved by the perturbations of the body and the mind will have a splendour of its own. You may regret that your own cotton scarf does not have the same shine. Well, it is a matter of the count of the yarn used. Your scarf woven on yarn of ten count will not be so shining as the one in which fine yarn of 200 or 400 counts has been used. You are free to make the count of the yarn in your scarf as fine as you please. Spin the yarns of the finer counts. You are free to do it. But a cotton scarf can be as pure as any other made of the finest silk thread. If the scarf you have received is not soft and silken, it is no reason why you should not wash and keep it soft and

white. Man is always looking for a justification for his own faults. 'I have not received the kind of scarf which belonged to Kabir or Ramakrishna. I am a common man. So let me suspend the task of washing it'. We are very clever at finding routes of escape and finding out justification for our shortcomings.

So let understanding work its way on all the levels of your life. That is the whole of the spiritual endeavour. It is a heroic endeavour. The path of the Lord can be treaded only by the brave. It is not enough to repeat the name. When an understanding of the meaning behind the name has dawned upon you and courses through your veins, do not put obstacles in its way. That is true heroism.

February 13, 1971

Discourse 4

This morning I would like to put three jewels in your hands —jewels which will make your journey inwards both auspicious and free from hazards. These three jewels are faith, absence of fear and love. I can say with confidence that the journey of the aspirant who secures these jewels and treasures them in his heart will be safe and smooth. When the understanding is founded in the truth, it is faith and life is the truth, life in infinite motion is the truth. Endless motion is the splendour of life. So we must have faith in this life which is God. All beliefs and theories vanish with the sunrise of Faith even as dawn dispels the dark shadows of the night. It is possible to believe in theories, dogmas, doctrines and institutions but faith is possible only in life. It is folly to have faith in man. Man resiles. Man has his limits. You can have love and respect for him. But it is only in the infinite splendour of life that you can have faith.

Countless is the number of those who have come into and gone out of life. They rose like waves on the surface of the ocean of life and fell back to rest in it. I and you are not the first men who came into life at the dawn of creation. Countless must be the number of those who came before us and they did not live their lives for nothing. What they lived is our heritage, the gift they have left for us. Socrates did not live in vain. The man who took the cup of poison for his faith in the truth was an ancestor of ours and yours. The consciousness of Socrates will lead the person who turns his face towards the truth. All that we have to do is to turn our faces towards the truth and the soul within us. For the rest, Life in its eternal glory is running forward to give us a helping hand.

The life of Jesus Christ who had the glory of Love in his flesh and blood was not lived in vain. He did not merely say, 'Love your assailant', he lived it. The cross he carried over his head and the manner he died upon it have not ceased to have an impact on our own lives. The consciousness of Christ

will lead all those by the hand who will turn their faces towards Love. The aspirant on the spiritual path is never alone. Life, his great friend, is always eager to lend a hand and lead him on.

Life cannot resist the desire to help those who want to live. It is for ever eager and waiting to come out and fall in step with him who has put his feet on the road to love and truth. If he falters, it will give a helping hand; if his vision is clouded over by the mists of thought and emotion, it will point out the way; if he stumbles, it will put him on his feet again and cheer him up. Life is for ever waiting. Life is for ever waiting to help. This is a truth I have experienced in my own body and I am keen to make a gift of it to you. He who seeks enlightenment and awakening will never be alone.

The consciousness of the Buddha will seek him out. From a life of indulgence and luxury Buddha turned towards renunciation. For forty-eight days he fasted and mortified the body to practise renunciation and it dawned upon him that enlightenment and awakening are not to be obtained by such methods. Sujata gave him a cup of milk and he returned to the middle path. This journey of his from one end to the other was not made in vain.

The Buddha is there to lend a hand to those who have seen the bitter fruits both of indulgence and renunciation. Not that Siddhartha, Shuddhodana's son, Gautama, will come back and take hold of your hand. His consciousness will take hold of the consciousness that is yours. Do not live in the gross. A consciousness seizes your own consciousness. You are inspired. It is the Universal Consciousness which seizes your consciousness. By saying that it takes hold of your hand, I mean that you receive inspiration. The fact that you are inspired is a sign and indication that someone has taken hold of you to lead the way.

The achievements of the Vedic sages who searched out the rays of the consciousness that pervade every limb and fibre of the creation within and without have not gone into extinction. There is nothing in life which goes into extinction. That which has a form will be transformed but that which is formless neither dissolves nor changes. Therefore the achieve-

ments of the sages remain preserved as waves of consciousness in the subtler realms, wherever you may happen to be stationed.

Gargi and Maitreyi have not left us. Only their physical bodies have passed away. The husband of Maitreyi said, "I am going to renounce the world in order to achieve immortality." Maitreyi stopped her husband and said, "You took the vow at our wedding that you will share with me all that you do for religious merit or material welfare. You are going back on your promise. What shall I do with the wealth and property you are leaving behind? Will all this give me immortality? If it will not, tell me first where is immortality to be found?" Yajnavalkya could not refuse to answer the question. "The wife is dear not for the sake of the wife. She is dear for the sake of the self. The husband is not dear for the sake of the husband. He is dear for the sake of the self. And so look at the self, hear its voice, meditate over it. That is the path, my dear. There alone is immortality to be found." This consciousness abides and keeps on waiting to enter anyone who turns his face towards the truth.

Take the case of Gauranga who was born in Nawadweep in Bengal. He was a student of the Nyaya philosophy and scoffed at the emotional devotees. He was a householder and a lover of the good things of life. For a time Vedant cast its spell on him. Love caught his fancy next. And from Nadia to Nilachal he travelled up and down the country covering the entire journey through devotion, Vedant, sannyas and finally a modified form of non-dualism. His footprints are no more there on the physical plane but the flow of his experiences continues to be there for any one who is eager to wing his way through the skies he knew. And there was Gyaneshwar. Where is he now? His physical body is no longer there. But his experiences and attainments abide. If you have faith in life, then the streams of experience and attainment in the limitless ocean of life cannot but help you forward. They are more eager to help you than you are to help yourself. Experience is more eager than the quest to go out and meet him who has the quest. And there was a Ramakrishna Paramahansa who cried out from the housetops, "Where are my children who will lend their ears

to the voice of the self and be its votaries. I am tired of hearing the voice of those who are of the world, worldly; Mother, where are they? When will they come to me?" Look at this eagerness of experience to come out and unite with the quest. There are innumerable accounts relating to Goraksh Nath, Gahni Nath, Nivriddhi Nath, Gyaneshwar. There was Ramakrishna Paramahansa who ran after Narendra here, there and everywhere. People said he was mad after the young man. Narendra himself was irritated by the manner the saint went to a meeting of the Brahma Samaj to seek him out. But love is not love if it loses patience and Ramakrishna did not lose his patience. He found out Narendra even if Narendra did not want to meet him. He waited for hours and hours in a room next to the one in which Narendra would be sitting just to have a glimpse of the young man. This was not infatuation. The saint was powerfully drawn by the spirit of enquiry which was simmering inside Narendra. He was keen that the quest within him should blossom forth and partake some of the fragrance of his own spiritual experience. So do not imagine that once you set out, it will be a lonely path without companions. The person who turned his face towards the truth was never alone. He is never alone. Therefore, be fearless. Fearlessness means the absence of fear. Fearlessness does not mean that fear has been driven out. It is a state, the state in which fear is non-existent. Those who are brave, the soldiers on the battlefield, also cast away fear. I am not talking about that kind of fearlessness, the fearlessness that stands up in opposition to fear and gives battle to it. What is required is the absence of fear which is rooted in and thrives on the soil of non-duality. Shake off the fear of the unknown. The fear of the unknown lasts only as long as we trust the known and cling to it. And the big fear that will not let us live is the fear of the unknown.

We really do not want to move on from that which we know to that which we do not know. We do not want to part with the familiar. We are familiar with our house, its walls, furnishings and the furniture. We go out for a few days to some unknown place and feel uneasy, out of element, suffocated. We long to come back home because the subtle waves of our

desires are glued to those articles and it is only when we are back amidst the old surroundings that our desires are able to breathe freely and feel restful. So this restlessness in the midst of unfamiliar surroundings is a symptom of our attachment to the familiar. Recognise this carefully. Only our attachment to the known is at the root of our fear of the unknown. The fear of the unknown is not a substance which exists independently which could be removed and dismissed by discipline and regulation. There is no school for training in fearlessness. What you need is an understanding of the true nature of fear.

There is nothing to be afraid of in the unknown. We are afraid of darkness because we rely too much on the physical eye and the intellect. If we had faith in life we would not be afraid either of darkness or the unknown. I have wandered by day and night in the forests of the Himalayas and the hills and caves of Amarkantak with nothing in my hands. No thorns pricked the feet. And why should my feet have trodden upon the thorns of the forest? Is it only the brain which is endowed with intelligence? Do the feet not have an intelligence of their own? In the natural course the feet will not tread upon the thorns. The intelligence they have will speak out. What you want is that your intelligence should express itself only through the organs of speech and sight. It should see only through the eye and not through the body. You seem to think that it is Indra alone who has a thousand eyes and the thousands of pores in your body are not your eyes. It is entirely possible to train them to see. It was a delight to roam about in the forests and get acquainted with the tigers and the wild animals. There is no reason why they should attack you. I was sitting in meditation in the forests of Arbudachal. Something was moving near by. I opened my eyes. It was the king of the forests himself standing at a distance of less than ten feet—a big, beautiful body, nine feet long. What splendour he carried about him! What a shapely form, what colour, what eyes, what majesty of bearing. I was lost in admiration. Fear had simply no room to come in between us. The delight of feeling for beauty conquers fear.

I continued to be lost in admiration. We exchanged glances.

The king of the forest must have been wondering who it was who was sitting so blissfully in his own domains. It was only a brief encounter, just for a few seconds during which I could feel the warmth and the smell of his body. And then he stepped away. On his way back he turned his face, looked at me and proceeded further. There was no reason for him to behave in any other manner. If these were any vibrations of fear within me at the moment, if I had even perspired out of fear, the very smell of the perspiration would have induced him to attack me.

So what I am talking about is not knowledge gathered from the books. I do read books. I do not have any distaste for book reading.

If somebody has reduced his life to writing, why shall I not read what he has written? There are those who are prisoners and bondsmen of what they have read in the books. They are the men of learning. But there is also the other kind of reading. You read, you learn and the book is left alone. The outer coverings of the words have been removed, the juice within has been savoured and you go forward on your journey. The essential difference between the lover and the learned man lies here. The lover will not agree to carry about the load of learning on his back because he is journeying on a subtler and a rarer plane.

What is there to fear, whatever it is that is facing you, a tiger or a snake or a scorpion? The incident I am now relating also relates to Arbudachal. I was staying in a house which had remained uninhabited by human beings for the last fourteen years. They asked me not to stay there because the house was haunted by ghosts and evil spirits. I said, "Let me have the pleasure of their company. Only one of two things could happen. They could either oust me or leave the place". And so I stayed there. I lay there on a quilt beneath which lay a big snake all through the night. I discovered this only when the quilt was overturned the next morning. Why should you imagine that the whole world is full only of those who are your enemies and opponents? It is only your own fear that turns others into your enemies. It is your longings and desires that turns others into aggressors. The absence

of fear in you and your state of composure evoke a healthy attitude in others. There are no 'others'. It is the sense of 'the other' that is at the root of fear. We dwell in a single pervasive life and empire of the spirit. What is there to be afraid of and of whom? It is you who have drawn a boundary line limiting the known and arousing the fear of the unknown. I suggest it to you that the night and darkness are so frightening simply because you have not practised the art of looking at them closely. Otherwise there is nothing more beautiful than the night. How shall I put it to you? Live without fear, live in the absence of fear. The purity of existence is in the absence of fear. Fearlessness is not the word. There is an element of courage in fearlessness. The state of the absence of fear is the state of spontaneity. Heroism is as much a deviation from the natural state as being seized with fear. The good life is the life of spontaneity and love is like nectar.

Love is the life-breath of the state in which you are without fear. When such a state of life breathes, the incoming and outgoing breaths are love and friendliness. So to attain the healthy state, be without fear. Wherever you might be placed, whether you are in solitude or in company, in the family circle or in a crowd, it is unnecessary for purposes of entering into the spiritual state to shift yourself from the position in which you have been fixed up by your physical and mental destiny. You must not run away from the conditions in which life has placed you. It would be an act of cowardice. Stay where you are. If you are wide-awake, your relationship with others will offer you all the occasion and opportunity you need for progress in the field of your spiritual endeavours. The failings, mistakes, crimes, habits, misbehaviours, onslaughts of those around you will provide ample opportunities for self-purification. Salute the people who distrust, defame and play false with you. They are the ones who are helping you to stay in a state of constant awakening. Salute those who stand in your way. Your changed attitude will bring results and affect them too. There was a heroic soul named Eknath in Daulatabad in the Paithan area of Maharashtra. He has written a very popular commentary on the tenth and eleventh chapters of Srimad Bhagwat which is eagerly read all over Maharashtra. His heart

was set on the Bhagwat and he was so calm and composed that nothing could upset his unruffled equanimity. It would be a mistake to suppose that this was due to his forgiving nature. Any egoist could forgive. Who will forgive whom? Forgiving is too gross. Love knows no forgiving. Forgiving is not very different from punishing. The one is only a little less gross than the other. Both are acts of the ego. He who wields power over others can also wield the power to pardon them.

Those who enjoy the luxuries of life could also renounce them. Those who accumulate wealth, could also give it away in alms. Alms giving is also a form of acquisition as forgiving is a form of acquiring dominion. They found it difficult to tolerate Eknath with his unruffled calm and absorption in love. They felt jealous. So they appointed a Muslim to provoke him. It was part of Eknath's daily routine to get up early in the morning and take bath in a river. One day he had just taken his bath and was coming back home. He was very near his home when the Muslim appeared and spat at him. The saint looked at him and smiled. He went back to the river to have another bath. He bathed again and was again on his way home. The Muslim was waiting on the way and again spat at him. This time the saint laughed heartily and returned for another bath. This went on and he took his bath no less than a hundred and eight times. The Muslim kept on spitting at him out of greed for the money he had received to do what he was doing. It took him from early in the morning to four in the evening to carry out the assignment and at last even the lure of money was spent up. He saluted the saint and said, "Good soul, you are unique. Forgive me. I committed this sin out of greed for money". And the saint replied, "What sin? On other days I took a dip in the waters of the river but once. Today you helped me to have a hundred and eight baths. I salute you for the favour." This is the real kind of a changed outlook.

They talk about turning the eye inwards. This is what turning the eye inwards really means. This is very different from the insane looks of those intoxicated with the idea that they have gained certain experiences above the sensuous level.

Those who revel in this sort of madness are really debauchees and not lovers of the truth. Truth and the acquisition of powers are wide apart. Truth has nothing to do with the acquisition of powers. If you revel in the powers you acquire, this too is a form of lack of discrimination, born of irrepressible egoism. You are only enjoying the pleasures of the witness attitude. If you take up the attitude that you are a witness, a seer, a sanyasi, this too is a departure from the natural state. Whether you are carried away by the agitation of the senses or of ideas and emotions, you are allowing yourself to be carried away and life is not allowing yourself to be carried away. Any kind of intoxication must carry you away. Even if what has intoxicated is a feeling of the highest type, it is bound to carry you away and upset your equilibrium, and equilibrium and equality are of the very stuff of attentiveness and spontaneity. A balanced state is the first product of attentiveness. Attentiveness and equilibrium are inherent in spontaneity. What is termed as peace is the fragrance, the very breath of balance and equilibrium. Peace has no independent existence of its own which you can go out to acquire.

Completely upset by the unruffled equanimity of Eknath, the Brahmanas of Paithan appointed another Muslim to offer provocation to him. They felt frustrated because they were unable to upset his equanimity even for a while. Eknath was made to bathe a hundred and eight times and enjoyed every dip he had in the river without losing his temper. So they decided to make another attempt. It was a day when there was a feast at the house of Eknath to propitiate his ancestors. Hundreds of Brahmanas were taking their meals. Eknath's son Hari, and his wife, Girija, dressed in silk were serving the food and she had to bend down to serve the guests. The Muslim who had been appointed to do the mischief appeared, covered all over with dust and jumped up on the back of the lady who was at the moment serving in front of her husband. Eknathji said, "Take care lest the young fellow should fall down". Girija replied, "You need not worry. I could carry my son, Hari, in my womb for nine months. Can't I carry this young one on my back just for a while." And this is a story about a householder and not a person who had renounced the world.

Absence of fear and a deep faith change a man's outlook, his modes of feeling, his whole behaviour. Faith changes the outlook. Absence of fear changes the modes of feeling. What is left behind is only love. Shall I say 'Love for all'? I would not like to say. 'Love for all.' There is nothing 'all'. 'One' and 'all' are all differentiations made by your calculating mind. Life knows nothing like the one and the many. Both unity and diversity are illusions. The illusion of diversity is spread by those who would enjoy life, and the illusion of unity is spread by those who would renounce the world. Set aside both of them. There is nothing like 'one' and 'many' in life. Reserve these calculations for your books on arithmetic. Life is itself.

There was once a great debate among the learned men of Kashi. The point in debate was whether God has a form or he is formless, whether he is one or many, whether he is dual or non-dual and they were unable to decide the point. They went to Kabir who was staying at the Assi Ghat at the moment and said, "Good saint, we have arrived at a conclusion on all other points. The only point which remains undecided is whether God is dual or non-dual. The saint said, "If all your questions have been resolved, do you think God could be kept a prisoner of your ideas about unity and diversity, bound down by your numerical calculations? Well, take it that God is both one and two and neither one nor two. Your countings are irrelevant in the context of life." So when they say 'You will begin to have love for all', they are only indulging in a piece of rhetoric. You will excuse me but it is incorrect to say so. Where is the 'all'? There is no one and all. It is just the dawn of the state of love.

As soon as a man has acquired the two jewels of faith and absence of fear, his outlook and attitude have undergone a change, the state of love has dawned in the human body—love not for others but for yourself—for that which is. And then it matters little whether you live for four days or four hundred years. Every moment lived is lived in a state of love. There is no higher achievement in life than being in the state of love. Those who do not understand the body and the mind will fail to understand the meaning of love. Those who are prisoners of the perturbations of thought and feeling will not under-

stand love. What is known in this world as love is not love. It is only a shadow of love. You are engaged in trying to catch hold of the sun's rays reflected in water. The reflection is there. Reflections could arise in the body and the senses and the mind. They do arise. Love is the natural duality of the self and consciousness and it cannot but arise. Light is the natural quality of the sun. Even so love is the natural quality of the self and it is there and, therefore, its reflections must get manifested through the senses. The rays of love do descend upon the earth. But have you ever been able to catch hold of a ray? Just try and see if you could seize and imprison a single ray in your fist. It is the desire to tie up love in relationships that turns love into infatuation. What are these relationships? They are nothing but devices invented by organised society to help you in carrying on the practical affairs of life as long as you continue to remain in the physical body. These relationships must be forged because while we live, we must play our roles as a father or mother or husband or wife or brother or sister. There they are and their relative importance has to be recognised because they are the means which will take you from relationship to union. But they are only the means and not the end. The moment relationship is an end in itself, it is a bondage. But if a relationship is an opportunity which opens the doors of union, you can pass unscathed through the stage of relationships. There could be those who would not like to enter matrimony. They could refuse to marry. But there is nothing in this to be lauded to the skies. I fail to understand why those who do not marry and renounce the world receive so much praise in this country. What is so extraordinary or unique in this? It is purely a matter of choice. If celibacy is not a deviation from the natural course, attained by arduous effort, it should be as natural and normal as marriage is for most people. It should be the most natural thing not to marry. You are not interested in marriage because your consciousness has risen above the sex feeling. It is only as long as your consciousness is ego-centred that the sex feeling persists and you have to undergo all the results flowing from the urges of the sex. If you are so inclined you may indulge in the sex experience but you must understand that it is only for the satisfaction of perturbation that you are

building up a house of cards. And be sure you will not shed tears if it so happens that a gust of wind raised by somebody should send the whole house tumbling down. Do build these houses of cards with as much relish as you like. After all you do weave fabrics and put on dresses made of them. You also know that these dresses are not yourself but you do put on fine dresses. Do make your relationships as beautiful and authentic as you like. Because the body is perishable, it is no reason why it should be kept unclean or depressed or weak. It must be kept in perfect trim. But whatever the situation in which you are placed on account of the needs of the mind and the body, these needs are not your true being, the reality about you. You must recognise this clearly. The doors of Truth are flung wide open the moment you are able to see an untruth as an untruth. That is all there is to do.

You need not run away from where you are. There is no other place to go. The material which goes into the making of a house is the same which goes into the making of an ashram. It is the ego which builds up the circles of 'my and mine'. Both a family and an ashram are built up within the ambit of this circle. 'He is my father or teacher or son or disciple'. The 'I' is there and 'the mine' too is there. There is the 'I' and there is 'the mine'. In one case it might be a fetter of iron, in the other one of gold but a fetter there is in both the cases. The idea of a relationship is there all the while. In one case you may be held in bondage by ropes made of coconut fibres, in another by ropes made of silk thread. One bondage may be a source of pleasure, another of misery. But both pleasure and pain are by nature dualistic and all relationships are built up on a foundation of dualism. And, therefore, there is no place to go to arrange and embellish the 'I and the mine' in new settings. That is the job of the religious people. Let them do it. Those who are in search of truth have nothing to do with this kind of activity. You have to meet the challenges of life wherever you may be placed. If there are those around you who are jealous and keen to compete with you, you will have to do some heart searching in the midst of this competition. If there are those who oppose you, this opposition will give an

opportunity to sound your own depths. So start the day after you have washed yourself in the water of love. Leave your home after you have washed your eyes with the water of love. There is an esteemed friend of mine in Bhavanagar, Mukund Bhai Parasharya, an author of a book of poems. At one place he writes, 'I have put on the collyrium of an Avadhoot, one who has shaken off all worldly feelings and obligations. How pure is my vision now?' Go out into the world with your eyes washed and purified by the water of understanding. You are placed in a certain relationship. Study it and see what perception and understanding it gives you. Do this even during meals. Let your perception arise out of your relationship and all bondages will fall away. Set aside the mind, and the state of non-duality will step in. You will build up a beautiful life—healthy, sound, free from taints. I am aware that a fire is raging in this country and the world. The situation all round us is grave. When you will go back to Ahmedabad or Bombay tomorrow, the spell and the delusions of people who have lost their way will be waiting for you there eager to seize and hold you in their grip. The situation in which you will find yourself will be one full of tensions and storms rising up all round you. If in such a situation the steady lamp of faith, love and absence of fear lights up your hearts, anything that you will do will be like a tray of light and incense held up to worship the Lord.

If fate has put you and me in this situation and somebody burning with envy and hatred comes and sets your house on fire, see clearly that he is setting humanity itself on fire. If he is setting our houses on fire, he is at the same time setting himself on fire. And if our portion is to be killed and burnt down, accept it. You have to go through it in any case. Why not enter it with a heart free from fear instead of one stricken with fear. Do not weigh your successes and failures on the scales of values set up by a society, an economy, a political system, a government founded on envy, hatred, anger and competition. We have no use for their values. Let society measure and assess the successes and failures that come our way in the pursuit of truth. We on our part will have the joy of treading the path of truth. It is judging yourself in terms of

values set up by society, if you stop to see whether the life without fear you live brings you popularity or isolates you. Your sole reward and fulfilment will be the journey of love on which you have set your feet. Give up the habit of evaluating yourself by peeping into the eyes of others. If you have to peep anywhere, peep within. Take it from me that he who pursues the path of truth and love is never alone. If its relevance is not apparent in the manifest world, it is entirely relevant in the realm of the unmanifest and the unseen. And do not think that truth abides only in the manifest and not in the unmanifest. The manifest and the unmanifest, the perceptible and the imperceptible are the limits imposed by the sense organs and not by the truth. These are the limitations of your instruments. They cannot circumscribe life. Do not try to confine life to the limitations manufactured by you. Life is limitless and let it remain immeasurable, infinite and limitless.

And so may faith and the absence of fear take you into the state of love. Just as proper nourishment and relaxation bring health to the body, faith and the absence of fear make for the health of your whole being. They will take you to the state of love, that is, the state of spontaneity. There in those realms there is no exertion, no effort, no opposition, no obtaining, no pursuit. You go on attaining one state after another endlessly and love and spontaneity are the only indications that your life is in a healthy state. May you be one in such a state of health free from taints. With these good wishes I close this morning's discourse.

February 14, 1971

Questions and Answers

Question : Is there a basic difference between the practice of spiritual discipline and worship ?

Answer : The questioner not only raises the question but also expresses his own feeling that there is the fragrance of worship in what I say. Well, this is no question. This is the view he holds and I shall not comment on it. There will be some who will smell worship in my discourses, there will be others who will smell discipline and yogic practice in them. There might be yet another class of those who might find them odourless. It is all a question of the direction in which your own face is turned. All I know is that I live. It is true that I use both the terms 'sadhana' and 'upasana'. In Sanskrit the prefix 'up' means 'near' as in the other word 'upvas' which means dwelling in nearness. Thus the idea behind the word 'upasana' (worship) is one not only of sitting or dwelling near the Lord but of living close to the Lord, the Universal Consciousness of which we have no perception beyond a vague, uncertain feeling. When you have a clear and certain perception of Him in your own body, any kind of worship is meaningless. In worship you have the feeling that the Lord is other than and outside you and you would wish very much to be near Him, and to make Him the object of perception through your various sense organs. Tukaram says, 'What shall I do ? The Lord is the one and only object I perceive through my senses, and people say I have become a devotee'. So there is worship only as long as there is a feeling and no perception. When there is a perception, it is no longer worship. It is Love.

Spiritual endeavour is a thing entirely different. It is related to your way of seeing things, your mode of living. The person

engaged in the practice of spiritual discipline is a person engaged in the quest of the self. He is one who brings his quest of the self to bear on all his activities. He is like a sculptor who applies his chisel not on stone but his own body and mind and the forms that take shape are those within him. Spiritual endeavour, therefore, consists in bringing the spirit of self-enquiry to bear on all matters, at all times and in every context. For instance, you are in the midst of a storm and high winds. Study how you feel in such a situation. It could induce a mood of worship in you and make you feel that Lord Shiva is playing upon his drum. But if high winds were blowing through hills or valleys or a thick forest or desert land, or a sea coast the sounds raised would appeal to you in a different manner. Go out in the storm with eyes and ears open. It would be an exhilarating experience which you could never have had inside the four walls of your home. You would be unable to plant your feet firmly on the ground. The force of the blowing wind will try to throw you away and it is then that you will get an idea of its high velocity for the first time. Even so you have to watch the storms that rage within you, the storms of habits, conditionings, longings and desires. When this storm blows through the spacious empire of the discriminating intelligence, the sound is of one kind. The sound is of a different kind when it is blowing through the desert lands of abstinence and suppression. Do watch the storms that rise within you—their shape, their sound, the way they sweep off your feet completely. Haven't you passed through moments when you have felt that the very roots of your being were being shaken?

So your quest for the Supreme Being must be linked up with all that you do. The soul of worship is feeling, the soul of the spiritual endeavour is perception. This is where the two differ. The first thing which the worshipper does is to centre his feelings on some image limited in space and time or some person with an image of his own. Anyone whose devotion is centred on an image or a person with an image will not go beyond the image. Such people will form a sect. But those you can see beyond the image develop devotional feelings extending to the entire universe. When this state of feeling is no longer

localised, no longer centred in one form or person, when the emotional state is all-enveloping it blossoms forth into a state of realization of the reality. So whether you make a start from the position of a worshipper or from that of one engaged in the quest of the self, you arrive at the same place—the realized state. Only when you are engaged in the quest of the self there is a perception of the reality from the moment you make a start. It is a short-cut, while the other one is a longer route.

The person who has to convey ideas to others by word and speech has to pass through every route, whether it is the path of worship or knowledge or yoga or *tantra*. Rama Krishna could not have been the upholder and the very image of all religions, and the supreme incarnation that he was, had he not actually practised each one of them. He made experiments on his own body and he who is not prepared to make experiments on his own body has no right to speak on these matters before others. Only the voice purified by experience is pure. All other voices are impure and tainted. In the spiritual field speech based on the play of the imagination or on mere intellectual learning has no place. Those interested in the play of the imagination and the exercise of the intellect would be better occupied in embellishing philosophy. But he who has to live must keep his eye over the entire field, whether what he says smacks of worship or of endeavour, I use the terms endeavour and worship in a particular context. I do not reject anything. Rejection and condemnation are very popular today both in this country and abroad. To my mind rejection and affirmation are the two sides of the same way of viewing things. When you affirm that some thing is right, you also imply that some other thing is wrong. Note the implication. When I say that this is the one and the only truth, the implication is that all else is wrong. Affirmation, therefore, leads to fanaticism because hidden inside it there is an element of rejection. The affirmation is there on the surface, the rejection is concealed below. Those whose affirmation is there on the surface are insisting that all else is wrong and they alone are right. Both the positions are positions taken up by the ignorant. May the Lord forgive them. It is not only those who affirm who form sects, but those

who reject also form sects of their own.

The truth is not something to be insisted upon. Truth is not attained to contradict and reject. There is nothing to be contradicted or rejected. Truth is to be lived, it is to be communicated. It is only the ego which persuades you to be wedded to any one view and to canvass support for it. Truth is contaminated when it passes through such a process. Argument, logic, the desire to establish your own views are all objectives that dwell only in the ego. The politicians, economists, the men of religion have resorted to these methods of rejection and subversion.

In the intellectual field there is the example of Charvak.

The tendency to reject, to demolish has gained a great deal of popularity in the spiritual field of late. It is immaterial whether it proceeds from Zen Buddhism or particular individuals. To my mind there is nothing to be rejected in life. All mistakes stem from a lack of the scientific approach. If the scientific approach is developed and stressed, mistakes are set at rest automatically. The harmony of life depends on where you put the stress. The dominant note determines the character of a musical piece. The question is what is the kind of melody you want to produce in your life. If the dominant note in the melody of your life is a desire to create harmony and mutual communication, it does not help to affirm or contradict anything. You may be able to impress some people for a while and attract those who are out to have some excitement and sensation because they themselves are ignorant or lazy or lacking in the capacity to think for themselves but the craze for sensation and excitement is only a symptom of inertia and stupefaction.

Question : How did the idea dawn upon you at the age of five that there is nothing in the world to keep anyone in bondage and that it was amazing why people felt that they were held in bondage? And if the realization came to you when you were only five years old, has this anything to do with experiences in past lives? Or is there some other reason behind it?

Answer: It is an entirely personal question. If I were to trace my ancestry to answer you, I would say that my maternal

grandfather was a good soul and saints and yogis used to pay visits to him frequently. Foremost in his circle of friends was Sai Baba of Shirdi. Others in the circle included Swami Vivekanand, Yogeshwar Sitaram Das Maharaj, the Nawab of Chhattisgarh who had withdrawn from worldly activities. It may be that some of what you talk about should have come to me by way of inheritance.

You ask me next about my past life. I know very little even about my present life, let alone my past lives. And why do you talk about a past and future life? Who are the people who ask such questions? People who have some settled beliefs about immortality and re-incarnation put questions like these by way of a reaction to their own beliefs. If a reaction starts in you as a result of something you have come to believe because you have read or heard about it, do not take it for a genuine quest. The reactions of a conditioned mind are not born of a genuine quest. There is a person not familiar with the language of re-birth and past lives. Is a question like the one you have put likely to arise in his mind? He will simply ask, "How did this sense of freedom from bondage dawn upon you at the age of five?" He will not raise any questions about previous lives. The questions that are asked about the next life, the life after death, are mere reactions of what we have heard and read about. They are no questions at all. They are not your problems. It is only he who looks at life and death steadily will ask, "Is there anything beyond?" And it is likely that he will not put the question at all. He will have understood death so well that the questions, "What next?" and if there is a next at all, will get answered.

If I were to make a guess I could easily say, "Yes, this is a gift acquired in a previous life". And what benefit will it bring to you? Only a belief will get more firmly rooted in you.

I talked the other day about the difference between a curiosity and a quest. Let us consider today the difference between a real quest and the reactions of a mind that is already conditioned. It is apparent that life does not begin with birth, nor does it end with death. Birth is one wave on the surface of the ocean of life and death is the next wave. But do not imagine

that this consciousness cannot dawn upon you at the age of five or three. You calculate the age of the body but the seed that lies within may sprout and blossom forth quite early in the life of one person and very late in that of another. In the lives of some the hidden potentialities do not blossom forth even if he should live for a hundred years.

But consider the case of Shankar, the Shankaracharya of later years. At the age of five he goes to his mother and says, "I am going to renounce the world." The mother says, "You have not known the world, what is it that you are going to renounce?" And young Shankar replies, "I know all about this world". And he goes straight to some rocks near Gaurpad inside which there lived a saint in one of the caves. He calls out and a voice replies from inside. "Who is it?" And Shankar, replies, "A reflection of yours." And this is the reply of a child barely five years old. The voice inside the cave asks again, "Why have you come here?" And the child's reply is "I am here to see the object which throws out the reflection." The saint whom he had approached to acquire knowledge removed the boulders blocking entry into the cave, came out and made obeisance to Lord Shankar, "A fine pupil you are, my Lord. You have come to give me an opportunity of giving expression to all that I have learnt in life. Come in". And this is about a child five years old. Gyaneshwar was nine years old when he was initiated by Nivrittinath. Nivrittinath himself was twelve years old. And the nine-year child says, "If you drown an empty vessel in the river, it comes out full to the brim when it is taken out. I went to my master to make obeisance and when I rose up I was full of spiritual consciousness."

