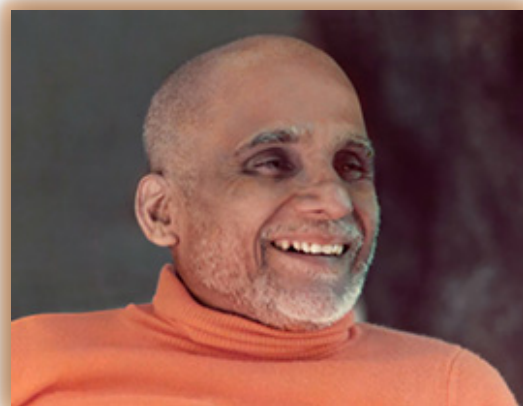


THE STUDY AND PRACTICE OF YOGA

AN EXPOSITION OF THE YOGA
SUTRAS OF PATANJALI

VOLUME II – SADHANA PADA,
VIBHUTI PADA AND
KAIVALYA PADA



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THE SADHANA PADA

Chapter 52

YOGA PRACTICE: A SERIES OF POSITIVE STEPS

The great adventure of yoga is not easy for those whose minds are distracted with various occupations. The difficulty with the human mind is that it cannot be wholly interested in anything. While on the one hand there is a pressure of the mind towards taking interest in things, there is, simultaneously, a peculiar cussedness of the mind on account of which it cannot take interest in anything for all times. It has a peculiar twofold *rajas*, or inability to rest in itself, working behind it, inside it and outside it—from all sides—as a disturbing factor. There is no harm in taking interest in anything; but the interest should be only in one thing, not in many things.

Anything in this world can be taken as a medium for the liberation of the soul. An object of sense can cause bondage; it also can cause liberation under certain conditions. When an object becomes merely one among the many—just one individual in a group—and the interest in the object may shift to another object after a period of time, then that object becomes a source of bondage, because it is not true that any single individual object can manifest the wholeness of truth in itself.

Such an apprehension that any peculiar individual feature can reveal the whole of truth is regarded as the lowest type of understanding. Yat tu kṛtsnavad ekasmin

kārye saktam ahaitukam, atattvārthavad alpaṁ ca tat tāmasam udāhṛtam (B.G. XVIII.22), says the Bhagavadgita. The lowest type of knowledge is where a person clings to an object as if it is everything and there is nothing outside it—it is all reality. But, this feeling that a peculiar object is all reality is not sincere. It is an insincere feeling which can subject itself to modifications under other circumstances.

“My child, thou art everything,” says a mother to her only child. But she has a false affection because she does not really believe that it is everything, though there is an expression of that kind when emotions prevail. If that child is everything, she cannot have interest in anything else in this world. But, is it true? She has hundreds of interests other than her baby, though she falsely makes an exclamation that it is everything—her soul, her heart, her alter ego, and what not.

Likewise, under limited conditions we temporarily exclaim our feelings of brotherliness and friendliness with things of the world, but these feelings are projected by conditions. When the conditions are lifted, the feelings also get lifted. Such a state of mind is unfit for yoga. But when the very same object that has been wrongly regarded as a thing of attachment becomes an object of possession exclusively, it can also liberate the soul. One of the principles of yoga is that any object in this world has two characteristics: enjoyment and bondage on one side, and experience and liberation on the other side.

This philosophy of the twofold character of an object is vastly emphasised in the Tantra Shastra, where nothing in this world is to be regarded as evil, unnecessary, useless or meaningless—everything has a meaning of its own. And,

the seed of this philosophy is recognised in a *sutra* of Patanjali himself: bhogāpavargārtham drśyam (II.18). The *drisya*, or the object, is for two purposes: for our enjoyment and bondage, and, under different conditions, also for our freedom.

Thus, a thing in this world is neither good nor bad. We cannot make any remark about any object in this world wholly, unlimitedly or unconditionally; all remarks about things are conditional. Things are useful, helpful and contributory to the freedom of the soul under a given set of circumstances, but they are the opposite under a different set of circumstances. Not knowing this fact, the mind flitters from one thing to another thing. This is the character of what is known as *rajas*—the principle of diversity and distraction. The remedy for this illness of distraction of the mind is austerity, or self-restraint. The great goal of yoga that has been described all this time will remain merely a will-o'-the-wisp and will not be accessible to the mind if the condition necessary for the entry of consciousness into the supreme goal of yoga—namely, freedom from distraction—is not fulfilled.

While desire is a bondage when it is caught up in diversity, it is also a means to liberation when it is concentrated. The concentrated desire is exclusively focused on a chosen ideal; and the freedom of the mind from engagement in any other object than the one that is chosen is the principle of austerity. We limit ourselves to those types of conduct, modes of behaviour and ways of living which are necessary for the fulfilment of our concentration on the single object that has been chosen for the purpose of meditation. We have to carefully sift the

various necessities and the needs of our personality in respect of its engagement, or concentration, on this chosen ideal.

This is the psychological background of the practice of self-control. Self-control does not mean mortification of the flesh or harassment of the body. It is the limitation of one's engagements in life to those values and conditions which are necessary for the fulfilment of the chosen ideal and the exclusion of any other factor which is redundant. It is a very difficult thing for the mind to understand, because sometimes we mix up needs with luxuries, and vice versa, and what is merely a means to the pampering of the senses, the body and the mind may look like a necessity or a need. Also, there is a possibility of overstepping the limits of self-restraint which, when indulged in, may completely upset the very intention behind the practice. Diseases may crop up, distractions may get more intensified, and the practice of concentration may become impossible.

While indulgence in the objects of sense is bad, overemphasis on excessive austerity beyond its limit also is bad. Moderation is to be properly understood. It is difficult to know what moderation is, because we have never been accustomed to it. We have always excesses in our behaviours in life. There is always an emphasis shifted to a particular point of view, and then that becomes an exclusive occupation of the mind. The difficulties and the problems encountered by great masters like Buddha, for example, in their austerities, are instances on hand.

Enthusiasts in yoga are mostly under the impression that to take to yoga is to mortify—but it is not. The subjection of the personality to undue pain is not the

intention of yoga. The intention is quite different altogether. It is a healthy growth of the personality that is intended, and the obviating of those unnecessary factors which intrude in this process of healthy growth of the personality—just as eating is necessary, but overeating is bad, and not eating at all is also bad. We have to understand what it is to eat without overeating or going to the other extreme of not eating at all.

The famous exhortation on moderation in the sixth chapter of the Bhagavadgita is to the point. *Yuktāhārahārasya yukta-ceṣṭasya karmasu, yukta-svapnāvabodhasya yogo bhavati duḥkhaḥā* (B.G. VI.17): The pain-destroying yoga comes to that person who is moderate in every manner. *Nātyaśnatas tu yogo'sti* (B.G. VI.16): Yoga does not come to one who eats too much, enjoys too much, or indulges in the senses too much. *Na caikāntam anaśnataḥ* (B.G. VI.16): One who is excessively austere also is far from yoga. *Na cāti svapnaśīlasya jāgrato naiva cārjuna* (B.G. VI.16): One who is excessively torpid and lethargic and given to overindulgence in sleeping is far from yoga, but one who remains excessively awake—to the torture of the body and the mind—is also far from yoga.

Therefore, the wisdom of the practice consists in a correct understanding of the necessities under the given circumstances. These necessities go on changing from time to time and are not a set standard. We cannot say that today's necessity may also be tomorrow's necessity. Just now, when it is hot and sultry, I may require a glass of cold water, but it does not mean that I should go on drinking cold water always, because the climatic conditions may not require it.

So also, the particular placement of the human personality under a given set of circumstances, external as well as internal, may be taken as the determining factor of what moderation is. We have to judge every condition independently, from its own point of view, without reference to other points of view of the past or the future. This is very difficult indeed, and this is precisely the point where people miss the aim. Every case is an independent, genuine case, and it cannot be compared with other cases. We should not make a list of our necessities for all times throughout our life, because time, place and circumstance will tell us what a particular necessity is. At what time this condition is felt, in what place, under what circumstances, in what atmosphere, and so on, are to be taken into consideration.

It is mentioned in the Yoga Shastras that the essence of yoga is self-restraint, no doubt, but this is precisely the difficulty in understanding what yoga is, because we cannot know what self-restraint is unless we know what the self is which we are going to restrain. Which is the self that we are going to restrain? Whose self? Our self? On the one side, we say the goal of life is Self-realisation—the realisation, the experience, the attunement of one's self with the Self. On the other side, we say we must restrain it, control it, subjugate it, overcome it, etc. There are degrees of self, and the significance behind the mandate on self-control is with reference to the degrees that are perceivable or experienceable in selfhood. The whole universe is nothing but Self—there is nothing else in it. Even the so-called objects are a part of the Self in some form or the other.

They may be a false self or a real self—that is a different matter, but they are a self nevertheless.

In the Vedanta Shastras and yoga scriptures we are told that there are at least three types of self: the external, the personal and the Absolute. We are not concerned here with the Absolute Self. This is not the Self that we are going to restrain. It is, on the other hand, the Self that we are going to realise. That is the goal—the Absolute Self which is unrelated to any other factor or condition, which stands on its own right and which is called the Infinite, the Eternal, and so on. But the self that is to be restrained is that peculiar feature in consciousness which will not fulfil the conditions of absoluteness at any time. It is always relative. It is the relative self that is to be subjected to restraint for the sake of the realisation of the Absolute Self. The aim of life is the Absolute, and not the relative. The experience of the relative, the attachment of the mind in respect of the relative, and the exclusive emphasis on the importance of relativity in things is the obstructing factor in one's enterprise towards the realisation of the Absolute Self.

The external self is that atmosphere that we create around us which we regard as part of our life and to which we get attached in some manner or the other. This is also a self. A family is a self, for example, to mention a small instance. The head of the family regards the family as his own self, though it is not true that the family is his self. He has got an attachment to the members of the family. The attachment is a movement of his own consciousness in respect of those objects around him known as the members of the family. This permeating of his consciousness around that atmosphere known as the family creates a false,

externalised self in his experience. This social self, we may call it, is the external self, inasmuch as this externalised, social self is not the real Self. Because it is conditioned by certain factors which are subject to change, it has to be restrained. That is one of the necessities of self-restraint.

Attachment, or affection, is a peculiar double attitude of consciousness. It is simultaneously working like a double-edged sword when it is attached to any particular object. It has a feeling that the things which it loves, or to which it is attached, are not really a part of its being—because if a thing is a part of our own being, the question of desiring it will not arise. There is no need to love something which is a part of our being, so we have a subtle feeling that it is not a part of us. The members of the family do not belong to us, really speaking. We know it very well. Therefore, we create an artificial identification of their being with our being by means of a psychological movement or a function known as affection, love or attachment. We create a world of our own which may be called a fool's paradise.

This is the paradise in which the head of the family lives. "Oh, how beautiful it is. I have got a large family." He does not know what it actually means. Also, it is very dangerous to know what it is because if we know what it really is, we will be horrified immediately, to the shock of our nerves. But an artificial circumstance is always created by us for the sake of a temporary satisfaction, and all our satisfactions are temporary and artificial. They are artificial because they are created out of a circumstance which is subject to change at any moment, and because the relationship that is established is not true. It is a false relationship which cannot really exist.

This externalised self is a peculiar self, known in Vedanta and Yoga as *gaunatman*—an *atman* which is *gauna*, which is not primary, but secondary. The son is a *gaunatman* for the father; the daughter is a *gaunatman*, etc. Anything that is outside us which we like, love and get attached to, which we cannot live without, with which we identify ourselves, whose welfare or woe becomes the welfare and woe of one's own self—that is the *gaunatman* or the externalised self. It has to be subjugated, which is a part of our austerity. How do we subjugate this self? We do so by understanding the structure—the pattern—of the creation of this self, because the definition of Selfhood does not really apply to this peculiar condition called the externalised form of selfhood.

The Self, or the *atman* as we call it, is a principle of identity, indivisibility and non-externality or objectivity. It is that state of consciousness or awareness which is incapable of becoming other than what it is, and incapable of being lost under any circumstance. It cannot be loved and it cannot be hated, because it is what we are. This is what is called the Self. There is no such thing as loving the Self or hating the Self. No one loves one's Self or hates one's Self, because love and hatred are psychological functions, and every psychological function is a movement of the mind in space and time. Such a thing is impossible in respect of the Self, which is Self-identity. Thus the definition of the Self as Self-identity will not apply to this false self which is the circumstantial self, the family self, the nation self, the world self, etc., as we are accustomed to.

Also, there is another self which is known as the *mithyatman*—the false self which is the body. The body is

not the Self. Everyone knows it very well, for various reasons, because the character of Self-identity—indestructibility, indivisibility, etc.—does not apply to the body. And yet, these characters are superimposed upon the body and we shift or transfer the qualities of the perishable body to what we really are in our consciousness, and vice versa. On the other hand, conversely, we transfer the indivisible character of consciousness to the body and regard the body itself as indivisible Selfhood.

The third step of self is the Absolute, as I mentioned, which is the goal of the practice of yoga and the goal of life itself. Self-restraint is, therefore, the limitation of the false self to the minimum of self-affirmation. Here, again, one has to exercise caution. We should not mortify this self too much. We cannot whip it beyond the prescribed limit; otherwise, it will revolt. Though it is true that false relationships have to be overcome by wisdom, philosophical analysis, etc., this achievement cannot be successful at one stroke, because even a false relationship appears to be a real relationship when it has got identified with consciousness. That is why there is so much intensity and so much attachment—so much significance is seen in that relationship. There is nothing unreal in this world as long as it has become part of our experience. It becomes unreal only when we are in a different state of experience and we compare the earlier state with it and then make a judgement about it.

Inasmuch as our external relationships—which constitute the outward form of the relative self—have become part and parcel of our experience, they are inseparable from our consciousness. It requires a careful

peeling out of these layers of self by very intelligent means. The lowest attachment, or the least of attachments, should be tackled first. The intense attachments should not be tackled in the beginning. We have many types of attachment—there may be fifty, sixty, a hundred—but all of them are not of the same intensity. There are certain vital spots in us which cannot be touched. They are very vehement, and it is better not to touch them in the beginning. But there are some milder aspects which can be tackled first, and the gradation of these attachments should be understood properly. How many attachments are there, and how many affections? What are the loves that are harassing the mind and causing agony? Make a list of them privately in your own diary, if you like. They say Swami Rama Tirtha used to do that. He would make a list of all the desires and find out how many of them had been fulfilled: “What is the condition? Where am I standing?”—and so on. This is a kind of spiritual diary that you can create for yourself: “How many loves are there which are troubling me? How many things do I like in this world?”

The percentage of attachment that you have towards these things also has to be properly understood. What is the percentage of love for ‘A’, ‘B’, ‘C’, ‘D’, etc.? In a gradational order, tabulate the objects of sense or the conceptual objects, whatever they be, and note the degree of attachment involved in every particular case. Take the least one, the simplest, as the first. If you have a desire to sleep on a Dunlop cushion—well, you may think over this matter. “Is a Dunlop cushion very necessary? I can have a cotton mattress instead.” This is not a very serious attachment, though it is an attachment. There are well-to-

do aristocrats who may like to sleep on Dunlop beds, Dunlop pillows, have air-conditioning, and so on. These are desires, but they are not so vehement. There are other desires which cannot be touched immediately, and they have to be tackled later on.

By a very dispassionate and unattached attitude, one can diminish one's relationships with things which are really not essential for one's comfortable existence. Let us assume that a comfortable existence is a necessity; even that comfortable life can be led without these luxuries. How many wristwatches have you got? How many coats? How many rooms are you occupying? How much land have you? How many acres?—and so on.

These are various silly things which come in the way of our yoga practice because the extent of trouble that they can create will come to our notice only when we actually touch them, or interfere with them, or try to avoid them. As long as we are friendly with things, they also look friendly, but when we try to avoid them, we will see their reactions are of a different type altogether. It is very necessary to use tact even in avoiding the unnecessary things; otherwise, there can be a resentment on the part of those things. This is the philosophy of moderation—the *via media* and the golden mean of philosophy and yoga—where the self that is redundant, external and related has to be made subservient to the ultimate goal which is the Absolute Self.

The social self is easier to control than the personal self, known as the bodily self. We cannot easily control our body, because that has a greater intimacy with our pure state or consciousness than the intimacy that is exhibited by external relations like family members, etc. We may for a

few days forget the existence of the members of the family, but we cannot forget for a few days that we have a body; that is a greater difficulty. So, the withdrawal of consciousness from attachment has to be done by degrees, as I mentioned, and the problems have to be gradually thinned out by the coming back of consciousness from its external relationships, stage by stage, taking every step with fixity so that it may not be retraced, and missing not a single link in this chain of steps taken. We should not take jumps in this practice of self-restraint, because every little item is an important item and one single link that we missed may create trouble one day. There may be small desires which do not look very big or troublesome, but they can become troublesome if they are completely ignored, because there is nothing in this world which can be regarded as wholly unimportant. Everything has some importance or the other; and if the time comes, it can help us, or it can trouble us.

Everything has to be taken into consideration so far as we are related to it, and a proper attitude of detachment has to be practised by various means, external as well as internal. This is the principle of austerity which, to re-emphasise, does not mean either too much indulgence or going to the other extreme of completely cutting off all indulgence. It is the allowing in of as much relationship with things, both in quantity and quality, as would be necessary under the conditions of one's own personality in that particular stage of evolution, with the purpose of helping oneself in the onward growth to a healthier condition of spiritual aspiration.

Again, it may be pointed out that every stage in self-restraint or practice of yoga is a positive step, so that there should not be pain felt in the practice. When we feel undue pain, suffocation or agony—well, that would be an indication that we have made a slight mistake in the judgement of values. We should not feel restless or troubled in our practice. That would be the consequence of a little excess to which we might have gone, not knowing what actually has been done. So when we feel that one side of the matter is causing us some trouble, we should pay a little special attention to it and see that it is ameliorated to the extent necessary. We have to bear in mind that the goal of yoga is the consummation of a series of practices that we undertake, every step therein being a positive step without any negativity in it. Really speaking, every step in yoga should be a step of happiness, joy and delight.

Chapter 53

A VERY IMPORTANT SADHANA

For the purpose of those students of yoga who would not be in a position to practise these meditations daily as has been indicated up to this time, the great sage Patanjali says that the same goal can be reached, though with a greater effort and in a longer period of time, by milder techniques of *sadhana* if intense meditation is difficult. The very attempt at the control of the senses—austerity, about which we were discussing previously—generates a new strength in the mind and sets the mind in tune with more impersonal powers. Thus, meditation becomes less difficult than it would have been otherwise.

It is the pressure of the senses towards objects that prevents the mind from taking to exclusive spiritual meditations. The objects of sense are so real to the senses that they cannot easily be ignored or forgotten. Even the very thought of an object will draw the mind towards it, and every particularised thought in the direction of an object is a further affirmation of the falsity that Reality is only in some place, in some object, in some thing, in some person, etc., and it is not universal in its nature. The universality of Truth is denied by the senses, at every moment of time, in their activities towards sense gratification.

The very purpose of the senses is to bring about this refusal of the ultimate universality of Godhead, to affirm the diversity of objects and to push the mind—forcefully—towards these external things. If this undesirable activity on the part of the senses can be ended to the extent possible,

this force with which the mind moves towards objects can be harnessed for a better purpose, for a more positive aim than the indulgence of the senses in objects. The very restraint of the senses from their movement towards objects is a meditation by itself, at least in some sense, because energy cannot be bottled up, unused; it always finds expression in some way or the other. If we do not utilise it in more beneficial ways for spiritual purposes, the only alternative would be for this mental energy to leak out through the senses towards objects of sense. If this leakage is blocked and prevented, the energy wells up within like the waters of a river that will rise up when a bund is constructed across it.

This energy that is thus stored up and conserved will naturally find its way in the direction of a better aim than what is pointed out by the senses. This effort is called *tapas*, austerity. Literally, the word '*tapas*' means heat—a heat that is generated by the preservation of energy in the system. It is not merely the heat of fire. It is energy, a concentrated force which, when it is accumulated to an appreciable extent, will light up as a kind of aura in one's personality. The radiance will emanate from one's face, from one's eyes, from one's personality. This is nothing but the very same energy finding its expression in other ways than the sensory indulgence in which it would have engaged itself if self-restraint had not been practised.

All meditation is freedom from distraction by directing the energy in one specified manner, and it is also freedom from every other motive, purpose or incentive. Since the senses are accustomed to contemplation on objects and will not so easily yield to this advice, another suggestion is

given—namely, a daily practice of sacred study, or *svadhyaya*. If you cannot do *japa* or meditation, or cannot concentrate the mind in any way, then take to study—not of any book at random from the library, but of a specific sacred text which is supposed to be a *moksha shastra*, the study of which will generate aspiration in the mind towards the liberation of the soul.

A daily recitation—with the understanding of the meaning—of such hymns as the Purusha Sukta from the Veda, for instance, is a great *svadhyaya*, as Vachaspati Mishra, the commentator on the Yoga Sutras, mentions. Also, the Satarudriya—which we chant daily in the temple without perhaps knowing its meaning—is a great meditation if it is properly understood and recited with a proper devout attitude of mind. Vachaspati Mishra specifically refers to two great hymns of the Veda—the Purusha Sukta and the Satarudriya—which he says are highly purifying, not only from the point of view of their being conducive to meditation or concentration of mind, but also in other purifying processes which will take place in the body and the whole system due to the chanting of these mantras. These Veda mantras are immense potencies, like atom bombs, and to handle them and to energise the system with their forces is a spiritual practice by itself. This is one suggestion.

There are various other methods of *svadhyaya*. It depends upon the state of one's mind—how far it is concentrated, how far it is distracted, what these desires are that have remained frustrated inside, what the desires are that have been overcome, and so on. The quality of the mind will determine the type of *svadhyaya* that one has to

practise. If nothing else is possible, do *parayana* of holy scriptures—the Sundara Kanda, the Valmiki Ramayana or any other Ramayana, the Srimad Bhagavata Mahapurana, the Srimad Bhagavadgita, the Moksha Dharma Parva of the Mahabharata, the Vishnu Purana, or any other suitable spiritual text. It has to be recited again and again, every day at a specific time, in a prescribed manner, so that this *sadhana* itself becomes a sort of meditation—because what is meditation but hammering the mind, again and again, into a single idea? Inasmuch as abstract meditations are difficult for beginners, these more concrete forms of it are suggested. There are people who recite the Ramayana or the Srimad Bhagavata 108 times. They conduct Bhagvat Saptaha. The purpose is to bring the mind around to a circumscribed form of function and not allow it to roam about on the objects of sense.

The mind needs variety, no doubt, and it cannot exist without variety. It always wants change. Monotonous food will not be appreciated by the mind, and so the scriptures, especially the larger ones like the Epics, the Puranas, the Agamas, the Tantras, etc., provide a large area of movement for the mind wherein it leisurely roams about to its deep satisfaction, finds variety in plenty, reads stories of great saints and sages, and feels very much thrilled by the anecdotes of Incarnations, etc. But at the same time, with all its variety, we will find that it is a variety with a unity behind it. There is a unity of pattern, structure and aim in the presentation of variety in such scriptures as the Srimad Bhagavata, for instance. There are 18,000 verses giving all kinds of detail—everything about the cosmic creation and the processes of the manifestation of different things in

their gross form, subtle form, causal form, etc. Every type of story is found there. It is very interesting to read it. The mind rejoices with delight when going through such a large variety of detail with beautiful comparisons, etc. But all this variety is like a medical treatment by which we may give varieties of medicine with a single aim. We may give one tablet, one capsule, one injection, and all sorts of things at different times in a day to treat a single disease. The purpose is the continued assertion that God is All, and the whole of creation is a play of the glory of God.

The goal of life in every stage of its manifestation is the vision of God, the experience of God, the realisation of God—that God is the Supreme Doer and the Supreme Existence. This is the principle that is driven into the mind again and again by the Srimad Bhagavata Mahapurana or such similar texts. If a continued or sustained study of such scriptures is practised, it is purifying. It is a *tapas* by itself, and it is a study of the nature of one's own Self, ultimately. The word 'sva' is used here to designate this process of study—*svadhyaya*. Also, we are told in one *sutra* of Patanjali, *tadā draṣṭuḥ svarūpe avasthānam* (I.3), that the seer finds himself in his own nature when the *vriddhis* or the various psychoses of the mind are inhibited. The purpose of every *sadhana* is only this much: to bring the mind back to its original source.

The variety of detail that is provided to the mind in the scriptures has an intention not to pamper or cajole the mind, but to treat the mind of its illness of distraction and attachment to external objects. The aim is highly spiritual. Sometimes it is held that *japa* of a mantra also is a part of *svadhyaya*. That is a more concentrated form of it,

requiring greater willpower. It is not easy to do *japa*. We may study a book like the Srimad Bhagavata with an amount of concentration, but *japa* is a more difficult process because there we do not have variety. It is a single point at which the mind is made to move, with a single thought almost, with a single epithet or attribute to contemplate upon. It is almost like meditation, and is a higher step than the study of scriptures. Adepts in yoga often tell us that the chanting of a mantra like *pranava* is tantamount to *svadhyaya*.

The point is that if you cannot do anything else, at least do this much. Take to regular study so that your day is filled with divine thoughts, philosophical ideas and moods which are spiritual in some way or the other. You may closet yourself in your study for hours together and browse through these profound texts, whatever be the nature of their presentation, because all these philosophical and spiritual presentations through the scriptures and the writings of other masters have one aim—namely, the analysis of the structure of things, and enabling the mind to know the inner reality behind this structure. There is a threefold prong provided by Patanjali in this connection wherein he points out that self-control—the control of the senses, austerity, or *tapas*—together with *svadhyaya*, or study of sacred scriptures, will consummate in the adoration of God as the All-reality.

The idea that God is extra-cosmic and outside us, incapable of approach, and that we are likely not to receive any response from Him in spite of our efforts at prayer, etc.—all these ideas are due to certain encrustations in the mind, the *tamasic* qualities which cover the mind and make

it again subtly tend towards objects of sense. The desire for objects of sense, subtly present in a very latent form in the subconscious level, becomes responsible for the doubt in the mind that perhaps there is no response from God. This is because our love is not for God—it is for objects of sense, and for status in society and enjoyments of various types in the world. And when, through austerity, or *tapas*, we have put the senses down with the force of our thumb, there is a temporary cessation of their activity.

But the subconscious desire for things does not cease, just as a person who is thrown out of his ministry may not cease from desiring to be a minister once again; he will stand for election another time, if possible. The subtle subconscious desire is there. He will be restless, without any peace in the mind, because the position has been uprooted. The senses are unable to move towards the objects because we have curbed them with force by going away to distant places like Gangotri where we will not get any physical or social satisfaction. But, there is a revulsion felt inside, and there is a feeling of inadequacy of every type. This will create various doubts—if not consciously, at least subconsciously.

The various types of suspicion that arise in our mind, and the diffidence we often feel in our daily practice, are due to the presence of subtle desires. The subtle desires may not look like desires at all. They will not have the character of desires, as they are only tendencies. They are tracks or roads kept open for the vehicle to move. The vehicle is not moving, but it can move if it wants; we have kept everything clear. Likewise, though the vehicle of the senses is not moving on the road towards the objects outside, there

is always a chance of it moving in that direction, in spite of the fact that it has been controlled.

Austerity, *tapas*, does not merely mean control of the senses in the sense of putting an end to their activity. There should be an end to even their tendency towards objects; otherwise, they will create a twofold difficulty. Firstly, they will find the least opportunity provided as an occasion for manifesting their force once again; secondly, they will shake us from the core of all the faith that we have in God and the power of spiritual practice. The powers of sense are terrible indeed. They work on one side as a subtle pressure exerted towards further enjoyment of things in many ways, and on the other side as a feeling that, after all, this practice is not going to bring anything. This is a dangerous doubt that can arise in one's mind, because it is contrary to truth.

Nehābhikramanāśo'sti pratyavāyo na vidyate (B.G. II.40), says the Bhagavadgita. Even a little good that we do in this direction has its own effect. Even if we credit one *paisa* (one-hundredth of an Indian rupee) to our account in the bank, it is a credit, though it is very little. It is only one *paisa* that we have put there, but still it is there. We cannot say it is not there. Likewise, even a little bit of sincere effort that is put forth in the direction of sense control and devotion to God is a great credit indeed accumulated by the soul. There should not be a doubt whether it will yield fruit. We should not expect fruit in the way we would dream in our mind, because the nature of the response that is generated by the practice depends upon the extent of obstacles that are already present and not eliminated. The peculiar impressions created inside by frustrated feelings will also act as an obstacle. The frustrated feelings are the

subtle longings of the mind, deeper than the level of conscious activity, which create a sense of disquiet and displeasure in the mind.

We are always in a mood of unhappiness. We cannot know what has happened to us. We are not satisfied—neither with people, nor with our *sadhana*, nor with anything in this world. This disquiet, peacelessness and displeasure which can manifest as a sustained mood in spiritual seekers is due to the presence of the impressions left by frustrated desires. We have not withdrawn our senses from objects wantonly or deliberately, but we have withdrawn them due a pressure from scriptures, Guru, atmosphere, monastery, or other conditions.

Sometimes factors which are extraneous become responsible for the practice that we have undergone or are undergoing; and because the heart is absent there, naturally the feeling of happiness is also not there. When the heart is not there, there cannot be joy. That is why it is suggested that the *sadhana* of self-control, or control of the senses, should be coupled with a deep philosophical knowledge and spiritual aspiration, which is what is indicated by the term '*svadhyaya*', and the other term '*Ishvara pranidhana*', which is adoration of God as the ultimate goal of life.

The purpose of sense control, study of scripture and adoration of God is all single—namely, the affirmation of the supremacy and the ultimate value of Godhead. This requires persistent effort, no doubt, and as has been pointed out earlier, it is a strenuous effort on the part of the mind to prevent the incoming of impressions of desire from objects outside on the one hand, and to create impressions of a positive character in the form of love of God on the other

hand. *Vijatiya vritti nirodha* and *sajatiya vritti pravah*—these two processes constitute *sadhana*. *Vijatiya vritti nirodha* means putting an end to all incoming impressions from external objects and allowing only those impressions which are conducive to contemplation on the Reality of God. *Vijati* means that which does not belong to our category, genus, or species.

What is our species? It is not mankind, human nature, etc. Our species is a spiritual spark, a divine location in our centre. The soul that we are is the species that we are. So all impressions, thoughts, feelings and ideas which are in agreement with the character of the soul, which is our *jati*, or species, should be allowed, and anything that is contrary or different from this should not be allowed. The *vijatiya vritti nirodha* is the inhibition or putting an end to all those *vrittis* or modifications of the mind in respect of things outside, because the soul is not anything that is outside. *Sajatiya vritti pravah* is the movement like the flow of a river, or the pouring of oil continuously, without break, in a thread of such ideas which are of the character of the soul—which is universality.

This threefold effort—namely, a positive effort at the control and restraint of the senses from direct action in respect of objects outside, deep study of scriptures which are wholly devoted to the liberation of the spirit from the beginning to the end, and a constant remembrance in one's mind that God is All with a surrender of oneself to His supremacy—constitute a very important *sadhana* by itself, which is the meaning of this single *sutra*: *tapaḥ svādhyāya Īśvarapraṇidhānāni kriyāyogaḥ* (II.1).

Chapter 54

PRACTICE WITHOUT REMISSION OF EFFORT

The practice mentioned is for the purpose of directing the mind slowly towards its final achievement, and for the attenuation of all the obstacles. The difficulties that present themselves with great intensity, ostensibly as if they are insurmountable, will be there in that form for a long time, making it appear that perhaps they are impossible to approach and difficult to overcome. It is the experience of all students of yoga, and saints and sages of the past, that honey does not start flowing in the beginning itself. One cannot see the light of day at the very commencement of the practice. It will be like a dark sky thickly covered with black clouds, and the only thing that one will be able to see or visualise in front of oneself are problems, difficulties, pains, and everything that is the opposite of what one is asking or aspiring for. It is not till very late in the day that a feeling comes within oneself that, after all, things are not so bad as they appear.

These difficulties and pains that are consequent upon one's strenuous effort are due to the thick layer of *samskaras* and *karmas* which have been accumulated in oneself since many births. The very personality of the individual is nothing but a bundle of *karmas*. It is made up of only these forces, and nothing but that. It is, if we would like to put it in that way, a heap of desires that has become this body, mind and personality—this outlook of life, even. Everything is made up of desires. There is nothing in us except desire. From head to foot we are made of that; every fibre of our body is only that. The only thing is, it is

sometimes visible outside as an activity of the mind towards fulfilment, and sometimes it is present inside merely as a possibility, a latent tendency and an urge towards a particular fulfilment, which may or may not be conspicuous.

Long practice is the only solution. These difficulties, problems, pains, *samskaras* and desires cannot be faced with any armour or apparatus that we have with us. There is no alternative except continued practice. This is a kind of *satyagraha* that we are doing with these desires, we may say. We cannot face them in battle directly because they too are equally powerful. But, we can be persistent to such an extent that there is no chance for them to show their heads again. The feeling that one is moving towards one's goal begins to rise within oneself after years and years of practice—not after months. Of course there are masters, great heroes on the path, who must have done this practice in previous births, such as Jnaneshwara Maharaj, Janaka, and such great heroes of the spirit who showed signs of mastery and achievement early in age. For others it is a torture—but it is a necessary ordeal that one has to pass through for the sake of scrubbing out all the encrustations in the form of anything that goes to make up this personality of ours in all its five vestures. *Annamaya*, *pranamaya*, *manomaya*, *vijnanamaya* and *anandamaya*—all these five *koshas* are various densities of the manifestation of desire. There is nothing but that—like the dense clouds which cover the bright sun and make it appear as if the sun does not exist at all. But the *kleshas*, or these obstacles, become attenuated gradually due to the pressure of practice, *abhyasa*, and the accompanied *vairagya*.

Samādhi bhāvanārthaḥ kleśa tanūkaraṇārthaśca (II.2) is the *sutra*. For the purpose of generating within oneself a feeling towards the achievement of one's goal, which is *samadhi*, and for the obviating of all the obstacles, practice should be continued.

Therefore, practice is the panacea. The watchword of yoga is practice—*abhyasa*. There is no other method; there is no alternative; there is no other remedy. When continued practice is resorted to, the force of the practice keeps all these impediments in check, and because of this continued pressure exerted upon them by the practice, one day or the other we will see a ray of light of hope beaming through these dark clouds of opposition. At a later stage, it will be realised that no help from this world will be of any avail here in this endeavour. People cannot help us. Nothing in this world will be of any avail in this single combat with the powers of nature in which one is engaged with all one's might. Our strength will be seen here in this duel that we have to engage ourselves in—between standing alone on one side, and the whole world on the other side. We have to face the whole world single-handed. Imagine what strength we must have! Nobody will help us here, though a day will come when all forces will come to our aid.

It is a great symbolic march of the soul towards its goal, represented in such epics as the Mahabharata, the Ramayana, etc., where a time presents itself when it looks as if we have no friends in this world. So was the case with Yudhishthira and others. They were thrown to the forest, into the wilderness. They were princes, born of great kings, but who bothers about this heritage and inheritance? They were driven to the wilderness with no help and no succour

of any sort whatsoever, as if they were the most unwanted people in the whole world. This is the Mahabharata of the spirit that we are discussing—the war of consciousness with the entire structure of creation.

Here, the same problems will arise as have been depicted by the epics. There is an enthusiasm of spirit in the beginning, as was the case with the childish Pandava brothers in their jubilant youth when it looked as if everything was beautiful, the world was friendly, and they had parents, brothers, relatives and protectors. It was all very nice, no doubt. We have parents, friends and brothers, and all things that are needed for safety and security, but suddenly we will find that the earth will give way under our feet and we will be the target of the very same persons and forces whom we looked upon as our friends. The very same cousin-brothers drove the Pandavas out. They were cousin-brothers, not enemies; and the succour, the source of support, the great heroic elements in the family who were the refuge of all these brothers were helpless—in a predicament which was understandable only to God. Man cannot understand.

Therefore, there is a great suffering; and, tentatively, the suffering may end. There are various stages of our experience where we look like we are sinking down into the ocean of sorrow and then coming up and showing our heads once again, as if we are going to have a support to save us—and, again, going down. The suffering ends and we come back, and then we are coronated once again with the apparent rejoicing of the *rajasuya*, which was the great delight of Prince Yudhisthira. He thought everything was

all right: “Now, what is the difficulty? All the kings are paying tribute to me.”

This is what we are all in—everyone, without exception. It looks as if we are crowned king now, and we are in a very secure position—very safe, and nobody can shake us. But this is a dangerous *rajasuya* coronation which has the seeds of destruction and opposition, and a further combat is going to follow; and then we have to go to the forest once again.

Here it is that we have the most interesting subject in mystical life. The Aranya Parva of the Mahabharata is the beginning of spiritual practice, which is almost equivalent to the first chapter of the Bhagavadgita, where we are lost completely—no one wants us and no one looks at us. No one is even aware of our existence, and no one bothers about our parentage, our heritage, our inheritance, our princely life, that we are children of a king, and so on—nothing of the kind. We may be the brother of Julius Caesar, but who bothers about us? We are in the forest. This is a condition into which we will enter after a rejoicing that everything has come. This is not the first stage itself; this is a stage that comes after a jubilant feeling that some sort of achievement has been made. There is first a sense of renunciation—everything is cast out, and we feel that we are directly in the face of God Himself, where we are perfectly protected from all forces that are opposed to us. But, this is only a feeling. Whatever the truth be of that feeling, it has the seeds of counter-opposing forces and experiences. There is a rising up, as I mentioned, in the *rajasuya*, and then again, a sinking down.

Here, one has to gather up one's energies. It is not true that the path of yoga is a smooth movement, a continuous ascent, one step rising above another step, steadily. It is a very zigzag way. We have to go round and round, as if in a *chakravyuha* formation (an intricate labyrinth formation of troops and armament used in ancient combat) whose ways are not visible to the eyes. We can see only one step at a time, not a hundred steps. One step ahead of us may be visible, but the step after that cannot be seen because the path has turned.

There is a famous epic called *The Divine Comedy* written by the great Italian poet Dante, where he describes these winding processes of the movement of the soul in its higher journey through the Inferno and through various stages of ascent to the Paradiso. This is only a description of the winding movements of the soul in its higher journey where for miles ahead it cannot see things properly. It can see only a little bit in front of it, and is kept in uncertainty at every stage.

We cannot be clear and confident at any stage. Everything is uncertain. We cannot know what is going to happen to us the next moment, though we may be in a highly advanced condition. We may have more than a pass mark, and we are going to get a certificate of having won victory. It may be so, but even that will be uncertain. We will not know it. That everything is kept secret is the peculiar way of God, and in this Vana Parva, Aranya Parva of the *sadhaka*, he is almost a lost soul, with no help from the world and no help even from the gods. Everything is dark, misty and dusty, and tempestuous winds are blowing. The sorrow of Yudhisthira was unthinkable, intolerable,

when he wept to the core of his heart and cried to the sage that came to him, and asked him, “Did creation see a person worse than me at any time?” Sometimes we feel like that: “Can there be a person worse than I? How miserable am I! I have no help. Neither God helps me nor man helps me.”

Well, these are stages we have to pass through. All great men passed through this wilderness. Rama went to the forest; Nara went to the forest; Yudhishthira went to the forest; and why not us? We have to go to the forest. No one can escape this great, terrific passage of the soul towards its ultimate victory. We may enjoy *ramarajya* in the end, no doubt, but in the beginning we are in the forest. We have lost everything. All the forces of nature set themselves tooth and nail against us in the Aranya Parva, and we are harassed even there. Even when we are downtrodden, and we have fallen and are sinking, we will be given a kick on the back. This also is to be tolerated, borne, and we have to face it and expect it.

Supreme fulfilment is the consequence of supreme relinquishment. It is only in the Udyoga Parva onwards in the Mahabharata that we have the description of powers coming to our aid, cooperation and coordination—where all that looked dark and hazy, misty and unclear becomes slowly clear, and one begins to feel that the sun is going to rise after all. It is not midnight, as it appeared to be. There is the light of hope visible in front of us, and we can see the dawn approaching. Then it is that all those powers which were keeping quiet up to this time gird up their loins and come to our aid—unasked. We need not ask for help. Help shall come, and it shall pour like rain from all sides. Even to

excess, the help will come; beyond the limits of expectation and hope, support should come from all sides of nature. But that is only in the Udyoga Parva—not before that. Until that time we are in sorrow and are being harassed. We can imagine the pitiable condition of the Pandavas in the Aranya Parva and the Virata Parva. We will cry if we read these portions of Mahabharata. Even the reader of these portions will cry, let alone those people themselves. But, this is a necessary stage of purification—purgation as it is called in mystical language—for the purpose of the enlightenment into a new vista of things which will be seen in the Udyoga Parva where they gird up their loins once again. The situation is not over. The battle is going to take place further. Every *parva* of the Mahabharata is a *parva* of the spirit's advance towards its great achievement.

Patanjali, in his *sutra*, *samādhi bhāvanārthaḥ kleśa tanūkaraṇārthaśca* (II.2), mentions that we need not be disconsolate and melancholic. There should be no discomfiture about our future. Everything shall be all right; one day or the other there shall be success. But, we must wait for that day. We should not ask for the fruit to fall from the tree merely because we have sown the seed for the tree today. It shall have its own time for maturity and ripening. *Karmaṇy evādhikāras te mā phaleṣu kadācana* (B.G. II.47): Our duty is to do what is expected of us and not expect the fruit thereof, because the fruit is not in our hands. While it is in our hands to plough the field, sow the seed and take care of the little plant that grows, it is not in our hands to produce the harvest; that is in the hands of other forces, and we should not compel them to work

instantaneously or overnight. They will take their own time, and they will work in the manner necessary.