You are surprised over my attitude towards life at the age of five? It is a matter of no significance. And what I said about myself was only a fraction of what is to be said, because I am not here in this camp to talk about myself. There are bound to be shortcomings in this body of blood or flesh and I don't know if what I said unwittingly was not a bit of self-praise. But wittingly I am sure I do not want to indulge in talk which relates to me personally. I would like only to point out that this numerical counting of yours—five or seven or nine years is entirely irrelevant in the context of life.

You calculate in terms of a man's age—six years or twelve years. They calculate the intelligence of the child—intelligence quotients—in modern schools. I do not know what all they do in modern schools. They measure the level of the intelligence of the child and declare this child is intelligent, that other is backward. I tell you that this method of measuring man in terms of mathematical figures, is diabolical. Man will have to give up these methods sooner or later. We have imported these methods from the West and the West too will have to give them up. This is not a forecast. They have an educational institution in Bulgaria known as the Institute of Suggestology and Suggestopaedia. They have made some experiments as a result of which a pupil learns things at a rate fifty times higher than the present one. They claim to have discovered this method on the basis of something they found in the Yogic lore. They pick up the men, women, children and workers whom you will brand as dullards and put them in a room. One of the pupils would be eighty years old, while the other one only eight. The subjects taught would include physics, chemistry, languages and the rest of them. They tell them, "Don't try to learn here, don't exercise your intellect—you relax and sit restfully. "And they are able to cover a course of studies usually extending over two years in a matter of two weeks. The results are checked and verified by holding tests at intervals of four or six months. They say, "The intellect and the mind have their limitations. What we do here is that we establish a direct contact with the dimension of consciousness which is beyond the mind. We are tired of teaching through the medium of brains that are conditioned, and so we establish a direct contact with that part of the brain which is conscious and free from conditionings. We bypass barriers built in the brain and teach by establishing direct contacts".

It may be that I was only five years old but that which dwells within might have been millions of years old. I shall not enter into any discussion of the matter here nor shall I formulate or propound any theories. I have purposely eschewed all talk of a previous life. As we are we are quite ignorant about our own life between the two points of birth and death.

How is it possible to probe into matters connected with a previous life? And what is the use of entering into what can be only guess work or hypothesis or logical argumentation.

All that I want is that man should be able to live with the body and the mind he has and in the circumstances in which he is placed. The question is not one of the next world. It is a question of living in this world, here and now. Just as we are not concerned with dialectical and learned expositions, so we are not concerned with that which was before we were born, or that which will happen after we die. We are more concerned with the present, that which is here and now. So leave these questions alone. The question is 'What shall I do when I reach back home? How shall I start again now that I have listened to discourses full of many good things?' For you these discourses meant some ideas, some lines of thought. For me they meant the joy of communication, the joy of living with the truth. Something must have stirred within you. Something asleep must have taken a turn and awakened. All this must have happened. Now it will be for you to watch what follows when you reach home.

I hope on your return home the first practice you will take up will be one of watching things. Your first concern must be how to acquire the purity of vision which will enable you to see things, persons, ideas and emotions without any desire, without wanting to own or possess them. This must be the first step. Watch the body, watch the mind. That is the preliminary exercise. Watch the sea, the river, the trees. If in the process of seeing you enter the state of silence, seeing will end. But you must be attentive and see intently. You see and no desire comes up that you want this and do not want that; no decision is taken that this is good and that is bad, or that one thing is better or worse in comparison to the other.

You have to put in effort before you can enter the state in which you are completely calm and unruffled. So find some time to sit alone. You may sit or stand or lie down as you choose but do see to it that the backbone and the neck are erect. Now watch what happens to the body. Watch how restless the body is, if you are not used to remaining restful and steady.

The feet will feel heavy or go to sleep. The hands, the eyes, the ears will be eager to move, to see, to hear. See how all your outer senses behave. The body will be eager to get up, but do not get up. You will not get over frustration and obstacles by yielding to the blind urges of the senses. In the West they have tried this method of yielding to the urges of the senses in full measure. You read the works of Ouspensky or the reports of all that is going on in the West in the name of overcoming frustration. It is no freedom from frustration, if you get some temporary relief, for a while. If this freedom from frustration were genuine, frustration should not recur. But this is not what happens. Only a tension is removed for a while but the removal of a tension for a while is not freedom from frustration or from the obstructions which stand in your way. I am talking about something which is a very serious affair. It grieves me to look at all the horrifying business that goes on there under the name of methods to overcome frustration. I have seen the nudist clubs and the communes in Europe and the United States of America. Relieving a physical tension is not liberation. If you put in effort to put tension at rest by arranging the atmosphere and the surroundings, you may secure some chemical restfulness for a while, but chemical restfulness is not liberation. So watch how the body behaves, what are the cravings that come up and why do they agitate and make the body so ill at ease. Do not say that one of the things you see is good, while the other is bad. If you are engaged in this kind of watching, say, for five or ten minutes, notice each thing which happens. Do not act upon it. If you will try to act upon it the continuity of the process of seeing will be broken. The moment you try to act upon it, you take up the role of the doer and the enjoyer. You are no longer the invigilator, the seer. That is why I say that this seeing involves a great deal of manly effort, courage and patience. It is no child's play to stay in the state of the seer.

All this relates to what you have to do about the body and the senses. The same thing has to be done in relation to the mind. As soon as a thought or an emotion arises and creates a tension, you have to watch it. Do not be after a total freedom from tension because then the process of seeing will be cut off

and you will relapse into the attitude of the doer, and this will have its own results. Now do not treat this lightly. It is a serious matter. Do not subject this to criticism. I have shed tears of blood over it. This human life is not something to play with. The youth of today in Europe and America belonging to the 18 to 30 age-group has done a great deal of violence to his body and mind by taking to drugs and chemicals and indulging in all sorts of false practices in the name of Yoga and *tantra*. A whole generation has been ruined under my eyes and I am a witness to it. Who will listen to my agony and anguish? Who has the time to pay heed to it? Who will listen to the music of the flute when they are all engaged in and consumed by the desire to set up their sects and organisations. They will sooner seize my flute and burn it down. But here I am in the midst of my own friends, my own people and I must give vent to my feelings out of love.

So the tensions of thoughts and emotions have to be watched as well as those of body. A thought is a tension of one kind, and an emotion, of another. There are various levels at which these tensions are created—the level of the body, the level of chemical reactions, the level of the intellect. I have used the term 'chemical reactions' for emotional tensions. Don't think that one kind of tension is entirely different from the other. The one fuses into the other. It is necessary to analyse, categorise and make use of terms for purposes of expositions. You have tensions created by the intellect and ideas and mental conditionings, the chemical reactions of the emotions, the physical tension of hunger, thirst, urges of the sex and you have to summon up a great deal of courage to watch all these sources of tension. By practice it is possible to cultivate the art of watching. If you are able to do it in a session of a few minutes, you will acquire the ability to keep it up during the rest of the twenty-four hours of your work and activities. This watching will not bring about any qualitative change in your behaviour in the beginning. Do not suppose that if you sit down for an hour in the day, you will acquire watchfulness and attentiveness. It is not so easy. But you will develop the ability to watch your activities. If somebody says something nasty and you fly into a rage, you will see what is there at the root of it.

Perhaps you will say, 'Isn't this the same thing, as the witness attitude? No, it is not the same thing, because in the witness attitude that which you see is separate from you. You feel all the time, 'I am seeing this'. You have to take up and keep up the idea that you are the witness, an intermediary, a person detached from the thing seen. You have to take up an attitude. No attitude is to be taken up or adopted. It is a difficult thing as it is. Why bring in an additional difficulty by taking up an attitude?

First of all watch the waves of tension and pressure rising on the level of the senses, the level of the conscious mind. If you are able to watch the happenings on the level of the conscious mind, other steps will follow. By 'conscious mind' is meant the behaviour in your waking hours. Watching behaviour during sleep is a later stage. Sleep can be watched. Deep sleep too can be watched. The ability to watch deep sleep is the ability to go into 'samadhi'. And if you are able to watch the fourth state of the spirit, *turiya*, it is the true state of spontaneity.

So if you are able to keep up the state of watching the behaviour of the conscious mind in the waking state, that is, if your chemical and nervous state remains unruffled and unperturbed in the midst of various relationships, the very intensity of your watchfulness will open up the doors of the unconscious. There are goings-on on the unconscious level below the conscious level. There are movements in the waves below the waves moving on the surface. When you have developed the capacity to remain in the state of watchfulness at least for twelve hours, the movements and the behaviour of the unconscious will be laid bare before you. Attentiveness is neither your act nor your activity. All you have to do is to keep yourself in the state of watchfulness. And then the thing will happen. It is a happening. When the unconscious opens itself before you, all the unsatisfied desires of your parents, their ambitions, their family, racial, religious conditionings, their religious and racial experiences will begin unfolding themselves before you. The experiences of Mahavir and Buddha and Krishna and Shiva—all lie there in the unconscious. These will come up. The coming up and manifestation of these past conditionings

is known as experience. Really speaking they are not experiences. They are really manifestations of the goings on in the unconscious when the conscious is still and unruffled. Now we have to watch their unfoldment too. It is difficult to do so because the moment you see them, you have a sense of happiness. Just as there are pleasurable vibrations when the senses come in contact with objects, there are similar pleasurable vibrations when the unconscious comes up and meets your attention. They are known as extra-sensory experiences. But in fact they are projections and these projections are taken for experiences. You feel happy and happiness has an intoxication of its own. You take a good meal or have a cup of tea or coffee, you listen to music, catch sight of a lovely face and you are intoxicated. Well, if this is what happens in the context of sensory experiences, how much more pleasurable must be the experiences on the unconscious level? It is difficult to describe the pleasures of such experiences. The intoxication of these realizations and projections on the extra-sensory level is quite as pleasurable as the one you get on taking a good meal. The process of seeing is snapped. The intoxication goes to your head and the ego is all the time waiting in the wing to see when watching should come to an end and it could take up its role of the doer and the one who enjoys. The ego is very uncomfortable as long as watching goes on because watching is neither an act nor a lack of activity. It has a feeling of suffocation. It is in a strange state. There is nothing to do and seeing is not its job. Seeing is a state of totality and the ego has nothing to do with it. Naturally the ego is restless. It is eager to do something 'I have heard such heavenly music', it says, 'I have seen such glorious light. It was like seeing the form face to face. I must convey the tidings to somebody. There is a change in my behaviour and the chemical state of my body. Somebody must notice and give it recognition'. It assumes a false modesty and says "What shall I do with this unique experience?" But all the while it is eager to parade the newly acquired gift. "Look at me" it says "I have acquired a precious stone, a rare gem". Beware of this attitude. That is why I rate watching as the highest askesis. There is no askesis higher

than attentiveness, and once you learn to practise it truly there is no other askesis you need go in for. But you must take care to see that the process of seeing is not interrupted. You will hear sounds. Sounds are stored up there within you. There is fire within you and shape and form. There is *akash* the subtle, ethereal fluid pervading the universe. There are words within you, words asleep and words awake. All these are there within you and all will put in their appearance. If the state of seeing abides with you during your encounter with the unconscious, you could see all of them.

As soon as you encounter the unconscious all the powers lying asleep within you are awakened. You must have noticed how with the advent of youth all the power and energy dormant within you is awakened. How your eyes are opened and there is a sparkle in them, how there is a change in your behaviour patterns and in your tastes in every matter from the way you dress to the way you eat. There is a similar change in your tastes and interests when you come in contact with the unconscious. Your associations and company undergo a change. Your deportment, the way you rise, the way you talk all are changed. In the result those around you are highly impressed. There is something intoxicating in the personality of those whose extra-sensory powers are awakened and they cast a powerful influence over others. But refuse to be influenced by anyone. And if my simple loving submissions and attempts to open up a channel of communication with you should make you intoxicated, in spite of all the care I take in such matters, please do not think of coming to the camps I hold. It is another matter if you are inspired but to be influenced is something quite different. If you are influenced, you will be a victim and a prisoner of my personality. You will lose your self-respect and I would sooner die than cast my influence over others.

So if powers lying dormant in anyone are awakened, people are attracted, charmed, intoxicated. There is an air of superiority and dignity about you. I hope you have noticed the difference between a person whose life has been shrivelled up by abstinence, suppression and renunciation and one who has enjoyed the good things of life. Even so people are held

in bondage by the joys and splendours coming in the wake of the awakening of inner powers. The result is that they cease to watch. But if you do not allow the process of watching to be interrupted, the level of the subconscious is unfolded. Activities on the subconscious were going on all the time but you could not view them. You could not see the movement of the waves 200 feet below the sea surface, or the fish or the gems and precious stones lying there at the bottom because your sight could not penetrate those depths. If your sight is unable to reach those depths, the movements going on below the surface are not brought to a standstill. The movements are there all the while. So if you continue to remain in the state of the seer while passing through regions beyond the senses, the goings on in the subconscious are brought within the range of your eyesight—the inner eyesight not the physical one.

The impressions and experiences of the entire human race lie there in the subconscious. The rarest attainments of the human consciousness, all the gems and diamonds and pearls, lie stored up there in the treasure house and they begin to be unfolded. You are still in the state of the seer. It is not the state of silence (maun). It is not the state of meditation (dhyana). It is the process of seeing which is still continuing and must continue as long as the seer is alive. If the seeing is kept up in the subconscious state, there is nothing further which has to be seen. The objective world ceases there. If the seeing process is kept up even through these experiences, further advancement can be made. One in a million is able to do this. The pleasures of this state are of a higher quality than even those of experiences beyond the senses. There is a qualitative difference between these pleasures and those of the level beyond the senses. But do not get entangled in them. Continue to remain the viewer. If the viewing is maintained at this stage, you are able to attain what is known as bliss (anand). Before that stage is attained, you continue to be voyaging through the region of pleasures, the regions of duality. But when you reach this stage, a peace descends on all that is seen and simultaneously on the seer. Peace is not the word. It is too loose. It would be a better description, if we said that the seer is dissolved as there is nothing more to see. The seer

loses his relevance. He is dissolved.

But before the seer is dissolved, something happens. He feels, "There is nothing more to see. Hitherto I had the pleasure of seeing things. Now even that is gone. What shall I do now? With all action and inaction and their direction gone already, all that was left to me was seeing. Even that is now set at rest. Where do I go now?"

It is a bottomless abyss. There is no light here. In the light of the objective world the seer felt he was lighted. Now that the objective world is set at rest, all light is gone. This may be darkness without any direction or a bottom. Who can guide me? What shall I do? Where am I to go? These are the last attempts of the ego to breathe and keep alive. Before such a stage is reached, the ego has various sources of nourishment. On the level of the body, the mind and the level beyond the senses the ego is always able to secure sources of nourishment. But at this stage, there is nothing it can live on. There is a last struggle for existence.

It weeps and sheds tears. "Help, help, I am dying out" it says, "Let me go back from here. I do not want to be here." It feels that the hour of final dissolution has arrived.

Such a stage of restlessness, anxiety and disappointment is bound to be reached but do not be frightened. I talked to you earlier about absence of fear and told you that there is nothing in the unknown to be afraid of. It is only your infatuation for the known that gives rise to the fear of the unknown. Let the ego weep. Let it shed tears. Do not fight shy of tears and restlessness, disappointment and agitation. You will not be saved by trying to find a route of escape.

And if anyone comes forward to rescue you, he is only retarding your progress and putting obstacles in your way. No wise man will offer you any consolation. The truth offers no consolations, no havens of refuge. It takes you by the hand and puts you in your naked state face to face with life. It is death to find refuge. It is life to be divested of all your coverings. The wise man, the man who has passed through the experience, will never offer any consolation. He will say, "It is just as it should be. Let him go forward. If there is life in smiles, there is life in tears too. If there is life in pleasure, it is there in the

vibrations of pains as well. You should see this, the smile of life concealed behind tears. Look at failures with a steady fortitude. Only then will a peace descend on every thing. The seer will be dissolved and a deep silence will enter and fill your existence. It will be a silence free from dualities. The silence which is the absence of sound is different. It is a dualistic silence and that is not what I am talking about here. It is a silence free from the dualities. This dissolution of the seer is what is known as surrender or, in the language of worship, taking refuge in a spirit of devoted resignation. The individual consciousness is relinquished and cast away. Instead of it the universal consciousness comes into play. It speaks out. The universal consciousness begins to play on the flute of your life with the dissolution of the ego. You may call it what you like, surrender or liberation or *nirvana*. The individual is no longer there. It is only the form of the individual that is there. The rope has been reduced to ashes, and now it is only the ashes lying there in the form of a rope. It is now only the universal consciousness speaking or to put it differently, the universal consciousness descends upon him.

The individual's ego having been dissolved, he attains liberation or *nirvana*. It is only a matter of choosing a particular terminology. The happening is the one and the same. The same person is called a husband by one or a son or a brother or a friend by another. But the person remains the same. To suppose that the happening varies with the terms in which it is expressed is only betraying a lack of understanding. So when the stage described is reached and the seer and the triangle of the seer, the sight and seeing dissolved, the undivided and uninterrupted empire of the state of non-dualism reigns supreme. The universal consciousness play its music through the body and the senses without the aid of the ego. Such an individual does not belong to anyone. No one can hold him in his grip and say, "This is my *guru*". There must be some one there to respond to your feelings towards him. There is no one there whom you could catch hold of. It is only silence and vacuity dressed in flesh and blood, a musical drum made of flesh and blood which you are free to play upon as you like. The pressure of your fingers will determine the notes that

are produced. It is like a stringed instrument. The quality of the music produced will depend upon the touch of the player. It is a stage where man has reached his roots. 'This Aswattha tree of cosmic existence is eternal and imperishable. Its roots are above. Its branches stretch down below into the world of men.' It is the roots now that are being watered. The roots are watered by the deep, pervasive silence born out of the dissolution of the ego. And then it is a new life that shoots forth and blossoms out. The life of such a person is full of a new energy, a new light, a new splendour, a new fragrance and all of it is reflected in all his activities and relationships his talk, his gestures, his conversation, his movements down to the manner he eats and gets up and sits down. There is music and harmony in all he does because there is no disharmony or anarchy or chaos within. May this new man awaken within you. Man in his totality is there when the universal consciousness is created following the dissolution of the ego. The world needs and aspires for the coming of such a new man. May he be born within you. Who, if he is born anew in this way, would like to dominate, or possess or exploit and build up all the relationship of the 'I' and the 'mine'. Man will still act but the level, the background of his activities will be different. Words will still be used but their form will have completely changed. The totality is transformed. May the Lord in his compassion inspire you to attain this state. What one man can do, all other men can do as well. And your sister sitting by you here is an entirely common individual. So what happens in the life of one person points to the possibilities inherent in the entire human race. I am nothing but the finger of the universal consciousness pointing out that there are similar possibilities within you. May the Lord inspire you to realize the possibility.

Question : If, even after the kind of consciousness you talk about has been aroused, a person is pained by the state of society round him, will such a person be able to change society by his own efforts or is it that change can be brought about only by collective effort to arouse the universal consciousness ?

Answer : No one is pained by the problems of society as

long as he is not in touch with the universal consciousness which means total egolessness and humility. This is the first thing to be understood thoroughly. It is not a genuine sorrow or concern for the state of society if you are worried or perturbed or pained for a moment or two. And unless the consciousness is seized with a genuine sorrow, no transformation is likely to take place. You are labouring under a delusion if you imagine that you are moved by the problems of society. I am not saying this to the questioner alone. All questions are raised through an individual but they have a universal meaning. It is only an individual who puts it but the question is there in the minds of all of us.

Today society is full of violence, aggression, injustice, exploitation, untruth, corruption. Do these pain us? Don't we resort to untruth to promote our business interests or acquire a status in society? You have to get something done by the state authorities, don't you resort to bribery to promote your business interests? Don't you flatter others so that your son should amass as much wealth as possible and earn it by methods to which others resort? Are those who want to amass wealth and acquire status moved by the sorrows of society. Look into yourselves and your motives and do not indulge in self-deception. If any one is really moved by the sorrows of society, his speech will be completely free from untruth. He will say or do anything untrue for any price. It is not only when our business interests are involved that we act in this manner. Politics and political parties do not survive without resorting to untruth. Untruth and rivalry are firmly established in the world of politics. Ambition is highly esteemed. To defeat the other party and win your case by the use of all and any method is legitimate a well recognised—Are those who witness this state of affairs anguished? Who is anguished?

In the family circle don't we give quarter to a deal of untruth in the name of marriage and the interests of the family? This is not to be told to the husband or the wife or the child or the neighbour. The truth that may be told to the neighbour is of one kind, that which is to be told to the wife or the child is of another kind. We will teach untruth to our children and pretend that we are grief-stricken over

the sorrows of society. Where indeed is the heart which is grief-stricken? Does exploitation cause us any pain, exploitation which is at the root of poverty, hunger and destitution? The moment you have a chance, you exploit. To save just a penny you will haggle and bargain with the green grocer who comes from long distances with a basket load of vegetables on his head. Very sophisticated and perfected indeed are the ways of your exploitation and self-aggrandisement. The desire to exact the maximum amount of labour from the porter or the rickshaw-puller and pay him the minimum of wages is at the root of exploitation. If I put in some work, I would like to extract the maximum of payment for a minimum of work but if it is the other man whom I put to work, then I must have the maximum of work for a minimum of payment. This unwillingness to pay the other person his due is at the root of exploitation and the roots have struck deep into our hearts. And we are out to build a society free from corruption and exploitation? We will not hesitate to take recourse to bribery and flattery in order to secure a good post or a good girl in marriage for our nephew and we indulge in big talk about removing injustice and untruth. You will excuse me for plain speaking but slaves of the ego have hardly anything to do with the problems of society. It is one thing to dream of removing the gap between poverty and affluence but the readiness to sacrifice your life in a bid to realise the dream is an entirely different affair.

The moment the universal consciousness is touched, your life is revolutionised. The basic fact about human life, not the life of a Hindu, Asian or African, is that the ego is there lodged at the root of the human-mind and all injustice and aggression emanate from there. The one and the only revolution is the dislodgement of this ego. The sources of compassion lie there.

The next question is 'Supposing the universal consciousness descends upon a person and he gets into touch with or attains it, what will such a person do following such attainment? Will he proceed to act alone? My friend, you are merely guessing. Such a man is never alone. That is exactly what I was telling you earlier. Scores of institutions, hundreds of workers cannot

accomplish the work which is effected through a single individual. Shall I give you some examples? Look at Vinoba, look at Gandhi. They talk about the removal of poverty. It was Vinoba, a single individual who brought about the distribution of land among the poor, even if the extent of this land was only fourteen lacs of acres. Words soaked in the nectar of compassion flowed from his lips and lands and villages came to be gifted away. If he could not go further, it was because of the faithlessness and ignorance of his followers. They had their weaknesses and shortcomings but the path was discovered in the heart of a single individual. The Ganga of compassion flowed out over the country. The people were rotting in slavery. They were emasculated. They were like lumps of clay scattered about all over the country. Who was it who breathed life into them. It was a single individual who awakened them.

Now let me come to the question of collective effort. You will say that these men promoted collective effort. What exactly is collective effort?

There was no real collective effort by those who professed to follow Gandhiji and Vinobaji. For real collective effort you need men who are free, men who have a sovereign philosophy of life. Gandhi and Vinoba could not get such men. They got only followers with no firm and settled conviction in or understanding of non-violence. Gandhi gives a call. We do not have the arms to give a fight. Therefore, we say, let us follow Gandhi. This is not collective effort. The engine, the driving force, was only one, the life of Gandhi.

The compassion was only that of one man, Vinoba. Their followers walked behind them carrying securely along with their own nests, big and small, of self-interest and taking good care that their own fields of exploitation and inequality should not be damaged. The endeavour was that of a single individual. This is no collective effort. If there had been collective effort in the sense that even fifty free persons inspired by compassion, a firm conviction and faith in the truth, cooperated with them, the face of India would have been changed. You cannot make collective effort by borrowing conviction, understanding and standing behind one who

is full of faith and conviction. There may be a thousand or ten thousands of followers but if they are devoid of conviction, they will walk only with the borrowed energy of the leader. There is no difference between putting such type of man to work and putting a machine into motion. Those present here who have worked with Gandhi or Vinoba will excuse me but nothing results from the collective dance of puppets. And, therefore, for real collective effort, for the unfoldment of the universal consciousness and the explosion of egolessness, there must be the right men, men who have a unified life, men who can stand on their own legs and are ready to hold aloft the torch of responsibility. Without such men you cannot have collective effort.

The transformation of society is brought about by the cooperation of individuals and not by collective effort. Cooperation of individuals and collective effort belong to two different dimensions. Only free men can come together and enrich the lives of one another. Society and the world whether in this country or elsewhere have never known such cooperation because no one is prepared to be free. They are prepared only to be camp followers and to cry 'Jai' (Victory) for somebody else. Whether it is the realm of politics or religion or spiritualism, they are willing only to cry 'Jai' for others and bear other people's standards so that they may get rid of their own responsibility. Everyone is afraid of undertaking the responsibility of bringing about a revolution in his own self. Only a Gandhi, a Vinoba or a Buddha is willing to pass through the fire of such a revolution. We are very willing to follow Buddha and say, "I seek refuge in the Buddha", because in this way we are able to transfer the praise or the blame to his shoulders and feel secure under the shadow of his personality. This desire for shelter and security is nothing but a desire to remain a slave. Problems relating to the building up of a new society and a new economy will remain unsolved as long as man continues to remain infatuated by the desire for security. The questioner asks, 'What will the person whose consciousness had touched the universal consciousness do? The phrase 'whose consciousness has touched the universal consciousness' is faulty. It creates the confusion that the

individual consciousness is something apart and separate from the universal consciousness. You fear that the person who reaches the stage at which the ego is completely shed is likely to be lost in the state of love and bliss which follows the dissolution of the ego. Even those who attain the state of samadhi (spiritual trance) feel free and detached and seek a place out of the bounds of society. But in the times to come it will not be open to us to do this. When life has been fertilised, it will not be possible to revel in the pleasures of the state he has reached for one who has travelled beyond the mind and silence and attained love and bliss following the dissolution of the ego.

The truth of the matter is that as soon as anyone has gone beyond the mind and silence, life will not allow him to sit at ease. Eternal processes will come into operation and he will be pushed forward into places where he is needed or his words are likely to be understood. Life will either push him forcibly into those places or people will be impelled to come to him. The empire of silence might be ever so dear to him, but he will be compelled to step out of it and undertake the human effort of opening up channels of communication. The question facing you and me is that the dissolution of the ego shall not be the privilege and monopoly of a handful of people. It is the greatest need of the human life.

Cross the dimensions of the mind and the intellect not to revel in the pleasures of liberation and 'nirvana' but to bring about a fundamental change in human relationship. Then we will live together and cease to exploit one another. In the state in which we are, we exploit each other even in the family circle. The exploitation is not economic, it is mental and mental exploitation is any day worse than economic exploitation. How do we enslave one another, how do we hold one another in a fix by spreading a net of desires and expectations. How do we make one another instruments for the satisfaction of our own infatuations, attachments and desires? Look closely at the ramifications of exploitation. As long as the background of the mind and the intellect is there, this state of affairs is bound to continue. The ways, the methods, the language will change but the desire to enslave others will persist.

Look at the countries seeking to abolish economic and political slavery—whether it is Asia or China or Yugoslavia or Bulgaria or Cuba. And look at our own country where we repeat ten times every day that we won our independence through love and non-violence. No change has taken place in the mind and the intellect of the people. The same desire for money and accumulation of goods, the same ambitions and desire for possession continue unabated and there is no end of exploitation. Power in the hands of individuals has passed into the hands of the state and the state has a thousand hands and feet and a thousand hands and feet are now engaged in exploitation and the perpetuation of injustice. Power now resides in the state. So, my friends, as long as the desire to dominate and exploit, which are efforts of the ego, are not rooted out of the consciousness of the individual problems will elude solution.

But we cannot wait till such a consummation is brought about. We want to do something today. Very well, try your hand. There are lots of people with unbalanced and perturbed minds, undisciplined lives, vitiated attitudes and a vision warped by illusions who are engaged in solving the problems of society in the world today. Even though the world has passed through two world wars those sitting in the meetings of the United Nations are not able to solve any of the problems facing the world today. Whether it is a problem relating to the United Arab Republic and Israel, or Jordan or the negro population of the United States of America or Eastern and Western Germany or Kashmir, nothing gets solved. The problems are there for all to see. Of course, some relief work could be done and it is work which must be done.

The great revolution, the ascent upwards for which the earth is thirsty and the sky is eager, is a change in man's consciousness itself and its abode. There is no other way out. Unless you know why those who have retired into the caves have gone there, how can you bring them out. Unless the mystery of the process which took them into their retreats is laid bare, they cannot come out. Also we do not know if they have the simple language needed to enter into communication with the common man or the necessary love for the human

being in his bodily frame.

There is a great deal of love for humanity in the abstract in India. They will talk about the human race and the human life but for the person in front of them, they have no love. The first thing they will want to know about the person is whether he is a male or a female. Then they will want to find out his caste and vocation in life. The factors that determine our attitude and behaviour towards the other person are peculiar. Man is to be loved and worshipped because he is a man. Towards whom should love be directed, we do not know in this country. Love for man because he is a man came to Gandhiji through Christianity. Do our saints attach any value to man or the individual because he is a man ?

The situation today is that half of the population is made up of women. And these women will be dismissed as handicapped in one respect or another. It will be said that they are good enough only to remain maid servants and liberation is not for them. No value could be attached to them. Half the population is thus out of court in the present state of affairs. The political and social leaders have taught women only to seek equality with the men, that is, to copy the men. The result is that wherever women have entered in the field with men they have succeeded only in turning themselves into imitation males, whether it is the field of politics or economics. There is a women's liberation movement in the U.S.A. They invited me to a meeting of theirs in California. I went and told them, 'Friends, when I come to your country, I fail to meet a single woman. Are there any women in your country ? They are all imitations of men all over your states ? A woman who has accepted the manmade values, the male's spirit of competition, his ambition, his faith in indulgence and merriment as a way of life is no true woman. And even if she enters the field of politics and economics what is it that she will be able to achieve. She will only repeat and re-affirm the same old values of domination and acquisition and possession of material goods. Half the population has been doing this till yesterday and the other half is going to do it in the years to come. And if woman enters the race, she will be even more fanatical as a money-maker. It will be a new field

which she will be out to exploit and the new convert is always full of energy and enthusiasm. There is no fanatic more fanatical than the newcomer in the field.

So this is the compassion of your men of religion. They will leave half of the human population untouched. I am pained by this state of affairs. I have travelled widely through the resorts of these men of religion in the Himalayas, at the fountain heads of the Ganga, in Badrinath, Kedarnath and Narayan Ashram. How many will be left to receive their compassion, and get their problems solved after they have been subjected to their screening on the basis of caste, creed, sex and sect, I do not know. And how can you expect those who renounce home and human society in order to pursue the spiritual path to diagnose and resolve the problems of society ?

Only he who lives in the midst of life at the place where he is stationed and finds opportunities of spiritual discipline in the course of his relationships with others and transcends the mind and the intellect could be expected to be of any use to society. Of course, if it is some practice in Hatha yoga that you are after, there are many who could initiate you in these practices. Come to Amarkantaka or the Himalayas with me and there are those who will train you. If you have a fancy for practising *tantra*, there are seats of training under adepts in Kamrup, Nepal, some territories in the Himalayas, specially the area round the black Ganga and near the confluence of the black and the blue Ganga. There are those who have specialised in various branches of self-discipline. There are Yogic practitioners who could infuse energy in you or arouse the Kundalini, the serpent power within you. If these practices could resolve the problems of society, go in for them. These practices have nothing to do with the spiritual life or with the opening up of a new dimension in your life.

Human society is not a herd of cattle which you could drive, whip in hand. But, as it is, this sort of cattle driving has gone on under the name of culture, civilization, religion and spiritualism. Would you, bright young men, like that your elder sister should take up an attractive, coloured rod

and drive you with it ? If ever I take it into my head to try to drive you, come out and break such a rod into pieces. Throw it away and throw out your elder sister too out of the path of national and social reconstruction. If you can do this, then only you are a true revolutionary. I have no use for this kind of leading you with a rod. Even if the rod is made of fragrant sandal wood, I have no use for it.

There are two firm convictions in the human consciousness—'ours', 'yours', 'I' and 'this', 'I' and 'you'. Life is divided between these two convictions. Now this conviction named as the 'I', this manifestation of the 'I', is not of my making. 'I am'. Who is it that says 'am' in his 'I am'. It has to be sought out and once you start on the search, you will find layers upon layers within you. At the start it appears that this body is the 'I', there is an identification with the body and the ego-sense follows. The moment the 'I' comes to be manifest, it is held in bondage by identifying itself with some attribute or qualification outside itself and the ego-sense is born. So at the first layer it comes to be identified with the body with a name and a form. We come to believe I am this body with a name and a form. Next we go on to believe that the 'I' is the mass of ideas, impressions, experiences stored up in the mind and the intellect. Now the moment there is the identification with this mass of ideas, the identification expresses itself and the ego-sense is born. The initial misconception is that I am the body, the senses, the mind, the intellect and we know nothing about the real character of the 'I'.