So the practice of yoga, which is expected to be a very strenuous, relentless pressure of the mind towards its goal, will release the tension of the impediments mentioned already. All the obstacles will disperse, and the mind will tend towards the goal. Now the mind is tending towards objects of sense. We have to bring it back with great effort. We have to struggle hard to wean the mind from the objects which it is contemplating day in and day out. All our effort now is in a negative direction, in the sense that we have to see that the mind does not fall upon the objects again and again. The positive effort is a different thing altogether. The positive effort of the mind should be towards contemplation on the goal of life. But that is far ahead; it has not yet come. Now the whole effort is directed in respect of not allowing the mind to go to the objects. Before trying to be positively healthy in our body, we have to see that we do not become worse in our sickness, that the illness does not become more and more emphasised. Before we try to see that we are positively strong, healthy and robust, we should see that our temperature does not rise higher tomorrow.

The confidence and the power of will that one has to manifest in this practice are almost superhuman because, while the inward tendencies of the mind towards its goal always remain submerged and never become visible outside, the problems will always be visible—and they will be the only things that are seen before the eyes. We will see only the seamy side of things—the problems, the evil, the ugliness, the pain, the sorrow, the difficulty and the almost

impossibility of doing anything in this world. That is the only thing that we will see outside. The positive side will be like the undercurrent of these outer waves that are dashing upon us, and it will not be felt in the beginning stages.

The reason is that we are floating on the surface. We have not gone deep into things. When we are on the surface of the ocean, we will be subject only to the onslaught of the waves. The calmness of the bottom of the ocean is not known, because we have not sunk deep. Hence, the struggle is to first get out of the clutches of these waves. We cannot go into the bottom of the ocean because the waves will not allow us to go; they will throw us hither and thither. The moment we try to escape being hit by one wave, we will be hit by another wave, so that we will be dashed hither and thither, and we cannot go in. But once we go in, we will not see the waves at all. There is a profundity, a depth, a deep silence and a grandeur whose powers are far superior to the clattering noises that the waves make on the surface; and the silence of the spirit will be realised to be more thunderous than the shattering noises of the senses and the sensuous mind.

Samādhi bhāvanārthaḥ (II.2). For the purpose of directing the mind towards *samadhi*, to generate within oneself the feeling towards the ultimate goal, to create in oneself a confidence that one is moving in the right direction as well as to put down all the obstacles, one has to set oneself to practise. Again, to reiterate, we have to emphasise the importance of practice—namely, the continuance of whatever little we are doing every day, without remission of effort. We should not withdraw the effort merely on the assumption that success is not

forthcoming. We cannot complain that years of meditation have brought nothing, and feel that evidently, “It is better I give it up.” This is a wrong approach because who can know what is ahead of us and when we will achieve success? We cannot dig three inches into the ground and say, “I am not finding water.” Even if we dig twenty feet down, we may not find water. Therefore, we should not lose hope, because if we dig twenty feet and then think that nothing has come and we give up hope—well, we are going to be the loser, because water may be there at the twenty-first foot.

There is an old story of a devotee of Lord Siva. It seems he used to carry a pot of water from a distant river for *abhisheka* in the temple, and he was told by his Guru, “Do *abhisheka* in this manner 108 times, and you will have *darshan* of Lord Siva.” It was a strenuous thing, because he had to carry water for a long distance. This disciple followed the instruction of the Guru, and was indefatigably working, sweating and toiling, carrying this holy water from a distant river and doing *abhisheka* to the *murti*, the *linga* of Lord Siva in the temple. He did it 107 times and got fed up. He said, “107 times I have done it; nothing is coming, and is one more pot going to bring anything?” He threw the pot on the head of Siva and went away. Then it seems, a voice came, “Foolish man! You had not the patience for one more pot? You were patient enough for 107. You could not wait for one more? And that would have worked the miracle!”

Likewise may be the fate of many people like us. We may be working very hard. We may be spending half of our life in sincere effort towards achieving something, but at the

last moment we lose hope and give up the effort altogether.
The advice of Patanjali is that this should not be.

Chapter 55

THE CAUSE OF BONDAGE

It is pointed out once again, for clarifying the path of the seeker, how one has got into bondage and what its significance is in the effort at the practice of yoga meditation. What is the bondage from which we wish to be free? What is actually meant by this thralldom of *samsara*? How has it come about? Why is it that we are full of sorrow and we have no peace? This is mentioned in a single *sutra*, *avidyā kṣetram uttareṣāṁ prasupta tanu vicchinna udārāṇām* (II.4), which states that the series of processes by which the individual soul has got into bondage consists of nothing but pains and pains, one after another, in various degrees of involvement.

As far as the origin of bondage is concerned, the common background of all schools of thought and philosophy is the same—namely, ignorance of the true nature of things. ‘*Avidya*’, ‘*ajnana*’, ‘nescience’, etc. are the terms used to designate this condition. What actually exists is not known; this is called *avidya*. We cannot, by any amount of effort of the mind, understand what is actually there in front of us; and whatever we are seeing with our eyes or think in our mind is not the true state of affairs. This is called *avidya*. We may logically argue, deduce, induce, but all this is like the definitions given by the blind men who touched different parts of the elephant. Every school of thought is like one blind man touching one part of truth and giving a partial definition of it, but never the whole definition of it. On account of a partial grasp of

truth, there is a partial attitude to life; and everything follows from that, one after the other.

This principle of bondage is the subject of the vital discussions in Buddhist psychology known as *Paticcasamuppada*, or dependent origination. Every successive link in the chain of bondage is dependent in one way or the other on the previous link. There is then a circular action of these links—one hitting upon the other, intensifying the other and compelling the other to act more forcefully than it did earlier, so that it may look that we are becoming worse and worse every day, rather than better. This is because of a peculiar psychological process that takes place which is difficult to fathom on account of our involvement. Bondage is nothing but involvement, and not an ordinary type of involvement—a very, very complex type so that there is attack from every side. And, apparently, there is no escape.

The inability to perceive the true state of affairs, the absence of an understanding of the correct relationship among things, creates a false sense of values. This sense of values is not merely an abstract imagination, but is a solid metaphysical entity that crops up. *Avidya* is not merely absence of knowledge—just as, as the expounders of this *sutra* tell us very humorously, the word '*amitra*' in Sanskrit grammatically means 'no friend' or 'non-friend', though actually it means an enemy. A non-friend is not a non-existent person; he is a very existent enemy. Likewise, even as *amitra* does not mean the absence of a friend but the presence of an enemy, *avidya* does not merely mean the absence of knowledge but the presence of a terrific foe in

front of us, which has a positivity of its own. It exists in a peculiar way which eludes the grasp of understanding.

So a negative type of positivity is created, we may say, called the individuality, which asserts itself as a reality even though it is based on a non-substantiality. The individuality of ours is insubstantial, like vapour. It has no concrete element within it. It can be peeled off like an onion, and we will find nothing inside it, but yet it looks like a hard granite adamantine being on account of the affirmation of consciousness. The reality that is apparently visible in the individuality is borrowed from that which is really there. The support comes from that which really exists, which is True Being, and this support is summoned for the purpose of substantiating something which is utterly false and wholly untenable. This untenable position is called self-assertion, affirmation, egoism, *asmita*, *ahamkara*, etc. All this has happened on account of not knowing correctly the interrelationship of things. There is a dependence of every factor on every other factor so that individuality can have no ultimate value in the scheme of things, because the very term 'individuality' implies an isolated reality of a part of the cosmos, but this is ruled out entirely by the inner structure of things which demands that every part hangs on some other for not only its existence, but also its function.

The inability to grasp this truth is the cause of a hobgoblin that is in front of us—namely, the individuality, the *jivatva*, and everything that follows from it. The *asmita tattva* that is mentioned as the effect of *avidya* is a centralisation of consciousness, a focusing of it at a particular point in space and time, and a hardening of it into an adamantine substance which gets encrusted more

and more by repeated experience of sense contact which confirms the false belief that the isolated existence of the individual is a reality. We get confirmation every day that our individuality is real due to the pleasure that we receive by sense contact. If our personal existence—the individuality—is not real, how does pleasure come, which is real? We live on the bank account of the pleasures that we derive by the contact of the senses with the objects outside. And every contact is an added confirmation of the notion within that our individuality is a substantial reality, so we go on pursuing the pleasures with added zeal, greater enthusiasm and more vigour. This again adds a greater confirmation to the already existent notion that our individuality is real.

Piles and piles of notions of this false individuality, *asmita*, get grouped together, and there is an impregnable fortress created in the form of what we are as individuals. It looks as though now the cart is before the horse—that which is real has become unreal, and that which is unreal has become real. The thing that has really evolved as an effect becomes the cause, as it were; and that which is the cause looks as if it is the effect. The cosmic substance out of which the individuals have evolved has become the object of perception of the individuals, and the latter have usurped the position of the cause of cognition, experience, etc. notwithstanding the fact that they are evolutes. They have come further than the original substance which is cosmic. This is a very beautiful process described in the Aittareya Upanishad: how the cause can become the effect and the effect can become the cause by a topsy-turvy positioning.

Everything is in a state of confusion on account of this situation that has arisen, and there is a total misconstruing of all the features that rule this world. Conclusively, we may say that everything that we think is a wrong thought. There is nothing like correct thinking as far as the reality of the individual is concerned. When the very basis is wrong, how can anything that proceeds from it be correct? This is the history of the production of *asmita* out of *avidya*. We can imagine how far and to what extent *avidya* is real from the direct experience of the extent of reality that we see in our own individuality, which is *asmita*, the effect of *avidya*. How far are we real? From that, we can judge the reality of *avidya*, from where we have come. How solid and concrete are we in our individuality? How hard is the personality? How adamant is the ego? How flint-like is our experience? From that we can understand how substantial *avidya* can be and must be, though it is ultimately an airy nothing.

In one place Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj has mentioned in a humorous way that the mind is something which is really nothing, but does everything. The mind is something which is really nothing but does everything. This is the world—it is really not there, but it is terrible. That terrific character of it, which is not there, is due to something else that has taken place. There is a transposition of values, on account of which the reality of ‘unreal’ becomes possible. The character of the real is injected into the apparent formation of the unreal, and then the unreal looks like a reality. We transfer ourselves to the objects in our perceptions, and then it is the reality of the background of our being which is the cause for our belief in the reality of

objects. All this is unknown because the causative background of our own individuality cannot be known by us since we cannot climb on our own shoulders, or look at our own back, or see our own eyes, etc. Because of the fact that the causes of our individual existence cannot be known by the faculties with which the individuality has been endowed, we are caught up in a confusion—a mess, which is a total disorder.

This kind of disorder, whose essence is in our individuality, *asmita*, is the product of *avidya*; and this concretised individuality of ours is the source of our loves and hatreds, likes and dislikes. We like certain things and dislike certain things because of the sympathy which a peculiar structural pattern of an individual feels with the structure of certain groups of things outside, with which it gets related for the sake of a temporary feeling of completeness. No individual can be complete. Everything is a part. Therefore, everything is restless; it has to be restless. But this restlessness, pain and anguish felt by each partial experience of individuality tries to get fulfilment by finding its counterpart in sensory experience. Inasmuch as the whole cosmos cannot be the counterpart of an individual, only certain elements which are projected by what is known as the *prarabdha karma* become the indicators of what is actually necessary for the fulfilment of individual wishes. This conditioning factor in the form of the group of *prarabdhas* becomes the projecting force, the motive power behind the type of desire that the individual manifests in respect of objects outside.

Therefore, we may say our likes and dislikes are conditioned by our *prarabdha karma*. That is why everyone

does not like everything—my likes are different from your likes, etc. The reason is that we as individuals are constituted of certain forces which do not relate themselves directly with every factor in the universe, because the *prarabdha* is a peculiar sample that is taken out of the entire resources behind us, called *sanchita karma*. This sample is not the whole stock that is inside; it is only a little bit of retail that is taken out for the purpose of practical experience or transaction in the present life. This little sample of *prarabdha karma* is concerned only with a particular type of experience. Therefore, it selects out of the whole pattern of the universe certain objects which are directly connected with the limitations of its own individuality as sanctioned by the *prarabdha*. Hence, there are varieties of likes and dislikes; and what I like, you may dislike, so that we cannot know which object is the object of like, and which one is the object of dislike, generally speaking. Anything can be the object of like of one individual and the object of dislike of another. There is no generalisation of this feature; it is only the finding of one's counterpart. That which is ugly to me may be beautiful to you, and so on, because of your way of thinking, the needs of your mind, etc.

This peculiar effect that further follows from *asmita*, or individuality, in the form of the pulls and repulsions, *raga* and *dvesha*, adds a further confirmation to our belief that the world is real, the body is real, individuality is real—that all our phenomenal experiences are real. Already the fire has been ignited by the presence of *asmita*, and now the flame is burning, and it becomes more and more consuming and vehement because of the winds of desire

that blow over it. The fire becomes a flame, and having become uncontrollable by the tempestuous movements of the desires for objects of sense, there is a tossing of the individual from one end to another in search of the pleasures of sense, which is the world of *raga-dvesha*—the fully expanded condition of the active mind in respect of its objects of pleasure. We can imagine how we get into bondage more and more every day. We go deeper and deeper into the quagmire. A quagmire is a peculiar kind of mire into which we will sink if we step on it; and if we try to lift one foot, the other foot will sink in. We cannot get out of it—that is called a quagmire. Such is this world, where once we get in, we cannot come out. And, how many difficulties follow from this!

The confirmed belief in the substantiality of our phenomenal experiences subtly creates a feeling of fear in us simultaneously, which is contrary to the apparent belief in the reality of things. Why are we afraid of things? The fear is due to the subtle feeling of the possibility of one's being wrenched out of one's contact with the objects of sense. The fear of death is nothing but the fear of loss of pleasure. "I may lose all my centres of pleasure if the forces of death come and catch hold of my throat." The love of life which is so inherent in every individual, accompanied by the fear of death, is another form of the love of pleasure; otherwise, why should one fear death so much? It is because the so-called phenomenal relationships created by *asmita* have formed the impression that there are centres of joy here, and they are the only realities—there is nothing beyond. Can anyone imagine, even with the farthest stretch of thought, that there is any delight possible, or even

conceivable, beyond the pleasures of sense? There is nothing conceivable. We only imagine intellectually, academically—but practically, there is none. Everything is included within sense pleasures. They are everything.

This peculiar involvement of the individual is what is known as the bondage of the *jiva*. As I mentioned, more detailed explanations of the various minor links in this chain of involvement are given in Buddhist psychology in the philosophy known as Patīccasamuppāda, which finally amounts to saying that we are only to take the first step in the direction of a mistake, and then everything will follow. If we take one step in the direction of a mistake, afterwards we will be pushed automatically. One push is given to us, then another push will follow, then the third, the fourth and the fifth. Twelve pushes are given to us, says Buddha, so that now we are in the twelfth push. We are in the deepest nether region of the most utter form of sorrow, in the most formidable condition of involvement, utterly incapable of understanding—but yet, giving the impression that it is the only reality. According to this psychological analysis, we are fools of the first water at present, though we look so wise. It is no wonder that yoga should be very difficult to practise for such fools as we. How is it possible? It is because the involvement is so intense, and we have to gradually remove the encrustations, one after another.

For the uninitiated and uninformed souls who have not yet been able to grasp the truths of things directly by vision, Patanjali goes on to give a series of descriptions for the freeing of one's consciousness from such involvements by graduated techniques and graduated practice. A sudden directing of the mind to meditation is not possible because

the layers are hard enough that they cannot be pierced through at once. Also, the layers of bondage, which have manifested themselves in a series, are not placed one above the other in a linear fashion, like piles of paper kept one over the other. They are intricately involved—one getting into the fibre of the other, as it were—and we cannot peel one layer out without causing pain to the other layer that is underneath. Because of the vital involvement of consciousness in every layer, there is a little bit of suffering involved in the peeling out of the layer, just as we feel pain when we peel the skin. We know that skin is not our real nature, but yet we feel pain when it is peeled off because we have become one with the skin, one with the bone and marrow, the flesh—one with everything. Likewise, every layer of bondage has become part of the self, so that the removal of the bondage is not desirable. It looks pleasurable for the soul.

Bondage itself has become a source of joy, so that we can say that the very vision of there being something beyond in the form of freedom has left one's vision. If a person is a captive in a jail for fifty or sixty years, he may take that as the natural way of living. He has been in the jail for sixty years; he has been used to that way of living, and he cannot think of any value or reality other than that. In a similar manner, there is an accustoming of consciousness to a life of bondage, and the conditions, limitations and restrictions have been regarded as a type of freedom by itself. Even the limitation that has been imposed upon us, we mistake for freedom, and the pain that follows is regarded as joy.

The pleasures of sense are not really pleasures. This is the point that is mentioned in one of the following *sutras*. They are pains which are misread as pleasures. There is a misconstruing of structure in the reading of meaning in the contact of senses with objects. There is a total misreading of the whole value. We read things topsy-turvy, as it were—just as when we look at our face in a mirror, the right looks left, and the left looks right. We do not see things properly. There is a complete reversal of values taking place in the judgement of the mind in respect of its contact with objects. The reactions that are produced by the contact of senses with objects are called the pleasures of sense, but these reactions are very peculiar things. They are difficult to understand.

Why are these reactions set up at all? Because of something inscrutable in this process, this reaction is mistaken for a desirable feeling, and because the feeling has already been called desirable, designated as desirable, it has to be called pleasurable. It is an intense tension that one feels in the process of this reaction that is created at the time of the contact of the subject with the object. We know that every tension is a pain. If we are placed in a condition of utter limitation from every side, we will feel unhappy, and any kind of lifting of this tension—even a modicum of it—will appear as the removal of a burden from our heads, a load taken away from us. The mere absence of nervous tension inside can look like a positive happiness, while what has happened is simply that the tense nerves have been released due to a particular action that has taken place biologically and psychologically.

It is difficult to know why we feel happiness, why there is pleasure at all in sense contact, unless we know the anatomy of perception itself. Why is it that we are seeing objects? What is it that compels us or drives us towards objects? Where is the need for us to come in contact with things? If the history and the anatomical background of this situation are properly grasped, we may also be able to know to some extent why it is that we wrongly mistake pain for pleasure, and how is it that we can get fooled by the senses in creating a notion of falsehood—how a negative reaction, which is merely a little bit of freedom from tension of nerves, can look like a positive bliss.

It is the inability to grasp these things that has created an impression that bodily experiences and phenomenal processes are independent by themselves—a reality taken by themselves. This is the essence of bondage; and how difficult it is to get out of it is clear on the very surface.

Chapter 56

LACK OF KNOWLEDGE IS THE SOURCE OF SUFFERING

In the discussion of the *yoga sutra* [II.4] whose meaning we are trying to understand at present, the great point that is insisted upon finally is that a mere tackling of the effect, or an attempt at subjugating the effect while allowing the cause to remain as it is, will not yield beneficial results. Most of the endeavours in spiritual practice become failures on account of the causes being left untouched and the effects being taken into consideration with great ardour and force of concentration. This is partly due to circumstantial reasons. We should say that the internal causes of one's mental suffering are such that, in most cases, society is not sympathetic with these presences. It is an unfortunate historical circumstance, but nevertheless it is there, so that mankind is perpetually kept in an artificial state of inward tension merely because of its own peculiar ethics. It has created its own bondage by creating rules which are ultimately no good. But this situation is there, whatever be the analytical reasons behind the worthwhileness of such a condition.

Avidyā kṣetram uttareṣāṃ prasupta tanu vicchinna udārāṇām (II.4) is a very important *sutra* which has psychological importance and practical significance. The root cause of our sufferings is an ignorance with which we are perpetually associated, which is our constant friend, and whom we can never leave even for a moment. This friend, called 'ignorance', is with us day in and day out. Inside and outside, this friend is with us and becomes one with our

nature so that our very thoughts are based on ignorance. Therefore, any effort even in the so-called right direction may not yield the desired results, because there is a basis of ignorance even before the rectitude which society parades so much.

If we go into the psychology of human nature, we will find that the whole of mankind is stupid and it has no understanding of what right conduct is, in the light of facts as they are. Nevertheless, this is the drama that has been going on since centuries merely because of the very nature of mankind's constitution—he cannot jump over his own skin. But then, suffering also cannot be avoided. We cannot be a wiseacre and at the same time be a happy person. This wiseacre condition is very dangerous, but this is exactly what everyone is, and therefore it is that things are what they are. This *avidya*, or ignorance, is a strange something which is, as we were trying to understand previously in our considerations, a twist of consciousness, a kink in our mind, a kind of whim and fancy that has arisen in the very attitude of the individual towards things in general—which has been taken as the perpetual mode of rightful thinking.

This ignorance or *avidya* is, really speaking, an oblivion in respect of the nature of things in their own status, and an insistence and an emphasis of their apparent characteristics, their forms, their names and their relationships, upon the basis of which the history of the world moves and the activity of people goes on. This ignorance is the root cause of all mental suffering, which of course is the cause of every other suffering. It may be any kind of suffering; it is based ultimately on this peculiar

inward root of dislocation of personality—where begins our study of abnormal psychology, if we would like to call it so.

If abnormal psychology is the study of disordered mental conditions, then we may say that every psychology is abnormal psychology, because there is no ordered mind anywhere in the world, in the sense that everything is set out of tune from reality. Psychoanalysts are fond of saying that when the mind is out of tune with reality, there is abnormality. This is a great dictum of Freud, Adler, Hume, and many others. But though the saying is well-defined and accepted by all psychologists, the crux of the matter is: what is 'reality' with which the mind is supposed to be in tune? According to psychoanalysts, reality is the world that we see with our eyes and the society in which we are living.

The point they make out is that if we are in tune with the way in which society expects us to live, we are normal. If we are not able to live in that manner, we are abnormal. The laws of society are supposed to be what they call the 'super-ego' in psychoanalytical language. It has nothing to do with the ego that we are speaking of in philosophy; it is something different altogether. The superego is a Freudian word which implies the check that is put upon individual instincts and desires by the laws of human society outside. On account of this pressure that is exerted perpetually upon inward desires by the reality of social rules and regulations outside, every human being is kept in tension. Therefore, there is a tendency to revolt against society. No one is really happy with society, ultimately. There is a disrespect and a dislike and a discontent, but because we cannot wag our tail before this monster called society, we keep quiet. But

sometimes we become vehement, and then so many consequences follow—inwardly as well as outwardly.

The attunement of the inward conduct and character of the individual with the conditions prevailing outside in human society is supposed to be the normal behaviour of the mind, according to psychoanalysis. The word used for this prevailing condition outside is 'reality', because that is what persists always, whereas individual instincts may go on changing. But the definition of reality as applied to the social laws would not hold water for long, because anything that is subject to change cannot be called real. The constitution of human society is subject to transformation on account of the mutations of history—the changes that we see in the world through the process of evolution. Therefore, laws will change, and our concept of normalcy also will change.

The root cause of unhappiness, therefore, is an irreconcilability between the individual and its environment. This 'environment' is a very peculiar word which has deep connotations. It means anything and everything. The circumstances in which we find ourselves are of the environment—the geographical conditions, the social conditions, the psychological conditions, the astronomical conditions. All these have to be taken into consideration when we speak of the environment of an individual. These are vast things, insurmountable by ordinary human thinking. It is not usually practicable for the mind to tune itself to all these things that are outside. If it succeeds in one line, it will fail in another, so that there is always some kind of difficulty, one coming after the other. And so, there is a perpetual restlessness within.

This restlessness which is the immediate outcome of ignorance produces unnatural, abnormal attitudes in respect of things, because a drowning person may try to catch even a straw that is floating on the surface of water, whether or not it is going to be of any help. The mind that is defeated from every side and cannot express itself at all for various reasons, tries to hold on to any support of satisfaction that is visible before it. At the same time, it is not allowed to hold on to it for a long time due to the force of the flood in which it is caught. It will be showing its head above for a few minutes, and then sinking down again. This condition goes on for a long time, and one cannot say who will win. The feelings of the individual during this time are obvious. They are unthinkable, unanalysable, not subject to scrutiny in a logical manner. They remain in a very confused state.

The tendencies of the individual towards external objects remain either dormant, when they cannot be expressed at all because facilities are not forthcoming, or they can be present in a manifest state, but in a very attenuated form, like a fine, silken thread—visible, and yet very slender, not strong and powerful. It is also possible that these tendencies can appear to be completely absent at some time, and suddenly crop up at another time, like a fever in typhoid—one day we look normal and the next day we have fever. These tendencies will look completely buried and almost extinct for some time and we will be under the impression that they have gone for good, but it is not so. They will suddenly show their heads when the atmosphere becomes favourable. And there are occasions when they can

be fully manifest and they can be at war with us, daggers drawn.

These conditions are mentioned in this *sutra*, *prasupta tanu vicchinna udārāṇām* (II.4), which enumerates the four conditions of the tendency of the individual towards objects. *Prasupta* is sleeping, or dormant; *tanu* is attenuated, or thinned out and weakened; *vicchinna* is interrupted; *udara* is fully manifest, or expressed. These conditions represent the activity of the tendencies of the individual, which are born of *avidya*, or ignorance. Ignorance of the nature of things means a complete obscuration of the knowledge of the ultimate character of one's true being. It is impossible in this state to know what one's Self really is, just as in dream one forgets one's wakeful condition—wakeful state and status. If we are a well-placed dignitary in the waking condition, in dream we may be a mosquito or a fly, or we may be a nothing. We completely forget our status in the waking state due to a total transformation of the mind in dream. This is an illustration to give an idea of what ignorance of one's true nature is. We may be an emperor; we may be a president of our vast country, or a prime minister—what does it matter? When we are in dream, we are something quite different. We are different to such an extent that we cannot have the least trace of the memory that we are something else in the waking state.

Now, what happens in dream? This ignorance of what we really are does not simply keep quiet like that. We are not simply in a sleepy condition where we are completely oblivious of our true nature. There is a mischievous activity taking place simultaneously with this ignorance, and that is

what is called the dream perceptions. Not only are we not allowed to know what we really are, but we are told that we are what we are not. This is a terrible type of brainwashing that is going on there, where we become stupid to the utmost, and become totally helpless. We become a tool of forces over which we can have absolutely no control. This is what happens to us in dream. We have forgotten what we really are, and are seeing something which is not there. Then we cling to it, run after it, believe in its reality and then cry for it, and get involved in it as if that is the only reality. So there is a tremendous *vikshepa* or projection, a violent *rajasic* activity taking place—a tempestuous wind that blows in a wrong direction as a consequence of the dark clouds covering the light of knowledge. Thus *avidya*, or ignorance, which is the obscuration of the knowledge of our true nature, at the same time produces a counter-effect that is deleterious to the knowledge of our own being—the perception of a wrong externality, as happens in dream.

We know how fantastically and frantically we run about in dream for the purpose of fulfilment of the desires manifest in the dream mind and the avoidance of the pain that is also manifest there. The joys and sorrows, the loves and hatreds of the dream world become so real that the experiencing unit there gets involved in it, gets submerged into it and becomes one with it, which is the direct effect of the forgetfulness of what one really is in waking. This is exactly what has happened in the waking condition also. This so-called waking consciousness is similar to the dream condition as far as its structure and mode of operation is concerned. This external activity of the mind in waking life, this engagement of the mind in the objects of sense and this

pursuit of pleasure and avoidance of pain in life are the consequences of the obscuration of the knowledge of what we really are. That is *avidya*.

Avidyā kṣetram uttaraṣāṁ prasupta tanu vicchinna udārāṇām (II.4). This *sutra* tells us that the obliteration of the knowledge of our essential nature, which is *avidya*, produces a false condition of individuality, *asmita*, which rushes forward outwardly for the purpose of contact with other individuals—animate or inanimate. This is called desire. This desire is nothing but the urge of one individual to unite with another individual. This urge is what is referred to in this description of *prasupta tanu vicchinna udārāṇām*. The urge for contact with other individuals is called desire, which has arisen on account of the perception of diversity born of the ignorance of the universality of things. This desire can be completely dormant in childhood, or when we are in the mother's womb, or when the body is dead, or when there is a comatose condition, or in the state of anaesthesia. In these conditions, the desire is dormant, but it is not destroyed. It is present, but not visible—not manifest, not active. When it is impossible to fulfil the desire, then also it is dormant. We know that the desire cannot be manifest—the conditions are not favourable at all—and therefore, we push these desires inside and keep them inside as if they are not there. But, this is not the absence of desires; they remain in latent forms. This summarises the *prasupta* condition of a desire.

Tanu, or the attenuated condition, or what they call the thinned-out condition of the desire, is that state of mind which we can see in some of the *sadhakas* or seekers—the students of yoga—where, due to continued affirmation in a

different direction altogether, the desires which are inside as dormant get manifest no doubt, yet remain in a very thin form because the activity of the mind in the student of yoga is in a different direction altogether. There is a constant rotation of *japa*, chanting of mantra; or study, *svadhyaya*; or meditation, or *satsanga*. All these things attenuate the mind. They keep it in a very fine, thin form, and desire cannot work with the force that is necessary to fulfil itself. Thus, in students of yoga, in *sadhakas* in general, the desires look absent. They are not absent; they are present there, but they look as if they are not there due to the pressure exerted upon the mind by other types of activity, such as what we call the practice of *sadhana*.

Or, they can be in this attenuated condition when we are in places like Gangotri or Badrinath, where these desires cannot be fulfilled normally because the conditions are not favourable. Either we cannot get the objects of desire, or there are other reasons for which the desires cannot be fulfilled. There are various causes behind the inability of the mind to fulfil the desire, though it is trying to find an avenue of escape. It is trying its best, but it cannot get an outlet. In this condition, it is attenuated in a very thin form.

Vicchinna, the third condition mentioned, is an interrupted condition where, if we have great affection for a person—a member of our own family, for instance—this affection may suddenly be interrupted by an anger that is manifest occasionally. We may be very angry with a member of our own family. Suppose you are the head of a family. You have, naturally, a tremendous love for all the members; you regard them as your own self. But it is well

known that there are frictions in the family, and one member of the family may get so angry with another that he may threaten them with dire consequences. In this condition of anger, the affection gets interrupted. It is not absent, as it will come back afterwards. The interrupted condition is the temporary suppression of a particular mode of thinking—a mood or an emotion—due to the presence of another mode which has arisen for some other reason. When there is a temporary anger or a hatred manifest superficially, the affection that is there gets interrupted, and conversely, when the affection rises, the anger gets interrupted. We can manifest love or hatred—either way—in respect of the same person or the same thing under different conditions. It all depends upon what mood is evoked at a particular time.

It is not true that we have perpetual love for a thing, and it is also not true that we have perpetual hatred. It depends upon how our feelings are evoked by that particular person or thing. We can evoke the tiger or the devil in us; we can also evoke that which is more peaceful and congenial. Both these factors are present in us. We can attack even our dearest friend under given conditions—it is not impossible—and, at the same time, he is our friend. We have great obligation and affection towards that person. This state of going up and down in the mood of the mind is the interrupted condition.

But if all the factors are favourable, then it is manifest: the war is actually taking place. The soldiers are in the battlefield and there is actually a burst of attack. When the mind is fully convinced that no obstacles are there—everything is clear, the road is clean—then it will pounce

upon the object at once, like a tiger jumping on a cow. This is the *udara* aspect.

This ignorance, or *avidya*, is the breeding ground for all these states of mind which undergo this fourfold stage of *prasupta tanu vicchinna udārāṇām* (II.4). *Avidyā kṣetram uttareṣām*—it is the *kṣetram uttareṣām*. *Uttareṣām* means anything that follows from this; all things that are the outcome of this find this as their mother. Our ignorance is the mother of all other distractions. It gives them its breast milk and supports them for all time. The desires and the activities of the mind cannot succeed if ignorance is absent, because that is the motive power behind the functions of the mind in whatever form it may function.

The purpose of *yoga* is to cut at the root of this ignorance itself, so that its ramifications in the form of these *vikshepas*, or distractions, may not have vitality in them. They will be like a burnt seed or a burnt cloth, or a lifeless snake. It is a snake, but it has no life. Likewise will be these functions, activities and enterprises of the mind when it will look as if they are there in all their shape and form, but they will be lifeless. That is the purpose of the practice of *yoga*.

So, this caution given to us here is that, in our practices, we should not ignore the presence of the cause and get engaged too much merely in the effect, since whatever be the intensity of the practice in respect of the control of the effect, it will not be finally successful because the major-general is alive, and he will not keep quiet like that. We are attacking the poor soldiers while the commander is still alive, and he has other resources to attack us even if a regiment is destroyed by the effort of our practice. The

cause has to be tackled; unless that is overcome there is no use merely confronting the effects. This is the advice given here.

Chapter 57

THE FOUR MANIFESTATIONS OF IGNORANCE

The cause of all the problems that have to be encountered in yoga was mentioned as ignorance—*avidya*. This ignorance functions in many ways, and it can be detected only by its ways of working. Patanjali mentions its principle projectiles, by which it binds the individual to phenomenal experience. There are principally four ways in which it works, though in detail it can work in many other ways also. The first action of ignorance is to create a consciousness of the ‘not-Self’. The Self appears as the not-Self—this is the first blow it gives. Then, the impermanent looks permanent—another blow is given over that. Next, pain looks like pleasure—a third blow. Lastly, the impure looks pure. Four hits are given, and then down we go. This is the definition of *avidya* given by the *sutra* of Patanjali: *anitya aśuci duḥkha anātmasu nitya śuci sukha ātma khyātiḥ avidyā* (II.5).

It is not true that things are really outside us, but we are made to believe that it is so. This is a basic trait of *avidya*, and this is the most difficult thing to understand. It is the strongest of weapons and, therefore, it is the last thing that we can get rid of. Because of the very difficulty of the nature of the case, we have naturally to take up the easier ones first, and the stronger ones have to be dealt with subsequently. But, when we actually touch a difficulty, we will find that each one has its own peculiarity, and none can be regarded as inferior or superior to the other. Every problem is unique in its nature; it has a speciality of its own.

Every day we see people being born and people passing away. Any day, anything can happen. There is impermanence reigning supreme as a law of the transition of the world process.

We cannot see any single atom sitting at rest in one place. Everything is moving. Static things are unknown. Everything is in motion. Everything is a tendency towards something else. Everything undergoes transformation, change and modification. There is birth; there is growth; there is change; there is decay; there is destruction. This is the process which is undergone by everything in this world, whether it is living or non-living. We see things passing away before our very eyes. Things which we regard as permanent and stable vanish like mist before the sun. What can be a greater wonder than this, that things which cannot stand in a single location, even for a moment, are mistaken for realities? “What can be a greater surprise in this world than this phenomenon—that every day we see people going to the abode of Yama, and yet, the remaining ones think they are immortal?” said Yudhisthira. “This is the greatest of wonders!”

The reason is that there is a mix-up of values in our experience, and the truth cannot be visualised. There is a complete shaking up of the various constituents of our perceptual process, and due to this mix-up we are unable to distinguish between the permanent element and the impermanent element. The passing phenomena are regarded as real on account of an element of reality getting infused into these phenomena, just as motion pictures look real on account of the background of a screen that is behind. If the screen is not there, we will not see the motion

pictures. But the screen is not seen—we see only the movement of the pictures. The transference of the quality of permanence that is behind—in the screen—upon the movement of the pictures is the reason why we see a continuity of the movement of the pictures. We cannot have only movement without some background of reality. But this peculiar mix-up is not easily visible, and it is precisely because of this inability to distinguish between the two factors involved in this perception that we enjoy the picture. All enjoyment is a confusion. It is not wisdom. It is not based on an understanding of the truths of things; it is based totally on a mix-up of values.

It is not true that anything is permanent in this world. So, how is it that we see everything as permanent? We see a tree, a wall or a building, and we see people living for years. All these are phenomena, no doubt. They are phenomena, not noumena—not realities. This incapacity on the part of the perceiving consciousness to distinguish between the phenomenal feature in experience and the real element behind it is ignorance—*avidya*. Inasmuch as things are interconnected, interrelated, vitally dependent upon one another—there is an organic relationship of things—it is not true that objects are really isolated completely and that there is a necessity for the mind to run after objects. There is no necessity for the mind to run after objects, inasmuch as the objects are really connected with the subject. That they are not so connected, and therefore there is a need for desiring and possessing them, is ignorance.

The not-Self means the *anatman*—that is to say, that which is not one's own Self. Inasmuch as there is something in this world which is not myself, I have naturally to face it

in some proper manner. The way in which I face an object in this world is called the relationship that I establish with it. This is the cause of my likes and dislikes in respect of the object; and where there is an intense like or a dislike for anything, that particular thing is invested with certain characteristics that do not really belong to it. Why does one's own child look so beautiful? Well, it has to look beautiful merely because it is mine. If it is not mine, then it must be ugly. It is stupid merely because it is not mine. Characters which do not really inhere in an object can be visualised due to a prejudice of emotion. The likes and dislikes are the causative factors behind this investment of characters which are false.

Thus, there is perception of beauty and ugliness, loveableness, etc. due to the peculiar emotional like and dislike caused, again, by the perception of not-Self—which is the central forte of ignorance. So we can imagine how many difficulties have cropped up on account of a single mistake that we have committed originally. Then, the pain that is involved in the action of the mind desiring the objects for their possession and enjoyment is mistaken for pleasure. What toil the householder undergoes, but he thinks it is a pleasure. He has to work hard for the maintenance of the family, but is it a pleasure? He works hard because he enjoys it; otherwise, why does he work?

So, even pain can be mistaken for pleasure where emotions are tied up. What we are serving is our own emotions—not the family, not the world. Our emotions are catching hold of us by the throat, and we are pampering the emotions under the impression that we are pampering, helping, serving or doing work for somebody else. There is,

again, a mistake in the very thought itself. The idea becomes concretised—takes a visible shape, as it were, and becomes the working field for all the urges of the individual. We have studied this earlier, in connection with another *sutra*: pariñāma tāpa saṃskāra duḥkaiḥ guṇavṛtti virodhāt ca duḥkham eva sarvaṃ vivekinaḥ (II.15). In this *sutra*, Patanjali tells us that everything is pain ultimately, if it is properly analysed. There is no joy, but everything looks like joy. If there is no joy in life, who would live in this world? We would all perish in a few minutes. But this joy is a counterfeit joy; it is not really there. It is a makeshift, a camouflage, a whitewash that is presented before us. At the background, there is a pricking pain—the thorn of agony, anguish, non-possession, anxiety, fear, dispossession, bereavement, etc. But with all this, we take this agonising world for a field of joy, as if rivers of milk and honey are flowing.

The perception of the reality of a not-Self; the perception of permanency in everything that is transitory or transitional; the perception of beauty, grandeur, and value in objects of sense; the perception of joy in the contact of the senses with objects—these are the ways in which ignorance works. And, because of the vehemence with which these forms of ignorance work, because of the force with which they impinge upon us, because of the velocity with which they come and sit on our heads, we cannot escape them. Like vultures they come and sit on us, threatening us and subjugating us with their powers. Because of the force with which they sit upon us, we have to yield to them. Then, coming under their thumb, we act according to their commands, because this ignorance does

not merely end with these perceptions. They have other demands, and once we fulfil a single demand, another will come.

The demands that follow from this ignorance have already been mentioned—*raga*, *dvesha*, *abhinivesha*, etc. Because of the fact that the mind is completely involved, root and branch, in this mix-up of values, it is unable to concentrate itself on any given point. How is it possible for the mind to meditate? It is simply out of the question. It is a slave of slaves—*dasa se dasaha*—and such a slave cannot have any independence of its own. Where there is no independence, how can there be deliberate action? The question of the practice of yoga does not arise. It is gone, if this is to be the case.

But this is precisely what has happened. All our so-called endeavours are backed up by a misconception. Because of the misconception, there is erroneous movement of the mind in its activities. Therefore, the expected results do not follow. It does not matter if we sit for meditation for hours together—nothing will happen. No fruit is going to drop from the trees, because this meditation may be like the meditation of the crane for catching fish. That is also meditation. The crane keeps quiet for hours together, without doing anything, and we call it meditation. We call it *bahula dhyana* in Hindi. *Bahula dhyana* is a peculiar kind of meditation practised by the crane. It stands on one leg. It is also a great *tapasvi* and does not budge an inch from that place. We think that the crane is a great yogi—but its mind is on the fish. It wants to see where the fish comes up, and then darts upon it immediately and catches it.

This ignorance is like this peculiar sleeping crane which is ready to pounce upon its objects, and it will not allow us to be in peace. As was mentioned previously, unless the cause is tackled properly and treated, there is no use merely catching hold of the effects. These effects are like ambassadors who have come merely to convey the message of the government to which they belong. There is no use in talking to the ambassador with a wry face or in language which is unbecoming, as he is only a representative of the force that is there behind him. The force is something different, and what we see with our eyes is a different thing altogether. But yet, we are likely to mistake these effects for the causes, and then it is that we practise wrong *tapas*. We may stand on one leg but it will not help us, though it is a *tapas*, no doubt. We may sit in the sun, we may drink cold water and take a bath in cold water in winter. All these treatments of the effects will produce only a temporary suppression of their manifestations. But suppressing the effects is not the treatment of the cause, because the cause pushes the effect, and as long as the living force of the cause is present, the possibility of the effects getting projected on to the surface again and again is always there.

These manifestations of *avidya* cannot be overcome by ordinary individual effort, because all efforts are the effects of this *avidya* itself. It requires a superior insight; a higher mind has to come into operation. How it comes into operation, we cannot say. Sometimes it comes like a flash and opens up the inner vision, and tells us that there is a faculty in us which is superior to ordinary intellect. It is this inward faculty in us that tells us the distinction that exists

between the permanent and the impermanent, and the proper relationship between the not-Self and the Self.

If we properly contemplate the implications of what we do from morning to night every day, we will realise that everything that we do is nothing but feeding this ignorance and acting according to its dictates, because what is it that we do except to confirm the fact that there is a not-Self outside? Our thought, our feeling, our speech, our action, our attitude, our duty, whatever it is—is a confirmation that there is a not-Self. Unless our activities take a different turn altogether in the direction of the remedying of this wrong notion of the presence of a real not-Self, mere hectic activity will not help, as it can only be the fulfilment of the requirements of ignorance.

Who in this world does not believe the reality of a not-Self, or an object of sense? Is there anyone in this world who does not have the conviction that what he sees, or she sees, is real in itself? And, is there any activity which is not based on this notion? So, we can imagine what will be the outcome of all these activities. They will be only adding fuel to the fire that is already blazing due to the action of this ignorance. But, when this endeavour on the part of the perceiving consciousness in respect of the objects of sense gets re-evaluated and takes a new turn altogether, then this binding activity can become a liberating activity. That is the subtle difference between discriminative perception of an object and emotional perception of an object. The scientific observation of a thing is different from an observation that is coupled with attachment—like, dislike, etc. Gradually the mind has to be disentangled from its obsessions in respect of things, and the perceptions should become detached

observations for the purpose of the complete extrication of the mind from its emotional relationships.