We know nothing about the 'I' as it is in its pure state and the I, goes out to identify itself with wrong elements, identifies itself and harmonises with them and is caught up in a whirlpool.

So the ego-sense is born of endless identifications. The word 'egoism' which we use is only a symbol. In fact it is nothing more than the feeling of the identifications which have come to be heaped up and crystallised. Once you fix the light of attention on them and have a clear perception of the truth relating to them, they melt down at each layer of the identification, dissolve and no ego is left behind. When the heaped

up mass of crystallised identifications with foreign elements begins to melt down and layer upon layer is dissolved, the uncovered manifestation that is laid bare is neither 'I' nor 'this', 'ours' nor 'yours'. It is the pure consciousness which reigns supreme. It is consciousness at the centre of which there is no mass to be crystallised and solidified. There is no unit there which exists separately from the universe and the universal consciousness. It is an expanse of consciousness without a centre and a circumference, and the ego is like a kernel, a something having appearance of crystallised unit in a mass of water. The secret of enlightenment lies in the melting down of the ego and the dissolution of extraneous identifications. Once there is enlightenment the 'I' and the ego-sense disappear.

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persuade or teach or initiate you. He will not do any of these acts of aggression. His love will extend to the point of throwing out a suggestion. He will only point his finger into the direction you have to look. But the journey will have to be made by you.

You go to the sea-shore where a cool breeze is blowing. If the breeze there were not cool, you would not go there. You have a vague idea that if you sought the society of a true and enlightened soul, something could happen. Otherwise why should you go to them. But if you are there at the sea-shore and do not notice how the waters decorate themselves with waves rising up in ornamental patterns, how the waves play with the winds, how the sky unites with the sea, how the rays of the sun sport and dance in the waters of the sea, who indeed is to blame? The sea is there to scatter its bounties. You could come away satisfied merely with the sort of physical pleasure the cool breezes provide to the outer skin. Or you could come back having entered into communion with the sea. True communion will be brought about only if you will look at the sea with both your eyes, the eye of union and that of separation. Nothing will happen if only one eye is put to use. For a full view you must see with both your eyes open. And so remember this well that communion with the truth is possible only when you view things with the eyes both of union and separation. Suppose you start looking at the world from a changed angle of vision. You carry the angle of vision which you have here to your home and look at the world and your people in the same way in which you looked at things here, do you think you will have developed the true angle of vision? No. You will only disintegrate. Yours will be a disintegrated personality. You will not be able to enjoy either the life here or the other life at home.

Do not entertain the idea that the world is an illusion and an unreality. Do not think that you do not have any responsibilities towards the world. The best, the highest field for spiritual endeavour is the one where destiny has placed you. It is the proper field of *dharma* and the field of action and you cannot renounce it. If it droops away, that is another matter. Do not the dry leaves drop down in the autumn? It does not

happen that the leaves should start dropping down before the onset of the autumn. There must be an autumn season in your life too. Then the leaves will begin to drop down automatically and this will not cause any pain either to you or to the leaves. Similarly let your worldly activities drop away naturally. If their renunciation causes pain, be sure you are unripe. If there are no attachments within, you will not have to renounce anything. If you have to renounce, it is a sure indication of the presence of attachments within you. They are here. Any renunciation in these circumstances is just a retaliatory counter-action against the attachment nursed up within.

When you renounce the world to take to *sanyas*, you only declare the struggle against attachments going on within you to the world without. Where there is opposition, struggle, tension, dualism and conflict are bound to follow. So when you go back to your homes and positions in life, understand clearly the relativities and limitations of your situation and your relationships with others, but do not speak in terms of renouncing or giving up anything. If your angle of vision is one in union and different in separation you will be shocked by your surroundings at home. 'How good it was at Chorwad?', you will feel 'The surroundings here at my home do not interest me. What has happened to me? People here do not understand me. This man or that woman does not understand me'. The result is you do not cooperate with them. But your office, your court, the members of your family, your getting and spending all are your own responsibilities and you cannot shirk them. There is your own body. You cannot fly away from it. It is your own self in flesh and blood. It is you who are lodged in this furniture. It is your own extension. If you renounce it, you behave like the sage Vishwamitra disowning his Menaka. It is not desirable.

What is desirable is that the attachment which is at the root of the conflict should not be there. The attachment is there because you have identified yourself with the body. You do not know your true self. That is why you identify yourself with the body and the mind. It is the identification which causes all the perturbation and agitation of the mind. This identification must not be there. The senses will be there and their needs

and death for them. They want to discover and live the life beyond the mind and the intellect. Our own attitude towards the spiritual life is a rather romantic one. If we are able to enter it, well and good. If we fail, it does not disturb us. Life is taking its merry course anyway. This will not do there in the West. There is a steady fire burning in the quest, but here it is a flame which flickers and flares up by turns. We live in the midst of people stricken by wants of all kinds. Naturally we attach more than ordinary importance to securing comfort and convenience.

So the atmosphere is much the same as it is here in spite of the fact that I do not give or teach anything and do not seek to change their lives. If, while we are in the state of love, something happens, it is not the result of your effort or my exertion. There is no give and take, no reaching out to help one another. Rendering help or service is the language of the physical and the mental world. On the physical level it is necessary to render service to others. We live in a poor country and we should put in effort to remove poverty. People are ignorant and illiterate, we should help and encourage them to read and write. They are not familiar with the rules of health and hygiene. We should impart the necessary knowledge so that they are able to keep fit. This kind of aid and service relates the physical and the mental level. In the realm of religion too service can be rendered because religion too has its science and body of knowledge. It is possible to render aid upto the levels relating to created beings or to gods. On the physical and the mental levels give-and-take is possible and it does take place.

But give-and-take has no place in the realms of love and friendship. Would you call him a friend and a lover who goes about burdened by a load of giving and receiving over his head? If I were to tell you that I would grant you this or that if you stayed with me for four days, you would at once start drawing up a list. Certainly aid can be rendered if you want to acquire some physical skill, mental ability. If what you want to learn is hatha yoga or a breathing exercise or a yogic posture or the art of awakening the *Kundalini* (Serpent power) it would be possible to help you. But none of it is the

spiritual life. It has nothing to do with the spiritual life because all these physical, mental, supra-mental levels belong to the realm of the ego. There must be some body to awaken and direct the process involved in arousing the Kundalini (the serpent power). The language of aid and service has a meaning only in the context of such practices.

You enter a garden full of flowers that have blossomed forth—lotuses, roses, jasmines, champakas. Suppose you go near one of them and say 'O king of flowers, do help me that I may enjoy your beauty and savour your fragrance.' You may be ever so eager. You may be full of yearning. You may weep. You may pray. Will the king of flowers speak in reply? Will it come to your aid? If its presence is not enough, will any action on your part help you? If its very presence does not bring you any attainment, how can the flower help? It is there with all its petals in full bloom, pouring out all its inner beauty and splendour and yet you say, 'Give me your presence as well'. It is the beauty and the quality of a presence that it cannot be handed over. It is not possible to turn a presence into an attainment. There is your mother who has cooked a meal, lovely, delicious, lavish. If you do not know how to eat it, she might tell you how to use the teeth, how to put it on the tongue, but shall the mother masticate it also for you? Howsoever intense might be the love your mother has for you, the mastication will have to be done by you.

I recall that perfect saint Akha Bhagat. He says, 'The well-prepared betel-leaf is in your mouth. You have your teeth too but you do not chew it. You just gulp it down your throat. The colour is not there on your lips, nor has your throat known its full flavour.' Even so if you go to a gathering of true and wise men, listen to their discourses but do not masticate the words and only gulp them down your throat, there could be no light in your eyes, nor colour on your lips nor any transformation of life. So if you enter a garden and come back without savouring the beauty and the fragrance of the flowers, whose fault is it? Nothing more than the presence is possible. Granted that the person you go to is a fully enlightened soul. Such a person can have no sense of the ego and he will not prefer any claims or hold you by the hand, or

Discourse 5

Life has this wonderful capacity that it can combine two mutually antagonistic elements, harmonise them and bring a third and an entirely new existence into being which is different from both. Life is the Lord's play. It is impossible to fathom it. The light of the day and the darkness of the night are combined and a third entity is born. Union and separation are harmonised and a third state is awakened known as association with the truth. Without separation, union is lifeless. There are two eyes but one vision, two lips but one conversation. Similarly he who is able to harmonise union and separation is able to secure life's wonderful gift—communion with the truth. It is not true seeing if you are in one state in union and in an entirely different one in separation. Your vision is vitiated if you start looking in two directions with your two eyes. Your vision is total only when your two eyes see the same object. If now when we are here together your state of mind and your bodily behaviour are of one kind and tomorrow when you have left this place and gone back home, your mood, behaviour, and speech undergo a change, you have caused to see rightly and wholly. Your vision is not steady. It has broken down. You are not in association with the truth because the eye of separation looks in one direction and the eye of union in another. This must not happen. You are all dear to me and I felt I must sound a note of warning. This morning was not scheduled for a discourse but I felt like disregarding schedules because love knows no laws. And I must tell you that you should not have a feeling of distance in separation and that of presence in union.

Perhaps you will wonder why I am talking in terms of union and separation. I must talk in those terms because I hold you dear and if you did not hold me dear you would not be here. Who would like to spend money and energy to come here specially because you are all men of the world, not one

like me without a hearth or a home or a background. And so if you came and stayed here for five days, away from your wives and children and the scene of your interests and activities, it does signify the love you have for me. And so a feeling of gratitude wells up within me. It is the Lord's mercy that you have so much affection for me and you come to one who does not give anything, who does not claim to give or to teach, who does not even aspire to change you.

I am fortunate that there is nothing left to me in life except love and friendship. I like to speak out my heart in the company of my family of friends. There is nothing else to do for one whose home is the wide world. You talk to your parents, your husbands, your wives, your children in the home circle. I open my heart to my friends when I am in their company. That is all that I do. There is no deliberate purpose behind it. The day a deliberate purpose or motive enters into a conversation of love, it degenerates into a hideous act of egoism. And so I am glad there are those who care to love even such a one as I am. I am delighted.

It is the same story when I am in Europe or America. In each country there are forty or fifty people who sit together in a similar atmosphere. The only difference is that there in the West they live together, cook their own meals, work and carry on the chores together and keep silent throughout the day. In the house we live in they form groups to carry on particular activities like keeping the house clean or preparing the breakfast and the meals. No one speaks a word except at the meals. Their need is great, their quest is intense. They are a body of determined people who do not want to waste a single minute of their stay for five days.

It is a question of life and death for them. They feel that it would be impossible for them to live, if they are not able to go beyond the mind and the intellect. They are tired of working with computers and electronic brains. The computers today are much more efficient than men in the matter of grasping, retaining, remembering and working out problems. So they in the West are faced with a challenge and an invitation to go forward and find out if there are things beyond in human life. The spiritual life is no more something of a pastime. It is a question of life

shall have to be satisfied in a rational, scientific manner. Your attitude shall be neither one of attachment nor detachment. Detachment also is a deviation from the natural state.

The needs of the body and the mind shall be satisfied in the scientific manner. It may be that chillies or salt do not suit you. But you will not go about declaring this to the world in a spirit of self-righteousness, or to show off how pure are your food habits. If you do this, it is egoism. There are some who are proud of the fact that they sit in meditation for an hour or worship the deity for an hour and a half. Why do we make a show of it? You take a bath daily, another does not. Why should this inflate your ego? Why should it be necessary for you to make a show of what you do and another does not? What you do is something which you do for your own good. But why should the other fellow be looked down upon? Please see this clearly. We are held in bondage because we react. Bondage is born out of your reaction, not out of the conduct of the other person. It is not the behaviour of the other person that binds. It is your own reaction that binds.

And so when you return home you will find yourself in a different atmosphere. You will find it a little difficult to come to terms with it. You will remember the days spent here, the atmosphere of love and affection in which we lived and moved here. Such an atmosphere of affection and amity was natural because of the conditions in which we lived. Everybody had made his own arrangements. Nobody had any occasion to come into conflict with any one else. If you had shared the chores of daily life, cooking the meals and preparing the vegetables, there could have been cause for friction over small matters. But there was nothing of the kind here. And so there was no occasion for conflict.....(At this stage the tape-recording was cut off, as the voice was inaudible).

February 15, 1971

LIFE AS YOGA

BOOK II

[Eight Discourses and Three Sets of
Questions and Answers]

Chorwad, December 1971

indulging in the language of poetry. It is no poetic language but a statement in words of the reality that is. Anyway, let that alone but isn't it a fact that we are men, purely human beings. So cast away the outer trappings that you are an Indian or a Pakistani or a Gujarati or a Marathi. So from tomorrow there will be a touch of communion between us during our stay together in every thing that happens here, our exchange of glances, our conversation, our presence, our closeness.

There is another request I should like to make. Use as few words as are absolutely necessary. I do not like to impose any restrictions or conditions on friends who are so near and dear. On my part I do not impose any conditions. You are free to come and go as you like, to participate or not to participate in the programmes. Take it easy and stay happy. But even though I am not imposing any conditions, I should like to suggest that you should not fritter away your energy by indulging in speech unnecessarily. There is a whole life before us in which to indulge in gossip. All our lives we are speaking without a purpose. And when we indulge in speech which is purposeless there is bound to be a great deal of falsehood, backbiting, exaggeration, ambiguity, self-praise, ostentation and pride in it. All the habits we have formed will put in an appearance in one context or the other. And we are talking all the time to ourselves and to others, alone and in company. Let us see what happens if we do not speak. Is it possible to have a wordless communion with ourselves? Communion with ourselves is possible in terms of words and then we either decry others or praise, justify and defend ourselves. So the more you can stay in a state beyond words, the better. If the silence is an imposed silence, it will lead only to inertia and a feeling of heaviness. The burden of an imposed speechlessness will weigh heavily on you. No communion with the truth is possible with a mind which is burdened. So I am not imposing a condition. But it is worth while making an experiment to see what happens if our communion with ourselves and with others is wordless, on a level beyond words. The thirty or forty people who are here will have some experience of the deep closeness and intimacy, the intensity there is in silent communion. Let

us watch what happens. Presence also is a kind of touch. The touch of speech is grosser than the touch of a wordless presence. Subtler than the touch of speech is the touch of sight. So there are many opportunities of creating the conditions favourable for mutual contact in silence. If you feel inclined, make the experiment.

Another thing I should like to say is this. Please do not imagine that when we sit in a corner in the morning or at night this is meditation. Meditation is not something which can be done. It is not an action. It is a state of totality. To enter into it you have to adjust the body and the mind, and we are not trained to it. You have to give the necessary training to the body and the mind. We will not sit here to meditate or concentrate. We will try to understand what meditation means, what are the obstacles and the obstructions that stand in the way of awakening the state of meditation. We will try to understand the true character of these obstacles. We will try to see if we are able to create the state in the body and the mind favourable to it. We use the word 'silence' because we do not indulge in speech and withdraw the activities of the body, the mind and speech. That is why we use the term 'silence'.

We do not sit here to do any meditation or practise silence. Silence too is a state. It is not just a state devoid of activity. It is not the absence or withdrawal or control of speech and activity. It is the state in which activities are spontaneously at rest. Silence comes to life when the activities of the body, the mind and speech come to a state of spontaneous rest. It is not a negative state. It is not the absence of anything. It is a creative state which sets in *before* meditation but *after* activity and inactivity. It is a state which comes in between activity or inactivity and meditation. So we will not sit here daily to secure or experience anything. We will sit at rest. No words or sound vibrations will disturb us. And if you have learnt how to withdraw your thoughts, thoughts will no longer disturb you. There will be no anarchy, no chaos of emotions. You will be in touch with a deep peace, balanced and satisfied.

So do not make the mistake of imagining that our morning and evening sittings here are meditation sittings. I have deli-

Discourse 1

Once again we are here in the midst of the peaceful surroundings of Chorwad beside the sea-shore. The situation in which we are placed today is grave both for this country and the rest of the world. Several states including the one in which we are gathered here today are theatres of open war. I bow my head to the spirit of enquiry and fearlessness which have persuaded you to come here to live together in this small camp. I hope this spirit will abide with you not only during the four days we are here but throughout your lives.

You know I am not interested in politics and I cannot support war and violence on any account or in any context. But I am glad to notice the courage of the Prime Minister of this country in rushing to the aid of the oppressed people of Bangla Desh in the teeth of the opposition and the neutrality of the entire world. It is not the war which has pleased me. What has pleased me is the courage of the woman who leads the fifty to sixty crores of the people of this country and who has taken up the challenge against the neutrality of China, America, England, France and the United Nations. She did not wait for the big powers to rise equal to their responsibilities. She felt that she would take the plunge alone if others are not prepared to stand up against injustice and for the love of the oppressed and the downtrodden. And what skill, what balance of mind has she exhibited in handling the situation without any desire for bloodshed or any territorial ambition. How I wish I and you and this country developed the power to take such peaceful steps.

I recall another one at this moment, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who acquired leadership by democratic methods and who has been languishing in jail for the last many months. No one knows whether he is alive or dead. Just as I cannot resist the temptation of admiring the courage of Indiraji in

standing up against the world, I cannot refrain from sending up a prayer in this family gathering for this lover of freedom and democracy. May the Lord protect him if he is still alive.

The third thing I should like to stress here is this. Just as your country, your political parties and your Prime Minister have stood up in defence of democracy against injustice and oppression, the desire should awaken in you, when the war is ended, to remove injustice and oppression, to root out the seeds of violence and conflict in the social and economic order and the fear which lies embedded in man's way life, in his individual and collective consciousness. The loss of human lives in Bangla Desh will come to an end. But as long as the seeds of tension and conflict in the present social and economic structure and in man's outlook on the acquisition of wealth and power are not removed, the destruction of human life on this earth will not come to an end. The blood of the innocents will continue to be shed, the oppressor will continue to roar in his pride and the sigh of the innocents will continue to come into conflict with him in one part of the world or the other. It is not a question of Bangla Desh alone. The case of Bangla Desh is a pointer which should set at least those who are thoughtful athinking. The desire should be aroused in the people of this country to disregard Europe, America and China and to build a society, an economy and a system of government which will not carry in it the seeds of violence, hatred and conflict. Man should receive the kind of training calculated to give birth to a consciousness free from the desire to dominate and amass and the habits of jealousy and ill-will. Only when such a consciousness has been aroused, shall I agree that the citizen in India has learnt the right lessons. Events go on taking place in history. Man takes the steps necessary to meet the situations as they arise but he does not care to go to the root of the matter. He does not turn the searchlight within. He resorts only to palliatives and expedients, moves forward without finding the solutions that will resolve the problem. So ignorant is man.

I and you will stay here for five days. Your minds will be perturbed. I am not less pained and agonised. But I am not

worried in the manner you are worried. I do not have any worry or fear. Pain and agony there are but there is no worry or fear. What is the use of worrying when the natural consequences of our way of life face us? It is entirely thoughtless to be a victim of fear and worry, if I have done what I could do in so far as it touched my life. It is unwise to worry because worrying as a habit is a greater piece of folly. And, therefore, I am pained and agonised but not worried or afraid.

I should like to make a few suggestions and requests relating to our conduct during the four or five days we propose to stay here. When you go in for a wash and a bath, you put away the apparels in which you are dressed. You do not take your bath dressed in all your apparels, however precious and dear they may be to you. So during the five days we are here we will have a real bath together and put away all those apparels which cover our consciousness.

These apparels are our relationships. A single person is someone's husband, someone else's father or wife or mother or daughter or daughter-in-law or neighbour or mistress or servant. The caste to which you belong or your state or language are all but the outer coverings. Your name too is an outer covering. The name was given to your body. During the next five days cast away these coverings that you are a Jain or a Hindu, a man or a woman, a husband or a wife, one named Nirmala or Kamala or Uma. No one has a claim on you. You are a limb of the universal life, a ray of the universal consciousness, a wave of the ocean of the universe. I shall talk about the coverings within the coverings later on, the subtler coverings of faith and belief of theories and ideas, attitudes and conditionings. At the moment I am talking only about the outer coverings woven round your relationships with others which anyone can comprehend. There can be no communion with the truth and wisdom unless these coverings of consciousness are removed. Just as you cannot bathe with your dress on, so you cannot enter into communion with the truth with all your outer habiliments about you. For five days we shall be only human beings. Leave alone for the present all talk about the waves of the sea of consciousness and the rays of the universal life. You might get the impression that I am

berately eschewed the phrase 'meditation sittings' during the last one year. Please do not use the phrase 'meditation camp'. You may call it a camp for community life, a camp where friends meet with no set purpose, a place where there is a union of those who love each other.

Our brother, Sri Kishan Singh Chawda, put it well that we are all friends here and no one is senior or junior. No one has come here to influence anyone else. We are here to enter into communication with one another and to open up a new dimension in the spiritual field, that of friendship. Since I have travelled much in realms beyond the senses and the mind, it may be that I shall talk more than others. That is all. Talk and communication on the level of friendship are no part of life in the spiritual world. They go there to sit at the feet of someone, to accept someone as the *guru*, to propagate their way of life. Take it from me there is no such purpose here. What we want is pure, unadulterated communication between friends. When this new dimension of friendship will open up, there will be no desire on the part of those who have realised the self to dominate, possess, establish, propagate, transform or influence, none of these diabolical and in human desires. Our companionship here and the joy of communication will be free and untainted, if we will not want to secure anything, if we will try to learn and understand, if we will not try to limit the truth to the life of the person who is more advanced than us, if we will not take his life as the limit of the truth of life. On my part I extend the hand of such a friendship. It is for you to decide what you want. But if you have come here to be influenced, you will be disappointed. You will have submissions here and conversation but no claims and authoritative pronouncements. I am unable to put up even with the use of such words as 'a claim' or purpose of converting you to my views or asking you to accept anything. I feel that if I did this, I would be insulting you. The fragrance of a flower reaches you and for a moment your entire inner being is perfumed. Would you say that you have been influenced? Only the pellucid purity of your inner being has blossomed out. If this kind of mutual communication of beauty and splendour serves to awaken joy and good cheer, it is of the very nature of life.

One word more and I shall have finished the discourse for this evening. Please remember that the spiritual state is not divorced from life. You go to a University to study various branches of learning, Physics, Chemistry, Zoology. Spiritualism is not just one out of the many branches of learning. The range and reach of the spiritual life is as vast as life itself. Not a whitless vast. When you enter the spiritual life, you develop a new angle of vision towards life. You get an understanding of the science of life, the art of living. It is the Yoga of life. You understand the meaning of life and the mystery of birth and death. You understand the relationship of the individual with the universe. It is like looking at the universal consciousness which smiles behind the veil of the individual consciousness, face to face. It is not that you destroy the veil. You only move it aside. This is what the spiritual life is, and therefore, it is not something which could be practised outside life. It has to be practised where you are stationed, in the midst of family in which you are born, the region to which you belong, not outside it. If you are not able to practise it in your life by day and night, you cannot practise it anywhere else. If you cannot acquire the art of looking into yourself, in the context of the relationships available to you, there is nowhere else where you could practise it.

If we cannot attain self-realization in the midst of the relationships in which we live, it will not help to build new relationships. The people by your side in the family circle provide, real, living challenges and invitations. You cannot carry on your spiritual endeavours by turning your face away from them and joining any nurseries.

Of course, if it is swimming or motor driving that you want to learn, you can join the training centres. You might find it useful to give some time to the task of learning how to use your body, mind and speech. But what is known as the spiritual life is to be lived where you are. It is a vibration aroused by turning your face towards and not away from life. And that which you call God, the Lord, That which pervades life, Brahma, the Supreme Being, the Divinity (I do not know what all are the names you have given to Him) is not separate from and outside the universe. You can realise his pervasive-

ness, his supremacy in everything from the tiniest atom to the mind of man. It may be that the Divinity is there inherent within you and me, our human body, and the man purified and perfected in his totality is the most beautiful manifestation of the Divinity. It may be that the human body itself is the best image of the Lord. It may be that the key to all the mysteries of the universe lies hidden in this corporeal frame, five and a half digits high. Therefore, the search for the supreme pervasive reality must be made within and not outside. The body, the mind, the intellect must all be pressed into service. Do not think that the body and the senses must not be used. There is nothing that is useless in the Lord's universe. Everything is both useful and beautiful in its proper context. So the search will be within and every thing speech, mind, intellect, heart and the senses will be pressed into service in a balanced and scientific manner. We shall not indulge in excesses and unbalanced activity in the name of spiritual discipline. If we will run after sensation and unbalanced living in the name of spiritual endeavour at the very start we will have to face many difficulties.

Here we will talk about the life of the spirit which is neither outside nor less comprehensive than life. The glory of the divinity is in the totality and worldliness consists in splitting up the totality. The attempt to divide that which is indivisible is the only error and unreality.

We will consider the difference between diversity and being divided later on. Diversity is an ornament, a beautification of the unity of life. It will be there. But it is a mistake to impose division on variety and diversity and many mistakes flow from it.

I have put before you just a picture in words of what is going to take place here in the next four days. You have come here away from hearth and home and taken the plunge with me at considerable risk. I am charmed by your quest for the truth and your freedom from fear. May the Lord make our stay here full of joy and may this joy be pure and untainted because it would be founded on friendship.

December 15, 1971

Discourse 2

The responsibility of one who is born in India is a hundredfold greater than that of those born in other countries of the world. It is for the individual here to treat this responsibility as a matter of good fortune or misfortune. The responsibility stems from the fact that people in this country have been making experiments to understand life for the last at least ten thousand or at the most fifty thousand years. Brave, patient, serious men have made heroic endeavours in this field. They have spoken about their outlook on life, their experiences, their philosophy of life. Out of what they have said have evolved whole systems of order and government, ethical systems, systems relating to our inner and outer, our individual and collective life. Various modes of thought and expression have blossomed forth and there is no part of the world which is so richly endowed with knowledge relating to ways of understanding life as India. And, therefore, a person born in the human body in this country has a responsibility a hundred times greater than that of those born in other lands. Similarly people born in Europe, America and Russia have a heavy responsibility in stating their views on matters relating to science, sociology, economics and politics because they have made experiments in these fields.

To discharge our responsibility the first thing we must do is to get acquainted with the words which seem to be familiar but are really not so. Words point to certain facts and these facts have a form and content of their own. These facts are co-related and these co-relations must be noticed and understood. The doors of the unknown will not be opened unless we are fully acquainted with that which is known. The door to the unknown is really that which is known. If you are not acquainted with the ego, you will not find the door to the self. The ego is the door to the self. If you do not know the finite, you will never know the infinite which is established in the finite. The Infinite dwells in the bodily frame of the finite. The unknown is hidden in the form of the known. The glory of the unmanifest lies hidden behind the curtain of the mani-

fest and the nameless smiles behind the name and the form. There is no other door.

It is a vain effort on the part of one unacquainted with the known to aspire for the unknown. The passage towards liberation lies in an understanding of the known. Once you have understood the known, neither the known nor your limitations act as a fetter and bondage. The manifest and the finite serve as means for the unfoldment of the unmanifest and the infinite.

Therefore, get acquainted with words, rip them open to see the realities pointed out by them. If this is not done, quest and endeavour are just traditional phrases which you wear like a necklace round your neck. 'An aspirant', 'a student', 'a person in search of the self and the good' are not titles like Padma Shri and Padma Bhushan which any Government could confer on you. These are not titles you could win in the world outside. They mean that your perception and understanding of that within has blossomed out.

There are three words which you must understand well—morality, religion and spiritualism. Moral rules are rules which provide the guidelines to individuals and communities in the conduct of life. 'Ni' the root of the Sanskrit word 'niti' means to lead, guide or conduct. Trace the roots of words even as you explore the sources of the Ganga and Yamuna. Watch the light of the meaning flowing through them. Have you ever put yourself in touch with the flow of facts? What are words to us? Saint Akha Bhagat says, 'You put betel leaves in your mouth but do not chew them. If you do not chew the leaves, how could the colour, the taste, the quality be savoured? All of it will go to waste.'

There is a science of ethics. Ethics is the construction of well-organised and well-ordered rules that govern. There are sciences governing our inner life and the outer one. There are the social sciences, the sciences of Economics and Politics. Men are governed by them and their activities are channelised in particular directions. There is a string running through the flowers in a garland and man has to accept certain rules and principles before his life can take a definite direction.

Rules and principles do not have any inherent power to

govern. Science can unfold secrets but it has no power to govern. Moral principles suffer from the same handicap. They have no inherent power to govern.

Man has built up so many religions, but those versed in the scriptures do not govern. They read the scriptures and give elaborate commentaries but more than that there is nothing they can do. Religion has a twofold function to perform. Since scriptures and moral codes do not have the power to rule, its first function is to make up for this deficiency. It is thus that the priestly class has come into power, whether the priest is a Catholic, a Protestant, a Presbyterian, a Methodist or a priest of the Hindus or Jains or Buddhists or Muslims. The priests in politics are your elected representatives, and those in the realm of economics, the businessmen. In the field of religion the priests are the rulers. They lay down the law as to what is virtue or vice, right or wrong, full of religious merit or devoid of it. The priest puts up the danger signals so that the social order may remain in tact out of fear. He holds out promises so that men may observe the moral rules out of greed. If even this does not work, there is a class ready to mete out punishment. There are penal laws like those administered by kings. They will do penance for you, foster notions about hell and paradise, virtue and sin. Briefly this is the history of what has happened during the last ten thousand years.

So much about one class of priests. Religion has evolved yet another class. This is the class which undertakes to acquaint you with the powers lying hidden in man's body and mind as well as the unlimited powers beyond the body which are immanent in every atom of the universe. They go further and seek to establish a relationship between these two kinds of powers. They seek to build a whole body of doctrines and statutes so that the body, the mind and the vital force might be kept in a sound and beautiful state and they will tell you the ways in which a relationship could be established between the corporeal frame and the universe. There are powers hidden in the realms of the super mind beyond the senses. They would first develop the powers hidden in the mind, the body and the vital force and then go on to link these fully evolved

powers with the powers immanent in the universe. It is out of such efforts that your Sankhya Yoga, Nyaya, Vaisheshik, Poorva Mimamsa and Uttar Mimamsa systems of philosophy were born. The whole body of thought of the Agamas in Jainism and of Nagarjuna in Buddhism rests on such efforts.

So this section of the priestly class evolved numerous systems of philosophy and paved the way to the evolution of practices in Hatha Yoga seeking to develop the hidden energy in the human body. Attempts to transform the sexual urge through physical exercises and to investigate the powers hidden in sound vibrations have been made by practitioners of *tantra*, *mantra* and *laya yogas*.

In Bhakti yoga the effort has been to know the nameless and the formless by hearing about and constant musing and repeated and profound meditation on the power of the nameless and the formless hidden in the name and the form.

All these efforts belong to the realm of religion. Effort is their essence and it is necessary to take recourse to adepts for direction and exposition of the methods involved. So a section of the priestly class came to be engaged in esoteric practices.

Thus there are these two things, the rule of the laws of morality and the order imposed by religion. Religion holds and binds together. Spiritualism is the fountain head of freedom. It is the region in which we enter and settle down in the consciousness beyond the body, the mind and the vital force. We are neither within nor without. We are at the bridge which connects the doors of the within and the without. There is no rule or government here. The statutes for the regulation of the collective life do not apply because we are not concerned with human society only. Besides human beings there are the animals, birds, trees, rivers, seas, the sky, the sun, the moon, the stars and an infinity of forms.

Religion can lay down the law relating to human relationship. But the spiritual life is to be established in that which seeks to establish a relationship not only with the powers within and without but goes beyond into an existence beyond power where the relationship is between this entire world and the consciousness which vibrates through the universe. As

long as the centre of the consciousness is in the body and the mind, there is the need to order and govern. But the moment the centre of consciousness crosses over to the other side of the bridge, there is no controlling and governing. Then it is freedom. Freedom becomes the very nature of life. They aspire for freedom in the world today. The call of the age in the world of politics is for the initiative and the freedom of the individual. The realm of spiritualism is the playground of perfect freedom and spontaneous control. That is why no problem facing the world today can be solved without resort to the spiritual life.

Man today yearns restlessly for liberation in the world of politics, economics and ethics. In politics they talk in terms of democracy; in religion, in terms of yoga; in economics in terms of the freedom of the society of producers. So inevitably they must leave the realms of religion and ethics and enter into the realm of spiritualism, a realm of freedom for the individual free from exploitation.

One who is regimented in his inner life can never be a good citizen in a democracy. One who is in a state of slavery cannot practice either democracy or socialism. And so it is for you to make the choice, whether you want the rule of ethics and that of some priest who stands between you and the Lord and the universal forces or a state of freedom.

The mentality of the slave and the mentality of one who loves and yearns for freedom are totally different. The chemical reactions in the two states are entirely different.

Knowingly or unknowingly, you have come in the presence of one who is a living flame of revolution. In her flesh and blood you will find nothing except freedom. There is no room for compromise here, or synthesis or adjustment and no desire to order and control. None of these things will be outwardly manifest here. Whether the music of an inner self-control is there within, it is for you to find out for yourself. Just as no one claims that he is beautiful so the presence of an inner harmony is not something to be claimed. Others could see it for themselves.