Anitya aśuci duḥkha anātmasu nitya śuci sukha ātma khyātiḥ avidyā (II.5). To sum up what this *sutra* tells us, while it is true that ignorance is the breeding ground for all the effects thereof—like, dislike, and so on—this ignorance has a fourfold prong with which it moves into action. These four manifestations, which have been mentioned, are: the appearing of the not-Self as the Self, the regarding of impermanent things as permanent, painful experiences as pleasures, and impure things as pure. This is a frightening disclosure, indeed, of the facts of our experiences in this world, because there is no experience which is free from these defects. We cannot humanly imagine a kind of experience which is not involved in these defects. It means to say that ignorance rules the world and, therefore, pain cannot be avoided. Where erroneous perception is present, a sort of sorrow naturally should follow.

Every one of these effects of *avidya* is properly being described. While the nature of ignorance is of this particular feature mentioned, its immediate progeny, which is *asmita*, or the self-affirming faculty which becomes egoism later on, is again a kind of mix-up of values between the perceiver and what is perceived. This is what is known in Vedanta as *adhyasa*—the character of the Self getting transferred to the object and, vice versa, the character of the object getting transferred to the Self. The confirmation that one exists as an individual—the rootedness of oneself in the feeling ‘I am’ as a separate individual—is called *asmita*. This feeling that you exist, or I exist, is also a mistake. It is not wisdom, because the affirmation ‘I am’ is the outcome of a

confusion between two types of character: the character that belongs to Pure Consciousness, and the character that belongs to what is not the Self. The conviction that one exists is due to the Being of Consciousness. The *atman* or the *purusha* that is within is responsible for this affirmation.

The existence aspect of this affirmation belongs to the nature of True Being, which is at the background of all these phenomena. But, this affirmation of Being in the feeling 'I am' is not merely an affirmation of Being; there is some other element also which infects this feeling of Being—namely, the isolatedness of a part of Being from other parts. When we say 'I am', or feel 'I am', we imply thereby that 'I am different from others', though we do not make that statement openly. The implication of the affirmation of oneself as an individual is that one is cut off from other individuals; otherwise, the feeling of 'I am' itself cannot be there. How do we know that we are different from others? There is no reason behind this. We have a prejudiced notion that we are different from others, and this irrational prejudice is the basis of all our actions—even the so-called altruistic actions. Even the most philanthropic of deeds is based upon this notion that we are different from others, which itself cannot be justified rationally.

The peculiar differentiating character of space, time and cause interferes with the character of Being which is in Consciousness, and then there is the rise of the phenomenal individuality, which is *asmita*. The 'I am-ness' of an individual, the feeling of the individuality of a person—the egoism, or the isolated existence of anyone—is, therefore, the effect of two factors coming together into activity. A

new feature is made to rise due to the mix-up of these two peculiar characters. Space and time act on one side, and Pure Consciousness acts on the other side. The spatial character of the way in which the mind works goes hand in hand with the Being character of Consciousness, and then there is the conviction 'I am'. Well, this is an effect of ignorance because space is nothing but the not-Self, and it was pointed out that the not-Self is perceived on account of an action of ignorance.

Space, time, cause mean one and the same thing—they are three aspects of a single phenomenon. It is the principle of externality, if one would like to call it so. The principle of externality is what is called *maya* in Vedantic language—the 'appearance', as philosophers put it—a peculiar thing which nobody can understand. Something is there, and no one can know how it is there, or why it is there. This is the principle of externality which manifests itself as what we call space-time-causal relationship, etc. This feature of externality gets mixed up with the being of Consciousness, and then we have an externalised personality; that is the individuality of ours. This is the 'I am-ness' we are speaking of.

Thus, our very existence is a false existence; this is what is made out by this *sutra*. If our existence is itself illegal, untenable, unfounded and irrational, how can anything that we do on the basis of this individuality be right? So it is no wonder that we are suffering in this world. Ignorance has produced this peculiar sense of individuality, *asmīta*—this feeling of oneself being different from others. The subject is cut off from the object; and each thing in this world has an *asmīta* of its own. There is an affirming

principle working in every item of creation. Because of this confirmed feeling of the sense of individual being, there is a further urge arising from this sense of individual being—namely, a necessity felt to connect oneself with others. “If I am different from you, what is my relationship with you?” This question arises.

It is not possible to deny all relationship, because of the fact of perception. If I am completely oblivious of the existence of people outside, of things outside, of the world around me, then of course the question may not arise. But I see the world, I see people, I see things as completely different from me. So I feel a necessity to conduct myself in a particular manner in respect of these existences outside me. This manner is *raga-dvesa*—like and dislike—a peculiar, subtle relationship that we project for the purpose of stabilising this individuality and keeping it secure in the light of the presence of other individuals also. Here begins what is called social life.

Social life is nothing but a set-up of living which has been agreed upon by different individuals in a group for the purpose of mutual sustenance, coordination and security, as no individual can be secure by itself in the light of the presence of other individuals because each individual is a centre of egoism, a principle of intense self-affirmation which denies the reality of every other individual. The meaning of individuality or egoism is the denial of value to others, and sometimes the force of denial becomes so intense that it comes to the surface as conflict, as warfare. Whether it is through words or actually in fight, internally there is a feeling of irreconcilability among individuals. They are not really friends, because their very existence is

an irreconcilability; it is an untenability; it is a denial of the truths which prevail in the midst of this apparent diversity.

Simultaneously with this urge to affirm oneself as an individual isolated from others, there is a contrary feeling of the necessity to relate oneself to others. We create a tense form of living, which is our present-day social living, where internally we dislike one another but outwardly we feel a necessity to be brothers. There is a necessity felt both ways. I feel a necessity to maintain my individuality. I cannot merge myself in you—then, I will lose my individuality. It is a loss of my very status, which I would not like. So I maintain and preserve vehemently my individuality—but at the same time, I cannot exist in that condition because of my dependence upon other individuals.

Thus, an artificial life is created. The sorrow of life is the result of this peculiar artificial atmosphere compelled upon the individual on account of its double attitude of affirmation of individuality on the one side, and the feeling of necessity for relationship with others on the other side.

Chapter 58

PURSUIT OF PLEASURE IS INVOCATION OF PAIN

The incapacity to feel the infinitude of Consciousness at once manifests itself as a consciousness of finitude. This is a peculiar sudden development which is almost simultaneous with this incapacity mentioned. A foolish person does not keep quiet. He has to do some mischievous deeds, at once. That is the very essence of foolishness, or lack of knowledge. Absolutely keeping quiet is not possible unless there is a complete withdrawal of sensation itself.

The absence of the consciousness of the infinitude of oneself is not an absence of all kinds of consciousness. It is an absence of a specific type, simultaneous with the presence of a different type of consciousness. Just as in a mathematical calculation we may be unconscious of an error that has been committed in calculation, but at the same time there is a positive effort at developing the series of calculations on the basis of that error; the consciousness has not ceased to operate but now it is operating in a wrong direction altogether. The switching off of oneself from the status of Infinity is at once the switching on to the consciousness of finitude. *Avidya* breeds, brings about, causes, projects, manifests, or reveals itself as finite consciousness—*asmita tattva*. While we are not infinite, and we are in a state that can be called an absence of the consciousness of Truth, we are immediately conscious that we are finite. How this takes place is not a question of temporal history. It is a non-temporal fact which eludes the

grasp of understanding, because what we call understanding is nothing but the effect of this catastrophe that has taken place. There cannot be the operation of the intellect if this consciousness of finitude is not there as its background. So much credit for this intellect of man!

Thus, the presence of the sense of finitude becomes the root of further phenomenal processes, desires, activities, etc. This peculiar upstart called the *asmita tattva*, or the finite consciousness, is the unintelligible structural pattern which is animated by an aspect of the Infinite. But though it is animated, it is not conscious of that which is the animating principle, just as the vast sunlight which is pervading all space can be restricted to pass through an aperture, or a hole—and not only that, it can also be split into various rays by making it pass through a prism, and so on. It can be made to assume different colours by allowing it to pass through certain coloured mediums. Likewise, the featureless Infinity, which is the essence of Consciousness, assumes a concrete feature of name and form, and this is the seed of personality, individuality, body-consciousness, etc.

The *sutra* of Patanjali in this connection is: *ḍṛk darśanaśaktyoḥ ekātmatā iva asmitā* (II.6). The thinking principle gets identified with the thinker. *Asmita* means the sense of being individual. It has arisen on account of an identification of two factors: the thinking principle—the medium through which thought is projected—and the real thinker that is responsible and is behind this process. It is difficult to define the nature of the thinking principle, because this principle is a blend of two different sides, or aspects. On one side there is the capacity to think,

understand, illumine, and judge the values of things. On the other side there is the aspect of projecting this intelligence into space and time in an externalised manner, and locating it or pinpointing it upon an object.

The true thinker, if one would like to call it so, is the principle of consciousness itself, which cannot be limited to objects and which is not in space and time. But the awareness of an object outside is a specific function that is performed by the *asmita*, or the individual sense, and this particularised function is made possible by the mixing up of this principle of consciousness with a distracting medium, which is the most inscrutable thing to understand. This distracting medium is the mind, the *antahkarana*. It refracts the light of consciousness in a particular fashion—just as, if a mirror is kept in the sun, the reflection of the light of the sun through the mirror will be cast only in that particular direction in which the mirror is facing. If we can change the position of the mirror, the reflection also will change its location and project itself in a different manner altogether. So, the way in which this refracted medium functions determines the nature of our life itself.

Minds differ. Just as mirrors may differ—the position, colour, structure, thickness, etc. all may change from mirror to mirror—in the same way, mental characteristics differ due to reasons which are peculiar to different individuals themselves. It is the mind that drags the consciousness in a given direction—just as, in this analogy I mentioned, it is the position of the mirror that will determine in which direction the light of the sun is projected. This position of the mirror of the mind is the

tendency of the mind towards objects. It is this tendency that determines the location, or the position, of the mind.

Everyone is born with certain groups of tendencies. The tendencies are the requirements of the constitution of the individual in a particular manner, just as in a vast set-up of a national government, for instance, there are different officials placed in different positions and each official functions in a restricted manner, notwithstanding that this restricted position of the official has a connection with an unrestricted background of an entire government. Likewise, the limitation of the personality is motivated by certain urges with which the individual is born, and these urges are the peculiar proclivities of the individual which makes one different from the other, so that even from childhood we can find that there is a distinct mark of isolated predilection in a particular individual which will mark it off from others. This predilection, or idiosyncrasy, of different individuals is due to the direction taken by these groups of tendencies with which one is born. And, the mind is nothing but a bundle of these tendencies.

Sometimes, in traditional language, we call these groups of tendencies *prarabdha karma*. We are compelled to move in a particular direction on account of our personality being nothing but an embodied form of this distracting principle. This mind that we are speaking of, through which the Infinite is reflected or refracted, is not an outside medium that we operate as independent individuals. It is not a fountain pen with which we write a book and which is not vitally connected with our body, which we can throw off after some time—not so. What we mean by ‘mind’ is nothing but the totality of what we really are in our

individuality—the whole structure of our tendencies, ways of thinking, etc. We will study in the system of Patanjali, in a future *sutra*, that these so-called tendencies condition the place in which we are born, the time period into which we are born, the society into which we are born, the length of life which we live, and the various types of experiences we have to pass through in life.

All these things are already determined even before birth, so that one can say when the child will die even while it is inside the womb itself. The time is fixed because death, transformation, experience, or any kind of encounter in personal life is an event which automatically follows as a consequence of the seeds that are already sown at the very commencement of these groups of tendencies that are manufactured within—just as we can predict an eclipse even a hundred years hence. Today we can say that there will be an eclipse after a hundred years. How do we know it? We know it because of the collocation of certain movements of planets, mathematically calculated.

Therefore, the individual sense, the *asmita tattva*, is a complex manufactured product. It is not an indivisible unitary being, as we wrongly take it to be. It is like a fabric constituted of various threads, and each thread is nothing but a proclivity, as I mentioned. This tendency is, to put it precisely, a kind of desire which is the urge to fulfil itself in a particular manner. Therefore, the thinking principle—the mind, the *antahkarana*—is a medium which cannot be regarded as an external instrument of the individual, but is itself what the individual constitutes. Here in this *sutra* I cited, *dr̥k darśanaśaktyoḥ ekātmatā iva asmitā* (II.6), Patanjali points out that the individual sense, the sense of

being separate, the consciousness of personality or bodily individuality, is a product of the union of this distracting medium with the background of the animating principle—namely, consciousness that is infinite. This union is an inseparable union for all practical purposes, so that we can never be aware, even for a moment, that this has taken place, because once we awaken to this fact we will be frightened out of our wits. But it is not allowed to take place. The manner in which this event has taken place is non-temporal, as I mentioned; so any temporal effort will not even touch it. There is a ‘dark iron screen’, if we would like to call it that, which separates this effort of the individual from knowing the cause, and the real cause that is behind it.

So the *asmita*, or the principle of individuality, which is the cause of all our further troubles in life, is brought about by a peculiar kind of internal, mutual superimposition of aspects. And once this superimposition has taken place, we cannot get out of it. Various kinds of examples are given to illustrate how this has happened and what it actually means. A heated iron rod or iron ball becomes red-hot, so that we are unable to distinguish between the iron and the fire. When we touch the iron ball, it burns us. What is it that we are touching—fire, or the iron ball? Well, either or neither, we may say. What burns us is the fire, but what we actually touch as a tangible, physical, concrete, solid substance is the iron ball. They have become one. There is a glow we see, that is all. It is only fire. The iron is not visible; it has lost its presence. It has identified its being with the being of the fire, for the time being. Likewise, we will find that this distracting medium called the mind completely

makes itself appear absent, as it were—though it is the thing that works there. It is the wire-puller behind all activities in life; and yet, it has so dexterously got identified with some other power, with the help of which it works, that we are wrongly aware of the erroneous activity of that superior principle rather than of the cause of this error that has taken place.

Sometimes, due to association brought about by mysterious circumstances, innocent people can be in trouble as a result of the mischievous activity of wicked persons. And, those wicked persons go scot-free; they run away, and these innocent ones are caught. They are hauled up in the court, and anything is possible. They know nothing; they have been simply caught by circumstances.

Likewise, there is a very mischievous imp called the mind, which very shrewdly utilises the powers of consciousness for its own purposes. The force with which it works, as well as the intelligence that it harnesses in its action, belong entirely to something which is different from itself. But all the functions—which are purely phenomenal—belong to the mind itself. So what happens is that when we are active, we are unable to distinguish between the principle of activity and the principle of intelligence that is behind the activity, just as we cannot distinguish between the heat or the fire in the heated iron rod, and the rod itself. The distracting movement of the mind in the direction of an object, whatever it be in life, is different from the motive force that is behind it. And if the motive force is absent, the activity will cease immediately—just as when a force is absent, movement will not be possible. This peculiar feature of movement, activity or

externalised projection gets mixed up with the force behind it, and then we have the feeling ‘we are’, or ‘I am’.

Therefore, this ‘I am-ness’, or the sense of being, is a confusion that has taken place. The existence aspect of our assertion, ‘I exist’, belongs to a realm which is different from the realm of purposes for which it is employed—namely, the mind, the desire and the actions.

The sense of individuality is, therefore, a combination of the principle of Pure Being and the principle of externality. When we assert or feel ‘I am’, we have a phenomenal sense of ‘I am-ness’. It is not the consciousness of existence as it is, because this existence is present everywhere—it is in me, it is in you, it is in everything. Why don’t we feel that everything ‘is’? Why is it that there is a peculiar feeling of ‘I am, independent of others’? The pure universal character of existence is restricted in its operation, localised by the distracting activity of the mind that is an aspect of existence drawn into activity. Only a phase of this existence is made to be felt in our sense of personality, so that we have a feeling of localised being, and not a sense of All-being.

This feeling of localised being is brought about for a purpose. The purpose is the fulfilment of the urges mentioned, these tendencies with which we are born—the frustrated desires, we may say, the *samskaras*, the *vasanas*, the impressions, etc.—which have been the cause of our birth in this world. Why are we born in this world? We are born for a purpose. The purpose is nothing but the fulfilment of these tendencies with which we are born. They will not keep quiet unless they are fulfilled, and they require a medium of action. There can be no fulfilment unless there

is an instrument through which that fulfilment can be achieved. The instrument is this body.

This body is an organisation of certain sensations—a grouping-up of various powers of sense, which the mind employs for the purpose of this fulfilment of its wishes. The individual sense, or *asmīta*, has a desire to see objects; then, eyes come out immediately. The moment there is a desire to see, the power of seeing is projected. When there is a desire to hear, ears are projected. When there is a desire to grasp, hands are projected. Likewise, the different sense organs get manifested on account of the intense urge to come in contact with objects in various ways. Fortunately for us, the mind has thought of projecting itself only in five ways; otherwise, we would have millions of hands, ears and eyes. We do not know how many instruments it would have manufactured if it wanted. Thank God, we have only five senses—not more. If there were more senses, there will be more desires, more ways of employment of the very same urge in various ways. These senses, therefore, are the instruments of contact. That is the desire of the mind. It wants to contact objects, and it cannot do that unless there is a method by which it can do this work. This method is projected by the sensations. This body which is an instrument is, as I mentioned, an organisation of certain forces, like an army that it has brought about for its own purposes. It has placed the whole army in the field of action, and it can use any part of that army at any time, as the occasion may demand. That particular part of the force it employs is the particular organ of sense.

When the senses come in contact with a desired object, there is sensation of pleasure: *sukha anuśayī rāgaḥ* (II.7). It

is the sensation of pleasure in one's contact with a desirable object that compels one to repeat this contact again and again, because there will be an endless asking for pleasure. We will never be satisfied with an amount of pleasure in a certain given magnitude. What is asked for is an infinitude of magnitude; but inasmuch as the instruments employed are finite, infinite pleasure is not possible. We cannot have a whole ocean contained in a little cup or a tumbler, because its capacity is very little. Can we use a small tumbler to carry the whole ocean—the Pacific or the Atlantic? That is not possible. But our wish is to carry it. What is the good of this wish when it cannot be fulfilled due to the wrong means that we employed? The instrument is very feeble in comparison with the object that is in our mind.

Therefore, the pleasures always remain unsatisfied. Inasmuch as what we ask for is an infinitude of pleasure, we cannot be satisfied with a little of it. Hence there is an urge to repeat the contact of the mind and senses with the object, endlessly. Throughout life we can go on having these contacts; and yet, there can be no end to it. So, what happens? These peculiar types of tendencies with which we are born get exhausted, get worn out. The senses also become tired because of repeated activity; then, their momentum ceases. The momentum of these tendencies ceases on account of exhaustion and inability to fulfil themselves to the extent they require from within, and also because the tendencies with which we are born are finite—they are only certain aspects of the possibilities of other types of contact we can have.

What happens is these tendencies have to come to an end one day or the other by exhaustion of momentum, and then the organisation dwindles; that is called the death of the body. If all the personnel in a government disintegrate, the government itself does not exist. It ceases to be because the constituents have separated, and so the complex diminishes in quantity until it becomes a zero. The forces which brought together the physical atoms of matter into the formation of a body withdraw themselves to their sources, and the complex structure of the body disintegrates automatically. The particles of matter go to their sources. This is what is called death.

But death is not the end of the matter; there will be rebirth because the desires have not been fulfilled. For various reasons, as I mentioned, it was not possible for the mind to satisfy itself fully with its activity, so it experiments with a new set of circumstances; and births repeatedly coming, one after the other, are the different types of experiments that the mind performs to see if it can get what it wants. It fails every time, but it is never tired: "If this fails today, I shall work in another manner tomorrow." So, another birth is taken.

Thus, the repeated cycle of birth and death continues endlessly, unbroken, and we cannot know where it begins and where it ends. This cycle is called the *samsara chakra*, the wheel of birth and death. All this trouble has arisen on account of the original mistake committed—namely, the assertion of individuality as a principle, independent by itself, whose erroneous presence compels it to come in contact with other individuals, objects, etc. Unfortunately for it, it has the temptation of enjoying pleasure in contact.

If that had not been there, perhaps it would have caught the lesson immediately at the very first contact itself, but the memory of a previous pleasure becomes a cause for working further to repeat the contact for the purpose of the experience it once had.

The *sutra*, *sukha anuśayī rāgaḥ* (II.7), refers to the immediate consequence of self-assertion. What is this immediate consequence? It is the conviction that arises in oneself that there is a purpose in self-affirmation. What can be the purpose, other than the enjoyment of pleasure? But, in this effort at coming in contact with things for the purpose of satisfying one's wishes, there is a hidden aspect, which is the reason why we always keep ourselves in a state of anxiety. It is not all pleasure that we see in this world. There is the other side also, which is pain, and that pain is the result of the working of another aspect of experience, which goes simultaneously with, or hand in hand with, the desire for contact with objects. The objects are finite; therefore, a desire for an object is a finite movement of the mind exclusively in the direction of certain given things, by which it sets aside other factors of life which it does not regard as conducive or helpful in its present activity. Thus, it has always a feeling of anxiety that these factors that have been set aside may not intrude.