December 16, 1971

Questions and Answers

Question : You say that the known is the door to the unknown. Could we infer from this that for seeing and understanding the unknown, the mind is a means and an instrument ?

Answer : No, you cannot infer this. I have said that the known is the door to the unknown, not that the knower is the door. An understanding of the known opens up the door to the unknown—that is all that I have said. I have not said that the known itself is the door to the unknown. The question you should have asked is this 'How can the ego be the door to the self?' That is where the question should have arisen. It has arisen on the circumference. It has not gone home to the centre.

I said that the known is the door to the unknown, that the finite is the door to the unknown, that the finite is the door to the infinite, that the ego is the door to the self. True, the known is a door in itself, but who is going to open it? It is a proper perception, understanding, comprehension and recognition of the known as the known that will open it. Otherwise the known is lying there all the time and does not turn into a door because we have not seen it as it should be seen. Since it is the known we imagine that we are acquainted with it, but we are not acquainted with it. So the known will be a door only when we are acquainted with it. We have a perception of its true character only after getting acquainted with it. It is only after a proper perception that we can be friends with it. So it is friendship with the known that opens the doors of the unknown. The mind is an instrument for gathering knowledge. But for understanding and gaining the certitude of conviction, the instrument is not the mind but your whole being, your totality, what you are from top to toe including the body, the mind and the vital force.

Question : What is the difference between self-analysis and

merciless self-criticism? (*The question was put in English, though the discourse was being delivered in Hindi.*)

Answer : It is unfortunate that this question and answer programme cannot be carried on in English. It is a pleasure to speak in a language which everyone in the audience understands. Every language has its personality, its atmosphere. The pronunciation, the modulation of the voice, the splendours of meaning and connotation—all combine to create the atmosphere. Have you ever noticed the atmosphere of a language? Have you noticed the difference between different forms of Gujarati—the nuances and stresses of Gujarati as it is spoken in Bhavnagar or Surat or Bombay? Every form has its own charms, its features, its gestures and mannerisms. You do not have the time to notice all this. You are too engrossed in making money, earning a name or building a reputation or meeting the wishes of the members of your family.

Well, the question is 'What is the difference between self-analysis and merciless self-criticism?' There is a lot of difference. In self-analysis you obtain information about the hereditary qualities and defects of your body and mind. You study the role of society and the social environment in the formation of your habits, qualities and defects. You get to know the reasons for your behaviour as a social and economic man in the environment in which you are placed.

There are reasons to account for your modes of thinking, living and acting. These reasons may be direct or indirect, immediate or remote. Self-analysis enables you to discover the causal relationship between your inherited tendencies and ways of approach and your bodily and mental behaviour. It also helps you in finding out the rational and chemical causes of your activities. If we take Western psychology into account, we find that Western psychology now covers a wide field. It is no longer Western. Psychological studies are in a much more advanced state in Russia than in America, more advanced in Bulgaria than in Rumania. You have to take into account various schools from Freud through Adler and Jung to Martin, from U.S.A. to Russia because self-analysis is their special forte and impact reaches out to Marx and Lenin. The self-confessions they have among the Bolsheviks

and the Mensheviks when party members sit together is only a refined form of self-analysis.

On the other hand in the context of 'merciless self-criticism' we Indians would do well to understand the meaning of the word 'criticism.' Criticism is of two kinds, constructive and destructive. If you confine yourself to anyone of these aspects, the examination will be incomplete. If a critic points out the mistakes and shortcomings, it is his moral responsibility to suggest ways of removing the shortcomings. You are not a critic, if you stop at pointing out the shortcomings. Some of you here must have studied Western logic and philosophy. Even the name of Kant's work is 'Critique'. Those who study logic read the book. So what is signified by criticism in the Indian languages is by no means adequate. It does not cover the entire field and we must not do an injustice to words.

So let us see what is it that we need for self-criticism. We must have criteria, standards of evolution, codes of conduct in the light of which conclusions could be arrived at. In the absence of these no criticism is possible.

Criticism means a balanced examination. In this camp where some forty to fifty people have gathered together we proceed cautiously to arrive at the root of the matter. Hence we do not deliver speeches. Instead we open up channels of communication. That is the whole beauty of such a camp, and I am very pleased with this kind of living together. I am keen and eager in this kind of atmosphere to open windows, throw out suggestions, direct attention. It is one of life's greatest blessings—this companionship of aspirants in quiet seclusion. There is nothing better to be obtained in life than the companionship of those who are in quest of the self and the good life.

So the critic must have a clear, balanced vision and there can be no balance if your concepts are not clear and firm. The critic's job is a highly responsible one. For self-criticism your thinking must be balanced and inwardly directed. Criticism involves self-observation and self-examination.

And why should self-criticism be merciless? For self-analysis it would do, if you do not observe for yourself. Another could

observe and report the position to you and you could see the position. There could be an element of self-pity in this. It is natural that you should be biased in your favour. A defence mechanism is there working all the time not only while you are awake but even in deep sleep. You want to transfer the responsibility for mistakes to others and to appropriate the credit for the good qualities like the clever trader who tilts the balance of his pair of scales in his own favour and you are unable even to notice when and how the scale was tilted. The green grocer is doing it all the day long to make a profit of a few annas at the day's end. Even so being biased in your own favour, you gather quite a bit of good opinion about yourself by the time you go to bed. Since this kind of partiality for your own self is there in your blood, self-criticism must be 'merciless'. The word appears to have a negative connotation but it has a positive suggestion. It denotes the sort of positive state which is free from any element of self-pity, partiality or self-justification. So the word 'merciless' is quite an interesting one. It has a negative look, but is positive in character. The self-criticism must be free from bias or pity or the desire to justify your position. Otherwise you would be holding the brief for your own case and pleading your own cause. That is why self-criticism must be merciless. But in self-analysis there is no suggestion of the need for freedom from bias and self-defence. Truly speaking there are few people who have the capacity to practise self-analysis and that is why we have so many professional psycho-analysts and psychiatrists with their sign boards fixed up outside their offices waiting to attend on you like paid servants. You have only to pay the bills for analysing you. It is you who live and they who analyse. We have an unbalanced diet, we fall ill, go to the doctor and pay the fees. It is for him to diagnose the trouble and prescribe the medicines.

Self-criticism requires unbiased observation, free from any desire to absolve yourself. No one can do any self-criticism unless he is equal to the task of looking at his behaviour in practical life in its totality. Observation is the one thing needful. Self-analysis is concerned with a particular happening, a particular malady, its causes, its cure and its treatment. In

self-criticism there is no particular happening to be watched. Life has to be viewed in its totality. Now what are the standards of evaluation, the criteria-norms which you could make use of in such a context? I talked in the morning about ethics, religion, politics and economics and various sciences which you could press into service to evaluate, form an opinion and arrive at a conclusion. So now you see the difference between self-analysis and self-criticism.

Question : I cannot weep out wholeheartedly, I want to weep but there is something which prevents me from doing so. I feel like resorting to some device, even if it is an artificial one, which would make me weep wholeheartedly. They must do so something, anything, sing a sorrowful song to make me weep. The tears are there but there must be an occasion or a pretext which would make them flow out freely.

Answer : It is no weeping if another has to make you weep. The flowers of tears should grow out of the heart. The momentary restlessness which is caused or aroused by others is not genuine. And if these flowers are there in the heart, there is nothing to worry over. Is the flowing out of tears a duty to be performed? Somebody should make me weep. Some one should provide the occasion. 'I am unable to weep out'—please do not take these statements lightly. It is a moving question. The smiles and tears of ninety-nine out of a hundred persons are not spontaneous. Is the ability to weep out a sort of an accomplishment which you are keen to acquire? What after all is this desire to weep? The only good point in it is that it indicates that all our laughter is artificial. It is not the questioner's individual problem. It is only that the question has come to the fore through an individual. The tragedy of the human condition is reflected in the question. We all know how thoroughly trained we are in shedding false, artificial tears and scattering artificial smiles. There is not an echo of it in the throat. Have you not noticed the ugliness of artificial laughter? It is part of our life. Some authentic seeker gives expression to the truth once in a while. But if the hypocrisy of artificial laughter is set at rest, the value of genuine tears would become apparent. You will not have to shed tears. You will go out in search of the fountain heads where tears are

born. Something I do not like, something opposed to my interests takes place. It hurts me and I weep. Now see the difference between the tears that rise up on the surface and those that rise out of your totality. There is not much of a difference between the tears and the smiles born of compassion. We really do not allow our suffering, our pain, our agony to touch the depths of our totality. How then can you have the boon of true weeping? You are pained, agonised, your ego is hurt and tears flow out. The next moment they dry up. Somebody turns up, praises you, flatters you or begs for a favour. There is an impact on your ego. You are inflated. Neither your tears nor your smiles have any potency in them. Have you noticed the bubbles sent up by children out of soapy water? Our laughter, our smiles, our weeping, our tears are nothing better than these bubbles. They disintegrate as easily. They are less short-lived than the flowers which die in the very moment of their birth. They cannot move anyone. There is just a jolt given to the mind because something it does not like has taken place and tears flow out. It means you lack the power of resistance, you are like the fragile person who catches cold the moment a cool breeze blows past him. You are a person without any power of resistance, any vitality—a bloodless being.

My brother too who has sent this question does not ask for such tears. Let us consider the question in depth. What are our wishes and desires? I expect something from the world. The members of my family have their desires and ambitions. These expectations and desires are deep-seated. The frustrations are not superficial. Listen to them deeply. Some of the expectations are known to me, and some are lying asleep. They are not fulfilled. I make efforts to meet them but do not succeed. So there are tears that arise following the non-fulfilment of deep-seated yearnings and expectations. These tears stay longer with us. They are not shortlived. They are sour and bitter and they cause harm. They cast a shadow of disappointment and yearning clouds of despair rise up in the heart. How tired do we feel if there is no sunshine and no breezes are blowing? There is the ego at the centre and man knows well enough that all of his wishes and desires cannot be

fulfilled. Even then he laughs when he succeeds and sheds tears when he fails. Life's truth does not lie even here. You have to go deeper into it. The mind is wiser. It is more sensitive. It wants to embrace the totality of life through the senses but is not able to do so. It wants to hold the beloved, the Lord, that which pervades all in its grip. It wants to grasp and catch the Lord in a net of concepts. To a certain extent it is successful, but there is much of Him that eludes its grasp. The Lord enjoys playing tricks. If a part of Him is manifested, there is a greater part which continues to remain unmanifest. The mind aspires to seize the whole through its imperfect resources. With the pair of tongs of birth and death it wants to reach out and seize the whole, the indivisible. When it fails to take the whole in its grasp, it is restless. It is puzzled. It is full of eagerness and yearning and restlessness. It is a divine discontent.

All bondages are galling whether it is a bondage of the senses or the mind or the vital force. Any limitation torments and life appears to be like a noose being tightened round our necks. That is what is there at the bottom of man's restlessness. A Siddhartha, a Gauranga, a Gaurhari, a Chaitanya starts on the journey towards the unknown. All the prizes of the senses, the mind and the intellect lose their charm. They become tasteless and insipid because the perception that they are imperfect is there all the time. The thirst for the Infinite and the Absolute makes him cry out. The quest now is in search of experience. This yearning for self-realization is some Radhika going out to her tryst. This is the cry of the totality, the imperfect yearning restlessly to unfold and express the perfect and a Gauranga or a Siddhartha takes the road. A Krishnamurthi kicks his throne of the universal teacher and quietly starts on the journey. These are not tears which somebody else can arouse. Have you noticed the relationship between the rains and the summer's heat, the manner in which the two cooperate? Clouds rise out of the waters of the sea under the heat of the sun. So the spirit of enquiry acts like the hot sun for the self. The heart tends to be drawn towards the light of perfection vibrating through the universe, the light of the true, the auspicious and the

good. These are the clouds forming themselves out of the quest for the truth and they spread and cover up the entire sky of the mind and the heart. The spiritual yearning runs through every particle of the senses. The heat which brings the rains is generated by the spiritual yearning. First there are the tears of yearning and restlessness. These are followed by tears of the joy of union and self-realization.

So my friend, it is not enough to bring down tears by asking someone to sing a sorrowful song. Ask some Manna Dey or Sashi Kapur or Shammi Kapur or Raj Kapur. He will do a bit of acting and bring down tears in your eyes. Ask a narrator of the story of the Bhagwat or the Ramayan. He will give you a moving recital and induce weeping. But blessed are the tears that rise up when the whole being, from top to toe, the head and every fibre of your being, is involved, and blessed are they who witness such tears.

So my very dear, though unknown, friend, throw away the robes of false laughter. Do not hanker after social reputation. Do not look into the eyes of others to form an opinion about yourself. Form your own settled conviction about the truth of life. Turn the searchlight inwards and search the beloved there. The Lord is very skilled in the art of making us weep. Do not worry about that. He would make you weep even in union and not only in separation. May the Lord grant you the gift of such tears.

Question : In your book, 'The Eternal Voyage' you have referred to a conversation with Krishnamurthi and remarked, 'Let me acknowledge this much that the encounter filled me with a restless yearning. I had no part in it. There was no relationship of cause and effect.' Is it only now that the cause-effect relationship has been laid bare?

Answer : Suppose the relationship has been laid bare. How does it help the questioner in his journey within? The relationship is quite clear. When the individual ceases to identify his individual consciousness with a particular body or name or form or race or religion or country or system of thought or code of conduct or value of lie, the light of the universal consciousness travels in his physical body, his small mind, brain and intellect. The travail is not less severe than the one

undergone by Bhagirath when, according to the Puranas, he made the effort to receive and bring down the Ganga on earth. The power received is unbearable. The power of the nerves, the marrow, the senses of the physical body are limited. The senses undergo a total transformation following the union with and the descent of the universal power. The senses shed their limitations. The limitations of the mind and the intellect come to an end. Then truly is there the empire of the Infinite in the finite. There is nothing which remains unknown. The separateness between the known and the unknown disappears. The moment the individual consciousness withdraws its centre from the body and the mind, the universal consciousness steps in and makes the body of the individual its own centre. There is no longer any meaning in calling the individual an individual or the universe because the separation between the individual and the universe is not there. His voice is no longer the voice of an individual. It has turned into the universal voice. You must not link this voice with the voice of the person known as Vimal.

The moment the individual consciousness is laid bare completely and all the layers of identification have been discarded one after the other, the difference between the individual and universe is obliterated. The obliteration of the difference is really what is meant by the descent of the Lord's grace. At the moment there is no perception of it in the physical body. There is only a vague inference but no preception that the universal consciousness is centred within but the happening itself is so very powerful that you feel like being suffocated by its presence. So the uncovering of the individual is the descent of the Lord's grace. The two happenings are not separate. All the words in the phrase 'the descent of an unheard power' rest on this point. The process of dissolution of the ego should be watched. The creation of void on this side synchronises with the manifestation of the Whole as viewed from the meeting point of the Void and the Whole, the Shiva and the Shakti.

So let us not use the word relationship because there are no two happenings and no two independent existences. The wholeness is manifested as soon as the vacuity is awakened.

Question : 'Would you be where you are today, if the aforesaid incident had not taken place in your life ?

Answer : No happening is accidental. Since man is not practised in looking at his own life in the totality, he goes on tracing cause and effect with the aid of his intellect. If some thing happens he thinks that either there is an element of the accidental or there is a causal relationship. But if a cause and effect relationship is not there, do not think that it is a case where destiny is playing a part. By saying that there is no causal relationship you create another source of tension because words like 'destiny' come in handy and this leads to dualism and its tensions. There is bound to be dualistic thinking in the context of a dualistic happening. Here the angle of vision is not dualistic. There is no element of relativity. My difficulty is that whatever might be the medium of my language, the words I use are bound to be dualistic. The moment I begin to speak about one thing, the other thing peeps in. I can see the tension in the mind and the eyes of the hearer. Even before I have finished a sentence, tension is created on the other side. So it is not a matter of fate or destiny. What I am driving at is that the ascent is that of the totality while our own mind is fixed on only a part of it.

Our angle of vision is determined by what is the high-lighting point. 'This was what was bound to take place. There was a co-relation between it and the ascent of the totality.' Those who believe in destiny forget the effort of the individual in this correlation. They imagine that the occurrence of the incident was perhaps necessary for the ascent of the totality and that is why it took place. The aspirant, he who seeks the self, is never alone in any of his efforts. The whole of totality is eager to render assistance. It runs out to help. Your eyes are fixed on your efforts and, therefore, you fail to notice or comprehend the cooperation you receive. Never in this world was there an aspirant who was left alone by God even if he dwelt in the loneliest of places. If the aspirant takes one step towards the truth and God, the totality takes ten steps to meet him. That is why I say the incident was bound to take place. So your question, where I would have been today if the incident had not occurred, is entirely conjectural. Why

should you be so inquisitive. This is merely curiosity and no quest. How is the questioner concerned with where I would be or fail to be? The thing has happened and the credit for it goes neither to Krishnamurti nor to Vimal.

The law of love is operating in life. You have your law of gravitation in science. Even so there are certain laws operating in life and these laws will operate in the case of anyone who enters this sphere of life. Instead of Krishnamurti it could be some Ramamurti, instead of Vimal it could be a Kamal. Do not go by names and forms. Look at the vibrating truth of the person's life. Look at the beauty and the charm of it. It does not matter whether the vehicle is Krishnamurti or Vimal, the life of Krishnamurti or Vimal. Vehicles there could be, there have been. The important thing is the totality that moves them.

Therefore, do not give the credit to individuals. Do not say that the entire credit goes to Krishnamurti. 'If he were not there, where would this one be today.' All these misconceptions are due to the fact that we are not firmly established in the truth. Take it that Krishnamurti instantly repudiated the story recorded in the book in question. But this does not satisfy anyone. There will be others, devotees of Vimal, who will say, "This happened in the life of sister Vimal. Why could it not happen in someone else's life? The credit belongs to her". Both are guilty in the eyes of the truth.

How is it important which way the wind blows and which are the leaves and the branches through which it blows. Men will come and men will go. What the aspirant out on the quest has to see and to learn is—how far does the person in search of the self go? What are the signs of maturity in him? Where has his maturity taken him? This really is what is to be seen. Curiosity only pulls the seeker backwards. That is how sectarian groups are formed. No sectarian groups could be formed, if there is the genuine spirit of enquiry.

Question : You talked this morning about one's own natural state of being and the spontaneous life. Please elaborate.

Answer : The dimension of spontaneity is a dimension beyond the mind and the intellect. The nature of the senses is their own. The nature of the senses, the mind and the intellect, their

fundamental tendencies, are not what you have earned and given them. It is not that the sex urge, anger, fear, envy must be under everybody's own control. Hunger, thirst, sleep are not tendencies that man himself has acquired. These are tendencies which he has inherited along with his body. They are inborn and innate tendencies but they have their version which is the result of culture also. They are cultivated as a result of education, literary studies, social and economic environment, religion, and ethical teaching. The tendencies acquired by the body and the mind as a result of heredity are so strong that our entire behaviour is moulded and controlled by them. Now there are some who have transcended the body, the mind and the intellect and have identified themselves not with their bodies but with the totality. The dimension of the totality is opened up when you are in tune and harmony with the totality. It is a new dimension. Total humility and orientation towards the reality come into play spontaneously without any cultivation or training.

The English word 'spontaneity' expresses only one aspect of its beauty and splendour. The tenderness and elasticity of humility is blended with the spontaneity of receptivity and a new dimension is born which brings about a qualitative change in your ways of seeing and responding without let or hindrance. It is a state which is neither natural and innate nor acquired and cultivated. Your attempts to train and cultivate reach only upto the limits of the intellect. If consciousness too were amenable to training and cultivation, it could be said about consciousness as well that it is pure or impure. It is only in relation to the body, the mind, the intellect, the senses and the ego that you can make your attempts at training and conditioning. Consciousness cannot be trained or conditioned. How can any influences work on that which is awake even in deep sleep. So this is what spontaneity is.

December 16, 1971

Discourse 3

For his own satisfaction and to sustain life man takes meals and goes to sleep. Equally necessary is the nourishment provided by silence. There are five elements of which four are earth, water, air and fire and the fifth is ether (*akasha*) which is as much a substance as the other four. We go into *maun* (silence) to draw nourishment from this subtle ethereal substance. Silence means taking in and retaining the ether within and without. For clean living we wash and dress. To give rest to the mind we go to sleep. Similarly for cleaning and giving a wash and rest to the vital element in us, it is absolutely necessary that we should go into silence. The chief reason why there is such a lack of inner satisfaction and balance in the life of the modern man is that he has almost completely lost touch with solitude, silence and space. People today seek solitude either to enjoy or to achieve some special purpose. The dimension of solitude has disappeared from the life of the common man. As we have forgotten the art of going into silence and solitude, we do not have any opportunities of washing out and removing the dirt and depression which we accumulate in the course of the day-long activities of the mind, the body and speech.

Even if there are some who sit in silence, they do so only to obtain something, to get an experience or satisfy a desire. This is not silence. Those who put a stop to all activity and use inactivity as a means of achieving a purpose are neither in solitude nor silence. Silence is not the absence of speech and activity. It is not a device to lapse into inactivity. You cannot bring it about by merely avoiding society. You go into seclusion to secure an end—'I shall see things, secure something, do something.' You are burning with a desire for some experience. How could a man have solitude and silence if all the while the mind and the desire to obtain and secure are fully awakened? You only turn back the direction of the mind from activities

without to those within. You withdraw the senses from objects outside only that they should be better engaged with objects within. It makes no difference whether the senses are functioning in the world outside or that within. The senses will gather experiences to be had within. The ego will smile, feed on what is there within and grow fat. 'I saw the name and the form', it will say, 'I had this or that experience, the serpent power within me was awakened, the esoteric circles within were pierced'. The 'I', the ego, will remain in tact as ever. Experiences and the consequences of experience will survive. How can you have silence in the context of all these disturbances?

So let us understand clearly what is meant by a bath and purification in the waters of silence. In all physical activity there is a close relationship between two elements—fire and earth. In mental activity the two elements that are specially at work are air and fire. The element left out is ether (*akasha*). 'From the self is born *akasha*, from *akasha*, air, from air, fire.' We have to establish relationship with the element which comes in between, that is, *akasha*. We can reach the self only after passing through *akasha*. So it is imperative that we should spend some time out of twentyfour hours in solitude and silence. You must find out some time convenient to you when the world has no claims on you and no one calls on and disturbs you. It is true that if you could find some time between midnight and day-break, it would be the best and the most suitable. I am not saying this in the context of any particular religion. This is true for mankind in general. The peace that descends during these hours between midnight and dawn is wonderful. It is a peace that is deep and full of vital energy as if life were eager to wake up and be tuned to the presence. This divine hour is truly congenial. You apply certain formulae and increase the potency of homeopathic and bio-chemic medicines— $30 \times 200 \times 100$. Even so introverts, men who enter silence and samadhi, men engaged in meditation and devotional practices have utilised this period of time to good purpose since time immemorial. There is a special potency in this period of time. It is charged. It has been charged for thousands of years for people who seek union with and rejoice in the spirit. And this is true not only in the case of India. It has

been the experience of those who enter silence during this period that they receive special help from forces flowing outside the body whether they are in the Hawaiian islands or California or New York or London or Paris or Amsterdam or Geneva or Norway. The universal consciousness comes to the aid of the individual consciousness. There is no mystery in this. There is a deep relationship between the five elements within the body and the five outside. Have you never noticed that when you are standing by the side of the ocean, the deep, the endless, the limitless ocean, all the substances within you rejoice and are satisfied? How cool it is, how satisfying, as if the element of water within you were eager to burst forth into laughter? Have you ever gone to the mountains—the Himalayas? In the soundless peace of the place, the element *akasha* (ether) within you is delighted. Have you wandered among the forests? If you have, you must have felt that the deep forest and its utter loneliness have their roots in the earth that is there in the body. It is a unique gesture, this smile of the earth element. You do not know what is happening to the body. It is the union of the streams and the seas, the union of the orchards and the forests. A relationship, a channel of communication, between the five elements within and without is established. The distance between the ethereal element within and that without, between within and outside is an illusion created by the fleshly curtain of the body. The curtain slides away when you are in the state of silence. The imaginary dividing line, apparent to the eye and mind of man, between the *akasha* within the body and the *akasha* of the universe is removed. The gulf is bridged.

So when you will sit with yourself in solitude, not to do or secure anything, the relationship with the part will be snapped and that with the indivisible will be restored. I am saying this because there are some people who are afraid of solitude. They imagine that it is they themselves who are the architects of their lives. They suppose that all that happens and is done is their own handiwork. They are afraid of what might happen to them if they went into solitude and stopped all activity. One who is afraid of solitude will also be afraid of silence because both solitude and silence are rehearsals of death. Death is

there with you in the state of deep sleep but few are the persons who keep awake in the state of deep sleep and see it. Silence and solitude are but the experience of the state of deep sleep in the waking state. It is death on account of our identification with the body and the mind. Death and liberation are not very different. That is why I ask you not to imagine that when activities cease and the mind is no longer at work, you will be like a helpless orphan, benumbed, incapacitated, unable to move. What an illusion? Do you think that when the body is shaken by a rush of feeling and excitement it is life that is moving?

You might as well suppose that it is life that is moving when a motor car or an aeroplane is in locomotion or a telegraphic or telephonic message is being transmitted. And why don't you put your faith in the power of love, love that defeats and transcends time and space? How narrow, shallow, trivial are the senses in which we use words. The body, the senses and the mind too are in ceaseless movement. We should pass through these and recognise the ways of the eternal. Life's movement is entirely different, entirely free. The mind is not free. Thinking can never be free. Feelings are not free. All these have become mechanised over the centuries. Just as a gramophone record is worn out by use, so also these mechanical instruments have become worn out. So the senses, the mind and the intellect are subservient, not sovereign.

So when you go in for a session of silence and solitude you must be at ease. Who are the people who are worried? The people who are worried are the people who want to do something, to secure something. Their worry is 'how shall I proceed? how shall I secure, when shall I secure it, when shall the realisation dawn upon me?' These longings and desires are at the root of the worry and the tension. The tension of time is created by longings and desires. Tensions and pressures have no standing ground when you have nothing to do and nothing to secure.

Time too slides away because time is merely a symbol which the mind utilises. Have no worries, be at ease. Be relaxed in whatever you do, whether you are sitting or standing or lying down. Whatever it is that you are doing at any moment, time

must be passed in such a manner that no inertia or insensibility should be induced. Keep the body in a manner so that no damage is done to your state of attentiveness, and the rhythm of your breathing is not disturbed. We have received no training in the art of watching the body and keeping it restful and free from activity. We give all sorts of training to the children but we give them no training in how to relax and keep the body at rest. You will observe that the body does not remain steady and healthily at rest. This is so because we have not received the necessary training and have not known the heavenly glories of the state of the body when it is at peace, all activity withdrawn. It is a problem how to keep steady because the body has not been made pliable and natural by proper nourishment and relaxation. It is dense and insensitive.

I cannot understand why the body which is so sweet, so tender, so elastic in infancy, comes to lose all these qualities by the time it reaches manhood. Is there no art which could enable us to pass through the sense and object relationships without parting with the tenderness and elasticity of childhood? When we lose these qualities, we fall a prey to our emotional urges and they exact their full tax and toll. Each sense and object relationship exacts its toll and you have to pay it. There is no way of dodging them. Therefore, cultivate the art of passing through the relationships of the objects and senses without allowing your senses to be disfigured by the spots either of attraction or renunciation. Our bodies are not delicate and sensitive. We lose what we have in our childhood. Youth arrives swaggering with its boundless energy. Why should we lose it? Let it gain strength. Let it be taken into old age. Is it necessary that man should be rendered worthless in his old age? It is not at all necessary. We have not learnt the ordinary rules of the art of living, the rules of nourishment, relaxation and sleep, which would enable us to pass through old age and maintain the body in good health. The body could remain healthy in all its splendour and divinity following the withdrawal of outward activities. When the mind receives no cooperation from the senses in its operations because the transactions of the sense-and-object relationship are withdrawn and

there is no sphere of activity outside, it inevitably turns within. So the sphere of its activities is raised, not elevated. I am not talking here about hathayoga where you raise the body so many inches upwards. I am talking about the ascent within, the ascent in the totality. What is the use of raising only the physical body? So we are now at the level of mental activities. The activities of the conscious mind are swift. We are going to sit in silence so I should like to tell you something about the obstacles in the way. Suppose you are able to withdraw the activities of the body as a result of proper nourishment and relaxation. You know the amount of nourishment which is to be given to the body so that the body is not hungry and does not fall into lassitude. They indulge in a great deal of tall talk about landing on the moon and the Mars, about democracy and socialism, equality and Sarvodaya and they do not know that there is some mistake or ignorance connected with the question of proper nourishment lying there within us. So the ideal is that there should be neither a feeling of hunger, nor one of inertia. The body should get its quota of nourishment but there should be nothing left for fermentation. It is fermentation that brings about chemical formations. One should study which are the substances that are congenial and which are the ones that are not suited to the body.

The season and the conditions of life and work should be studied. There are times when you have to put in physical exertion. There are other occasions when you have to do a lot of intellectual work. The diet should be suited to and harmonise with the demands of the hour, the conditions of word and the season of the year. The lord of foodgrains must be propitiated.

Again if the mind and the body get the necessary amount of rest and sleep, you will be in good health and the mind will remain keen, alert and sensitive. If you do not sleep well in the night, you are bound to have a feeling of heaviness during the day. The result is that we sleep when we should be wide awake and the night which is the time for deep sleep is spent in dreaming. How devoid of the joy of life are our ways of living. Life is for the lover. You should fall in love with life and death. This can happen. There are those who live

such a life.

So when the body has become strong, pliable, free from inertia and complexes as a result of proper nourishment and relaxation, the processes of the mind and the conscious, are set in motion. Among the activities of the conscious, you have ideas, fancies, notions and beliefs which are coming in and going out all the time. Memories are recalled. Experiences which you had earlier are repeated. The mind and the intellect are eager to peep into what is to come. Suppose all connection is cut off from the objective world outside, the intellect will ask, "What will happen tomorrow? If this will happen, how will it come about? If this does not happen, what will follow?" There is a great deal of planning. For this the mind takes recourse to imagination because imagination is one of the powers of the mind. Memory is another power of the mind. How do we misuse these faculties! The mind is active—even without a reason or purpose. Shall I do this? Shall I do that? This or that happened in the past. He did this. The other one did that. It begins to wander. Do not check it. The mind which is free from the responsibilities of supervising the bodily activities starts revelling in its own activities. Do not check it, and do not approve or disapprove. That is its way. That is the training it has received from you over a life-time. It is you who have given it practice in wandering here and there aimlessly. The mind which you have spoilt over a life-time will not be reformed in a moment. Know only this much that it is a habit, a way with it. Watch this habit of the mind throughout the day. You will discover how various are the ways in which it is used to wandering. Let it wander. Don't check it. The mind will wander and I will watch the wandering of the mind. Who is this 'I' which is awake in deep sleep and says on getting up in the morning, "I had a good sleep."

It is he who is there. What is his name? He is nameless and let him remain nameless. The moment you give him a name, you will be caught in a mesh of naming, you will give a form to the nameless and get caught in questions relating to form. Is he yours or is he not yours—are controversies which are best left for the philosophers and theologians to revel in.

They have their arguments and systems which they may keep for themselves. Our Akha says, "Don't participate in these controversies. Don't get caught in the controversies of these dry and insensitive philosophers and theologians. I and you have to live."

Be that as it may, that which is awake even when you are asleep, that which watches over your vital life, that which activates your breathing even during deep sleep, that substance or element also views the activities of the mind. Do not check these activities. When do you want to check them? You check them when you want to enjoy or suppress. But you have no wish to enjoy the thought.* What has happened or will happen to you is not what the body will enjoy directly and that which you are imagining for the future cannot be fulfilled here and now because the future is not the present. So do not check them. You will have to summon added resources in order to bring them under check. You will have to develop a new technique, a new code of prohibitions. "This is right. This is not right. This thought is evil." Do not allow these notions of right and wrong to come in between. Only observe the wanderings of the mind with detachment. If you can do this sort of watching, if you will stay in this state of watchfulness, this state itself will not allow you to impose any checks or prohibitions. Both temptations and negations have to be checked.

There must be no revelling in, no renunciation, no comparison, no taking of any decisions. And so the process of incoming and outgoing thoughts is allowed to go on without let or hindrance. As I said earlier we have not received the necessary training. We have not cultivated the art. As you are going to enter silence, it is necessary to point out the obstacles. You have just entered the state of silence. It is not a play thing and you must not expect success on the very first day. It is not that you will enter the state of silence on the first day, enter *samadhi* the next day and attain non-attachment on the third. The spiritual life is not so cheap. It is no child's play.

You cannot attain non-attachment by disregarding the body, nor can you enter the changeless, objectless state by merely refraining from speech for a while. Today they are playing a

diabolical game with one of the most sacred and solemn things in Indian life. I am distressed and full of agony over this development. Everything is becoming commercialised. They have started a regular trade in life-beyond-the-senses. If you will watch the activities of the mind on the conscious level calmly and stay in the state of watchfulness, another state will follow in which you are not the doer or the enjoyer.

They are playing a cheap game with human life. Exploitation of all kinds is going on all round, exploitation by those in authority, by capitalists who hold the purse strings, by priests in the name of religion, and now by those who deal in spiritualism and countenance all manner of immorality, corruption and exploitation of human beings. It is a new form of slavery which is as alluring as it is intoxicating.

So if the state of watchfulness is allowed to stay, tensions and pressures begin to melt away automatically. If the state in which you keep a watch on activities on the conscious level stays on, the unconscious comes up, because for the moment thoughts are set at rest and do not come in and go out. The unconscious projects itself on the screen of the conscious, much like figures moving on the screen in your picture halls. The unconscious is projected on the screen of attention and consciousness.

So it is essential that you should enter into silence. Please do not mind if I am speaking beyond the scheduled time. I am keen to pour out the essence of what I have experienced in life during the days we are together because, you have taken considerable risk in coming here to listen to me.

December 17, 1971

Discourse 4

A state which is not expressed in your conduct and behaviour is no state. It is something superimposed by the imagination, a false attribution of qualities which are not there. A collection of false attributions is not the true state. Just as the true state is not brought about by holding certain ideas, so also it is not the imposition of some ideas. The spiritual state is not a figment of the imagination, it is not a thought, it is not an illusion. Every moment and at every step the Supreme Power is going on with its play. Therefore, it is important that you should make sure that the state of watchfulness stays with you in all your activities throughout the day. It is thus that the capacity is developed of looking simultaneously at the objects, the challenges and the situations in the world outside as well as the actions and the reactions within. We do not have the capacity to hold out, nor do we have the requisite mental vitality. When we are looking outside, we go on looking outside and being borne away by the stream of internal impulses. Both within and without we are being merely borne away. We do not swim.

So the first thing you have to do is to observe whether, in the course of your activities throughout the day, there is any other power too which is at work besides the purposes, the objectives and the aims of the conscious mind. The intellect wants to do one thing on the level of the conscious mind but there is something else which is boiling up in the unconscious, and it rises up on the surface, frustrates all your aims and purposes and acquires dominion over them. You want to say one thing but say something else. You want to do one thing and something entirely different and unrelated, even opposed to what you intended, takes place. You know that you want to do one thing but something else rises up from within, overpowers you and makes you do an entirely different thing. Generally you are at least aware that such a thing is

happening. But there are occasions when even this awareness is lost. You want to do one thing. Another urge or compulsion or demand forces itself up from within and before this enters the focus of your attention, you have done the thing. The contrary impulses entrenched within appear on the conscious level. The watching state is disturbed and upset.

The complexes, the dissatisfactions, the deformations in the unconscious must find expression in your conduct. That is why I told you earlier that any deliberate attempt to stir up and inflame them or to give expression to them is unscientific, undesirable and unnecessary. You only act in a high-handed manner and do violence to yourself. They have developed a new method of medical treatment recently in California, which they try in the case of grave mental disorders. But I am talking here about those who are not mental patients in a serious condition yet. They watch how obstacles, deformations and complexes foil the purposes and aims of the conscious mind in life, how they enslave the conscious mind as well as the intellect. This kind of watching is no joke. It is a serious matter. People take it lightly when I talk about watching and fixing the attention. They do not understand the difference between self-analysis, criticism and investigation. For any activity it is necessary to have a purpose and a sense of the doer. Without a special purpose there is no activity. While we are engaged in examination, we do not know what it is that will come up from the unconscious. It is when man is fully awakened about the circumstances outside that he is able to see the true character of the reactions of the unconscious mind. It is a third faculty of the unconscious which controls and directs the conscious mind which now does the seeing. A whole field is opened up for observation. The attention is deepened, the range of the sight is widened. Both are at work together, the depth and intensity as well as the range of observation. It is now that man's pride and self-conceit begin to crumble. The illusions which he had formed about himself, that he was clever and efficient, that he was free from the taints of desire, envy, anger and sexuality, crumble down. He had brought his longings and desires under check by applying the whip of discrimination in the past. But the whip of discrimination does

not work in the region of the unconscious. The pressure of moral rules and injunctions does not work because the forces behind the unconscious are not the forces of the individual mind. They are hereditary forces, received by way of inheritance. All the desires, notions, traditions handed down by parents and gathered in the context of the family, the race, the religion, the society, the group to which you belong are lodged there in the unconscious and are set into motion there. And so the individual's pride is rudely shaken. He finds that he has no natural inclination towards religion and virtue and that there is no getting away from sin. It is a pitiable state. He begins to lament and says, "What false notions did I have about myself and what kind of a world lies here within me. The world is not there outside. The whole of it is here within." We have to notice the disorder and anarchy within. We have to identify the place where it is born. You will try to place your finger on the source of the discordant note. You will try to tune the musical instrument. But how will you tune it? People imagine that it is the world which is in disharmony, the world outside. No, the world is there within you in the first place. We shape the outside in the light of that which is within.

So this is how the unconscious projects itself on the conscious mind. Do not shut your eyes to this like Vishwamitra and say, "This child does not belong to me. It belongs to its parents. It belongs to society. I own no responsibility for it. I am only a helpless victim of that which rises up within me". Do not indulge in a sense of martyrdom and self-pity. Freedom is the essence of the quest and the free man must own his responsibilities. He cannot say, "What can I do about it? What I am is the result of what has gone on through the ages. It is the collective force at work and it will have its way. I am only a victim of these forces". If you will fall victim to self-pity and pessimism, you will meet with nothing but disappointment and frustration. The moment you refuse to own responsibility, the world appears to you as a valley of tears, full of pain and there is no bitterness in the world which alienates man from the source of life so much as the idea that the world is a valley of tears. It throws you into self-righteousness.

You feel that you are really good, and others I have made you what you are. If you fall into this state of dependence and helplessness, be sure there is not much difference between this sort of mentality and the slave mentality. It is a slavery you have accepted willingly, and the next step is only a sense of martyrdom. So recognise freely and courageously that the tendencies within you are not habits and hindrances which are of your own making, they are hereditary and due to religious, racial and social influences and various kinds of conditionings. This will give you something like an idea of the form of the universe as it is.

So it is merely futile egoism on the part of man to think that he could control and direct the conscious mind and the intellect by teaching them a handful of rules. Man has tried many methods and chalked out various techniques like *tantra* of controlling and suppressing the unconscious. You could quieten it for a while but the cessation of the activities of the unconscious for a while is not silence. As long as your attention is fixed upon it, it is quiet but the moment your eyes are turned away, it begins to start functioning again. How you noticed how small children behave? As long as the mother is there, they will behave and sit quiet in a corner. The moment the mother leaves the place, they will run away. The poor conscious mind sits down with all the rules of religion, ethics, the commandments of the law and the scriptures and the dictates of the discriminative intelligence about it and yet it feels harrassed and exhausted. The reason is that there is the single-handed power of the conscious mind going back to twenty, fifty, sixty or eighty years on the one hand while on the other side there are urges and tendencies that have become part of your physical and mental mechanism in the course of thousands of years. This must be recognised. The unconscious mind has armies at its command as big and numerous as those which took part in the war of the Mahabharata. It is impossible to take up the cudgels against each unit in this vast army. So if the state of watchfulness abides with you, the unconscious will go on projecting itself on the conscious. At first this too must not be checked. The effort to check interferes with the process of watching. Watching brings you face to face with

the unconscious. So if from being the seer you turn into the doer and the enjoyer, the journey onwards is interrupted. Questions such as what is to be done about your anger and your sexual desires are irrelevant while you are engaged in seeing. There is nothing to be done at this stage. We have not set out to do anything. We have simply entered a room to sit peacefully in silence. We have not entered it to do something or obtain something although the mind will be asking you all the time to do something, to be a doer and an enjoyer.

So the essential thing is that your state of the watcher should continue. The grip of the inner obstacles which enter the light of attention will be loosened. If there is the necessary amount of intensity, the grip is lost completely in a moment. But even if the necessary physical and mental endurance is lacking, the grip is loosened. The sting is no longer as painful as it was before, because emotional disturbances cannot bear the light of attention. Their hold is gone because the emotional disturbances do not get an opportunity to deform your responses. Slight disturbances will continue to come up but you are busy with your engagements, your shopping, office work or cooking. You are not idle, you are watchful. Obstacles and hindrances are no longer able to befoul and contaminate your conduct and behaviour. They are there but with a difference. Formerly the moment they presented themselves, you used to be enslaved by them, and did their bidding. The conscious acted as directed by the unconscious. Now this power to direct the conscious is lost. You are seized by anger but the sting is lost. By the time you give vent to the anger, its intensity has ceased and you ask yourself "What am I doing." You could say now, "It came and it has passed away." In this manner obstacles begin to lose their hold and their power to hurt. In course of time their momentum is also lost.

Let the process take its course. The state of silence has not yet been reached. We are only entering the caves of silence. All this I have said describes what you will see on the way. As long as there are objects to be seen, the seer is there and the seeing does not end. But in silence even seeing comes to an end, and if you do not fall a victim to self-pity, frustration and

the feeling of martyrdom, humility and egolessness are born. Allow the obstructions to come into light, do not fight shy of them. Do not be ashamed of the obstructions and the deformations. Man is not prepared to look at himself. He wants to look only at the brighter parts. The moment the inner ugliness and deformation come up, he wants to cover them up. Lending support to them is an attempt to hide them. All efforts at supporting or clarifying provide you only a defence mechanism. You are alone and so there is no need for defence. The moment you develop humility and egolessness, the hold of the unconscious is loosened and removed. If you are in the watchful state, the entire knowledge, culture, experience of mankind will begin to come up to the surface in the same manner as the obstacles and malformations used to come up following the cessation of the hold of the unconscious.

The experiences of all lie there within you—the experiences of Siddhartha becoming the Enlightened One, of Nagarjuna, Abhinavagupta, of Jesus, Muhammad, Mahavir, all those who have lived before—Arvind, Ramakrishna, Ramatirtha, all who have taken the road. These experiences come up one after another. If you are born in a Jain family, you will have realisations of Adinath, Neminath, Mahavir, and the rest of the Tirthankaras.

If you are a Buddhist, the impressions will be those of the Buddha, Avalokiteshwar and Maitreya. If you are born a Hindu, there will be the impressions of Siva, Rama Krishna and the various goddesses. If you are born a Christian you will be face to face with the physical presences of the Virgin Mary, the Madonna, the divine child and St. Paul. At first you see representations in form because all these forms are there within you. These experiences are very pleasurable and man is apt to leave off the seeing and indulge in such pleasures. These experiences are super-sensory—not experiences through the senses. The object of the experience is not outside and, therefore, the experience is very free, pleasant and intoxicating.

Look into the eyes of those rare individuals who have such experiences. It makes no difference whether he is a Christian or a Muslim or a Hindu or a Buddhist or a Jain. There is a special kind of intoxication in his eyes. He is

like one who is drunk or who has taken an L.S.D. drug. If a man is immersed in such experiences not only his eyes but his activities too undergo a change. But if he is not so immersed he will pass through these experiences without allowing the balance and the response of his vision to be affected. But if he revels in the happening, these experiences induce their own type of intoxication. Look at those who indulge in the sensual pleasures of eating and sleeping. There is no simplicity or naturalness or purity or spontaneity about them. This is not without its reasons. Every form of intoxication disturbs the inner peace and harmony. You are bound to see physical forms. You cannot avoid it. There are people who are after such experiences and mistake them for the spiritual life.

The realm of the spirit is not reached as long as there is any satisfaction derived from form or shape, and the dualities arise out of the seer and the seen, the doer and the deed, the knower and the known, the enjoyer and that which is enjoyed. You are still in the realm of religious experiences. Any one who revels in the realm of such gross and physical experiences will find that his faculties have been sharpened, his mental powers have increased, some of his emotional tendencies have been reformed in this or that respect. All this will happen and, therefore, if a man is not determined in his quest, if he does not aspire for freedom and balance, he will leave off seeing and get caught up in these experiences. There are many such persons who spend hours together in experiencing the physical presence of their deities. If one is not detained on the way he will go forward. These experiences are quietened and one gets settled down. But now he has subtler experiences. He begins to see light and hear sounds and smell fragrance. These sounds do not come from outside, whether it is the sound of breathing in *pranayam* or the sound of Krishna's flute or of Siva's gong. All these sounds are there within. There is blood circulating in the veins, there is your breath. Similarly there are sounds and vibrations with you. Brahma, Vishnu, Shakti, Siva are all of the form of sound. The Lord is a rhythmic and uninterrupted sound and, therefore, this sound flows and reverberates through the physical body.

I shall not dwell on the subject here in depth. But it is a reality. So there is sound and it can be heard. There is light. Where the five elements unite they either collide, or come in contact with one another and there is a kind of light following an acceleration in the movement of the circulation of the blood. There is another kind of light in the rhythmic movement of the incoming and outgoing breath. Just put some pressure on the nerves joined to the organs of sight and increase or decrease the tension and pressure on not only the eye but the adjoining nerves also and you will see different kinds of colours. It is the same inside. Decrease or increase in the tension and pressure on the inner nerves results in the manifestation of light. And the person who has entered silence can see such lights.

There is nothing extraordinary about this. These experiences have their own qualities and attributes but they do not have a form. Beyond these there are the experiences of that which is devoid of all qualities and attributes. These could be invested with a body and form or qualities and form, or qualities and no form or without any qualities and form. The unconscious is a vast treasure-house. There lies in the mind of every individual a whole treasure house of knowledge and experience of the entire human race. These come up and all this light and sound appears. You are intoxicated. How thoroughly intoxicated are you the context of the sense-and-object relationships! A beautiful sight, a good meal, a good walk—all have an intoxication of their own. Similarly there is an intoxication in the experience of the limitless. The subtler the experience the intenser is the intoxication which goes on increasing successively. The man's dormant faculties are awakened. If he is a walker he can walk longer, more briskly and with added zest. If there is a good eater, not a glutton but one who takes a balanced diet, he will find he could eat more and assimilate more. In this way one advances into subtler realms, one's sensitivity is intensified and new capabilities are unfolded. People say how spiritually advanced a man is he. You are sitting in a room and even if you do not utter a word, he is able to read your thoughts. He establishes a rapport between his own sound vibrations and

those of the man in front of him. He could read thoughts rising within you, even if no words are uttered. He looks at a man and from the signs on his physical body he can read the thoughts of the man in front of him with perfect ease even as you read the words in a book. Your gestures, your gait, the expression of your eyes are all an open book for him. So the man who has developed these powers has highly developed mental and intellectual faculties. If a man starts taking pleasure in these accomplishments, he gives up seeing and revels in these accomplishments.

If you aspire to enjoy and put these extra-sensory subtle experiences to use, you can do so but I must tell you it is not the supreme state, not the state of silence and freedom from all ties and hindrances, the state of absolute unity and detachment, the state of final liberation. Understand this clearly before you choose to stay at this stage, because you will advance further only if you are not caught up and held back by the lure of these advanced capabilities. The moment you obtain the extra-sensory experiences, the unconscious will project itself, but if you do not revel in them these experiences also will subside and settle down automatically. Anything which you allow to have its course either in enjoyment or renunciation will lose its momentum and come to a stop automatically. But if you start to cash them, go out to give demonstrations and give them an exaggerated importance, there is a large number of simple and gullible men and women to impose upon and there is a vast scope for pride and hypocrisy. The sources of your powers are easily imposed. They will run after you.

It is not only in a circus that you give a demonstration of exercises in gymnastics, or a gathering of scientists (when the exercises are intellectual), but also in the realm of the extra-sensory and the infinite that demonstrations are given.

It is courageous work of a sort. People full of youth and aspiration enter the field and try their hand. But this is not spiritualism by any means because the mind still continues to be awake. It is engaged in enjoying the sights and scenes of the objective world, and revelling in them. However, if you do not revel in them, they subside and quieten down. And when the objective world is set at rest, the seer too is dissolved.

As long as that which is seen is not put to rest, the objective field is there, lying within you in the darkness of inattention. All attempts to dissolve the seer are unsuccessful. You can imprison the mind. There are those who give up hearth and home and go to the forests. This is like putting the mind under lock and key. I shall not allow any sound, any fragrance to come near me and, therefore, nothing will allure there. And so the mind is imprisoned. Self-control is the lock and the mind is the prisoner. But the mind cannot be made quiet like that.

If you suppress it at one point, it will retaliate with redoubled force at another. But if you allow the objective world to be set at rest, in other words, if you allow the state of seeing to stay on with you, the objective world will be set at rest and the seer too will be at rest. The seer is dismissed in other words, there is neither a centre nor a circumference in the field of consciousness. Only self-communication which is the nature of the human consciousness remains with you. Self-communication does not have a centre, and where there is no centre, the objective world tends to dissolve and the seer too dissolves. This is what happens. Our ego-sense, the 'I am' feeling, as a crystallised unit identified with the body and the mind, remains. It is like water assuming the form of a piece of ice. The water itself has no form. It takes a form according to the vessel into which it is put. Similarly consciousness does not have a centre of its own or a form of its own. It might lodge itself in a physical body. But consciousness, the self, has no form of its own.

Now when this centre, which considered itself the seer, the enjoyer, the doer, begins to dissolve a final restlessness sets in. It laments the loss of not only its role as the enjoyer and the doer but what is most agonising, its role as the seer. It is distressed, it weeps and wails, and does not know what to do. It does not see light and has no sense of direction. At this point its sense of being the seer is dissolved. The ego-sense cries out and makes one final effort to retain its hold as the supreme master and directing authority at the centre which rules the consciousness as well as the body, the mind and the vital force. It decides finally to give up its position as the master but feels, "What kind of a place is this where I have landed? There

is nothing to see. What is there to do? There is nothing which I can claim as my own, nothing with which I can identify myself." It is frightened and wants to run away. It feels, 'It is a bottomless pit. I shall fall down but since it is a bottomless pit there is no bottom to fall down upon. It weeps and wails. It sighs and sheds tears for the last time. It is uneasy and feels suffocated. The person is frightened.

This is the point at which a realisation of the silence begins to dawn. The last dictates of the urge to act, the last sight of the forms of the objective world begin to settle down. The centre of the empire of the circumscribed consciousness is now breaking up. The rulership of the body, mind and the vital force is now coming to an end. The deep seated habits of the ego that it is identified with the body, mind and the vital force now begin to be shed. There is not much difference between the ego's tears arising at the moment of the birth of the silence and the tears at the time of death. There are many similarities. The ego says, "Let me take refuge with some one. Let me consult someone. Let somebody come to my help and rescue me. Hitherto I could have experiences. Now I can see nothing." Nothing takes place. The ego has nothing to live for in this state beyond action and inaction, beyond the objective world. The ego finds its occupation gone. Naturally it is restless. In this adventure into truth your patience, the authenticity and freedom of your quest and your aspiration are put to a severe test. If you can meet the situation and say, "Let the worst happen. I can do nothing about it", you are taking what is known as a plunge into the darkness. It is not you who take the plunge. The plunge is now facing you.

Compared to the state of the doer, the enjoyer, the seer this appears to be 'darkness.' But in itself it is not so. If tears flow down at this juncture let them flow; if there is restlessness, do not mind it. If you are at your wit's end because of this restlessness, take leave of the responsibilities of the world for a time and live out this state. Anyone who runs away from this state, will have to retrace and go back to the previous position. Do not imagine that it is an act of surrender if you take refuge with or sit at the feet of someone, when you are in this state. It is only a route of escape for the ego. "How

fine will it be to throw myself down at the feet of someone !", you feel. Do you think that surrender is an effort of the will? It is the state of egolessness. Do you think that a state of vacuity and humility is the state of one who has surrendered. Taking refuge in the Lord is not an act of the mind or the intellect. It is not a product of the ego. It just happens. It is a happening. It is the very life-breath of love. But you have not yet entered the state of love. You are still in a state of restlessness 'What will happen next? If I will not act, what will happen in the future? Who will look after me?' It is an anxiety like the one you feel about the fate of your children. You feel you must arrange everything while there is yet time. This anxiety on the part of the seeker is very much like the one which a house-holder has 'Now that I shall be at peace, and shall no longer be the seer, what will happen next?' All these reactions of the ego must not be mistaken for a search for the truth. So at this juncture you will be in the grip of a real restlessness. You will not be able to attend to your daily work. You will be in too delicate a situation to be able to attend to your activities. It is a very delicate situation indeed, a situation as delicate as the one at the moment of your death. If you do not spoil the moment of death with fear, the hour of death is not less welcome and auspicious than the hour of birth.

So do not run away from the challenge. Let what happens to you take place. The body will tremble, the throat will be choked, you will not find it possible to utter words, tears will flow from the eyes. One has to pass through this. I am not laying down a rule that you should pass through this. All I am saying is that you should not run away from this situation and if you do not run away all the crying, wailing, restlessness, the desire to run to someone will be quietened.

I find it difficult to put what comes next into words. I shall have to relate the happenings of the non-dual state with the help of words born in the soil of duality. But I shall try to take you as far as words could carry us. The intellect has to be put to service as far as it could carry us. If the intellect is given up on the way, it is bound to have its revenge in one form or another. If you do not satisfy the intellect, it assumes the form of doubt and retaliates. Doubt is only a perversion

of the intellect which has been left unsatisfied. Enquiry is different from doubt. So we must put both words and the intellect into service to the extent they can carry us. That is why I will not lose touch with the thread of words yet.

So, now you are in the state in which thoughts do not come and go and the triangle of the seer, the object and the seeing is no longer there. Then all is peace and a strange kind of restfulness envelops the totality. The seer is cast away. There is a state of perfect chemical unperturbability as if the properties and the qualities of the body were in a state of perfect equality. The totality acquires restfulness and a chemical equilibrium is established. This is not silence. This is a kind of stupefaction and inertia. In silence attentiveness is increased to an incalculable extent, both in range and depth. Do not forget what the criterion is. In concentration there is attentiveness on the totality; and in the state of awakening, sleep and deep sleep, attentiveness acquires depth. If you want to practise and be trained in silence, you must stick to the scientific point of view. Science and spiritualism are closely related. So it is a beautiful state without any tension or pressure on the nerves or chemical perturbation.

Now silence unfolds itself as a new dimension. How the energy which was being frittered away in thoughts and emotions returns to its original source, how it operates once it is back in its totality and how the operations of the totality are carried on, once this dimension of silence is fully alive—are topics I shall deal with later. I know the discourses I am going to give here are not going to be entertaining. They might tire you—I cannot help it. I cannot think of providing you entertainment when I am dealing with a serious subject like the working of the manifest consciousness.

You must have here the mood of a scientist working in his laboratory. And do not mind an occasional fatigue. If you want to remove the fatigue, the best way is to stay in seclusion or to go out for a walk or sit down under a tree or by the seashore and watch how the states I have described here dawn within you.

You would do well to take rest before you re-enter the world of speech and mental activity after you have listened to an

intensive discourse. Stay in peace and seclusion. I am not asking you to ruminate. It is unnecessary. People start talking about what I said and why I said it as soon as they rise up after listening to a discourse. They mistake their own reactions for spiritual questioning. Allow what you have heard to descend into and get soaked in the totality. Do not engage yourself in any activity including speech. It helps you to remove the exhaustion. We have only five days at our disposal which is entirely insufficient for matters of such deep import as we want to deal with. Necessarily we must have what may be termed as a condensed course of study.

December 17, 1971

Questions and Answers

Question : You have said that if an intellectual doubt is not resolved, it will have its revenge. So many doubts arise in so many contexts and the expenditure of a good deal of energy is involved in trying to allay them. Could you suggest a way or a method which would resolve all doubts once for all? What happens sometimes is that no doubts remain, but equally no faith is born. If there were faith, there would be no doubts. But there is a state when we have neither faith nor doubt. What shall we do in such a situation?

Answer : We have a habit of mistaking the reactions of our ego for doubts. Something is not to our liking, we do not relish it, we are repelled by it and a question arises in our mind regarding its truth we treat this question as a doubt. I do not think it is right to treat questions arising out of our emotional antipathies as doubts. Doubts arise out of the difficulties and obstructions with which we are faced, when we put something which we have to believe in, even intellectually, to a practical test in life. When I talked about doubts this morning I talked about the doubts which are reactions of the ego. Doubts arise when we put our beliefs to a practical test and find that there is some defect or shortcoming or an element of the unscientific in them.

You say that you have to spend a lot of energy in removing various kinds of doubts that arise within you. If the doubts have arisen in the flow of life, they will be resolved only by life. Life is for ever making experiments, making mistakes, meeting with reverses and learning through them. So mistakes have a creative power in them. But there are many who accept something intellectually but do not act up to it in life because knowledge received in the intellect has no dynamism. Knowledge by itself is immobile. It has no dynamism of its own.

So knowledge which has been gathered by the intellect has to be carried out in practice by seeking inspiration from ethics, religion or the scriptures. People have lost faith in ethics, religion and the scriptures and so knowledge does not move men to action. Knowledge does not have the power to translate what the intellect has accepted into action instantly. That kind of power there is in perception, firm conviction and understanding but not in knowledge. Awakening and understanding are born out of the union of the truth inherent in the individual and the event. Understanding is automatically translated into conduct. You do not have to put in any effort. But you do have to put in effort to acquire knowledge.

Now a majority of people accept things intellectually. Their knowledge has no capacity to activate them. They have lost faith in the power of religion and the scriptures to inspire them. In the result all their knowledge lies dormant in their intellect. And all knowledge which is not translated into conduct or experimented upon and experienced is dead.

Therefore, gather knowledge only to the extent you have use for it. If a problem arises, knowledge which has been acquired should be requisitioned and pressed into service only to the extent it is needed. Knowledge which is not assimilated leads to distortions in the mind and the heart and nothing which is not used can be assimilated. Food which is not assimilated leads to upsets in the physical body and unassimilated and unutilised knowledge leads to mental disorder, tension and pressure. So some people cannot use their knowledge in the conduct of life. They are the kind of people who while away their time in idle thinking and logical disputations. We are apt to think that intellectual doubts are the truth and our progress is arrested. Our time is spent in wordy dialogue and logical disputation. We complain that there is this or that doubt or difficulty in our way. Any one who is out to do something is bound to face setbacks, doubts and difficulties. But he will not be deterred by them. He will assess the situation and will not take much time in resolving his doubts. But if there is a person who does not want to do anything, he will find it difficult to resolve his doubts.

So first look closely into the nature of your doubt. The answer

could be provided by a philosopher or theologian or man of religion. These men will look into their books and give you the answers. But if it is a problem that has been raised by life, the answer will come only out of your conduct in life.

You say, 'What about the person who has neither doubt nor faith?' It is a pitiable state indeed. People who gather knowledge, whose life's earning is a store of information, those who have lost the innocence, the humility, the egolessness of the mind in the pursuit of intellectual and cultural advancement, whether in the West or the East, have also lost the power of faith in their own convictions. They are for ever looking into their books. They will want to know what Plato has to say or Aristotle or the Bible or the Dhammapada on a particular point. The authority of their own conviction, they simply do not have. They will act upon what others say and behave as others do. Their authorities are tradition, the scriptures, and the word of the teacher and the sages. But that which purifies all such knowledge, the authority of a settled conviction, they do not have. Faith is nothing but faith in the authority of a settled conviction.

You would ask, "Will this not mean that I shall have a partiality for my own views?" What has the person who lives his life to do with partiality or insistence? He acts in the light of the conviction within him. He might make a mistake but what he is interested in is life. He is engaged in savouring life. The moment he finds that a particular conviction does not work in life, he will not hesitate to change it. We lack faith because we have forgotten how to live with faith in our own selves. We are looking all the time into the eyes of other people. Somebody says I am good and I am good. Somebody else says I am not good and I am not good. I may be entirely lacking in the qualities and values which society glorifies but I am keen to resort to all those means and methods which are likely to establish my reputation in society. I strain every nerve to live up to the mental image which society has formed about me. We simply do not have the time to live in the light of our own convictions. That is the reason we do not have faith in ourselves. What then is the remedy? The remedy is that we should kindle a small lamp of our own and step

forward in the light of this lamp. For once let us live in the light of our own convictions. Let us not be guided by what others say or tradition prescribes. Let us say, "I have tried this. This is right. I do this because it establishes a perfect communion with my body, mind and the vital breath." The measure of a man's life depends on the measure of his conviction. You lead only a 'second-hand' life if you live in the light of principles and rules laid down by others. It is a stale life. There is no freshness in it and that is why faith is lacking.

Therefore let us live courageously in the light of our own convictions, the light of the understanding of life we have, whatever the cost. We would spend time and money at school and college and sweat for eight or ten hours a day to make a living, but no one has the time for a life of experiments, a self-earned life, a life full of sounds that vibrate and reverberate in the body, the mind and the vital breath. So let us be fearless and live life as we understand it. This fearlessness is not recklessness or defiance. Fearlessness is full of humility. Understanding is developed and sharpened, if you live in the light of your own understanding. It is not developed by taking every step after making close calculations. Those who are making calculations all the time are never able to live their lives. If you start living in the light of your own understanding of life you will feel the fragrance of your conviction spreading all around you. You will be a man alive. You will make mistakes. Your understanding will lack maturity. The price will have to be paid. But if you will have to pay the price, your understanding too will have the opportunity to attain maturity. Otherwise you may attain an age of fifty, sixty, eighty or ninety years but you will have the understanding of a child of thirteen or fourteen. You will have greater knowledge but not greater understanding. Your mental age will advance but not the age of your understanding and what you need is mature understanding. You gather much knowledge, but you have little understanding and even less of the use of this understanding in conducting the affairs of life. This ratio will have to be changed in life. If doubts will come up in the life of a man who lives in the light of his understanding, these doubts will no longer be mere reactions

of the intellect or personal preferences or the notions and beliefs which you have accumulated. Even your doubt will be a free, sovereign, purifying element in your life.

In the darkness of indecision doubt will enter like a ray of light. It will throw a challenge to your understanding. It will awaken you and knock off all your inertia and stupefaction. I am a friend of yours and would not like to offer you some readymade device, which will be like a master key you could take home to resolve all your doubts. It will not be a friendly act. If I should allow my life and its experiences to cast their shadow upon you, it will not be in keeping with the sanctity of friendship.

Question : If following a state of concentrated and intense attentiveness, there is a momentary feeling of giddiness or deafness, what could this be due to from the point of view of human physiology ?

Answer : People who live in a state of inattentiveness all the time are apt to be fatigued in moments of intense attentiveness. If you stay, in the watchful state, which is only an advanced state of attentiveness, even for five minutes, there is a feeling like one of giddiness because the nerves cannot sustain the density and intensity which is the very essence of energy. The nervous system is not attuned to the notes of this intensity. The vibrations at work in the state of attentiveness are those of pure energy. The sense of the doer and the enjoyer is absent in the state of attentiveness. The complex that you are the doer and the enjoyer is dissolved because the impediments on the way are gone. In such a state attentiveness is not an act merely of the mind and the intellect. A state of totality is brought into being in which the sensitivity of energy works at a high speed and numerous vibrations are formed within it. The sensory nerves are fatigued because they are unfamiliar with the experience. There need be no deafness unless you do violence to yourself. If you are fatigued by two minutes of attentiveness, you should open the eyes or get up and walk, if you are sitting in a room.

You must not approach the Lord with a body or a mind which is bruised and mutilated as a result of injuries received in the course of spiritual discipline. You do not offer flowers that

are broken and crushed at the feet of the Lord when you go to worship him. Even if a single petal is broken you would not like to offer it. There is no possibility of the loss of hearing unless you do violence to the body, or you suffer from bloodlessness or low blood pressure. What is deafness? If a sort of paralysis sets in, no faculty of the brain will work. If you have any feeling of the kind you describe, stop going into silence for a few weeks and spend the time in getting over the frailties of the body. Entering the state of silence or *samadhi* is no joke or pastime. You must have nerves of steel.

Going into silence is not putting in a piece of acting in a dramatic show. People in a cinema hall look at figures in the role of Rama and Krishna moving on the screen and there could be those among them who might get the illusion that the figures are real. But if you want to enter the real state of silence, you must take steps to remove the frailties of the body. In the true state of silence it is not deafness that would set in. It is peace that would descend upon you.

During the period of training in silence, that is, upto the time you acquire the capacity to remain in a state of uninterrupted attentiveness for ten to twelve hours, you should have the minimum of contact with the public because the nerves cannot stand jolts and shocks. They get tired. So you should use the mind, speech and the body only to the extent it is absolutely necessary to do so.

How will you judge that the period of training is over? It is over only when and if your attentiveness is not interrupted both while you are awake or in deep sleep. Your attentiveness has attained both range and depth only when you stay in the state even when you are in deep sleep. If the time spent in deep sleep is not taken into account during the period of training you should take it that your training is taking a smooth course, if you can remain in the state of attentiveness for twelve hours in the day and instead of getting fatigued you are full of cheerfulness and freshness. Fatigue will leave you gradually, if the chances of receiving jolts from outside impacts are few.

As far as the question of proper nourishment and relaxation is concerned *aonla*, *brahmi*, cow's milk and butter, if these suit

you, should be the best in the context of Indian conditions of life. To those whom cow's milk and butter do not suit *til* oil might prove helpful. *Aonla* and *Brahmi* strengthen the nerves and the brain. *Aonla* is good in any form whether it is green or ripe. If you find it convenient, you may prepare a mixture of jaggery and rose petals at home. In this connection a knowledge of Ayurveda and methods of nature cure is helpful. Life is total and I am giving you some general knowledge. For instance, if it is a case of low blood pressure or bloodlessness the use of pine-apple or the juice of carrots is definitely helpful. I gave a course of this kind of diet to patients suffering from a weak heart or low blood pressure in Europe and it worked very well.