There are also objects in the world other than the one towards which the mind is moving. What will happen to them? Because of the interrelated structure of all things, it is impossible to avoid the intrusion of other factors into our experience. We cannot have summer always, or winter always, or rain always, or a particular kind of season always, because the planets move according to their own way, and

so seasons change, naturally. Experiences also must change. Everything in this world is subtly connected with everything else. Therefore, if we interfere with any particular thing, we will be interfering with everything else also—knowingly or unknowingly. But, due to the ignorance of this peculiar way in which nature works, the mind takes into consideration only that particular object or group of objects which is visible to its mental eye, as if it is looking at things with blinkers, and completely loses consciousness of other factors with which the very existence of this object or group of objects is concerned or related. Thus, reactions are set up.

The reactions that are produced by our actions, called the *karmas* that bind us, are the unconscious repercussions which are consequent upon our interference with things in the world. Though we are contacting objects not with an intention of interfering, but with a so-called pious motive of getting what we want through them, we are thoroughly mistaken, because every contact is an interference with nature. Nature is an indivisible whole and it cannot brook interference of any kind, and it has no partiality of any kind in respect of its content. It does not love one to the exclusion of others. But this individual sense does not know this truth. It thinks that a part of nature is its property—it belongs to it, and it tries to possess it wrongly and make it a part of its own being, not knowing that nature will not allow this and that its law will operate.

Sukha-dukha come together; pleasure and pain are simultaneous. Every endeavour at pleasure is an invocation of a pain that is to follow one day or the other. Today we laugh, and tomorrow we cry. We cannot go on laughing

throughout the day, throughout our life, because there is a negative side for everything in this world. Everything has two aspects: the aspect of visibility, as it is presented to the limited vision of the mind and the senses, and the aspect of invisibility, which is the other side of things, of which the mind is not aware and the senses cannot perceive, but nevertheless it is there.

The individual sense is a foolish one, indeed, in that it cannot succeed in its attempts. Yet it persists, though it does not succeed, because it does not know that its failure is due to its own erroneous methods employed. It thinks it is right in its methods, and that something is wrong with the objects themselves. We always find fault with conditions outside when we fail, not knowing that the failure is due to a mistake committed by us in the methodology employed. But, the mind will never understand this. Nobody will ever accept that there is a mistake in one's own self. We always impute the mistakes to circumstances and conditions outside. So goes this world.

This is the short history of the immediate consequences that follow from an ignorance of the true nature of one's own Self, a consequent sudden affirmation of personal individuality, and then the running after pleasures of sense.

Chapter 59

THE SELF-PRESERVATION INSTINCT

The sense of personal being, or *asmita*, immediately begins to act in the form of its various contacts with things outside, because every stage of the manifestation of *avidya* is an active manifestation. It does not remain quiet even for a single moment. It is like the movement of a forceful river which flows continuously until it reaches its destination. It will not halt at some place. Likewise, once *avidya* gets channelised and concentrated as *asmita*, the green signal for further action has been given and then there is a very persistent movement of the individual sense towards its objects.

The intention behind this activity of *asmita* is to gain pleasure. It feels a satisfaction by coming in contact with things; and once there is a sensation of pleasure, it stirs the ego for further effort in the same direction so that the quantity of pleasure may be increased. A moment's experience is not sufficient. The memory of having had pleasurable contact earlier becomes a goad for further effort for contacts of a similar nature. *Sukha anuśayī rāgaḥ* (II.7): *Raga*, or desire, which becomes passion when it is very intense, is pleasure objectified. When pleasure is externalised on an object outside, the attitude of the mind towards that object is called desire. Therefore, it is not a desire for objects; it is a desire for pleasure. The experience of pleasure is invested upon the form of the object, and what the mind sees in the object is not the substance of the object, but its capacity to fulfil its desires—just as when we see a currency note we do not see a piece of paper, and we

do not see the ink with which it is impressed; we see the value which it has in respect of our personal life. It acts as an instrument for the fulfilment of certain purposes of the individual, and that is why we have a liking for currency notes, money, etc., while really what we physically see is only a scrap of paper.

In a similar manner the object of sense, living or non-living, has a physical existence of its own, but that is not the meaning that is read into it by the perceiving mind. The meaning is a value that it inheres in itself—a kind of significance that is read there secretly by the cognising mind. “Here is a tool for the satisfaction of my desires,”—thus contemplates the mind. The mind’s attitude towards the object is, therefore, a hundred percent selfish. There is not even an iota of unselfishness there, because it has no botheration whatsoever as to the independent status of the object. Its status in relation to one’s own self is what is taken into consideration, or into account. “What does it mean to me?” is the question, and that is the only question; there is nothing else. It means something very valuable to me because it can become an instrument to cause in me an experience of pleasure, of which I have a memory now as having been experienced earlier.

Thus, the mind feels that while pleasure is something desirable, it cannot be invoked in itself directly without the aid of something outside. This is the bondage of the *jiva*: its desires, wishes, or longings cannot be satisfied by themselves. They require the instrumentation of something other than themselves. This causes a very serious problem because the objects of sense are not really subsidiary to any cognising individual. They have an independence of their

own, as is well known, and so it becomes a very hard task for a person to bring them under its jurisdiction. For this purpose it has to work very hard, toil very much; and it employs various means of subjugating the status of the object, which is independent, and makes it a satellite of its own.

Every form of affection is a satellisation of the object. We try to bring the object round ourselves and make it subsidiary to our purposes. Therefore, it is not true that loves are unselfish. They are utterly selfish. The purpose is very clear. The clear background of this activity is a cessation of a tense feeling that is created in the mind on account of the unfulfilled wish of the mind. This peculiar predilection of the mind towards desired objects is called *raga*, or desire, and the other side of this attitude is called *dvesha*, or hatred. Where the one is, the other must be present because dislike, or *dvesha*, is that negative side of the attitude of the mind in respect of those things which are not contributory to the fulfilment of its desires. Objects or circumstances, persons or things who are of an obstructing character in the direction of the fulfilment of its desires become objects of hatred because they obstruct pleasure.

Therefore, the thing that one asks for is pleasure, nothing else. We do not want the world; we do not want people; we do not want things; we do not want anything else. What we ask for is a sensation of pleasure. This sensation has to be repeated regularly because if it is not so repeated, there will be a gap between one experience and another thereof, and the gap will be one of pain. Who wants pain? We have a longing to have a perpetual motion, a flow of the experience of pleasure, which is not possible under

existing conditions because a perpetual contact of the mind with pleasurable objects is not practicable, for various reasons. Either the mind does not have the facilities to do that, or there are other reasons on account of which there cannot be a perpetual contact of the mind with its desired object. There can be a break, or a bereavement, or a separation. This is what is disliked, because there is a desire to be perpetually immersed in pleasure. Why does this feeling arise? It arises on account of the finite sense of individuality. The *asmita* is a local affirmation of self—a complete boycotting of relationship with everything else and asserting a superiority of oneself, which immediately creates the subtle feeling that this state of affairs cannot continue for a long time, because the affirmation of individuality is contrary to the nature of things.

The law of nature will not permit the affirmation of absolute isolatedness because in nature everything is organically connected and, therefore, any sort of assertion of independence on the part of any aspect of its structure would be dealt with in a proper manner. Nature vehemently contradicts this step taken by *asmita*, and this force with which nature pulls the individual sense towards its universal structure is really the dynamo that is behind the projection of desire. Though desire is really inscrutable—it cannot be rationally analysed, and intellectually it cannot be subjected to investigation of any kind—it is certain that at the deepest background of this activity of the mind, called desire for the objects of sense, there is the pull of the organic nature of all things. It is the inability of the individual sense to keep itself really aloof

from things that is responsible for its attraction towards other objects.

This deeper truth is not known to any individual on account of its weddedness to the activity of the senses. That the reason behind the pull of the subject towards the object is something different cannot become obvious to one's consciousness because of the projection of this I-sense by externalisation through the senses. The senses diversify this I-sense, externalise it, and make it impossible for the individual to know the undercurrent of unity which is the cause for this attraction. There is a very foolish pouncing of the subject on the object, completely oblivious to the rational ground that is there, on account of which it is made to operate in that manner. There is a great rationality behind the manifestation of desire, but it works very irrationally. The rationality is the unity of things, but the irrationality is the feeling that things are outside. Because of this irrational element present in the manifestation and function of desire, there is no satisfaction of desire. Since every effort at the fulfilment of desire goes hand in hand with hatred for certain other things in the world, it is impossible to avoid psychological tension wholly, because the love for a thing, which is simultaneous with hatred for something, is the essence of tension.

These two activities of the mind—*raga* and *dvesha*, love and hatred—cannot be avoided as long as there is this false conviction that one can exist, or does exist, as an absolutely cut-off individual with a prestige and a pedigree of one's own. Hence, *avidya* has caused *asmita*, and *asmita* manifests itself perpetually in its action as *raga* and *dvesha*. Thus this love for pleasure in life is also the love of life. We

love life very much; but it is not life that we love—rather, it is the pleasure of life that we love. If it was all horror and death-like pangs, one would not love life. But there is a drop of honey mixed with the venom of tense activity, and one is after the little drop that is sticking even to the blade of grass which can cut one's tongue—due to which, life is kept moving. The intense clinging one feels for one's own life is the vehemence with which love for pleasure manifests itself. There is a joy in existing, and there is a joy in coming in contact with things. This joy is the cause of self-affirmation in the bodily individuality, which is the love of life and the hatred or fear of death.

There is a perpetual anxiety that death may overtake us, and this is the last thing that anyone would expect in this world. One fears death because death is the negation of all pleasure. It destroys the body. It destroys us, as we can conceive ourselves, and together with that, all that is the value of this individuality also goes. Why do we exist in this world? We exist to enjoy pleasure. This is what the mind tells us; otherwise, what is the purpose of existing? This pleasure will be annihilated by death—so there is fear of death. Thus, fear of death is the same as love of life. While the perception of pleasure in an object of sense creates a desire for it, and the perception of the contrary in an object creates an aversion towards it—*sukha anuśayī rāgaḥ* (II.7) and *duḥkha anuśayī dveṣaḥ* (II.8)—there is a simultaneous clinging to one's own body. This love of life is present even in the wisest of people, says the next *sutra*: *svarasavaḥī viduṣaḥ api tatha ārūḍhaḥ abhiniveśaḥ* (II.9). *Abhinivesa* is love of life, clinging to the body, together with fear of death. This is present in everyone. It is present in an ant, in a

worm and in an insect, and it is present in the wisest of people. Even the wisest of people do not like to die; there is always a desire to live. We take tonics and other things for prolonging life so that we may not die quickly.

Why should we not die quickly? There is no answer for it. We should not die quickly because—it is very clear, the whole answer is there—it is the affirmation of the pleasure principle in life which prevents the very possibility of accepting the impending destruction of individuals. This feeling for life is spontaneously manifest; it does not require any effort to reveal it. *Svarasavahi*—we may not have to work hard to create this love for life; it is there inborn, ingrained. It is one with us; it is ourselves. It is our own essential nature—*svabhava*, *svarupa*—and so it is called *svarasavahi*. Just as the flow of a river is spontaneous, moving of its own accord—we need not push it from outside, or behind—so also this love of individual life is spontaneous in its movement and persists in the idiot and the wise equally, in the child and the learned equally, without any distinction, because it is the love of existence itself. *Viduṣaḥ api tatha ārūḍhaḥ* (II.9). It is very vehemently present, very forcefully functioning, even in the most learned, educated. Even a genius he may be, but the love of life is present in him. This is called *abhinivesa*. All this has come out of the precedent causation which we have mentioned.

Why is it that we fear death and love life? Because we love pleasure and dislike pain—and death is pain. What can be a greater pain than death, which is the annihilation of all positive values and possibilities of satisfaction in life? Because the love of pleasure and the dislike for its opposite

is the aim and objective of every activity of the mind and the senses, it clings to the cause and to the possibility of such enterprise—which is the sense of being that is *asmita*. Hence, we have to maintain our individuality in order that it can be used as an instrument for the satisfaction of pleasure. Therefore, the instinct of self-preservation is very hard to overcome. It is the strongest of instincts. We want to preserve ourselves.

This preservation of the individual is physical as well as psychological. When it is physical it comes as hunger, thirst, heat, cold, etc., which are indications that some threat is there to the existence and welfare of our physical being. Heat, cold, hunger, thirst are indications or symbols of the possibility of this physical individual withering if proper care is not taken. We have to go on plastering a wall every now and then so that the plaster may not drop down. Likewise, there is also a desire to maintain the psychological individuality by the affirmation of the ego. Hence, we affirm the body and the ego at the same time. Together with the desire for food, clothing, shelter, drink, etc., there is also a desire for prestige, self-esteem and position in society. A good word, name, fame, power, authority—all these come under love of ego, and that keeps the ego intact, just as the body is kept intact by food, drink, etc.

Either way, and both ways, the instinct for life works: on the one hand, by working hard for the preservation of the physical individuality, and simultaneously with it, working for the preservation of the psychological individuality. While there is a desire to live as a physical body, due to which we hunger for food and drink, etc., at the same time there is also a desire to maintain a

worthwhileness in one's individuality; one must be an important individual. That is why there is desire for a good word, for name, fame, etc. Even the most foolish of persons would not like to be insulted. There is a necessity felt, even in the worst of individuals, to be regarded as worthwhile. This is the psychological urge, together with the physical urge. Both these put together is the instinct for life—the psychophysical urge, we may call it. That is the self-preservation instinct.

The self-preservation instinct is not an inactive, dormant or sleeping instinct. It is a very cautious instinct. The self-preservation instinct knows that it cannot succeed for all times. One day or the other, with all our effort, we have to perish. We may go on eating, drinking, clothing ourselves and living in a house for any number of years to the extent possible, but a limit is there for this effort. We will perish. The instinct for life tells us that life has to end one day. There is a fear: "I am going to be annihilated one day." We all know that we are going to die, notwithstanding that we struggle hard to prevent it by food, drink, etc.

This instinct works in a different manner altogether, in a strange way, which is called the self-reproduction instinct. The self-reproductive instinct is nothing but another action of the self-preservation instinct. We want to perpetuate our individuality for all times; otherwise, there will be an end of it. How long will we exist in this body? A few years? It may be even a hundred years, let us assume. After a hundred years, what happens? No food and drink will perpetuate this body; it will drop. The instinct for the love of individual life is shrewd enough to know that it cannot always succeed with all its shrewdness, so it manufactures a device by

which it can perpetuate its individuality for a future generation also. The vehemence with which the self-preservation urge manifests itself in life channelises itself in a different way as an equal vehemence for self-reproduction—so that when this body goes, its child is there to continue its drama of life. The soul transfers its emotions to the child that is born, and *atma vai putranama asi*, as the scripture says—we feel ourselves in the child. That is why we love the child so much. We see ourselves there. The temporal urge for phenomenal, individual existence, which is the self-preservative instinct, manufactures a device for continuing its activity in this world by the urge of self-reproduction.

Hence, the instincts of self-preservation and self-reproduction are really one instinct only, like two sides of the same coin. They are not two different things. As Patanjali puts it, it is the *abhinivesa* which works so strongly and spontaneously that even the wisest of people cannot escape this. This wisdom of the world is nothing before this instinct, because it has a wisdom superior to the wisdom of the world. Why is this instinct so powerful? It is because the whole of nature is backing it; the entire set-up of the forces of nature is in collaboration with this instinct. The purpose or the intention of nature is that one propagates the species into which one is born. Therefore, this instinct has the support of every part of nature. We can find this instinct present everywhere—in human beings, in subhuman beings, in plants, and everywhere. It cannot be absent anywhere, and it is doubtful whether it is absent even in inorganic matter; even there, it is present in some form or other. What is chemical action but this urge that is

working, in a subtler form? Even the gravitational pull can be explained physically as the working of a single force which diversifies itself in various ways for the fulfilment of a single purpose in nature. On account of the collaboration received by this instinct from various sources, from the whole of nature itself, it becomes insurmountable, vehement, very forceful, turbulent and impetuous. This is the condition of things, which is put plainly in this *sutra*: svarasavahī viduṣaḥ api tatha ārūḍhaḥ abhiniveśaḥ (II.9).

What is to be done now? This is a terrible picture that is presented before us. Are we helpless? Yes. The only solution for this is to work hard to get out of the difficulty, even in the midst of the difficulty. As they say, we have to take a bath in the ocean even when the waves are dashing. We will not find a time when the waves subside, as they will never subside. Likewise, problems of the world will be there always. We are not going to be free from them. Every moment there is trouble, but in the midst of this fierce encounter of trouble in this world, we have to find a moment of respite to contemplate the possibility of overcoming it. Every dark cloud has a silver lining, as they say. Likewise the unthinkable, unimaginable extent of the difficulties in which one finds oneself in life also has a silver lining. There is a streak of light that is projecting forth in the form of a hope that there is a chance of getting out of this problem by some strange method.

That strange method is the practice of yoga. It is strange, indeed, because it is not available in this world, in the market. It is not even imaginable by the mind, ordinarily. It is a very, very strange technique which has been discovered by blessed ones, great masters and adepts,

which is the antidote for this vehemence with which the love of life, or instinct for existence, manifests itself. This antidote is the practice of yoga. How it is to be practised, we shall be told in the future.

Chapter 60

TRACING THE ULTIMATE CAUSE OF ANY EXPERIENCE

These impulses and instincts, which are the manner in which the creative urge manifests itself, have to be purified and transformed into their respective causes so that they can be subdued in an intelligent manner. This is the meaning of the *sutra*: *te pratiprasavaheyāḥ sūkṣmāḥ* (II.10). The only way of controlling anything is to bring it back to its cause. *Pratiprasava* is the recession of the effect into the cause. First of all, an impulse, an instinct, a desire, an urge, or any event for the matter of that, has to be diagnosed as to how it has arisen. What is the reason for its manifesting itself at all? What is its intention? What does it seek? What are the conditions that have contributed to its rise?

This is the etiology, the diagnosis, or we may call it the pathological investigation of a psychological condition that has arisen. No event takes place by a single cause. Many causes come together to produce an effect, just as it is in anything that we see in life. Even a headache does not come due to a single reason. There is a susceptibility of the system—the season or the climate that is pervading outside, the mental condition, the social status, the function or the work that one performs, and so on. These become various factors that are contributory to a single phenomenon which is experienced.

To bring an effect back to its cause is a difficult thing because the cause cannot be easily discovered. If there is a

single cause for a single effect, and they work in a mathematical fashion absolutely, we may be able to revert the effect into the cause at once, by turning on a switch. But, the cause and effect relationship is not as arithmetical as it may appear. They do not follow any logic in the way we understand it. Suddenly, a phenomenon can arise. Though it is a very logical consequence of certain causes, it will remain outside the purview of our understanding because the logical deductions that we make are linear in their fashion and not organic in their structure. But, the world is organic. Everything is organic in life, which means to say there is an interrelatedness of causes mutually determining one another, so that anything can be called a cause if it is pinpointed exclusively.

As is the intention in the teaching of this *sutra*, the remote causes, though they cannot be easily discovered, will come to the purview of one's vision if the immediate causes are first discovered. There are immediate causes as well as remote causes. The remote causes can be ignored for the time being, and we can concern ourselves with the immediate cause. What is the immediate reason behind a particular event that has taken place, as far as it can be visible to the eyes or intelligible to the mind? Then, a proper step has to be taken to rectify the situation which has become the immediate cause of a particular experience. The experience that we are referring to here is nothing but the manifestation of a *vritti* in the mind in the direction of an object of sense, or any kind of individualistic satisfaction.

Generally, an impulse is not absent in any person. Every impulse is present in every person, just as every disease is in

everybody, only it manifests itself in some and in others it does not manifest itself due to unfavourable circumstances. Likewise, everyone has every desire. No one is free from any desire; but in some, certain desires can manifest themselves, whereas in others they cannot, due to the circumstances in which they live. The physical, psychological and social conditions, etc. have something to say about the time and the manner in which a particular impulse can reveal itself outside. When a particular urge is felt inside, it means that favourable conditions for its manifestation are ready, on hand. Unless conditions are favourable, the urge will not manifest itself.

The very fact that we have an impulse inside shows that there is a chance of its fulfilment; otherwise, it will not show its head. It is very clear. The chances of the fulfilment of an impulse may be very remote. The fulfilment of an impulse may not be immediately possible, but the impulse is more intelligent than our intelligence and it can sense the presence of contributory, helpful factors more easily than our intellect, in its gross functioning, can understand. The instincts are more powerful than our understanding. That is why the understanding goes down into the pit when the instinct comes up. The instinct is very sensitive—extremely sensitive—to the presence of the objects and the instruments which will help in its fulfilment. We have to infer the proximity of these factors which are necessary for the fulfilment of an impulse when the impulse rises. Then it is that we have to go into the diagnostic action of the case. “Why has this impulse arisen? Something is happening; I am in the proximity of something.” When we feel the warmth of the atmosphere, we must infer that the sun is

about to rise; otherwise, from where has this warmth come?—and so on. The presence of an impulse in the direction of a particular form of satisfaction is the indication that we are in the midst of certain types of atmospheres which are helpful to its fulfilment.

Then, what are we supposed to do? There are two things to be done. Number one, an investigation has to be made immediately as to why this has happened. A careful probe into the psychic atmosphere will reveal what sort of factors are present in our proximity which have brought this impulse out—just as a magnet, by its mere presence, can draw iron filings to itself, and when we find a restlessness of the iron filings, we can infer the presence of a magnet nearby. If we hear the chattering of monkeys in a tree, we can imagine there is either a snake nearby, or a very violent dog that they have seen, or that something which is frightening them is present; otherwise, they will not make this chattering noise. Likewise, a very dispassionate, inward analysis has to be conducted. But, this is almost an impossibility for most people because nobody would like to conduct an investigation into pleasurable circumstances. They try to conduct investigations into painful ones, because an investigation into pleasurable circumstances is an attempt at stopping the very possibility of this satisfaction. Otherwise, why do we conduct the investigation? Who would like to counteract the chances of a pleasurable experience?

In practice, this method will fail unless the intelligence is far superior to the demands of the instinct; which is, of course, very rare to find in people. The senses generally get stirred up in the presence of their respective objects. ‘Sense’

does not necessarily mean the ear or the eye—even the ego is one of the senses. In an atmosphere where the ego is to be pampered, or can be pampered, where it can be elevated, where it can find its food—in such an atmosphere it gets stirred up. It is activated, and its mood changes. Immediately, it flies up through a pair of new wings. When such a stirring activity within takes place, either of the senses or of the ego, one can infer the presence of a conducive atmosphere. A wise person will flee from that atmosphere; that is what an intelligent *sadhaka* would do. He would not stay in that place because he has found that his senses are becoming very turbulent due to the presence of certain external things. What can one do, except place oneself in a different condition where such an urge would not manifest itself? The cause of the event, the cause of the effect, is the presence of the personality in a given condition, just as favourable conditions enable a seed to sprout into a small plant while unfavourable conditions compel it to remain under the earth, as if it has no life at all. Likewise, the impulses remain inactive under unfavourable circumstances, and they manifest themselves under favourable ones.

Once we provide these impulses with the conditions that are favourable, they gain an upper hand. Then, we cannot do anything with them. They will rush forth like a river which has found a small outlet. If a river that is in high flood finds even a little outlet, it will break the entire bund and will go wherever it wishes. Likewise, even a little outlet that is provided for the movement of an impulse outside in respect of an object may be enough for it to go out of control.

The cause is thus to be discovered. And what are we supposed to do after discovering the cause? The effect has to be absorbed into the cause—this is the advice given in this *sutra*. It becomes subtle when it is diverted back to the cause from where it has arisen. Though physical conditions may act as favourable causes for the manifestation of an impulse, the main cause is a psychological susceptibility. Unless we are susceptible to a disease, it is unlikely that we will fall sick even in the midst of atmospheres which are likely to cause such a disease. The inward susceptibility is a greater factor than the presence of outer conditions, though it is true that we have to take notice of both these factors at the same time. Our inner susceptibility, as well as the presence of outer factors—both these are important, though the inner ones are stronger.

Thus, the cause behind the rise of a particular sensory impulse is firstly the presence of an object outside, which is what the impulse seeks, and secondly, a susceptibility of the mind itself towards the rise of such an impulse. The susceptibility may be due to one's not having allowed the impulse to come to the surface of consciousness for a long time. For years and years, we have subjugated it with great power of will by *tapasya*, by fasting and mortifications of various other types which have kept the impulse under check. This pressing of the impulse down by the force of will for a protracted period might have acted as one of the motive forces behind the impulse finding an avenue of manifestation, because the more we suppress a desire, the stronger it becomes and the greater is the force with which it arises when it finds even the least chance that is given to it—just as, when we press a spring down hard, the pressure

with which it jumps back will be equal to the pressure with which we have pushed it down.

The recession of the effect into the cause does not mean the pressing of the effect towards the cause with the force of will. What the *sutra* tells us is that the effect should not remain as an effect—it should become a part of the cause itself. It gets transformed. But it will remain as an effect if the effort has merely thrust the effect back into a bag and allowed it to remain as an effect for a long time. That would not be a successful practice, because the purpose of the reverting of the effect towards the cause, or in the direction of the cause, is to sublimate it to the extent possible—to refine it and to make it ethereal, as far as possible. The grossness of it has to be lessened so that its vehemence also is reduced. It is difficult to bring about this transformation because, as I mentioned, all this implies an action contrary to the satisfaction of a desire. Inasmuch as the whole world moves towards the fulfilment of desire and seeks satisfaction and nothing short of it, any kind of effort contrary to it is unthinkable. Nobody would work against one's own satisfaction, but this seems to be a peculiar condition of the mind where such an effort, such an action, is called for. Therefore, it becomes very painful, and mostly unsuccessful.

Thus, when the effect is brought to the cause, what is expected of us is not merely a psychological effort to trace the cause of the effect, but also to enliven it with a higher reason, by which it would be possible for us to know the defect or the error that is involved in the very manifestation of the desire. Why has the desire arisen? It is due to an error of perception. Nobody would like to continue in a state of

error. If we merely exert to press the effect back to the cause by sheer force of will, that would not be successful, because it will be tantamount to putting an end to the possibility of satisfaction—a most painful procedure, indeed. But, if the cause is probed into a little further in greater detail, we will realise that *raga* and *dvesha* have a deeper cause—which is nescience, or *avidya*.

The *pratiprasava*, or the recession of the effect into the cause, means the tracing of the ultimate cause of any experience—not merely a single cause, or one or two causes. It will be realised that the ultimate cause is an erroneous movement of the mind which has given rise to a wrong impression that it is taking a proper course. Because of the habit of the mind since years and years, it may look like it is taking a proper course of action; and even a wrong may look right when it has persisted for a long time. If we go on lying about something completely, for years and years, it may take the shape of a truth, though it is not. This is what has actually happened—an erroneous course of action that has been initiated has put on the mask of a right course of action, and that is why it is so insistent.

When the ultimate cause of a particular experience is discovered, it will be found that the cause lies in the recognition of the Self in the not-Self. This was the definition of *avidya* given by Patanjali. The *atman* is seen in the *anatman*, and then *asmita* arises. Then there is love for things, and wild impulses arise. So, the rise of an impulse in respect of a pleasurable experience in the world is rooted in an urge towards it, which is *raga*—which again is rooted in the self-sense or *asmita*, which again is rooted in the recognition or the vision of the Self in the not-Self. Now, is

this a great virtue to see the Self in the not-Self? Is this wisdom? Is this a course of rightful action that has been taken by the mind? Can anyone say that to see the Self in the not-Self is a correct course, a proper course? But unless the Self is seen in the not-Self, we cannot have pleasurable impulses.

The satisfaction of the senses is possible only if the not-Self is outside the Self. If the not-Self is not there, the pleasure also cannot be there because every contactual pleasure, sensory or egoistic, is conditioned by the presence of an external object. The perception of the reality of an external object is what is known as the recognition of the Self in the not-Self. So, the extent to which we read reality into the location of an object outside is also the magnitude of the satisfaction that we gain by coming in contact with it. The more is the reality of an object, the greater is the satisfaction that we get by coming in contact with it. The more we read the Selfhood in a not-Self, the more is the intensity of the recognition of the Self in the not-Self, the greater is the pleasure that we derive by contact with it. Hence, all the pleasures of the world are ultimately rooted in this peculiar phenomenon—namely, the vision of the Self in the not-Self.

Now we have been awakened to a very terrifying situation in which we have been placed: we see the Self in the not-Self. Is it proper? If it is not proper, why is it not proper? It is not proper because it is quite the opposite of what is. It is the contrary of facts, and inasmuch as it is ultimately the Truth alone that can succeed, this effort of the mind in the direction of coming in contact with the not-Self will not succeed. It cannot succeed because it is

contrary to Truth. *Satyameva jayate nanritam*: Truth alone will succeed. This *amrita* of the perception of the Self in the not-Self is the basis of the great joys that we have in this world—any kind of joy, whatever it be, whether it is sensory or egoistic, social, personal, or whatever it is.

In this manner, if a diagnosis of the event of experience of pleasure is made, it will be realised that there is a great stupidity behind it. A hideous error has been committed, without which we cannot have happiness in this world. All our happiness is rooted in utter ignorance, and unless this ignorance is present, there cannot be happiness. The joys of the world are not a manifestation of understanding or intelligence. All the pleasures of the world are manifestations of ignorance. They are darkness masquerading as illuminating joys. This is the truth that is dug out when we bring the facts to the surface. And so, in this investigative analysis that we are conducting for the purpose of tracing the cause of an effect, we realise that we have been fooled from the very beginning—a very hopeless situation, indeed.

Also, there is a reason why pleasure is seen in the contact of the senses with the not-Self. The contact of the Self with the not-Self brings about a tension, and the tension is caused by a false circumstance that has been created. The transference of the Self to the not-Self is a false condition because the Self cannot be transferred to the not-Self. It cannot be what it is not—but this is exactly what has happened. An impossible thing is attempted, and so a tremendous tension is created in the consciousness. Therefore, it is unhappy. This unhappiness is due to the tension created by the urge to place itself in what it is not.

The loves of the world are tensions of one kind or the other. The release of this tension should be, naturally, a satisfaction. The tension is caused by the movement of the Self away from itself, in the direction of the object. And when we have lost our Self, that is great pain indeed, because the essence of tension is an aberration of consciousness, or a movement of Consciousness away from its own Self. This is what is happening in every kind of attraction or affection.

Hence, there is tension, and the so-called satisfaction that is arrived at by the contact of senses with objects is due to the cessation of this tension. *Ananda* is felt in the contact of the senses with objects on account of the retrogression of the senses back to their source, under the impression that their purpose has been fulfilled. In the contact there is a notion created in the mind that the purpose of the contact has been fulfilled, and so the forces of the senses return to their cause. Then the mind ceases to function for a while, and the tension caused by the movement of the Self towards the not-Self is brought to a cessation temporarily—so there is a flash of *ananda*. A conviction arises in the mind that the object has brought the satisfaction required, and so there is a persistent effort to repeat the experience again and again. This has been caused, therefore, by a muddled understanding—a confusion, totally. The happiness has not come from the object, and therefore, the rise of an impulse in the direction of an object is illogical, ultimately.

Such analysis of this type would be helpful in the reversion of the effect into the cause and the sublimation of the effect in the cause, so that the vehemence or the force of the effect in the direction of its fulfilment will be mitigated

to a large extent. Thus, effort has to be made. We have to be very vigilant, every day, in seeing that the force of the manifestation of an effect in the form of an impulse in the direction of an object is brought down to the minimum by such intelligent analysis.

Chapter 61

HOW THE LAW OF KARMA OPERATES

Dhyānaheyāḥ tadvṛttayah (II.11): Everything is possible through meditation. All the impediments are set aside by the power that is projected in meditation. The force of concentration has miraculous results following it. Though in the beginning it looks as if we are threshing old straw and no essence seems to be coming out of it, a marvel will be beheld later on as a result of continued practice.

The harassing *vrittis*, the tormenting obstacles of *raga*, *dvesha* and all their concomitants, will disperse like scudding clouds, and there will be a luminous light of hope presenting itself before us—after a long, long time, of course. Even a hope that something is going to come is enough—if it is a confirmed hope, not a nebulous one. But, in the earlier stages, on account of the thickness of the cloud of unknowing, or ignorance, even this hope is absent. There is diffidence and discomfiture even in one's approach, and sluggishly, reluctantly, with suspicion in the mind, one undertakes the practice. But this continuous hammering of the mind into a given point—continuous, unremitting, prolonged for an indefinite period—has its own consequences which are very advantageous. It breaks through the thick wall that is obstructing the vision of Truth. These obstructions are nothing but the *vrittis* of the mind.

The *vrittis* of the mind are the powerful tendencies of the mind to move outward in the direction of objects. The senses drag the Self with a power which is unthinkable and tie this Self to the peg of objects, so that it looks as though

the objects are the masters and the Self is the slave. Such a strange event has taken place. The master has become the servant and the servant has become the master. This is the work of the senses. They are the driving impetuous forces which violently blow like a tempest and shift the attention of consciousness in the direction of objects.

This urge of the mind is called a *vrittis*, a modification, a shape that the mind takes in respect of a given object outside. It has some motives behind it, and these motives are the objects of sense. The intention of the activity of the senses is the identification of consciousness with the object so that the consciousness may go and impinge upon the object, identify itself spatially and temporally with the object, cling to the object and imagine that its comfort, joy and delight are in the object. This is what the senses are intending to do, and they have no other activity. This tempestuous activity of the senses is the essence of the *vrittis*. These *vrittis* are multifarious, multifaceted, diverse, and very powerful. They are powerful because they are charged with the force of consciousness itself, the power of the mind itself. We ourselves have sold ourselves to these evil *vrittis*—the tendencies towards objects—and these tendencies are so powerful that as long as they are active, there is no chance of the mind thinking in another direction.

But by the intelligent analysis that we have been provided with in the system of yoga, and the continued practice with persistence and ardour of feeling, a day will come, the scripture tells us, when these *vrittis* will get attenuated. They will become weakened in their power. There is no remedy for these *vrittis* except meditation itself.

Yogena yogo jñatavyo yogo yogat pravārtate (Y.B.III.6): Yoga is to be attained through yoga, and yoga comes from yoga, says the Yoga Bhasya. Thus, in this *sutra*, *dhyānaheyāḥ tadvṛttayaḥ* (II.11), Patanjali tells us that we need not be afraid of these *vrittis* of the mind. They can be overcome, root and branch, by meditation itself. As diamond is cut by diamond, mind is overcome by mind only; but as long as these *vrittis* are present even in a very minute form, even subtly, they will become the cause of rebirth. *Sati mūle tadvipākaḥ jāti āyuh bhogāḥ* (II.13). If the root is present—well, the sprout also must be present. And if the root of suffering, the root of rebirth, the root of transmigration is not completely dug out, then naturally it will manifest itself as the tree of *samsara*.

The fruition of these *vrittis* which exist in a latent form is manifested as the kind of life that we are living here, the circumstances under which we are born into this world, the length of life for which we live, and any experience that we pass through. *Jati* means the category, or the species, or the genus into which we are born. We may be human beings, we may be men, we may be women, we may be this, we may be that; this is called *jati*. Why is it that one is born as a man and another as a woman, and one here and one there—one of this category, one of that category? This is determined by the latent *vrittis* of the mind. The length of life—how many years we are going to live in this world—is also determined by the nature of the fruition of these *vrittis*. And, what are the experiences that we have to pass through in this life? That, also, is determined. So, *jati*, *ayuh* and *bhoga*—the category into which we are born into this world, the length of life, as well as the experiences in life—

are all external shapes taken by the internal roots of these *vrittis*. Because of the non-fructification of some of these *vrittis* in a particular physical incarnation, they remain potential in the lower layers of the mind and become the causes of further births.

This is the great law of *karma*, very beautifully put in a single *sutra* by Patanjali: *sati mūle tadvipākaḥ jāti āyuh bhogāḥ* (II.13). Every action that we perform is a confirmation of a desire, and it is the fulfilment of a particular urge of the individual in respect of its atmosphere. And, inasmuch as the release of a particular urge in the direction of its fulfilment brings satisfaction in the form of that fulfilment, and because it is satisfaction that is the aim of temporal life, every satisfaction gained through the contact of senses with objects becomes an added confirmation of the fact that pleasure is in the objects. Hence, there is a repeated effort on the part of the mind and the senses to come in contact with the objects, and this chain of action continues.

Every experience of pleasure or satisfaction in respect of contact with an object of sense creates an impression in the mind. There is a memory of past pleasure. “I came in contact with that object yesterday, and I had great satisfaction from it. I was very happy at that time. There was pleasure in that contact, so I would like to repeat that contact.” This desire to repeat the contact arises on account of a memory of the pleasure of yesterday. This memory is a groove that has been formed in the mind by the experience of pleasure that was undergone earlier. So, what happens? This groove that has been formed in the mind by the pleasurable experience urges the mind to further action in

that very direction, and there is again a grasping of the object in a manner similar to that which was employed earlier. There is again a pleasure which confirms, "Yes, I am perfectly right. There is great pleasure in this contact." There is an ecstasy, a rapture and a thrill of contact with objects, and there is ennui and surfeit. We retire with a memory that the repetition of the contact has brought about an added pleasure. So, why not repeat it three times, four times, five times, a hundred times, a thousand times, as many times as possible? Why should not we convert the entire life into a repeated activity of coming in contact with objects which give us such satisfaction?

Every such contact which brings about a pleasure creates an impression, so there are impressions and impressions endlessly created in the mind. There are millions of grooves in the mind which can urge the mind towards any object of sense at any time, according to the favourable conditions. There is nothing which cannot attract us, if only the necessary conditions are provided. There is nothing which we cannot pounce upon at some time or the other as a means to the satisfaction of the senses. The reason is that there is present in the mind a groove for every type of experience on account of the various births through which we have passed in our earlier incarnations.

This impression that is created in the mind at the time of a pleasurable experience is a *karma* that is added to the stock already there. *Karma* is not merely an action. It is also the effect that is produced by an action, a force that is generated—an *apurva*, as it is called in some schools of thought. An invisible potency is generated in the mind by

an experience of any kind. This invisible force is the urging factor for further experience of a similar character. So this *apurva*, or the potency that is present in the mind for further experiences, is present there, and one groove is sufficient to create a desire for further experiences of a similar nature—which again produce further grooves, and so on, endlessly.

The whole of the mind is made up of these grooves. It is a bundle of these *vasanas*, impressions—*samskaras*, as we call them. All these are the preparations that we make for rebirth because, inasmuch as a groove, or impression, formed in this manner in the mind will not go without satisfying itself, it is imperative that birth be taken for the purpose of this fulfilment. Every fulfilment of a desire requires an instrument of action, and that instrument is the body and the organs thereof. So there is a necessity to manufacture a body for the purpose of the fulfilment of the desire that is there already buried in the form of impressions, *samskaras*, etc. That is the reason for rebirth.

The kind of life which we live here—the length of life, the type of experiences through which we pass, etc.—is conditioned by a group of these potencies in the mind called this *prarabdha karma*. This is a Sanskrit word with which we are all very familiar. ‘*Prarabdha*’ is only a peculiar technical term which means the allocation of a particular group of these subtle potencies, or tendencies, or impressions, for the purpose of direct experience. We are born into this world with a single purpose, and the purpose is the fulfilment of those urges which have been left unfulfilled in the previous life, inasmuch as the previous body was unsuited for the fulfilment of those desires. Then,

what happens? These allocated groups of *karmas* concretise themselves, become very powerful, and seek manifestation in space and in time. They attract atoms of matter from space and create a body around themselves, just as the nucleus in an atom can draw electrons around it and form an atom.

In some such manner, the nucleus of this mind, which is like a proton, we may say, draws the electrons of particles of matter in space and forms an atomic structure which is this body. It has been done for a particular purpose, as it is very clear. Then the instrument is born. This is called birth. This instrument is born for a particular purpose: to repeat these experiences of previous lives. Then, what happens? The mind jumps on the objects immediately because the instrument is ready, and it gets confirmed in its feeling that there is pleasure in the objects of sense. Thus, in this birth also we repeat the same experience that we had in the previous life. What happens is that we go on having more and more confirmation of this feeling that pleasure is only in objects because we can see them, we can feel them, we can touch them, we can taste them, we can smell them, and so on. What can be a greater proof than this experience of pleasure? The reality of pleasure is confirmed.

This second series of impacts of the senses on the objects produces more impressions again, and so we find ourselves in hell, veritably. The earlier *samskaras* are already there, not entirely fulfilled; and before they are completely fulfilled, we add to the stock by further experience. So the *prarabdha*, which we are here to run through by experience, does not exhaust itself merely by the process of experience, but becomes a generating force for

further actions. These new actions that we perform or commit through the force of this *prarabdha* is called *agami karma*—*kriyamana karma*, as they call it. Those unfulfilled impressions which have not been fully manifest in the form of *prarabdha* or *sanchita*, the stock that is already present, will be ready to reveal themselves in the required shape, one day or the other.

These are all a misery from beginning to end. We have lost control over these *vrittis* totally; we are under their control entirely, and they drive us in any direction whatsoever. That is why we have whims and fancies, moods and desires of various types, changing almost every day. The winds of desire may blow in any direction according to the strength of the desire concerned. The stronger desires are supposed to manifest themselves earlier, and the weaker ones a little later. If our actions are very powerful—whether good or bad—they may bear fruit in this life itself; but if they are not so powerful, if they are milder, they will take action in the next birth. It depends upon the intensity of the force generated by the action concerned.

It is very difficult to understand how *karma* works, because the whole of nature is the determining factor behind the operation of the law of *karma*. A particular action, though it is singled out from all others at any particular time, may produce an effect which has some relevance to other factors which are unknown to the individual, and it may be conditioned by those unknown factors. That is why it is said, *gahanā karmaṇo gatiḥ* (B.G. IV.17): The way in which *karma* works is inscrutable; even the gods cannot understand it. The reason is simple: every *karma* has some connection with every force in nature.