Question: What is the difference between attentiveness, understanding and awakening?

Answer: I do not know what you mean by awakening. Does your 'awakening' cover lassitude, deep sleep and dreaming? Or do you mean the waking state in which we are, or suppose we are, by day and night? The awakening I have in view has nothing to do with lassitude, dreaming or deep sleep. Take the case of one out of the five elements—earth. Inherent in earth are water and air and ether, all these elements. No one out of the five elements could remain in isolation. Similarly waking, dreaming and deep sleep are inseparable from the waking state. This is not being awakened in the real sense of the term. What is known as waking is a relative term. It is waking in relation to lassitude or inertia or dreaming. And you know it is a state in which you are half awake and half asleep. The state of unmindfulness is really a state when you are half asleep or dreaming. What you see in a state of unmindfulness is neither real nor total.

What you see or hear in a state of perturbation is not real. The perturbed state is a chemical state which affects your seeing. That is why the state which is free from perturbation and the attractions of the objective world is known as the healthy state and all other states have been described as diseased. Granted that the person free from the perturbation and attractions of the objective world is a saint or a sage. But it is not the state for us common men and I tell you I am not

interested in the kind of the spiritual life which is not for the common man. The spiritual life is concerned with bringing about a revolution in the mutual relationships of common men. The only moments that are lived and have been lived are the moments spent in a state of mindfulness. Those are the only moments which are sovereign.

So there is a difference between awakening and attentiveness. What is known as awakening is a mixed state. Attentiveness is not a mixed state. It is a pure state.

Now let us see what is understanding. In the state of attentiveness a relationship is established between the senses and objects through the senses. This is natural. As long as man is alive the eyes will see form. It depends on you whether you look at objects with the eye of desire or with the eye of a man of taste. As long as you are alive the ears will hear and the skin will receive touch. But it depends upon you whether the touch awakens the give-and-take of desire or love. The sense and object relationship is at work all the time. By understanding I mean the kind of apprehension which brings assurance and firm conviction. Understanding, conviction, comprehension are synonymous. It is the fragrance of understanding which results from the sense-and-object relationship during the state of attentiveness. Its form and flavour are distinctive. Restlessness is a state of unmindfulness, a state of lassitude and forgetfulness. The sense-and-object activities like eating, sleeping and relaxation performed in the state of unmindfulness have a form of their own. When the same activities are performed in a state of mindfulness, the capacity of the senses to enjoy flavour as well as the true flavour and savour of the objects themselves are laid bare. The Lord of the flavours pervades through every atom and particle. Life is full of flavour. That is why I say that the duty of those who have a taste for life is to live. The flavour of life is at its best in the state of mindfulness. So this flavour which springs out of the state of mindfulness is what understanding is. It gives sustenance and satisfaction, it provides energy, it gives lustre to life. In its absence, in the state of so-called waking we are borne away on the surface of the flowing stream of tradition, beliefs, notions, theories and conclusions from birth

to death. As our saint Akha has put it 'It is like a betel leaf which has not been chewn'. The teeth and the tongue know nothing of its flavour. You gulp it down without ever knowing the flavour. It brings no colour on the lips, gives no taste to tongue, no quality which the stomach may perceive. You may live for a hundred years without knowing what the true flavour of life is. So understanding is the flavour brought out of the sense-and-object relationship in the state of total and intense attentiveness.

Question : Do thoughts occur or are they brought in ?

Answer : They occur and are also brought in. All thoughts which have an element of duality—shall I do it, or shall I not do it—are brought in. Thoughts which arise out of beliefs, concepts, principles are thoughts which lie within us, being results of previous conditionings. The thought waves which arise out of the treasure house of previous conditionings and past memories are thoughts which we do not bring in. They come in. The action is mechanical. The senses and objects come in contact, the sensory nerves carry the stimulus to the brain. There is a reaction in accordance with the previous impressions and conditionings. These reactions also are termed as thoughts. The actions and reactions which arise out of the store house of memories and conditionings are not brought in by us. They come in. It is due to our egoism that we say "This is my belief, my faith, I have a vast store house of memories. I shall utilise it. I shall do this or that, propagate such and such ideas, form an organisation or build up a family. I shall do this and not do that". All these thoughts which have an element of the will to do or not to do are thoughts brought in by us.

Question : As a result of association with saints like you there are times when it is possible to enter silence and concentration on the level of the intellect and the mind. It is even possible to have some experience of the consciousness about which you talk so often. But all this is very short-lived. It even lights up our life but there is no continuity in it. This is a source of dissatisfaction. If there is a way to maintain the continuity of the experience, please let us know.

Answer : You have conferred a very cheap and easy sainthood

on me. What has put the idea in your head that I am a saint ? Is it because you have listened to some discourses given by me ? Unless you have seen a person in all sorts of states, in private and public relationships, by night and day, in tears and smiles, how can you know whether he is a saint or not ? Do not trust anyone so easily. Life is a precious thing. If you have the egoistic feeling, while you are listening to me that, I am a saint, this could possibly do you harm. Fortunately for you and me I have not set an institution or organisation and do not want to promote or propagate anything, and therefore, you are not exposed to any risks. All that you need accept is that in me you have a true friend who is in love with life and is not out to propagate anything to transform you. She is here to reap the joys of friendship and love. Accept only this much. Do not take me for a saint. You would be taking a risk. Who knows the roots of exploitation might be lodged there within me too. Both in the West and the East this feeling of admiration awakens trust and any one in whom the groundwork has been prepared is likely to be exploited easily. There is exploitation in the spiritual field no less than in the field of politics and economics. In the name of religion exploitation goes on unabashed in the past and now the tendency to exploit is entering the field of spiritualism as well. We shall not enter this field. If ever I should think of entering it, please prevent me from doing it. We have to open a new dimension of friendship here. There is so much to be done. We have to root out the seeds of conflict, tension and violence from the present state of our society and economy. We have to build a social and economic order based on Truth, love and friendship. We have to set up a machinery not of administration but of order and discipline. There is much work waiting, but there are not the men who are likely to prove equal to the task. So in the spiritual world it is the dimension of friendship that has to be opened up by you and me. If your feet are on the road, if you are wide-awake, if you have paid the price for developing understanding, you may certainly listen to what I have to say. Put what I have to say into practice. If you discover something which is new, share it with me. We shall march forward hand in hand. This is absolutely

essential. If this does not end exploitation, mental slavery will never come to an end. So stop this talk about sainthood.

Now you say that your mind is at rest for a while and you enter into a particular state, but this does not last long and there is no continuity in it. Please let me know what is this continuity ? This idea of continuity is closely allied to the sense of time. You would not use the word 'Continuity' in the context of your life, if the concept of Time were not there. Is there a continuity in Time ? And what is Time ? Ask a student of physics or study the matter yourself and find out if there is really a substance called Time, which has a continuity ? Isn't 'continuity' related to mental Time ? Who built up this symbol of Time made up of night and day, the hours of the night and day, an hour made up of sixty minutes and a minute made up of sixty seconds ? Seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, years are all symbols invented by man. Do not take the symbols invented for purposes of group activities for the truth of life. Symbols are meant to point to the reality of life. If a man cannot see the moon in the sky, you point to the branches of a tree and say it is there up above the branches. The moon is not there on the branches. But you take sight of the moon with the aid of the branches. Even so symbols are merely signs pointing towards life. Do not be a prisoner of symbols. They have a use for purposes of group activities.

There is going to be a meeting here at four o'clock and I tell you there is nothing like time, that four and five are numbers invented by man. It will not so happen that when it is four by my watch it will be two by yours ? So the language meant for group behaviour being what it is, there is such a thing as Time and there is a sort of imposition of the notion of time but it is an imposition only. You impose the concept of continuity on the eternity which is life. So first of all free yourself from this false attribution, this illusion about continuity. Man makes so many false attributions for purposes of devotional worship. What is worship but an elucidation and ordering of various attributions and impositions of qualities so as to give solace, peace and sense of happiness to the mind ? Even so the use of symbols is nothing more than a convenient

arrangement to meet the purposes of group activity. There is nothing like continuity in life. Life is itself. How can you bring in continuity? You can think of continuity only in the context of things which can be broken up in parts. But life cannot be broken up in parts, and since it cannot be broken up in parts the language of continuity is irrelevant in the context of life.

You say that when you come here and find yourself in the company of the true and the good, you are in a particular state of mind. If you have within you the aspiration and the quest for love and the truth, if there is the thirst within you for the manifestation of the Infinite and the Whole, the thirst is bound to be keener and intenser in such company and surroundings. Two things result when you are in the company of the true and the good. A process of the intensification of both your sensitivity and thirst for enquiry sets in. If you do not indulge in gossip and useless conversation, if your conversation is confined to matters relating to the quest for the truth, if the atmosphere around you is one of love and affection and the mind is free from dogmatism, it is of the very nature of love to intensify your inner tendencies. If the light within you is dim, it will become clearer, intenser, wider in its range. Love is like the light of the sun in life. So do not give the credit for the intensification of the love and light within you to any one individual in particular. Besides the love of an individual, there is the factor of the atmosphere built up here and if something results in such an atmosphere, it is not surprising.

You ask further, "What shall I do if this blessed mood leaves me, when I go back to my home?" One thing you can do is to spend some time in solitude and silence to be in communion with yourself. The moment you will do this, you will feel that your quest for the truth and your sensitivity have been intensified because the company and the association of the universe is there within you everywhere. Sensitivity and quest are dimensions of life. You do not have to keep a guard over them. So if you cultivate the practice of staying in the state of attentiveness and acquire the capacity of going into solitude and remaining in communion with yourself, what happens to you here will happen to you there too when you go

back to your home. It maybe something better even could happen to you.

Another thing. If your sensitivity is keen and the quest is fully awakened, life itself will provide opportunities of association with the true and the good. When I say this I do not have any camps like this in view. Association with the true and the good is not bound up with the name and form of any particular individual. Some opportunity will offer itself, some person will meet you, some voice will enter your ears which will keep up and intensify the quest. The responsibility for feeding an awakened consciousness is that of the universal life. You need not take up that responsibility.

Question : You have said that impressions and habitual tendencies going back to thousands of years lie there in the subconscious mind, while the impressions left on the conscious mind go back only to a few years. If the conscious mind is mightier, why is it that the unconscious seems to be able to manifest itself so much more prominently in a man's life causing disharmony and pain? Is the conscious mind something like water which takes on any colour you put into it? If this is so, how can we say that the conscious mind has sovereign powers. Why is the conscious mind dominated by the unconscious mind?

Answer : Although for purposes of understanding, we use terms like 'conscious' 'unconscious' and 'subconscious', the mind is one and indivisible. It is not that a portion of it is one compartment, that the conscious forms a separate part and the unconscious is further subdivided. It is all one. That of which we are conscious all the time and which seems to be constantly at work, is the conscious mind. Impressions, experience, knowledge which lie embedded in the mind but of which we are conscious only when they manifest themselves in special circumstances and at particular places are termed the unconscious. This distinction between the conscious, the unconscious and the subconscious holds only as long as the range and intensity of attentiveness have not reached the point of perfection.

When we are in the state of attentiveness there is nothing like the conscious and the subconscious because the totality of

consciousness is revealed in the light of attentiveness.

Literary terminology could be pressed into service to understand the difference but you must not think that there is any division in fact. They do not exist separately.

In the conscious mind is lodged all that we have learnt in this life as a result of education and assimilated knowingly or unknowingly. It includes all that is imparted to us by cultural tradition, literature and music. You know what happened in the family circle or in your relations with your parents when you were a child. All that comes to enter the light of attentiveness is the conscious mind. And this conscious mind has a range of its own—a range of ten or fifty or sixty years, because it extends only to that which has been earned with effort in this life and this body. But there are things beyond. These are the impressions and tendencies you have inherited. These impressions and tendencies are not matters extending over a mere fifty or sixty or eighty years. The power behind them is hereditary. It is the inheritance of mankind extending over thousands of years. Now you see that there are two types of forces that are in operation, the one which we have created in this life and the other which is hereditary, received by way of inheritance from our parents. These hereditary traits and tendencies of the body and the mind have been in operation over two or three generations.

Western scientists have unravelled many of the mysteries of physical and mental heritage. They have found out the chemicals which reside at particular points and in particular parts of the brain—the DNAs and the RNAs. They have made it possible to extract them, inject them, transfer knowledge and memory from one person to another. These intellectual and physical tendencies, traits, qualities and malformations are at work for over three generations according to the Russian scientists of our own times. In India they say that these extend over five or seven generations. So this is the range of the hereditary traits which lie lodged there in the blood and the marrow of the body.

So the unconscious comes to dominate and govern the conscious. The questioner asks, "Is the conscious, liquid like water which takes on the colour put into it?" The fact is that

the force of the conscious is very feeble compared to a force which has been at work since times immemorial. The period of time during which the conscious has evolved has been very short. But the unconscious has passed through prolonged period of evolution. The influences of the family, the race and religion on the unconscious are so firm and so deeply entrenched that it has become very powerful. But there is nothing in this to upset you. Facts must be understood. All your worry is due to the fact that you want to control, regulate and govern the course of the unconscious. And every time the person who wants to control and govern the unconscious and the subconscious mind comes to grief.

In India they wanted to govern it in the name of race and religion. In the West they tried to govern it in order to build up a classless socialistic society free from exploitation. Who can govern the passion for property and power? They are out to change the social fabric, confiscate property and set up institutions of centralised production. They imagine that in this way they could eliminate the profit motive and the desire for power and property. Now this is not happening. If you will look at the situation in which the communist countries are placed, you will understand my agony in stating this. Those who have resorted to aggression, suppression, renunciation and restraint in the name of religion and spiritualism have failed, like those who have tried to control the unconscious in the name of patriotism and social welfare.

It is not possible to control and govern the power of the unconscious. The right thing to do is to understand it and give up the attempt to check or oppose it. We should use, not oppose, it. Putting restraints on it or opposing it is only a subtle form of suppression. The more you oppose it, the more strength will it gain. That is why I say that the desire to oppose is also an act of arising of the unconscious. Bitterness, anger, self-pity, self-condemnation, all arise out of the desire to resist the movements of the unconscious. Give up the desire to reform, control or oppose it and you will discover that just as no one takes poison the moment he recognises it as poison, the desire to control will no longer arise in you as soon as you decide that you do not want to control the unconscious. As soon as

the urges of the unconscious will want to take hold of you, the light of attention will fall upon them. The realisation will dawn upon you that the ideas and emotions rising up in you—sex, anger, envy, jealousy—are not yours. They are mechanical activities of the mind and you give only added strength to them by saying that they are yours. I told you earlier that opposition strengthens them. Now let me tell you that the sense that they are yours tends equally to strengthen them. "I am irascible, I am jealous. Anger and jealousy are part of my nature." My friend, the nature is that of your senses and your mind and when you identify yourself with them and own them as yours, you are again setting up a sort of opposition. If you do not own them as yours, the activities of the unconscious will continue to find expression in your behaviour in the course of your daily life but they will gradually lose their hold on you and much of their sting. It will make little difference whether they are there or not. They will be there but they will be like a heap of ashes. The wood will have been burnt out, leaving only the ashes behind. And ashes do not cause any burns. The unconscious will not be destroyed; it will be there but it will have lost the capacity to burn. It will have lost the capacity to cause perturbations. It will have lost its sting. If and when there is the need or occasion, you will be able to recall and say, 'There lies a heap of ashes'.

Therefore do not turn this unconscious into a problem. If you will turn the facts of life into problems out of your egoism, you would be only warring against them and losing your energy unnecessarily. The unconscious is there and it will not be rooted out by giving battle to it. Take it for what it is. If you will see and recognise the false as the false, the vibrations of the truth will be generated out of the unconscious itself. When you will understand the whole process of the working of the unconscious, the life-breath of freedom will emerge out of this understanding and it will start functioning. I am not going to enter into a dialectical exposition here. But the truth comes into life the moment you begin to treat the false as the false.

December 17, 1971

Discourse 5

Please listen to what is said this morning with utmost attention. When someone describes what happens in the realms of the mind and the intellect it may be difficult but it is not impossible for the listener to understand what is said. But it requires a great deal of attentiveness on the part of the listener when a person tries to put into words that which happens in life after all the activities of the mind are set at rest and he speaks out of sheer love. For the listener the subject is beyond the realms of logic and since it is beyond the bounds of logic and hypothesis, the intellect is unable to grasp it instantly. There is a state of awakening and sensitiveness in which the moment you hear a word you are able to experience instantly that which is suggested by the word. It is a state in which seeing or hearing is converted into a happening and an experience. There is no interval between seeing or hearing and experience of the totality. The interval is dissolved. Such a state which is known as *samadhi* is possible, but the stage has not been reached yet. I would, therefore, ask you to listen intently to what I tell you this morning.

I told you yesterday that all the impressions and experiences of the human race which lie there lodged in the unconscious assume a form and are projected on the screen of attention. These forms are subsequently set at rest but if, while they are being projected, the desire to enjoy or renounce or reject do not come in the way, you can see these forms. But howsoever wide-ranging, extensive and varied they might be, the knowledge and the experiences of the human race have their bounds. They are not unlimited. They are not infinite. They are finite. That is why the objective forms are set at rest. Their sole purpose and role is only to be projected on the screen of attention. As soon as this purpose is served without

let or hindrance, they subside into their places. Waves rise up only to subside. Even so the objective forms settle down automatically. A gust of wind rises only to be dissolved into space. There is no movement of the wind outside space. There is no rising and subsiding of waves outside the lake. Even so these forms come up on the surface of the ocean of consciousness and then subside. The seer begins to be dissolved and it is a very critical phase. If it is possible to withdraw from the activities of daily life and intercourse with people and the affairs of the world for some time, progress is not impeded. It is a moment of crisis, because a new life is being born within and it is the hour of birth pangs.

At this moment the seed of the ego must enter the soul of silence so that the power of the Eternal self might be awakened out of the explosion of the ego. You yourself are your own father and mother. It is a birth pang. It is the hour of the gestation of a new life. Any mother has to be very careful during the nine months she bears the child. She must take care of her surroundings and her nourishment. Similarly a period of the utmost tenderness and delicacy sets in in the life of the aspirant. The greatest care has to be taken. The seed of the ego will be deposited in the soil of silence. It will be covered over by the earth of solitude. The rays of the Sun of Consciousness known as the Soul or God will fall upon it. I am forced to use the figurative language of poetry.

Now since the ego is not used to going under and settling down like a seed, it is uncomfortable and restless. You deposit a seed under the surface of the earth. It is tame and quietly yields and settles down. But there is power inside the seed, the power to shoot forth and pierce through the earth and appear above the ground. The entire banyan tree lies lodged in it. You could never imagine that the mighty banyan tree with its branches, leaves and fruits could lie lodged inside the tiny seed. You could never imagine this but it is a fact of life. All the form, colour and size of the tree lies there in the tiny seed. The seed is docile, it is willing to be deposited deep down in the earth. But the seed of the ego is very unwilling to be buried in the silence. Action and inaction, the will to do or not to do are its two feet. When it is not allowed to make use

of them, it is frustrated and restless. It sheds tears and feels lost in darkness. Just become a seed for a while, get buried under the earth, and you will be in the same predicament. It is the hour of trial, the hour of testing your endurance, your courage, your bravery. Do you wish this should not happen and the hour of crisis should never arrive? And if the hour has arrived would you like to beg someone to lend a helping hand?

There are women in America who would not like to bear the child in their wombs for nine months. They would rather that the foetus should be taken out in the fourteenth week and reared in an artificial womb. Experiments along these lines have been made. Do we want that powers of endurance should not be developed in us at all? I am a woman myself and, therefore, it will not surprise you if I should use familiar examples. But do not entertain the ugly desire to ask someone else to save you from pain, discomfort and tears. In the beginning you will lose some of your appetite, you will be sleepless, you will not be able to digest what you eat. All this will happen but do not mistake all this for illness. It is a natural development, a natural result of the seed—like ego burying itself in the silence. Somebody asked me yesterday, 'Will no one help? Will no one rescue? You say that there are powers which come to our aid.' Of course, they come to our aid. But this is not the hour to seek aid. Let me tell you it is the hour to endure, the hour to live through pain and agony. Do you think pain and agony are not good enough to be lived through? Do you think it is only smiles that are to be lived, the tears and sighs are not to be lived? Why are you frightened so much? You are frightened because the ego has a habit of wanting to live in security and there is always a sense of security if you are in comfort. You do not have this sense of security if you are in discomfort which is why pain is so unwelcome. If tomorrow you persuade somebody that there is security in pain also, pain will be very welcome. Half of our pain, agony and restlessness is only a reaction of the ego. It is not willing to allow itself to be buried underground like the seed and that is why it reacts. So this sense of insecurity, negation and nullity is only an appearance, a phantasm and you must pass through it. If you will put in

effort to remedy it, you will make the mistake of treating what is a phantasm and an appearance as the truth. There is no nullity, no negation, no darkness. There is an appearance, an illusion of nullity. This is so because we are used to positivity and all our experience of positivity is built up round and in relation to negation and nullity.

The nullity which is the essence of that positivity will now present itself before you. In fact it is now that you will realise that what you had so far taken to be positive is also negative. Now you will be face to face with what is really positive and creative. This will be the hour when the duality of the positive and the negative will be cast away. Just as the hour of death is the auspicious hour when the tensions of life and death are removed, so is this hour too an auspicious hour, the hour when the dualities of positivity and nullity, of light and darkness are removed and set at rest. The helplessness you feel is not your helplessness. It is the helplessness of the ego. You have been used to looking upon it as associated with the body and the mind, as something well-set in its frame of limitations, as a complex of experiences, knowledge and conditionings. It must now be allowed to melt down so that an explosion should take place. It is the hour of its disintegration. The explosion will occur now. The birth of the tree lies hidden in the explosion of the seed. Even so the light of the spirit will be lit following the explosion of the ego. It is the hour of the descent or ascent. You may put it as you like. So it is not an hour when you should expect my help or aid. It is the auspicious moment when the ego feels helpless and restless. God is the strength of the helpless. There is the power of effort, the power of askesis, the power of arms and the power of wealth. The poet Sur says all sources of power flow from the grace of Sri Krishna. For the helpless there is only the name of the Lord. All these kinds of powers are defeated and that is how the limitations of all such powers are laid bare.

So this is the hour for transcending the limits of the ego. The restlessness you feel in this hour is auspicious. Do not check your tears. These are drops of nectar. You might ask me, "Does the self appear out of the explosion of the ego?" I told you the other morning that the Infinite can be seen through the

doors of the Infinite. The unknown is established in the form of the known and the Infinite, the self could be spied through the door of the ego. As long as the seed remains the seed, the tree is not visible. As long as the ego identifies itself with the body and the mind as the ego, the self cannot be seen. Now the ego is going to be merged in the empire of silence. It is lodged in the physical body. Now it is all a solitude of silence without a tremor or vibration. The addition is negative but the state is positive. Now you know that the self lies hidden in this physical body of flesh and blood. The physical and the spiritual are not two existences. They are one. The art of life is to allow the spiritual to appear out of the physical. This is yoga. This is not a figure of speech. Pick up a handful of earth. Do you see infinite beauty of form, infinite colour, infinite flavour anywhere in this handful of earth? But in this very handful of earth lie hidden all the colours, flavour, forms of the universe and you know this. This is true not only of earth but also of water. They reap now a harvest on the surface of water, with the help of the element of earth that there is in water. I shall not be surprised if tomorrow they are able to carry on cultivation in the skies by utilising the subtle element of earth that there is in the ether. I have seen people who cook their meals with the help of the element of fire that there is in the rays of the sun and I shall not be surprised if somebody develops the art of sustaining life with the help of the rays of the sun. I have met yogis who derive all their nourishment from the element of earth and water that there is in the ether (*akasha*). So the five elements that there are in this body are very well crystallised, ordered, integrated, shaped, built and arranged and the infinite powers of the divinity are present and inherent in them.

So the energy, the consciousness, the power inherent in every particle of your body flows freely in the empire of solitude and silence. Now there is nothing there in the body which could put impediments in its way. The complex of the ego which put up obstacles, divided life into 'I' and 'you' and frittered it away in the pursuit of desire and ambition lies buried like a seed in the silence. Therefore, there are no more

obstacles anywhere, neither in the sensory nerves nor the morrow and the muscles. There is a vacuity, a space of such an all-pervasive silence that there is no let or hindrance anywhere. Energy flows freely. So this energy which was scattered hitherto returns and enters its original spot, the solar plexus. Just as the centre of the intellect and the mind is the brain so the centre of life's energy is the solar plexus. It goes back to its centre and flows in its totality. It is a live centre of all the principal nerves serving every part of the body. Energy is directly connected with the brain, the backbone and the base of the backbone. Therefore, energy flows into these parts. The birthplace of sound too is there in the solar plexus. This is something you can experience. No borrowed knowledge, guess work or logic will work here. Experiment and experience alone will serve you in the pursuit of your journey here.

What is the nature and character of this energy? Unfrustrated intelligence, unfrustrated sensitivity are the true nature and innate quality of the energy that pervades the universe. Unfrustrated sensitivity is the nature of life. It is life itself. The ability to receive and respond to life is sensitivity. The whole of the human body from top to toe is a movement in sensitivity. Sensitivity is love. Under its influence the whole body becomes like an electric wire. Touch it anywhere and a new movement of energy, freshness, and capacity to feel anew in the body, the mind and the intellect is released. Every moment is full of an unending newness. So the Infinite hidden behind the finite begins to reveal its face. This is the sight of Siva on the peaks of silence. Siva peeps out from behind energy and power. This is the hour when the quest for truth turns into experience, the hour of the union of the individual and the universal consciousness. So the movement of energy expresses itself in the form of intelligence, freshness, the capacity to acquire newness.

Do not mind my language and grammar I do not know what to do with words. I use them as they occur to me. The intellect is finite but the intelligence is infinite, desire is finite but love is infinite. The powers of the senses and the mind are finite but the power of the spirit is infinite. In this hour the truth of the words used comes to life.

So out of the dimension of silence are born infinite sensitivity, infinite intelligence, infinite love. Now the individual is no more an individual because there is no longer a particular centre of consciousness within him. Words will continue to be used. 'I' and 'you' will continue to be used because we continue to remain in the body but the words will have lost their connotation. You take up a handful of earth from any where and it has within it infinite possibilities of form, colour, taste. Even so now the universal consciousness itself has found lodgement in this physical body. The complex which used to frustrate it has now been resolved. It is the state of freedom from all ties and hindrances, the state of total dissolution and final emancipation, the state of liberation, the state of complete extinction of the individual existence. The moment you are an emptiness, the Whole comes in to pervade you. The whole lodged in the emptiness is eager to manifest itself. So this is the end of the individual. Only the body remains. The Universal Consciousness, the infinite energy manifests itself. And when it begins to manifest itself, my friends, it is impossible to contain the manifestation of the Universal Consciousness, the Infinite, the Boundless. So there are people who go into a state of madness, forgetfulness and intoxication. Compared to it the intoxication of a drug like opium is a petty, wretched kind of experience. Some people are led into a state of *samadhi* and are held up in this state. It is a state in which the body becomes a centre of the Universal Consciousness. There is a sort of divine intoxication in it and they like to stay in this state. There are some others who want to bring it down on the level of the intellect. They write works of philosophy. They build up a body of knowledge on the state of egolessness and expound the subject in logical terms. If the person happens to be originally a poet, he writes mystical poetry. If he was originally an intellectual, he would write a philosophical treatise. This is how they end because the capacity to feel, the capacity to wait, the endurance which are needed to bring down the state of their consciousness to the level of the senses and behaviour in the intercourse of life are lacking. So their state of *samadhi* reaches down only to the level of the mind and the intellect.

The transformation which should be reflected in life outside the state of *samadhi* is not brought about. The state of *samadhi* is not expressed in the lives of those who express themselves through philosophy, poetry or mysticism. The old habits of the senses persist. The remnants of their past life persist just as the remnants of animal life persist in human life as it is today. The senses are those of human beings but what is expressed through them are the same old animal tendencies, desires and fears. Similarly even after the attainment of *samadhi* the habits of the previous state of life, the sense-object relationships continue to be expressed as before. There is no change in them.

Please do not think that the state of *samadhi* is the final stage in spiritual endeavour. It is the dawn, the first stage of a new life. If a person is seized with the belief that *samadhi* is the final stage and reaches the state in that belief, he takes steps to make the state secure. People flock round him and treat him as a saint, a sage, a yogi. They set up an *ashram* for him. A sort of a nursery is set up to safeguard and protect the state of *samadhi*. Life is not allowed to unfold itself on the level of human relationship. The hatha yogi's *samadhi* is reared up carefully by various devices and practices which have to be gone through. What is the use of such a *samadhi*? It is and it remains the personal experience of an individual. The area of life is not entered into and I am talking of a new dimension, an ascent into totality, a revolution which would transform human relationship. I am not prepared to entertain for a minute the kind of spiritualism which does not bring the tensions, the pressures, the conflicts and the violence of modern life to an end. I have no interest in the spiritualism of those who are satisfied and feel glorified if they are able to bring the state of *samadhi* to the level of the mind and the intellect, seek to describe the state of *samadhi* in philosophical or poetical works and are engaged in setting up separate sects to propagate their own ideas. To them the state of *samadhi* is the achievement of a particular individual. For fear of allowing the state in which they are to be disturbed, they would not allow life to be unfolded in the context of human relationships.

The senses have to be utilised. The mind and the intellect have to be utilised. As I am talking here about the state of *samadhi* I am using words, the mind and the intellect. You can see that these are being utilised by me. But the state in which I am is not disturbed. It is not interrupted. It does not come to an end in the course of my conversation with you. So the whole question is whether the senses, the mind and the intellect are being utilised and are moving in the grooves of the old habits or the old habits themselves have undergone a change. So this desire to safeguard and preserve the state of *samadhi* in a nursery house and tie it up in ashrams and sects and to build a philosophy out of it is a subtle snare. If a person is not held up, that is, his quest and aspiration and sense of freedom are so intense that he does not stop at this stage, his march onward will not be arrested by any personal happening or experience. In such a case the state of *samadhi* is bound to descend on the level of the senses. Such a man's conduct and speech will be full of the fragrance of balance and harmony. His speech will have the coolness of peace. The unity of life will vibrate through all his relationships. He will have nothing but an intense intimacy, a love which is not of this earth for all who come in contact with him. His life will be full of the graciousness of love, the coolness of peace, the light of equality. There will be no room for domination, fear, dogmatism, exposition. Speech will be there only for communication, his breathing, for ordering the vital being; and the mind and intellect only for receiving the universal consciousness. These and these alone will be his entire concern. Such a human being will be born. Do not think such a state will be unfolded in some one in particular, and not in all of us. It can be manifested in us if we allow it to be manifested. We have made our lives a piece of barren land. It needs to be cultivated. A plot of land may be fertile but it may lie fallow and uncultivated. It is in this sense that Buddha said, "I am a farmer" or Jesus said, "I am the true fisherman".

So *samadhi* is not a state but a dimension and you have to enter this new and unconditioned dimension. It is not only that it is unconditioned, it is not amenable to conditioning. The senses, mind and the intellect can be conditioned, not the

consciousness. In the new man the mind and the body will be governed by this new dimension. Hitherto the centre of administration was the mind and the intellect; now the centre will be shifted to the new dimension of the universal consciousness. And this will be the new man. It is not a dream. It is the truth I have lived and if this can happen in the life of one person, if the waves and the ocean of the supreme spirit could be set in motion in the case of one person, entry into this new consciousness is the right of entire mankind as well. If a single mango starts maturing be sure that the time for the ripening of the rest of the mangoes is not far behind. The mangoes have started ripening everywhere in the West and the East. This is like the song of the *kokila*, heralding the advent of the spring season.

The discourses you hear herald the advent of the spring. Anyone who will turn his face towards it, anyone who loves freedom and the infinite and has the courage to see with open eyes the limitations of the body and the mind and the transcendence of all the limitations put up by the ego, will be a new man. The life of such a person will be a flute in the hands of the universal consciousness and its music will continue to be played. It is an individual human being who speaks but the will is the will of the universal consciousness. It is an individual who lives in this physical body but the song is the song of the supreme spirit being played upon an instrument which is of the earth, earthy. Such a man will be born. Man was born to transcend the limits of the body and the mind and express the Infinite within. The Infinite is the great lover who sometimes chooses to peep out of the finite. The Infinite hidden behind the veil of the finite, the Supreme Spirit hiding behind the curtain of its own physical form is the Beloved, the lord of life, the Immanent who chooses to manifest himself.

My friends, this is *bhakti* (devotion). He who is not separated from his Lord even for a second is the one who is devoted (the *bhakta*). Give Him any name you choose, the Lord who pervades life, the Universal Consciousness, the Prime Power, the Shiva. After all names are not facts. Names can only serve as pointers. It is the union of Shiva and Shakti

taking place in your own body. You have only to allow the Universal Power hidden in your corporeal frame to manifest itself. This is *bhakti* (devotion); the only true *bhakti*. You are only doing a piece of acting and misrepresenting *bhakti*, if you make certain mental attributions, acquire proficiency in making these attributions and secure the fruits of your desire. You may call it the enlightened state on account of the vibrations of the totality and those of attentiveness and knowledge which are caused but it is nothing other than the Universal Consciousness. You may give it the name of the state of *bhakti*. Since the individual consciousness and the universal consciousness are in an eternal embrace, you may call it the *Mahārāsa*, the cosmic dance of eternal Vrindavan. Since it is the union of the individual and the universal you may call it the supreme state of yoga. Since the balance is not lost even for a moment you could call it the supreme state of Dhyāna yoga. You could look at it from any point of view. The content is the same and if your state does not manifest itself in the conduct of life it is not a genuine state, the true state. There is no room for inertia, or lassitude whether bodily, mental or intellectual. It is impossible that you should be fresh and alive within but stale and listless without. There is nothing like inward and outward in the flower of totality. The very skin of such a person is no longer a covering like the skin of a fruit. You do not take the skin with the fruit. The skin is separate from that which is inside the skin. There is not even this much of separateness between this body and the nectar within. The very skin becomes ambrosial. What about death and the span of life in this state? I know the question will come up in your mind. It is not possible to answer the question yet.

December 18, 1971

Questions and Answers

Question : What is it like when one is in the state beyond the senses ? Is it only a stage on the path of spiritual endeavour ? What is the state of the mind in that state ? Kindly throw light in some detail on these questions.

Answer : Ordinarily the experiences received or obtained through the senses are known as sensuous experiences. Some of these you secure on purpose, others come to you by chance. But that is not what we are discussing here.

The sense known as the mind is unmanifest and subtle. It is an instrument undoubtedly but an inner instrument, not an outward one. In a way none of the sense instruments are outer instruments. However, we can see the eye, the ear, the nose. The mind is invisible. The experiences we gain through the mind without the help of the senses are mental. Really speaking that which experiences through the senses is the mind. Nevertheless the experiences gained or received by the mind through the senses could be termed as sensuous experiences. Experiences gained without establishing any relationship with the outward objective world would be mental experiences. Mental experiences include thoughts and emotions but nobody describes them as extra-sensory experiences.

Really speaking it is a mental experience if you recall from the memory and try to re-live the knowledge you have gained and the influences and impressions of this life which have been exercised upon the conscious mind. If you examine it closely these are extra-sensory experiences but usually nobody would say that they belong to a realm beyond the senses. So what are extra-sensory experiences ?

In the first place extra-sensory experiences have nothing to do with the traits and tendencies cultivated in this life, in the family or the race in which you were born. It is only when

happenings take place which are not related to your senses, thoughts, feelings and your racial or family or religious conditionings that you say that it is an experience belonging to the supra-mental or extra-sensory realms. These experiences coming to us from the supra-mental and extra-sensory realms are further divided into two groups. Firstly, there are the experiences which are more or less related to our body. Hearing certain sounds or seeing light or smelling certain perfumes are more or less experiences which are somehow related to our physical body. Secondly, there are experiences, which have nothing to do with this body. There is an unlimited flow in the universe which is outside our bodies, a flow of ideas and desires which make up the atmosphere. Mosphere is really a French writer, author of 'Man the Phenomenon'. He was a Catholic who spent twenty years in China, a revolutionary in America. Well-known scientists of the world like Julian Huxley have given scientific recognition to this word 'mosphere' which is like the word atmosphere. I am saying all this to point out that we are enveloped in streams of thoughts, feelings and impressions. When a person is exceedingly sensitive and his body, mind and vital being are so pure as to receive the subtlest of communications, it sometimes so happens that some one stream out of the universal streams collides with this person and comes to be manifested. If the aspirant is engaged in arousing certain processes with a set purpose, his attitude is of one who waits for results. There are methods of arousing extra-sensory experiences. Hatha yoga is one such method. There are other schools of *tantra* with specialised practices, e.g. mantra-yoga or laya-yoga.

It is evident that if a person has recourse to some specialised method, he is waiting for something to happen. Firstly, he is a doer as one engaged in arousing certain powers and next, he is an enjoyer interested in putting these powers to use. His is the attitude of the dualist. "I shall experience this. I shall arouse these powers." Generally such a desire or aspiration or ambition is there. And the purpose to which he will put the powers thus aroused is also there in his mind. So just as in the physical world the mind of the man who hankers after comfort is sensual, so it is a sensual mind which is engaged in

trying to induce particular experiences and spending time and energy over it. There is no difference in the attitudes of these two sets of people. I am not talking here about those who are engaged in making money to earn a livelihood. But the mind of the person who earns money for social position and the satisfaction of his ambition to wield authority is certainly sensual. He is a person who is running after the satisfaction to be secured from sense and object relationships. Even so in the world of supersensory experiences those who run after experiences which will bring powers which could be put to use are mean and petty-minded people. There is the other case of the person who proceeds through the path of silence to the state of meditation. He too has experiences but he is not out to obtain something or to grasp certain powers to achieve something. The attitude of such a person is not that of a doer or enjoyer. His is the attitude of the witness but his mind is awake all the time at a very subtle level. If the mind is not awake, no experiences are to be had.

Question : During the period of spiritual practices certain extraordinary phenomena put in an appearance such as seeing a light or hearing sounds. Are these due to chemical action in the body ?

Answer : I have already talked about chemical changes, their rise and fall, in the body. Due to this rise and fall certain phenomena like seeing light and hearing sounds do occur. These are not mere appearances. There is a relative reality in them but they are physical or at the most psychophysical.

What are you afraid of? That it might go to your head, that you will be like one drunk? Why are you so afraid of falling into a bottomless pit? There is a phrase current among bhaktas (devotees) 'Drink the cup and go mad'. To the devotee who has drunk the cup and drowned himself in the deep sea, the experience must be one of delight. Otherwise why should he talk of drowning himself in the deep sea? But ninety-nine out of a hundred of us are frightened by the prospect. There is infinite movement in the state of stillness in which the ego has nothing to see or to do, nothing to enjoy or renounce, a state free from action or inaction, a state beyond activity. This earth too appears to be still and stable. How shall I describe

this state of stillness? It is a state beyond all activity, a state where nothing is directed by the mind. Man is frightened by the prospect of such a state because he has come to believe that the movement of the mind is the movement of life. He thinks that if the movement of the mind is set at rest, the result be a lifeless inertia. He thinks that the state beyond all activity is a state of stupefaction and inertia. The reason is that he himself is familiar only with lassitude and inertia, activity and inactivity. It is on account of these dualistic experiences that he is full of fright. The moment the ego feels that it will lose its purpose, it is frightened. This is the meaning of fear of death. Why is man so afraid of death despite the fact that he sees men dying everyday? Man is very proud of his intellect. Why then is he so afraid of death? All his logic and mathematics fail him here. He sees people dying everyday. He knows that he who is born will die. He knows this in theory and observes this in actual life. Even then he is terror-stricken at the mention of death. The very word 'death' is ugly, inauspicious.

Now the line 'Drink the cup and go mad' taken from the Bhakti lore, or from whatever other source, does not evoke any feelings of fear in anyone. There is the image of the deity before him and the devotee sings and dances blissfully, cymbal in hand and anklets on his feet. But the state I have been describing is not a state of self-forgetfulness. It is a state in which the ego is dissolved. There is self-forgetfulness, when you hear good music. There is self-forgetfulness for three hours, when you are in the cinema hall. For those three hours you forget all about your hearth and home, your worries and anxieties, your admirers and detractors. There is self-forgetfulness when you go out for a change or on a pilgrimage. All your domestic worries leave you. But the moment you come back home, you are again your ego-centred self and the same ego-centred life starts afresh. When the ego is dissolved this kind of thing does not happen. When the ego is dissolved in the empire of silence automatically, and the seed of the ego is buried under the earth of silence, a new consciousness is born. The ego does not return again. Having gone into that realm, no one returns. Such is this supreme dwelling place of the silence. Then the centre of the physical body is not there

in the feeling of 'I am'. If the clog of memory does not encumber the feeling of 'I am' it is one with the universal life. There is a self-forgetfulness in it but this self-forgetfulness has no connection with the physical body. If the consciousness of the self attaches itself to the world while keeping itself identified with the body, ideas and emotions are at work. The centre is there in the body and the mind, only the identification is extended to the whole universe. The distinction is subtle. In one case, 'I am' means I am an individual with a particular name and particular qualities a man or a woman, a Hindu, a Jain, an Indian, a Communist, an anarchist or member of the Sarvodaya Samaj. I am there, only the extension of my ego is stretched to the end of the earth. This is not universal consciousness. It is one thing to stretch the extent or expand the circumference of the ego sense to the whole of the universe, but the dissolution of the very centre of the 'I' consciousness is an entirely different matter. The one is merely an expansion of the 'I' consciousness, the circumference of I-centre, but in the other case the universal consciousness is crystallised and finds lodgement in the body.

Question : What is understanding ? Is it not knowledge ?

Answer : It is like this. Knowledge and well ordered and organised information are gathered with the help of the intellect. Out of this accumulated knowledge and information conclusions are drawn. On the basis of conclusions theories are propounded and schools of thought are built up. All this is the play of the intellect. The relationship of knowledge with life is only indirect. There is no direct contact with life in knowledge. But in understanding and apprehension there is a direct contact with life. Understanding is a happening. Knowledge is an act. Knowledge is acquired by the intellect and, therefore, it is a partial action. But in understanding the whole being is in vibration and, therefore, it is total action. The one is direct, the other is indirect. The one has no dynamism of its own, the other does have. Knowledge has no inherent capacity to move or conduct itself. You have to put in effort to translate knowledge into action. You must have initiative or an incentive to put knowledge into practice. It is seldom that you acquire knowledge through the intellect and

it is automatically translated into action. Otherwise we are all educated people who know what is truth and what is untruth. We can grasp it by the intellect. How is it then that it is not reflected in our conduct ? We will weep over the life stories of Harischandra and Prahlad and Dhruva and Mahatma Gandhi but the next moment we will not hesitate to speak a lie, if the occasion is there. And we will tell lies not only when it is a matter of high moment and there is the risk of incurring huge losses. We will tell a lie over the most trivial matters. And life is made up of small matters. The sea is made up of the tiniest of drops. So we gain knowledge of all kinds but our action is diametrically opposed to our knowledge. Why ? Because knowledge is barren land. It has no dynamism of its own. What you call understanding or perception is a happening packed with vibrant energy. The moment you have an understanding, totality is compelled to go into action. You cannot help it. It is impossible that you should understand something and fail to act upon it, because understanding has its own power to move. You cannot withstand this moment of the truth. The moment you understand, your inner energy is set in motion and understanding is converted into action. You do not have to do anything about it. Knowledge can be borrowed. People collect books from all over the world and build a library not only in their homes but also in their brains. Of course it is no library but it is certainly a museum. We are very fond of interior decoration nowadays. I do not say this is bad. You can go on making collections. But there is no question of making a collection in the case of understanding. The moment you perceive, the moment you understand, action will follow. So there is no occasion for making a collection. Perception enhances and enriches the power and truth of life. In understanding there is no room for accumulation. In knowledge you can go on borrowing and collecting.

Question : When we gather here in the morning for self observation, you arrive exactly at seven and leave the hall exactly at eight, an hour later. What is there in all this ? Is there anything more in it than just the observance of a rule ?

Answer : When a number of people are here for a talk for a

specified time which is very short, it is a mark of culture that we should observe the rules. Punctuality is a sign both of culture and courtesy. We decided that I should be here at seven and we could sit in silence for an hour. We could sit for three hours and I should have liked it but this is not possible because every year we have newcomers who know nothing about silence or meditation. So it was necessary to limit the time to half an hour and fix up the alarm clock so that I could know that the half hour was over and it was time for me to talk on a specified subject for another half an hour before I left exactly at eight. It is all so perfectly plain. Isn't it? Even when you are in the family circle you fix up a time schedule for everything. So we here in this association of friends also have a time table. How does the questioner feel about it? Is this discipline imposed from above? Does it fetter his freedom? Is it mechanical to come exactly at seven every day instead of coming at seven one day and at eight on the next? All group activity would be impossible if we did not observe certain symbols of time. It is true we are observing only symbols but such symbols are used all over the world. They must be observed in the interests of group activity. Symbols they are, these fixed timings, but they are symbols set up to facilitate group activity. There are rules of precedence in India and elsewhere. Elders here like Bhai and Dada take their seats first. This is not a question of discipline. This signifies mutual love. The poetry of life is expressed in terms of symbols. I really do not know what it is that is in the mind of the questioner.

Question : We have noticed that you put on wooden sandals. How does this fit in the poetry of life?

Answer : Yes, you are right. The latest fashion in Europe and in America is to put on wooden sandals and these are no ordinary sandals. They carve out the figure of the foot on these sandals. They will fix up a piece of rubber or leather underneath to have high heels. Specialists in nature cure there hold the view that if the soles of the feet are in contact with wood, this is good for the health of the feet. In this country we have a very old tradition and practice of putting on wooden sandals. I like the practice very well.

These leather sandals generate heat, and I am not enamoured of the sandals made of canvas or rubber. That is why I put on wooden sandals. But if I go from here to my room or come from my room to this place, the wooden sandals produce a lot of unpleasant sound. If I get rubber fixed to these sandals, the rubber would touch my feet and people would read some mysterious meaning in this kind of footwear also. So this year I put away the wooden sandals and haven't brought them with me.

If you come to Mount Abu you will see that I continue to use wooden sandals. I like the touch of wood in my feet. I love the music of the gentle sound which they produce as the wooden sole touches my feet. The good they do to my health is incidental. My physician at Mount Abu has presented a specially prepared pair of sandals to me. So they have something to do with the Ayurvedic medical science. With the music of life wood has a great deal to do. I have to sit at a level a little higher than the ground level to enable the audience to see me well and this they suppose is a high pedestal. It is very difficult for a person in this country to live the pure life of a common man without losing the dignity of the common man and the ties of friendship. I talk on matters of the spirit. I love to do so. I have made some experiments in this field, and speak from experience and they call me a saint, a high priest and I do not know what else. But in all humility I am engaged in making an experiment. I wish that even if I should attain the highest state that it is possible for a human being to reach, I should live on terms of friendship with the common man on the common level without assuming the air of anyone who is uncommon and without exercising any pressure on others. When I noticed last year the manner in which my pair of sandals were exercising an influence on the mind of people, I decided to put them away.

Question : The question is why does man want to live? He himself does not know the answer but he is intensely eager to live. He makes all sorts of arrangements so that he should continue to live. The world may come to rack and ruin but he must continue to live. Why is this so?

Answer : There is a desire to live. It is a desire, an aspiration

to unfold that which is there within him. This is true of all human beings and also of plants, trees, animals, in fact all living beings. I know the desire is there but why it is there I do not know. I take delight in living, it gives me joy. I know the joy there is in unfolding myself. In view of the meaning which life's totality, divinity, sovereignty and pervasiveness has for me, I delight in unfolding myself before the totality. I feel as if the desire for creative manifestation were a vibration of the totality's vital being. And this desire has been there in all human beings. It is there in the universe, it is also there in man's corporeal frame. And this desire is fulfilled in life. We simply do not know the art of living, the art of expressing ourselves through relationships. We treat relationships as means of securing advantage and that is why we are unable to manifest ourselves. Every relationship is an opportunity for self-expression. The moment we understand this, relationships no longer remain means of securing something. It is because all our relationships today are based on desires and expectations that the aspiration for self-expression which is lodged in our vital being on account of the totality has remained unfulfilled and we do not experience a sense of gratitude and thankfulness till the hour of our death. He who knows how to live has a feeling of gratitude every moment of his life. Every moment of his life he showers the gift of the totality. All his relationships are occasions for giving away and offering the self in sacrifice freely, spontaneously, without a purpose behind it. He allows his totality to be expressed every moment and in all his relationships. This is the true art of living your lives. There is nothing that you ask for, nothing that you want in return. If it happens that something is given to you, it is part of the nature and law of life. You get incalculable times more than you give. You are getting here the love of only one person. I am getting the love of such a large number. You give just a little and you get so much more. It is the nature of life. Real life consists in giving away your totality every moment of your life without hesitation, without a purpose behind, without caring for what others will say, without fear, spontaneously, gracefully. In this way you go on purifying the self. This truly is life. We simply do

not know how to live. Please do not nurse the illusion that you know how to live. If you live this kind of the true life, death will have no terrors for you. You do not have any wishes and preferences that you should live long, that life should not be cut short too soon, that it should not be too prolonged. All questions whether you will die today or tomorrow or ten years later are irrelevant in the context of such a life.

The man who knows how to live is not the fearless man, he is the man without fear, the man in whom there is the absence of fear.

So it is the very nature of life that it wants to allow itself to be unfolded. Perhaps that is why man wants to live. I say perhaps because I do not know. Since I was a child the question why I live has never occurred to me. I opened my eyes on creation, and saw the infinitude, the splendour of life. Questionings arose, 'What is all this? What is birth? What is death? All this manifestation around me, how did it come to be manifested?' These questionings were so insistent that the question, why do I live, has never occurred to me to this day. I became so engrossed in watching my relationship with the world and the totality, life became such a joy that even today if someone asks me the question why do I live, I do not answer it. It is all so full of joy. Do not suppose that my life has been full of comforts. I have had my full portion of pain, sorrow, poverty, slander, indifference, flattery, public opprobrium and adulation—all that there is in the life of any individual.

Life means that if happiness comes your way, do smile but do not try to hold it fast in your fist. If there is suffering, do shed tears but do not allow the tears to taint and ruin the moment that is going to follow. Only he can live his life who has cultivated the art of not allowing the memory of suffering to taint the moment that is going to follow and of refusing to allow the intoxication of happiness to warp and cover up what is to come. We have feelings. We are not insensitive like stone. If we are respected, we will smile. If we are disgraced, it will pain us. But you must not make this pain your life's capital with which to trade. Passing through life's dualities of pleasure and pain, respect and disrespect, joy and sorrow,

birth and death with such perfect dignity that no ugly spots are left behind on the body or the mind—this is life. There is no one who can be free from pleasure and pain, honour and disgrace or the pangs of disappointment.

You cannot live in a glass house. Even if you were to go to the Himalayas or to the seclusion of an ashram, you will find that the dualities, the jealousies, the greed you have known here will follow you there too. The will to live, the true life consists in this that you pass through the dualities with such calm and dignity that the shadows of the pleasure and pain of one moment are not allowed to affect or darken the moment that follows.

Live out both the pleasures and the pains without being lured by heaven or frightened by hell. Let not the terror of death or the difficulties of life or the talk about virtue and vice and sorrow and even the more deceptive talk about happiness dupe you. Who else in this wide world other than the person who lives such a life can afford to talk about the liberated life, the life which is free and unfettered like the flowing river or the bird in flight in the skies? You can find the answer for yourself without asking me why do we live.

It is not that there were no seekers after the truth and joy, none engaged in the search of life before you and I came upon this earth. There were so many seekers and aspirants before us. There must be many today. Shall we make a list of them, make a comparative study of their sayings, assess the value of their experiences, categorise them, award them places in a seniority list? What is it that we are after? If a person in search of the truth and the self remains devoted to the search in the relationships of his life, he will find all the answers forthcoming in the right contexts, at the right moment and from the lips of the right person. It is the responsibility of life to put you in touch with the right person. If there is the slightest difficulty in the pursuit of your search as it attains certain heights or reaches certain depths, life creates the situation in which your difficulties are met. You come by the right persons. It so happens that someone places the right book in your hands. You are engaged in conversation and the answer

springs out of the dialogue. The earnest seeker whose face is turned towards the truth cries out, "The Lord has come to my aid." So if there are those who have found the truth in their own lives and are able to put it in words, life will put you in touch with them.

Question: What was the position in which Arjun or Yashoda found themselves when the Universal form was revealed before them?

Answer: I do not know. I have not had the experience and, therefore, I could only make a guess. Everybody would guess differently. You could guess that Yashoda looked upon the Universal form as her child, the child whom she considered and accepted as her child. Every mother considers that the child that smiles and plays in her lap is her own child. She never imagines that the child playing in her lap is a representation of entire mankind and the universal consciousness in the form of child. So Yashoda thought that Krishna was her child. Balaram had complained that Krishna had eaten up some dust and Krishna says, "No, I have not eaten up any dust." When the child opens his mouth, the form of the entire universe is revealed in it.

You may say that it is only an allegory. But there is a lot of the flavour of life behind the allegory. Whatever it is that you have in your mind when you talk about 'the universal form', as far as the mother is concerned, she must have been rendered speechless by the sight. So much of power and energy in so small a child! She had witnessed all those episodes relating to the destruction of the demons like Shakatasur or the slaying of Putana. But being the mother that she was, she must have forgotten all about those feats. The relationship of mother and child, 'my own son', is not easy to get over. And when she saw the universal form in the mouth of the child, she must have been rendered speechless by the sight of the whole universe in the mouth of her baby. But the very next moment she must have been swept away by the powerful urges of a loving mother.

About Arjun you know what happened from the Bhagavad Gita. "O Krishna, O Govind, O Friend—that is how I have known you all the time and now what is all this? What use

have I for this universal shape of yours. I cannot take it in my embrace. That other shape of yours with the two feet and two hands was good enough. It is true it was I who asked you to show me your universal form but my mind is unable to settle down on this form." If the view of the universal form could illumine the meaning of the earlier ten chapters, it would have been unnecessary for Sri Krishna to go on with the exposition contained in the rest of the seven chapters of the book. Arjuna asked to see the universal form but when it was shown to him, he was frightened. He was terrified. There was no means of establishing any relationship with this form. And so the very next moment Arjuna asked Sri Krishna to assume his former shape and Sri Krishna had to resume his former shape as Vasudeva. He was obliged to deliver the discourses in chapters twelve to eighteen of the Gita. I do not know what the questioner wants to know. My friends, everybody has a view of the universal form in his own corporeal frame and his own life. And when the universal form begins to unfold itself in your own body, you are terrified, you turn your eyes away and look for a route of escape.

December 18, 1971

Discourse 6

Spiritual endeavour is real when you strive to bring all the relationships and activities of your life out of the dark levels of desire, tradition and habit into the free and open space of science. The basis of the endeavour is a way of seeing things which has been purified by science. The day human relationships in society are looked at from the scientific angle of vision, there will be no need for spiritual endeavour as a separate effort or activity. Anyone who seeks spiritual light and happiness must address himself seriously to the task of his self-education because the very basis of our relationships is wrong. Our relationship with our body, mind, speech, the things we use, the people we live with, all that there is around us is built upon wrong foundations. Our outlook is unscientific. Our approach is unbalanced. In order to remedy this we need what may be called spiritual endeavour or self-education.

The real foundation of spiritual endeavour is purity of life. Cleanliness and purity are poles apart. You may have a clean body. If the body is clean but your speech is unclean and tainted, the cleanliness of the body cannot do for purity. By unclean speech I mean speech that is untruthful.

Untruth is the breeding ground of all sin. There is nothing more unclean than untruth. Untruth has a wonderful capacity to vitiate all your life. Before you know it untruth brings you face to face with fear. Untruth is very proficient in giving rise to endless complexes, evils and diseases without your ever knowing anything about its processes. Untruth lands you in folly, fear, hypocrisy and false pride. Anyone who gives quarter to untruth even once will find that all sorts of impurities will enter into him by the backdoor. So the foundation stone of the spiritual endeavour is purity of life and purity means truthful behaviour.

Do not imagine that truth is some sort of a subtle doctrine. If the truth for you is only what you understand and feel free to state in private and public, in the light of the day and the darkness of the night, something which is a settled conviction with you, it is enough to start with. Truthful behaviour turns mere cleanliness into purity. If you are truthful in speech, the heart too tends to behave truthfully. Truthfulness of the heart means that you do not hide or hold back your motives, your wishes, your purposes and your aims. You must see clearly and in their stark reality the motives which move you.] ✓

We do not look into our motives and even when we recognise them for what they are, we try to deceive ourselves into thinking that the motive is different from what it is. We should accept and own the truth about our motives in the open light of our relationships with other people. It is sheer cowardice not to tear away the veil from the face of the motives which arise within us. It is nothing but cowardice not to recognise our motives for what they are in their true colours. If a man who is a coward at heart does even an act known as pious and religious, he lands himself into pride and hypocrisy. If you will view your motives and purposes in their true light and own them, you will be saved from the sin of self-deception; otherwise man is for ever ruining his life in self-deception. There could be people who could save you from ignorance. But no sage or saint or even God Himself could save you from self-deception. Self-deception lands you into all sorts of illusions. Therefore, at the base of the endeavour for the purification of life and the mind lie three things, acceptance of the realities, truthfulness in speech and suitable nourishment and relaxation for the body. Then alone could it be said that the enquirer has become an aspirant. Otherwise the quest of those seeking happiness and the self remains merely an intellectual and mental exercise. Such a person will read books dealing with spiritual matters, listen to discourses and harbour the illusion that the ideas which he has accepted intellectually are experiences or realisation. You cannot reach conviction or understanding by merely making acquaintance with conclusions and theories.

If a man carries on his quest on the level of the mind and the intellect he will stop at the accumulation of various kinds of ideas. The accumulation of physical goods is less harmful than the accumulation of things mental and intellectual.

They are building up a social structure in the world today designed to take away your physical goods. But your mental and intellectual accumulations are even more dreadful. They have in them a formidable capacity to dominate and exploit.

The whole vocation of the aspirant is that he should strive to bring in the spirit of enquiry in all his relationships and transactions from morning to evening.

I shall not deal here with the problem of proper nourishment and relaxation. Suffice it to say, that you should solve the problem in the light of the needs of your body, keeping in view your inherited qualities and conditionings and the requirements of your environment, the climate and the season. It will not be difficult for you to find out what diet and recreation will suit you, if you have proper love and respect for your own body.

Truthfulness in behaviour is the next step. The abode of the Lord whom you call God is in truth. Love is just the beginning of truth. Beauty is its effulgence. No spiritual endeavour which is not based on truthful conduct can bring about the pellucid serenity of harmony or evoke the vibrations of the unity of life. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi became the Mahatma under your eyes by dint of his truthful conduct. It was on account of his truthful conduct that he introduced a new power, a new vision in the annals of world revolutions. Under your eyes Rai Chand Bhai became Srimad Raj Chandra on the basis of the truthfulness of his conduct. Leave alone the stories of mythology, the stories of Harish Chandra and Prahlad and Ram Chandra of the house of Raghu. Under your eyes Gadadhar became Ram Krishna Paramhansa due to his truthfulness. And it was truthfulness again which turned Nimai into Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

So look at the mighty power of truthful behaviour. Do not say that it is not possible to follow truth in society and the worldly transactions of everyday life. I do not know what this

word 'follow' means. Truth is not followed in society and it is exactly because truth is not followed in society that we need men who are in search of happiness and the self and keen to establish truth in society. He is no seeker who does not strive to awaken and establish the truth all round him, at home and outside, in the course of his activities as a business man, in the performance of his duties as a public servant. The spiritual endeavour is co-extensive with life. It envelops the whole of a man's life. What is needed is a complete transformation of life.

The spiritual state means the dawn of a new life. It involves the revolutionary task of opening up new dimensions in life. If you are not prepared to pay the price by foregoing the profits you make in your business transactions and the positions you win in society, do not think of taking the spiritual road. You have the field of religion wide open before you. There are so many religious organisations. Make money by resorting to falsehood and pride and exploitation. Earn hundreds of millions and give millions in charity. They will call you a religious man. All this goes on in society and very cheap work it is. It is not a difficult task in this country to earn the title of a religious man. But we here are talking about the spiritual life which means that there is a revolution in and a transformation of your life. There can be no compromises in the spiritual field. You cannot speak and practise a little truth at home and a lot of untruth outside. It is not possible. You cannot indulge in untruth in the name of politics and economics.

Life is one whole, life is indivisible. If you do not have the necessary courage, to practise truth say, "Good bye to the spiritual life. I am not made for it. I shall not take this road. I am well satisfied with the scriptures of my religion and my race. I want a position in the same society about which I say that it is based on falsehood. I want luxury and the good things of life in the same body which I say is false. I want all that and so goodbye to the spiritual life. I am well content with my religion and my ethics and my society." The spiritual life is meant only for him who sees the incongruity and the imbalances in the life of the individual as well as the tensions,

the struggle, the violence in human society today. The spiritual life is meant for the brave. But the least that you can do is to take yourself out of the illusion that you are a seeker in quest of the self and the Supreme Being.

When you practise truth the purification of your life is in proportion to your practice of the truth. Purity is set in motion by truth at all levels and in every field of consciousness. We are free agents in the matter of practising the truth. There is a wonderful dynamism in the process of purification which follows the practice of truth. As soon as truth is practised complexes begin to melt away. The man who practises truth knows no fear. The fear complex melts down and the individual is without fear. He is neither rude, nor arrogant. He does not suffer from the egoistic complex that he is truthful and the rest of the people in the world are sinners. I think that a seeker who is in search of happiness and the self cannot be touched by egoism. Egoism, envy, ill-will seize only those who are for ever comparing themselves with others. Those who are carefree and busy living their own lives have no time to compare themselves with others and indulge in egoism. Egoism could have no standing ground if we were not for ever comparing ourselves with others. Neither fear nor egoism could touch anyone at any level if he would not compare himself with others. It is only the coward who is an egoist and cowardice leads to various subtle forms of aggression.

The fear complex is resolved by truthful behaviour and many other conditions arising out of fear such as tension, pressure, the desire for aggression also tend to be resolved. The person who is with fear is always planning to attack others in the name of self-defence, because fear always gives rise to suspicion. He is all the time on the defensive and full of suspicion about others. "He was deep in conversation with that other fellow. He must have said something, against me. He smiled at him. He loves him more than me." Somebody has not spoken to me for some time. I am seized with suspicion, even if it is my mother or wife or daughter. A person seized with suspicion is always attributing motives. He comes to believe that the motives he attributes and the guesses he makes are facts and realities. This creates tension and vitiates our relationships. Complexes

are formed. Complications arise. And all this is so because our actions are not founded on truth. If there is no spontaneity, no purity and serenity, no free and easy intercourse in human relationships, if our relationships are befouled by tension, pressure, envy, anger and jealousy, believe me, there is no other reason for this except the untruthfulness of our conduct and our self-deception.

That is why Gandhiji used to say that God is Truth. If anybody went to consult him on political matters he would say, 'Truth is my policy'. If somebody went to seek his advice in the midst of a political crisis, he would say, 'Truth is my shield.' We have witnessed a mighty effort for the realisation of truthfulness under our own eyes. It was the same thing which Raichand Bhai practised. This man who was a businessman and dealer in precious stones, never considered wealth as a measure of life. Truthfulness was what he lived by. Truthfulness automatically purifies life and such a man need not practise the fixed rules prescribing self-restraint, penance, breathing exercises and the drawing-in of the senses from the external, objective world. Friendliness and cooperation will flow out from the life of such a man as a waterfall springs forth from the mountain tops.

Crookedness and complexity tend to fade out and a naturalness and spontaneity enter into his life. His actions are based upon the bedrock of science. Science and the spiritual life are not removed from one another. If a man's relationships have a scientific basis, his mode of life, his diet and recreation, and his balanced speech take him to a physical, mental and intellectual stage very favourable for the attainment of the Yogic state. There is very little that remains to do or to be allowed to be done. So true spiritual endeavour consists in lifting up our actions, wishes, desires, traditions, and habits into the light and the free and open atmosphere of science. The endeavour consists in linking life with the spirit of enquiry. The bedrock is the purification of life and for the purification of life it is necessary that nourishment and relaxation of the body should be guided by the scientific outlook. Let your speech be grounded on truthfulness and watch the result. But this must be done in a spirit of humility.

There are no set laws and rules in this connection. Try and watch the results. But the price will have to be paid because society today is not based on truth. Perhaps you will find that your wife or husband or the members of the family do not understand you. Society will misunderstand you. All this will happen because family and social life is not based on truth. They will misunderstand you, treat you with indifference. They might insult you and say that you are a simpleton. They will say that this is the iron age of ignorance and not the golden age of truth and that you have strayed into the wrong age. They will make fun at your expense. But it is a thousand times better to pass through the difference and calumny of such a society than to allow harm to be done to your life and your soul. And he who will pass through this trial with humility cannot be cowed down by any power in the world. There is no power on earth which can prevail against true humility.

People harbour the notion that the spiritual endeavour is some sort of an independent and exclusive activity divorced from life. They look upon it as some kind of a romantic and mysterious endeavour. I am not saying that mysteries will not be unfolded following progress in the field of spiritual endeavour. But you must see first what is the foundation of the spiritual life. Build your house on a foundation of rock, not of sands. Truth is the bedrock. Tempests and storms may rage and strike against this foundation but these will be driven back. Let the psycho-physical vessel of life be purified. How the universal consciousness enters this purified vessel will be the subject of the discourse at the next sitting.

December 19, 1971

Discourse 7

The first symptom indicating that the process of purification has been set in motion in the mind and the vital being is that no thoughts about the next moment arise in the mind. I said in the morning that truthful conduct banishes fear and that it is the foundation stone of the state of detachment. So any one who acts truthfully in his relationship at the present moment has a sense of fulfilment issuing forth in his life at that very moment and out of that very action. Do not take this for a theoretical proposition. It is an experienced fact that the joy of fulfilment is secured instantly from truthful action. Any idea or desire or ambition about the results that will follow simply do not arise in the mind because the act itself is infused through and through with joy.

Since truth is of the very stuff of God and the self, there is a direct apprehension of the self in truthful action. The spiritual life is living constantly in the self and the consciousness of the self. In truthful action you are directly in touch with and in the proximity of the self. It is not an indirect relationship and there is nothing theoretical or imaginary or mysterious in this. God is revealed in truth. God manifests himself in truth. I do not have words good enough to describe it but this is what I have experienced and realised in life. There are no words tender enough to convey the tenderness of the touch and the vibrations of the Divine presence which I have seen in truth.

So since there is a sense both of consummation and fulfilment in the action itself, no thoughts relating to the next moment enter the mind. You begin to experience the glories of the eternal in the present moment. You are not tormented by memories of the past or imaginative fancies about the future. Since you are not worried about the future and secure the joy

of fulfilment in the act itself, you do not waste life in studying the reactions of others.

In the kind of life we live, we are assessing, measuring, calculating all the time. 'How will the other person react to this? Let me keep him pleased and in good humour. If an injustice is done to the self or to truth or life, this does not cause concern. The person in front of me is likely to serve my self-interest, and, therefore, I must please him. 'What a deal of flattery do we indulge in in the attempt to please others? What lies do we utter to ingratiate ourselves with others. It is the untruth of our own personal lives which assumes a universal shape and leads to tension, struggle and violence on the universal level.

So this is the miracle of truthful conduct. The glories of the life eternal are unfolded in the present moment. You experience immortality in the present moment. There is joy in truthful conduct, joy and a sense of liberation, liberation at the very first moment, liberation that abides from the first moment to the last. You are free in that very moment from frustrations, tensions, pressures, fear, memories of the past and fancies about the future. Therefore, you act like a liberated man. You have no fear of death. A man fires at you with his pistol from a distance of two yards and without so much as a twitch on your face you say 'O Ram' and fall down a victim (like Gandhi) to the assassin's bullet. This is not a story from ancient mythology. Two thousand years have rolled by since Jesus said on the cross, 'Father, pardon them for they do not know what they are doing.' But what happened in the case of Gandhiji relates to our own times. The man who fought relentlessly by day and night against British rule had not the slightest ill-will or bitterness in his mind for the Britisher. It is a story of our own times. Do not entertain the idea that I am a follower of Gandhiji. I never saw Gandhiji and never had the good fortune of listening to him. But we can see how truthful action strengthens the spirit, and how the purity and harmony of such a man effects and transforms the lives of countless men and women. And you in Gujarat are familiar with the faith in truth of Ram Chand Bhai who inspired Gandhiji.

So complexes are resolved, death holds no terror, worries about the morrow and the next moment vanish and you are a liberated man. The state of liberation is not very difficult to attain. It is not the monopoly of a select few. If this state is attained, that is if truth is installed in your mind, body and the vital being, the vessel of life is purified. Purification casts its light all round effortlessly. There is a spontaneous perception and understanding of life. You go on living your life and what you call understanding and perception follow your footsteps. You take one step and the path is lighted for the next one.

So effort and endeavour have to be put in only for the purification of your mind, body and the vital breath. Effort and endeavour end here. Beyond this things happen because such a purified man is not cut off from the community and the universe. Things are not done. They happen. A relationship is established between such a man and his environment including the animal and plant world, the entire creation and the flow of the unmanifest forces that pervade the universe. As long as the human vessel of the body and the mind was impure such a relationship could not be established. Now the man and the universe are in the presence of one another in their true state. Hitherto although the individual and the universal flow did exist, yet there was no meeting point between the two.

The Lord is even more eager than you to step into your heart. He is impatient to take his devotees into his embrace. But where is the room for him to step into? Shall he step into your impurities and disharmonies? Shall he step into a heart which is a battlefield of conflicting desires enveloped in the tumult and the anarchy of disordered feelings, ambitions and ideas? There is not a moment when your heart is in a state of silence or solitude or harmony or balance or truth. Shall the Lord enter a heart such as this? The Lord does not tarry. When I say the Lord and the Immanent, I have no Rama or Krishna or Shiva or any gods or goddesses, nor a Rishabhdeva, or Adinath, or Neminath, or Mahavir in my mind. What I have particularly in mind are the Universal Consciousness, the all-comprehensive Intelligence, sensitivity that is unbounded, a perception of the unity of Life and Love.

Purification of life is the only true endeavour. All efforts to secure experience, develop powers beyond the senses and to enjoy the pleasures of such accomplishments belong to the world of unreality. They do not belong to the world of the spirit, being merely extensions of the visible world. It is the same old world of the mind and the intellect, a world of the pleasures of the senses and objects, a world of ideas, theories, schools of thought, a world of the super mind. They are not efforts to realise life and to live the life of the spirit. If you want to go in for appearances and unrealities you may do so, but recognise them for what they are.

So once your life has been purified you are in a state of perfect peace and happiness because you are free from fear, complexes and indecision. All that you do is done in a state of clarity, purity, calmness and harmony. The result is that your words and actions do not carry about them the foul odour of inner tensions, contradictions, conflicts and pressures. The words and actions of those who are bruised and disintegrated within give out a bad odour similar to the one the physical body gives out. There is the beauty and the music of peace, the fragrance of unity in the speech and action of the man who is detached and without fear and who is established in the truth. In other words, he is like a lute all the strings of which are perfectly attuned. The musician has seen to it that the tuning is perfect.

People have taken the spiritual path for thousands of years before you and me in this country. Some of them saw the truth, some put it down in words, some built up schools of thought and systems of philosophy, some others wrote poems. People have gone on making experiments. Whether these experiments dealt with the totality, whether and how far they were partial or one-sided or unscientific is a matter which I will not discuss at the moment. But I must say that there has been no dearth of courageous men in this country who have carried on experiments in the laboratories of their human bodies. Their work has not been wasted. Siddhartha became the Buddha, the Enlightened one. At first he went into excesses and fasted for fortyseven days. He found that the truth of life did not consist in going to extremes. There must be a middle path.

His spiritual endeavours have not been wasted. A thought arises in your mind. It is turned into vibrations. It enters space. You are seized with fear, it takes the form of vibrations and joins space in a form subtler than that of ether. So all these practitioners in the spiritual field, the sages, the yogis, those who renounced the world continue to be part of the existence that is around us.

When life is purified and the lute of the body is perfectly tuned, the flow of the inner currents pervading the universe comes like a gust of wind and strikes the instrument. When there is a problem, or a difficulty or an obstacle, the man who is calm and unruffled and seriously in communion with his self is bound to come into contact with the universe. If the person is emotionally keen, a devotee or a lover, the current will take a visual form and lead the way. If he has a keen intelligence and has followed the path of knowledge, his mind will vibrate with perception and understanding. So the help he needs is pre-arranged. It is not a matter of putting in effort. The relationship that is established is in accordance with the law of Love. There is the physical law of gravitation which makes it possible for you to walk on the earth; there is the law of cause and effect operating in the field of the mind and the intellect. Similarly in the spiritual life there is a law of Love like your law of gravitation. The moment your life is purified, this law comes into operation and relationship is established between the individual and the universe.

A hundred years ago the statements of Madame Blavatsky used to be considered as full of fraud, deceit and falsehood. There are no works which are more widely read today in U.S.A., and, even more than that, in Soviet Russia than the works of Madame Blavatsky. The reason is that now they have invented glass plates and cameras to demonstrate how emotions are material and could have a material cause. There are bodies within this body and they have invented cameras which can photograph upto a depth of three or four bodies. They have manufactured devices which could register telepathic messages on an instrument.

So I am stating this with a full sense of responsibility that the results of the spiritual endeavours of those who have gone

before us continue to exist in the form of waves or vibrations. There is no knowing when, how and wherefrom the seeker who has purified his life may get the aid he needs. It is as if there were signals and codes or a system of attracting inspiration, or some method or technique of life and the universal consciousness. Words fail me. As soon as I use words you would drag them within the four corners of a definition. I do not know the definitions. I do not know the science and the laws governing it. But this much I know from experience that the aid of the universe will be forthcoming in proportion to the intensity of your quest and the purity of your life. Man does not know what is the science or mathematics behind it. Man cannot fathom it. The aid that you get is not something you secure by your own efforts. It is here where man has erred. People imagine that they earn it and have a right to it. You are free to call this aid from the universe and the unknown what you like, 'the descent of the supramental' or 'the grace of the Lord.'

So the purification of life and the descent of the Lord's grace are not independent happenings. As soon as effort has reached its own limits, as soon as life has been purified, the Lord begins to manifest Himself. Powers hidden inside you begin to unfold themselves. Powers of the mind come into play automatically. You do not have to will it or to have a purpose or put in effort. Every thing happens spontaneously. Sorrow and pain and agony which symbolise the world enter the heart of such a man because his sensitivity is at once keen, all-knowing and pervasive. His heart beats in unison with the pulse beats of the world, the universe and the whole of mankind. This is the summit point of the unity of life. There is a state of perfect balance. An unbroken and uninterrupted stream of purity and serenity flows through you. You are now a living non-duality walking in the midst of human society.

This sense of unity and non-duality is reflected in your conduct and people give this tenderness of your behaviour the name of love. If you think that there is some substance or independent entity called love, you are mistaken. When the apprehension of the tenderness and unity of life are reflected through all your senses following the purification of your

totality as a result of truthful conduct, they give it the name of love. In the state of love your entire physical behavior, your speech, the expression of your eyes reflect a firm faith in the unity of life. As we are today we are in a very imperfect state. Man has succeeded so far in developing his body and the intellect. He has no perception of the consciousness beyond the body and the mind. He has not yet realised his self. He has not perceived the truth. The result is that he is imperfect, broken up in parts. He continues to be consumed by the fires of conflict, ill-will, wrath and violence. The flames leap up all around him—in the family circle, in society, in poverty and in affluence.

I told you when this camp opened that the spiritual state is a way of looking at life in its totality. It is the yoga of life and there is no lord, no omnipresent outside life. The practical every day life and the spiritual life are not two different states of life. Life is not broken up in compartments. But this is not the position today. We have divided both our inner and outer life into parts and compartments and each has its own values, its own ways of life. There is a conflict between these values and ways of life. Naturally there is no resolution of doubts, no balance, no love or truth in human life. To my mind there is a case for the spiritual life today. We have to establish the unity within and to make the unity of all life the true source of inspiration for social and economic regeneration.

This country has demonstrated how truth and non-violence could be brought into play as revolutionary forces. How one wishes that the possibility of being at one with the universe in body and mind should no longer remain a mere possibility and man should enter into and be firmly established in the consciousness, the unconditioned consciousness of the unity that there is beyond the mind, the body and the senses. It is necessary to bring in the scientific viewpoint when we utilise the body and the mind. Only the man who is established in this unity could hope to build a new set-up and a new society.

I have given some indications of the manner in which you could reach the state of consciousness beyond the body and the mind. I do not know how far I have been able to put over what I had to say. I am unable to make the subject entertaining

for you by introducing stories and parables in these discourses. I am aware the abstruseness of the subject has fatigued some of you. But I could not think of entertaining and satisfying the intellectual curiosity of the brothers and sisters who have gathered here at considerable risk when the country is at war. I have said what I could to share with you the joy of life I have known. I am not versed in the scriptures and philosophy. I am not interested in them and Dada Dharmadhikary, who has known me since infancy, will bear me out.

You may find fault with my discourses in so far as they lack the point of view of those learned in the scriptures or on the score of my language. They might not be very shapely but, as Tukaram has put it, a sugarcane might be ever so unsmooth outwardly but it is full of sweet juice within.

To sum up, I have told you the difference between ethics, religion and the spiritual life and how it is necessary to recognise the limitations of the body and the mind. I have also told you that it is unnecessary, undesirable and unscientific to oppose and fight against these limitations. The Infinite lies concealed in the finite. The Infinite has his abode in the finite. I have talked about the need to recognise limitations as limitations and how to make use of them in view of these limitations. Further I have pointed out the symbols which the mind is apt to employ. I have pointed out how the sense of egoism is a symbol. Time and what you call space are also symbols because Time and space are one. The beauty of life consists in using these symbols within their limits. But it is wrong to mistake symbols for life. Man is a prisoner of symbols and that is how he comes to have a sense of bondage. The sense of bondage is created because we do not look upon limitations as limitations and symbols as symbols. We first create the sense of bondage which is only an appearance and then go on to create the sense of liberation to remove the sense of bondage. Neither bondage nor liberation is true. The reaction of the mind towards limitations is bondage and a perception of the futility of bondage is liberation. Together both these senses are relative. Life is itself. It is neither bondage nor liberation.

Beyond the mind there is consciousness. How shall we

practise silence to get acquainted with consciousness, how can man receive training in seeing during silence, how the seer and object relationship and the conscious-unconscious relationship is established, what are the things that get imprinted on the screen of attention and consciousness out of the subconscious, how extra-sensory experiences influence the body and the mind—all this we have considered during the last three days.

So where do you start when you go back to your homes? What is the bedrock on which the course of evolution of your life shall rest? I feel I must say something in this connection, because the awakening of a mere curiosity is not the quest. Curiosity could be satisfied by a set of ideas. It is not the real quest, the real hunger. A false hunger could be satisfied by some snacks and a glass of water, because it is just a mental desire. But when the hunger is real, a real bodily urge, nothing short of a full wholesome meal will satisfy you. Similarly if it is a momentary curiosity, you will go and buy some books or listen to a discourse or gather ideas, organise them properly and get some satisfaction. Curiosity will take you only to the stage of collecting books and ideas.

The real quest is a serious matter. It permeates your life, creates a restless eagerness and yearning. You feel you are engaged in a search and borrowed material will not meet the needs of your demand. A mere study of the events in the life of Narsi Bhagat and Ravi Sahab, a mere repetition of their words will never satisfy the true seeker. You will merely satisfy a curiosity, an itch of the intellect if you only repeat what they said and do not go forward to taste directly the sweet juice of life with which their writings are replete. The true quest is not an itch of the mind and the intellect. It is a fire lodged in every atom and particle. And when by the grace of the Lord such a fire of yearning is awakened in your life, do not go outside yourself in search of it. It is your mind and the intellect which make the search and the mind has a way of searching out the person suited to its needs. It is an important point which has to be stressed.

As soon as there is a quest people run out in search of a guru (teacher). Who is a guru? And is the person who goes

out in search of a *guru* endowed with the qualities of a true disciple. Consider this carefully, because the words being used here are familiar and we are apt to imagine that we understand their true meaning. When the spirit of enquiry seizes you, you feel that you must search out the meaning of life. You have the humility to own that you do not know the meaning. If the seeker is not humble, be sure that his quest is merely intellectual. The quest is not real. The true seeker is a different kind of man. The way he lives and moves, and looks at things are different because his face is raised in watchful eagerness and expectancy. He is the very embodiment of watchful eagerness and humility. He is not conceited and assertive. He does not feel that his vessel is full and he knows all. He does not say, "I know all. All you have to do is to approve of and confirm my way of thinking". True quest brings about an attitude of humility and eager watchfulness. There is flexibility in this kind of attitude, a sweetness, a readiness to bend. It is a dimension of life.

The manner of the person who is watchful and devoted, humble and eager to see and to know, even if he has to pay the price of his life for it, cannot be mistaken. He is inwardly so flexible that when he meets others he does not impose his own views and personality on others. He is interested only in seeing and understanding things and persons.

Have you looked into the eyes of children? The desire to learn and understand is reflected there in their eyes. The child's body is like a question mark. If they are looking at a rainbow, they are looking at it with their whole being and not only with the eyes. The seeker also is all eyes and ears. The test of true quest in practical life is that the seeker is sweet-hearted and willing to bend. Humility and a state of watchful expectancy radiate all round his personality. Apply this test to recognise him and use your intellect as far as the intellect can take you. The path of spiritualism is not for those devoid of the intellect. The life of the spirit is beyond the bounds of the intellect but it is possible to go beyond the frontiers of the intellect.

If the seeker is endowed with the necessary qualities, he has the quality of a magnet. A relationship is established between

him and those, whether living or dead, who have realised the self. He is like a magnet to a piece of iron.

Do not think that there is anything mysterious in this. It is the law of life. The field of life is not as narrow as we imagine. It is very extensive. So the seeker who is equipped with the proper qualities, does not have to go out in search of a teacher. Life will arrange it that he will meet the person who could help him. Either the teacher will come to his door or he will reach the door of the teacher. This meeting is a happening. It is not brought about by effort. Love does not belong to the realm of effort and meetings of this kind too are not to be had by effort.

Who is a guru? He is one who is not identified with the mind lodged in the physical body. The mind and the body are not his centres. His centre is the universe. It is not a status that he enjoys as the *guru*. He is a state of consciousness, in which there is not only no ignorance but nothing like dreaming or deep sleep or even waking. He has no sense of an ego related to or identified with a name and a form. There is nothing like the 'I' and 'my' anywhere in his body because the entire universe, the entire universal consciousness are there within him.

In his consciousness the centre is not different from the circumference.

Do you think such a person will say 'I am a guru, I teach? I have acquired experience. I have a way of life. Come and follow me'? Do you think he will form a sect and set up an organisation? It will be like the wind which is blowing here so gently saying, "I am going to shut myself up in this room. Come close the doors and windows and take your seat here". You cannot hold the wind in the hollow of your closed fist. You cannot shut up space within the four walls of your house. Similarly you cannot bind down the person who is free from all ties and hindrances and has withdrawn from the world. Such a person belongs to no one. He belongs either to all or to none. How can you forge a relationship with him? The seeker has no time to forge relationships and no relationships could be formed with one who has realised the self. Of course, there could be love and friendship but there could be

nothing like a relationship. 'He is my guru. He is my disciple'. Just as those who are after extending the 'I' and 'my' idea to the limits of the universe fall a victim to vastness, so those who extend the 'I' and 'my' idea to the formation of spiritual relationships are bound to be caught up in bondage. All relationship is bondage.

Therefore, he who has attained the status of the guru and has entered that state will not stop to form relationships. He will not give anything: What he has will be given out. He will not summon up the will to give because there is no one there who could will.

So if a man like this who has realised his soul cares to say something, or something is said through him, it is no act of generosity on his part. It is unnecessary to put him on a pedestal and worship him. Some of his ways of expression will be scientific, others will not be so scientific. You need not treat his modes of expression, his ways of life, his mental and intellectual expressions as authoritative. Truth is greater than individuals, however great the individual may be. Certainly they should be treated with respect, love and humility. All should be so treated. It is likely that you will have more than the usual tenderness in your attitude towards them. It is but natural.

However, the meeting of the teacher with the disciple is a happening. It is not brought about by any effort or endeavour. It is the law, the nature of life. Therefore such a meeting is a happening. Do not try to establish your ownership over it. Do not try to make it an experience of your own.

December 19, 1971

Discourse 8

If this were a camp only of the youth I would have said what I had to say in terms of Western educational methods based on various branches of modern science, physics, chemistry, biology and medicine. That is what I do when I am there in Europe and the United States of America. But the audience here is composed of middle-aged or even older people, people who are mature. They are acquainted with the mainstream of Indian spiritual discipline. They are familiar either with the Upanishads or the Gita or the Jain Agamas. They find it difficult to understand scientific terminology and so I use terms derived from the Vedic lore.

If and when there is the occasion, we could arrange special camps and discourses to suit the needs of the youth and those who are above thirty. In this way we could meet the difficulties of all sections.

A sister suggests that personal interviews with me could be more helpful than public discourses. There is something in what she says because when others are not present it is easier to open up and place your problems freely without fear or hesitation. I know cases of those who shrivel up in the presence of others. They feel as if the whole world were looking at them and their manner, deportment and dress. So such people have a sense of freedom when they meet me alone because there are no obstacles in the way.

There is an additional advantage. I am exclusively theirs for the time being and they have a sense of emotional satisfaction. Here we have fifty people around me whose eyes and mind are centred at one point. But in the course of exclusive interviews there are only a few, say two or four people and you have a sense of proximity. It is a more congenial setting.

Again in an exclusive interview people come with their own problems. But here in a gathering the light of the totality

falls upon life as a whole, the personal as well as the social life. Life is so comprehensive, it is made up of so many areas, it has such depths, heights and range that when you are giving a discourse, you have to measure up all these. But when you are alone in an exclusive interview with problems arising out of your own life, the searchlight of total attention is directed towards you. Problems arise, out of your own life and they are full of intensity. You are aware of the difficulties and hindrances in the way of living your life. On my part too, there is a great deal of attentiveness and, therefore, what is said appears to be more live and easier to grasp.

Here in this gathering the totality of life is in view. So if there is a person here who is not interested in the totality of life, because he is more involved in his own problems, the same range and sweep of the exposition which is so welcome in the context of a specific question, becomes intolerable. I hope you remember what happened to Arjuna when he had the cosmic view. He was ill at ease and frightened. So what you want is that the light of truth, love and friendliness which falls upon life as a whole should fall exclusively on your own question. Then you are not ill at ease. You must grasp the point because there are many who have to face this difficulty. I have told you about the part played by environment during an exclusive interview. But there is another factor too. Our attention cannot be fixed all at once on the totality, because we have not been taught to fix attention on the totality in our early life. We are used only to intellectual reasoning and so our problem remains linked up with our own lives and the members of our families, my family, my husband, my wife, my children, my business, my vocation, the people in my village or at best those of my caste. So the circle to which we belong is a narrow one and therefore, what we understand in this limited area tends to acquire an intensity of its own. So what you have to learn is that your angle of vision towards life should be pure. There should be clarity in your thinking. And this attitude should stay with you as much in relation to your personal affairs as in the context of the totality. I say that our quest must be related to the total life in every sphere, physical, mental, intellectual, supramental, personal or social.

So get yourself trained to relating all your problems to the totality of life. If you do this, whenever your eye will light upon anything in particular, it would point to the totality. So all particular things are viewed in the context of the totality. You are not parted from the context and the light of the totality even for a moment, whether you are awake or in deep sleep. Your vision is able to view everything that happens in totality. And the response also is in the context of the totality.

Two things can help in acquiring training in this way of viewing things. In the first place our problems are not our personal property. They are the problems of entire mankind, problems of the human mind. They come to us even as a gust of wind blows past us. If I am awake, I feel it. Now tell me if a man is asleep, will his body feel the touch of the breeze? How many are there in our midst who will feel the touch of the breeze even when they are in deep sleep? The breeze does not say to the man it touches, "I am here and having touched you, I shall leave. Take notice of me. Recognise me." The breeze does not have any such desire.

So just as the breeze touches those who are awake and those who are asleep, problems too touch all living individuals. But they pass their lives in a state of sleep and unconsciousness. Even if a problem touches them, it is only for a moment that they have a look at it and then they forget all about it. They see but they see not. They hear but they hear not. They ignore the problem. But he who is awake looks at the problem and says to it, "You are here, welcome, my friend". He looks into the eyes of the problem and says, "You are here? What have you got to say?" A dialogue is opened. He wants to see into the inside of the problem, just as we want to look into the inner life of those with whom we are intimate.

So the problems rising up in our lives are the problems of the whole of mankind. If you look at them both from the individual and the universal point of view, it is possible that the difference between the impact of what is said about the total life and that which relates to your individual interests will be eliminated. Some of the difference will persist. You will feel more keenly when it is something which relates to

your body, your surface consciousness, your mind, your vital breath. Let it persist but let it be there only as the dominant note in a piece of music.

In the next place all our activities from morning to night should be in full glare of attention. Nothing should be done with inattention even for a moment. The light of attention must be shed on all that we do with the body, the mind and speech.

Now let me say something about friendliness. I have not been less attentive to you than you have been in listening to my discourses. If I were attached to this body and mind of mine in the smallest degree, it would have been impossible to listen to the glowing tributes you have been paying to me during the last few days. Perhaps an egoist could listen to them and feel tickled but it is only Vimala Behen who can look at Vimala Behen from a position of detachment.

I have listened carefully to what you have been saying since yesterday. I am aware that this talk about the dimension of friendship in the spiritual sphere in which I have been indulging will not be easy to understand. The fault is not yours. There is nothing difficult about this dimension of friendliness. Only it has not been presented properly. It is assumed and the assumption is traditional that those who gain insight into or attain or live the spiritual life must take up a position of authority. The enquirer who approaches such persons touches their feet and accepts what they say as gospel truth. The practice is traditional. Both the teacher and the disciple have a sense of security in this sort of relationship. The disciple feels secure because he comes to feel that the teacher will see to everything, he will undertake the burden, he knows everything and will remove all difficulties. So what used to happen in the past was that the disciple had a sense of dependence. He felt he had found refuge under the protecting wings of the teacher and he himself had nothing more to do. He would do only what he was asked to do. He surrendered all his initiative into the hands of the teacher. The reins of the horse were in the hands of the rider. He himself must act only as ordered. The responsibility was not his.

In politics the reins of government were in the hands of the king and much in the same way they were in the hands of the

guru (the teacher) in the spiritual realm. This was very convenient and kept the disciple happy. There is a sort of happiness in slavery too because there are no responsibilities. This became a habit and ran into the disciple's blood.

And what is the satisfaction and sense of security which the guru gets out of this? He feels, 'These disciples will practise what I preach.' So the teacher has the opportunity to organise his philosophy of life. Doesn't the householder feel worried if he does not have a son or successor to perform the funeral rites? Similarly the guru has the desire for an offspring to carry on his work. He feels that there must be a successor to propagate what he has attained after a great deal of painstaking effort. So there is a great deal of satisfaction in training others in the light of your own experiences. The so-called disciple is very well satisfied with the security provided by the guru.

It is a mutual transaction. The senses, the mind and the intellect enjoy developing certain habits and these habits are repeated over and over again. The mind derives both pleasure and a sense of security out of mechanical habits and their repetition. Your body is very well satisfied and reassured, if it is able to throw its responsibilities on the shoulders of others. And wherever there is the desire for happiness and security, exploitation is inevitable. Please understand my agony. I do want all possibilities and centres of exploitation to come to an end. Only then could there be human relationships based on brotherliness, equality, friendship and cooperation. If cooperation is to replace competition as the motive force in our social, economic and political life, friendship alone could be the basis of such cooperation.

And if your inner individual life is not based on friendliness, if you do not have the self-dependence and the courage to take up the responsibilities of your personal life, it will not be possible to replace competition by cooperation and hatred, anger, and violence by love in your social and political life. The question is one of changing the very foundations of life for the violence, the conflict, the exploitation in our lives are intolerable. It all looks so hypocritical and that is what has led to this search of mine for new bases, new methods, new

modes of expression in our inner lives. So whether it is in the context of the individual life or the totality of life, my endeavour is to make friendship the background of what I have to say.

I do not insist that your attitude towards me should be that of a friend. If it pleases you to stick to your habitual impulses and the traditions in which you have been brought up, if the present situation is not intolerable for you as it is for me, you are free to feel as you like. I would not pressurise you to feel differently. There was a time, a few years ago, when if you were not prepared to have a friend's attitude towards me, I would withdraw myself, I would shrink back and refuse to speak and go further. That sort of hesitation was there. But now it is all a one-sided affair. On my part I take good care not to be unjust, not to exploit. But I would not compel you in this matter. If you cannot bear up with the background of friendship, leave it alone. There is freedom in friendship. Freedom is the essence. You may hesitate to speak freely to your mother or father but when you are in the company of a friend, there is no hesitation, no sense of shame, no fear. Ramkrishna Paramhansa used to say, "Where does fear or shame or hesitation come in, when you go to meet a saint?" Salutations to Ramkrishna, the supreme incarnation of religion and divinity, the founder, the true representative of all religions. This Gadadhar was the harbinger of a new message. He did not use the terms friendship and cooperation, but his relationship with his devotees was entirely different from that of the other saints. Whether it was Latu or Niranjan or Kali or Durga, or Rakhal or Narendra, he gave them all the fullest freedom and love. It was in such an atmosphere that Narendra could stand up and say, 'Thakur, you are infatuated. You will meet the fate of Jada Bharat'. And Narendra could dare to make a hole in the door of the room in which the saint and his spouse Sharda Devi slept to peep into their night life and make sure that they practised celibacy. And it was in such an atmosphere again that the saint, when he got up in the morning, asked Narendra, "Why did you make a hole in the door? You could have come inside as well." It was for the same reason that Paramhansa could say freely and openly. "My

heart weeps when Narendra is not here." Do you know the story? The Paramhansa had not met Narendra for a whole week. He wept over it, engaged a horse-carriage, went to Bagh Bazar where members of the Brahma Samaj were holding a meeting. He knew he must be there and he searched him out, although he was aware that he was not a welcome visitor at the gathering. Narendra was embarrassed and ran away from the place. The saint pursued him. 'Why do you run away?' he said, 'I have come to see you. I have not seen you for a whole week.' Are there any saints and *gurus* who will do this? But the young man does not come back. So the saint ties up some sweets in a handkerchief and says, 'When Narendra turns up, give it to him. Tell him this is from the Thiakur.' The first unfoldment of this dimension of friendship which is deeper than the love of hundreds of fathers and mothers was made by Ramkrishna in his own life. I am putting the same thing in a scientific form. The Paramhansa had a special mode of worship. Thank God we do not have any such special mode of worship here.

There was Gandhi, a great leader of a great country peopled by millions of men and women. The humblest worker could go to him and tell him what he liked. They called him 'Bapu' but Gandhiji's relations with his comrades were those of a friend. If Jawaharlal did not join his prayer meetings or Jaya Prakash would not ply the charkha, he did not feel hurt. He would only say, "If there is truth in what I say, they will come round one day. They are immature but they are true."

So Gandhi was a man who lived the simple life. If somebody offered him a packet of cigarettes, he would put it by for Jawaharlal or Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. People said, "Why do you accept a cigarette box?" And he would say, "Give it to Jawaharlal when he is here". If a child was born in the house of one of his humblest workers, he would write to him. If somebody died, he would send a letter of condolence. This was the kind of leader that he was.

The life that Ramkrishna lived in the spiritual field was lived by Mahatma Gandhi in a much wider field. You can see that friendship and goodwill was the force which he wielded for effecting a social revolution. Do you think that the millions

of comrades who thronged round Gandhiji understood all that he said? Very few indeed understood him. But they were people hungry for friendship and love, people charmed by a single smile of his, people whose lives were transformed by a single word of his.

So I am talking to you about the scientific basis of what happened. If you do not understand the scientific meaning of these happenings, they will not be sources of inspiration. They will not be weapons and instruments which would bring about a revolution in your life. So come and let us meet on the level of friendship. In other words you should be fully assured, as far as I am concerned, that there is going to be no exploitation by me. You should feel that this sister of yours has no axes to grind, no mission of her own, no organisation or institution to build up. Only then will you be able to approach me without a purpose. You should feel that there is nothing which I expect from you, nothing except friendship. If you have this assurance, you will have no fears. There is one more assurance—that I have no desire to change you. If a change takes place of course, I shall be happy.

In the Gyaneshwari, Gyaneshwar says this through Sri Krishna, "O Arjun, what is the purpose of the friendship between you and me? None whatever. It is for you to understand what is good for you. The only relationship there is between you and me is that in the measure you understand what is good for you my joy will increase. It will increase a hundred-fold. That is all the relationship there is between you and me."

So if you get this assurance out of my feeling of friendship for you, what do you think will happen? You will have found a friend in your life to whom you could come just as you are. You will not feel for a moment that you must not come to me because you do not come up to the standards of the virtuous life that Sister Vimala expects.

So all the service I can render to you is that you should have the opportunity to come to me as you are. Such a life is full of joy. It is a joy to meet a person who has no expectations whatever, inward or outward, here in this world or in the worlds beyond, a person who does not ask if the visitor is a sinner or a saint. I am stressing this because this is the very

basis of life. Otherwise what I am saying could sound as self-praise. There is a great deal of assurance in friendship and good will. You are dear to me just as you are and for what you are. If you receive a message for your life or I receive one for my life out of this friendship of ours, that is only the nature of life.

As it is we are all the time trying to give or take something in the course of our relationship. Relationships are means towards an end. We must secure something out of it. The husband wants something from the wife, the wife wants something from her husband. Parents want something from their children. All relationships are built on expectations. Is there a situation where there is no expectation of one kind or the other in the mind of either party, where the two parties could live together on a footing of friendship just as they are? If even a moment is lived in a state of pure friendship, it gives you peace and joy. Then it is no more necessary even to speak. Your mere presence speaks out. Love speaks out. Friendship speaks out. Things happen. There is nothing to do and nothing to get. Both are at one and in the same situation. This is why I talk about this dimension of friendship.

They talk of the rules of good conduct. What is good conduct? Is formal courtesy good conduct? Formal courtesy leads only to pride and hypocrisy. You need humility, humility in the presence of the entire universe and when there is love, humility is bound to come in its wake. So beyond this humility you need no other rules of good behaviour.

This is my last camp at Chorwad. I told you last year too that I do not want to set up a tradition of holding camps. I do not want these camps to be annual gatherings for the emotional entertainment of those who join it. You enjoy listening to me. I too enjoy speaking to you. Do not feel that I do you a favour. I have neither the time nor do I enjoy doing favour. So the idea occurred to me that it may be that I will not meet the friends who are here again in a camp. And so I chose to speak out freely because love is not fettered by the rules of polite behaviour.

December 20, 1971