And, the way in which the *karma* can be fulfilled or made to manifest is determined by the law of the entire nature, of which an individual can have no knowledge because of the limitation of the knowledge in the individual to a particular frame of the physical body. Thus, there is a complete subjection of oneself to the forces of *karma*, given rise to by desires of this kind in respect of objects of sense.

Therefore, rebirth cannot be avoided as long as unfulfilled desires are present. These desires which cause rebirth are not necessarily conscious longings of the mind in respect of any intelligible object. Just now, when you are here listening to me, it may appear that you have no desires at all. “What desire have I got, except to hear what you say?” This is what you will be thinking in your mind. It may be. You may be very honest in feeling so, but that is not the truth, because at the present moment the conscious activity of your mind is directed or channelised voluntarily by you in a given fashion. But, this voluntary activity of the mind will cease as soon as the cause of this action ceases—namely, my speaking before you. When the cause subsides, the effect will also subside. Then the other impressions among the unfulfilled ones will show their heads, and whichever is stronger will speak to you first—just as in a revolution, the leader will take action first and will be the person to confront people. The leader of the revolution will come up and speak in a language of his own, and one has to listen to this language because of the power of that leader. Then an action is taken in the direction of the fulfilment of the wish of that leading principle.

The desires, therefore, are not necessarily intelligent manoeuvres of the mind, consciously directed. They are not

always deliberate. Psychologists tell us that there are various layers of the mind, which is another way of saying there are various layers of the manifestation of desire, because what is mind but desires? This *purusha* is supposed to be made up of desires only. These different layers of mind which are studied by psychology are the different densities of the manifestation of desire. The dense ones are visible first and the lesser in density remain at the background, just as there can be layers of clouds darkening the sun completely, and though we will see only the thickest, lowermost layer which is proximate to us, the inner layers are always there, invisible.

The grossest form of desire projects itself out in space and time as the conscious urges of the mind. What we call conscious activity, deliberate free will, or freedom of choice, about which we speak—all these are nothing but the spatio-temporal expressions of buried desires. When they become spatialised and temporalised, they become conscious, and then it is that we say that we have freedom of will, and so on. But, it is not true that we have real freedom of will. We are forced to act by the potency of these impulses inside; and because these impulses, when they act, get identified with our intellect, we mistake these actions for deliberate actions.

The moment an urge identifies itself with the intellect and ego, it passes for freedom of will, just as a hypnotised patient may think that he is acting voluntarily though he is acting under the power of the will of the physician who has hypnotised him, not knowing that he has been hypnotised. If we ask a patient who has been hypnotised why he is acting in that particular manner, he will say, “Well, I want

to do that.” He will never say, “I have been hypnotised.” He will not even know it. Likewise, these impulses pass for freedom of action due to their identification with the ego and the intellect of the individual, but there still remains behind this conscious activity a layer of subconscious and unconscious impulses which, little by little, will come up to the surface one day or the other for the purpose of fulfilment, so that we can never know ourselves fully at any time.

We are always in the dark about our own selves, let alone about others; otherwise, why is there a change of mood and behaviour every day? If we know ourselves fully, why not maintain a continuous mood which is regarded by us as worthwhile and desirable? Suddenly we say, “Well, something happened to me. I am thinking something else today,” because of the fact that we are controlled by other rulers—alien forces which are the latent impressions created by past experiences in many lives. This is the history of the law of *karma*, which, in its various formations, goes by the names of *sanchita*, *prarabdha* and *agami*.

As I mentioned, *sanchita karma* is the total store of the forces of previous actions accumulated in the deepest layer of our mind—in the unconscious layer we may say, in the *anandamaya kosha*, which always remains like a dark abyss into which we cannot enter. It is completely dark, opaque and impervious, and shakes up its entire structure and bodily constitution occasionally for the purpose of the ejection of a particular group of stored actions from its own constitution. That becomes the subconscious level.

The subconscious is nothing but the tendency of the unconscious to reshuffle itself into a particular mode for the purpose of coming to the surface of consciousness. That intermediate condition where the structure of the constitution of the unconscious level is shaken up for the purpose of ejecting a particular group of actions is the subconscious level. When it is completely projected into the arena of space and time, it becomes conscious action, conscious desire. Thus, what we are thinking just now in our mind—or rather, what we are thinking throughout our life in this particular incarnation—is nothing but what we call the conscious manifestation of what is already there unconsciously, subconsciously.

The whole of our personality cannot be revealed in the conscious level, because there is no point in it coming to the conscious level. What is the good of it coming to the conscious level when it cannot get anything? Only those particular aspects of the *karma* which can be fulfilled through the instrumentality of this physical body will come to the conscious level for action, and the other aspects will keep quiet because they know they cannot get anything. They will wait for the opportunity, and they will wait for ages, so that we do not know how many years a particular *karma* will take to manifest itself. It may take ages. It may take many incarnations. It may sometimes wait even a hundred births to attack us one day or the other. And at other times, of course, it can come earlier due to a mysterious allocation, as I mentioned, which is determined by the entire nature itself. God alone knows how it works.

Why a particular judgement is passed by the judiciary in the court in spite of it having heard various evidence and

having sifted through all the evidence, though it may be so much, and pinpointing the evidence into a particular judgement, is given to the discretion of the judiciary based on the constitution of the government. Likewise, the individual cannot know how a particular action is taken up for fulfilment, under what law and regulation, just as a defendant cannot know why a particular judgement has been passed by the judge against him. “Why I have been defeated in the court?” he will complain. Well, it is based on some peculiar law, of which the judge is supposed to be well informed.

There is a judiciary in the government of the universe which passes judgement on all individuals, and how this judgement is passed is beyond the grasp of the intelligence of any individual. But, broadly speaking, this is the manner in which the law of *karma* operates, and in this *sutra*, *sati mūle tadvipākaḥ jāti āyuh bhogāḥ* (II.13), Patanjali tells us that rebirth cannot be avoided as long as we allow the root of these *vrittis* to be present.

Chapter 62

THE PERCEPTION OF PLEASURE AND PAIN

Te hlāda paritāpa phalāḥ puṇya apuṇya hetutvāt (II.14) is a *sutra* which tells us that pleasures and pains are caused by the manifestation of these *vrittis* of the mind which have been designated as afflictions, or *klesas*. *Avidya*, *asmita*, *raga*, *dvesa*, *abhinivesa*—this fivefold complex of affliction is the cause of the various sufferings that we undergo in life, as well as the various joys that we experience. *Punya* and *apunya*, merit and demerit, are regarded as causative factors of pleasurable and miserable experiences in life. The happiness that we experience, whatever be the nature of that happiness and whatever be the cause thereof, is considered to be an effect of the forces generated by the meritorious deeds of the past. We are not unnecessarily happy or unnecessarily unhappy. This is the meaning.

These experiences are brought about by certain causative factors. Nothing happens without a cause. Even the manner in which the psychophysical organism comes in contact with objects of pleasure is determined by the nature of the actions performed in previous lives. This explains why only certain objects can give us pleasure and certain others cannot, though it is true that every object has the capacity to fulfil a particular need of an individual. What may become the source of happiness to me may not be the source of happiness to you. This means pleasure, or happiness, or joy, whatever we call it, is a very peculiar situation that is created, and not a substance, as such. It is a

condition which is brought about by other conditions—namely, the actions of the past.

The objects as they are cannot be regarded as sources of pleasure because the same object can act adversely or positively, as the case may be, in respect of different individuals. What I like immensely, you may dislike wholeheartedly for various reasons. While 'like' is the background of a pleasurable experience in respect of an object, 'dislike' is the opposite thereof, so the moment we dislike an object, it ceases to be a source of pleasure. Pleasure is accompanied by 'like'. This is very important to remember. If dislike is present, there cannot be pleasure. The pleasure is a circumstance brought about by a psychological condition of 'like' for a particular object, a group of objects or a set of circumstances. Therefore, it is difficult to accept the commonplace notion that the object as such, inherently, is the cause of pleasure uniformly to all individuals, at all times, under every circumstance.

What this *sutra* tells us is that pleasures and pains are not inherent in the object; they are only instrumental in evoking certain sets of circumstances which bring about these experiences. What pleasures we are to enjoy in life, and what sufferings we have to undergo—all these are already determined at the time of the manufacture of this body-mind complex in the womb of the mother, because this complex of body-mind, this individuality of ours which shapes itself into a form in the womb of the mother, is nothing but the form taken by the conditions which are to bring pleasure and pain in life after the birth of the individual. It is not the physical substance called the body of the individual coming in contact with another physical

substance called the object outside which will generate a third something called pleasure or pain. All this is a mutation of values—a revolution of the *gunas* of *prakriti* which form the substance of not only the body but also the mind of the experiencing individual, and also the objects which become instrumental for the experiences of the individual.

Even the link between the subject and the object is constituted of the *gunas* of *prakriti*, so that we may say that the whole drama of experience that is universal is nothing but an activity that is taking place within the bosom of *prakriti*. Therefore, as the *sutra* points out, meritorious deeds are the causes of our pleasurable experiences. If certain things cause happiness, it is because we have done some deeds in the past which have to bear fruit in the form of these experiences.

Why certain deeds bring pleasure and why others bring displeasure or sorrow is also to be explained; and it is easily explained by the nature of things. Anything—any action, any tendency of the mind—which takes a step in the direction of the unity of things will certainly become the cause of a pleasurable experience, and any tendency or step taken in the opposite direction will become the cause of sorrow or pain. Any intention of the mind, any affirmation, any conviction or feeling, or any action based on these feelings, etc., confirming the diversity of things, will become the source of sorrow, either in this life or in a future life.

An affirmation of the diversity of things is contrary to the law of things as they really are. So, an intense egoism—a self-assertive nature which cuts oneself off from the reality

of others and asserts an utterly selfish mode of behaviour—naturally prevents the entry of positive forces from outside into its constitution and consequently suffers the agony of separation, the sorrow of isolation, and all the difficulties that devolve upon this attitude of the mind. Any affirmation of independence on the part of an individual is the cause of the sorrow of that individual, because sorrow is an immediate outcome in the form of an experience of the inability of the individual to get on with the resources of its own individuality.

The finitude of the individual causes the sorrow. Wherever there is finitude, there must be unhappiness. As a matter of fact, unhappiness and finitude mean one and the same thing. It is the intense feeling of limitation in every way that causes restlessness in our minds and also becomes the motivating force behind efforts towards the obviating of these causes of limitation. That is why we are active and work hard to come in contact with things outside. So, in a sense, what it amounts to is that all joys of life, whether they are physical or psychological, are caused by unselfish deeds of the past—which means to say, deeds which have suppressed the sense of individuality to some extent, and enabled the altruistic nature to manifest itself to the extent possible. Thus, pleasures and pains have a beginning and an end, inasmuch as every action has a beginning and an end. Anything that we do in space and in time is temporal; and if our deeds are the causes of our experiences, and if these deeds are temporal in their character, our experiences also should be of a similar nature.

Thus, we cannot have permanent happiness in this world, nor will we be permanently unhappy. Happiness and

unhappiness will come and go; they are a transitional process. The unhappiness which one feels is, therefore, attributed to demerit, and the happiness one feels is attributed to merit. The point aimed at here is that whether it is merit or demerit—whatever be the nature of the action performed by an individual—all this is urged forward by the *klesas*: *avidya*, *asmita*, *raga*, *dvesa* and *abhinivesa*. They are trying their best to reconstitute themselves into a form or a shape which will place them under better circumstances.

What is the meaning of 'better circumstances'? It is a circumstance which will be commensurate with the unity of things. Even the worst of actions is rooted ultimately in a pious intention, though it is moving in a wrong direction. There is nothing utterly wrong in the universe. The basis of all things, the essential root of things, is holy and divine; it is a unity of all things. But the urge of this unity when it gets distorted through the complex of space, time and individuality becomes a peculiar experience and a motivating force which we call error, misconception, wrong action, etc. Even a good thing can become bad when it takes a wrong turn—and thus, it is the turn that it takes which determines its goodness or badness, not its essential nature. Even a very good person can hit somebody on the head. Though hitting somebody on the head cannot be regarded as something good, the man himself may be very good. The turn that he has taken is bad; the substance is not bad.

Likewise, the intention behind even the so-called erroneous deeds of phenomenal life is basically a search for permanent composure, peace and stability of existence, but it is sought in an utterly wrong manner on account of

involvement in space and time, which persists in an externality of things, an isolation of individuals and a selfishness of character. This is something like a good man becoming a friend of a bad man, on account of which the goodness of the person gets adulterated and loses its significance. The unitary urge that is behind things becomes spoilt by its association with the externalising tendency of space and time, which is the cause of the diversity of things and the affirmation of individualities with their *asmita tattva*. This is the philosophical background, or we may call it the psychological exposition, of the cause of pleasure and pain in life.

Now, the *sutra* takes us to a startling conclusion which makes out that there is no such thing as pleasure, really; it is all pain only. Even what we call pleasure is only a confusion of our mind. There is no such thing as pleasure in life. The real substance behind our experience is only sorrow. It is a kind of trouble that is arisen, but even this trouble may look like a joy on account of certain prejudiced habits of the mind. If it insists on taking a particular experience in a particular manner—well, it is left to its free will and choice. But if we logically analyse the substance of an experience, we will find that it has not got the character of what we may really call pleasure or happiness. It is a negative condition that is at the root of all our experiences in life. It is nothing positive. We are never in a positive state of affairs. We are always in a negative condition. And, the persistence of something positive, even in the midst of all negativities, is the cause of misconceiving pain as pleasure.

This is brought out in the famous *sutra*: pariñāma tāpa saṃskāra duḥkaiḥ guṇavṛtti virodhāt ca duḥkham eva

sarvaṁ vivekinaḥ (II.15). This painful character of experience is not visible to the gross mind. Only the subtle perceiving mind can know what an experience is really made of. The subtlety of vision which is required to detect this defect in every type of experience is not to be found in every individual. The organ of perception which is required to discover this fact is something super-physical.

If we put a heavy substance like a chair on our legs, the legs may not feel pain; we may feel a little weight, but it will not be so painful. But, when we touch our eyeballs with even a fine silken thread, they will feel it very much and they cannot tolerate it. Even a huge chair is not felt by our legs, but a fine silken thread cannot be tolerated by our eyes because of the subtlety of their constitution. Likewise, it is only a very subtle perception that can discover the defect in things. The gross mind cannot know that and it will take for granted that everything is all right. The mutation that is involved in the transitory nature of things in the usual experiences of life is not discoverable by ordinary perception because the mind of the individual cannot catch up with the speed of this transitory process.

Because of the inability of the mind to catch up with the speed with which things move, there is an illusion of substantiality in things, while really there is no such thing as substantiality. It is all a process. Everything in the world changes instantaneously during every moment of time, and sometimes this process of change is compared to the flow of a river or the movement of a flame, which cannot be regarded as an immovable substantiality but is a constantly moving, changing process. Though the water in a flowing river may look continuously present, it does not mean that

it does not flow. Every moment we see new water in the river; we are not seeing the same water. When we go on looking at the Ganges River flowing in front of us, we are not seeing the same water the next moment, notwithstanding the fact that we are seeing a continuous presence of a river there. When a flame jets forth, it does not mean that we are seeing a single substance called the flame of fire. It is a movement. What we are seeing is a movement, but inasmuch as we are unable to perceive the gap that is there between one bit of process and another bit, we seem to be perceiving a continuity, a substantiality, a solidity, and so on.

This perception of a so-called solidity or substantiality in things is the cause of the running of the mind and senses towards objects. The mind and the senses cannot discover the mutation or the transitory nature of things, just as we cannot know that pictures are moving in a cinema. We enjoy the cinema for a reason which we ourselves do not know. Why do we enjoy the moving pictures? We cannot see the distinct pictures on account of the velocity with which they move. If we begin to see every picture frame distinctly, we cannot enjoy the movie. The perceiving capacity of the eyes—or rather, the mind—is such that it cannot distinguish between one picture frame and another on account of the speed with which the film moves.

Likewise is the case with all perceptions in life. There is a cinematographic projection presented before our eyes which is this world show, or the drama of life. We mistake the changes of things for a substantiality of things on account of a defect in our faculties of perception and sensation—not because things are as they appear to be.

There is a *parinama*, or a change of a *vritti*, but this change cannot be seen.

We cannot see the change of our own bodies, even. Every moment we change; every cell changes itself. They say that after seven years every cell has been replaced, so that we are new persons altogether after every seven years. But, all this cannot be known. We are babies, we are children, we are adolescents, we are youths, and we are old men. We cannot know that we have passed through these stages because of the *adhyasa*, or the identification of our consciousness, which remains there as a continuous principle in the midst of these changes that are taking place in the constitution or structure of the body. There is an *adhyasa* of perception. There is a transference of the permanent character of consciousness upon the transitory nature of things in the perceptual process, and so there is a mistaking of the changing condition of things for a permanence or substantiality.

The so-called substantiality of things is a phenomenon that is created due to the transference of values between consciousness and the essential nature of things, but this is not known to us and we are completely kept in the dark. The truth is something different—it is *parinama*, or change. One who is subtle in his vision alone can perceive what is behind things. That everything in this world is changing every moment of time cannot be seen with the physical eyes, just as we cannot know the atomic structure of a physical object merely by gazing at the object with physical eyes and we require a powerful microscope to see the vibrant forces within it.

Likewise, the vibrant process which is the essential nature of an object is not detectable by ordinary physical vision. That is why it is said: *duḥkham eva sarvaṃ vivekinaḥ* (II.15). Only for the subtle vision it is a process, but for a gross vision it is a substance. Therefore, the *parinama*, or the changefulness of things, is something capable of being known by the most intense form of subtle vision. A *viveki* alone can know that things are not what they seem. Hence, this *parinama*, or changeful character of things, should give us a lesson that the pursuit of pleasure is really a pursuit of the will-o'-the-wisp, and that we feel a sensation of pleasure for a reason which is different from the constitution of the object itself. The reason is something different, and the notion is quite the contrary.

While the reason behind the perception or sensation of pleasure in our contact with objects is something, the notion we have about it is the opposite, and so we fall victim to the clutches of this perceptual process, which is the cause of the sorrow of the individual. This is the lesson that we are given by the significant term '*parinama*' as the source of the transient character of all pleasures in life, and also the inability on the part of an individual to discover this fact.

Chapter 63

THE CAUSE OF UNHAPPINESS

Pariñāma tāpa saṁskāra duḥkaiḥ guṇavṛtti virodhṛāt ca duḥkham eva sarvaḥm vivekinaḥ (II.15). The happiness that we pursue should be unmixed, if it is genuine. It should not be contaminated by other features, as that would go to prove that there is some defect in the way in which happiness is being pursued. It will be observed that every passing phase of pleasure or joy in life is accompanied by another character altogether which precedes it, comes with it, and also follows it—namely, a kind of sorrow. An immediate consequence that follows the experience of contacting a pleasure is a feeling of having lost it, because it has not continuously become a part of one's experience. There is no such thing as a continuous, unbroken experience of happiness, because the happiness was caused by certain efforts and certain conditions. When the efforts cease or the conditions disperse, the effect also must vanish; therefore, there is the consequence of an unhappiness of having lost the happiness that was once there. This peculiar character of unhappiness following a temporary experience of happiness will continue in spite of our pursuing it again and again.

Moreover, the repetition of an enjoyment increases the thirst for it due to a memory which is retained on account of that pleasure. Memory of unhappiness becomes an urge, a goad to drive the mind onward once again towards continuing the same process which it followed earlier. The fact that there was no satiation in an earlier experience of a similar character should show that there was some defect in

the procedure adopted. Nevertheless, the same procedure is adopted again, and there is no improvement whatsoever in the *modus operandi*. The result is, once again, a recurring feature: there is unhappiness; there is thirst. The quenching of a thirst does not end the matter—it creates further thirst—so the attempt at quenching the thirst is only a new effort that we are putting forth at creating a new thirst and a greater longing for the experience that passed away. How is it possible that a quenching of a thirst can create more thirst? The attempt is for one thing, and what happens is something else.

A desire, when it is fulfilled, should not create a greater desire. If that is the case, the very purpose of the fulfilment of the desire is defeated. What is the intention of our efforts at fulfilling desires? It is so that they do not, once again, come and trouble us. The satisfaction should be there. That is the purpose of the attempt of the mind to gain pleasure of any kind. But, the satisfaction does not come. What comes is a greater desire. How is it possible that the flames of desire get fanned more and more rather than extinguished in a large measure, in spite of hard effort? Whatever be the effort, whatever be the manner adopted, whatever be the kind of object one contacts—we may move earth and heaven—yet, the result is the same.

There is a *parinama*, or a consequence of unhappiness, that follows happiness. This is something very strange. How can unhappiness follow happiness? How is it possible that something contrary to the nature of the cause can follow as the effect? If the cause is happiness, how can the effect be unhappiness? But, the effect is unhappiness. This shows that the cause was not happiness. There was something very

mysterious about that experience which appeared as happiness. It was really unhappiness. It was not happiness—otherwise, how could it produce unhappiness? There was a mix-up of values and a confusion of mind, on account of which a peculiar passing phase of tension called unhappiness looked like happiness, for different reasons altogether.

In the *sutra* we are told that the consequence of happiness is unhappiness. Therefore, it should be concluded that the happiness was unhappiness only. There was no happiness. Also, there is an anxiety that follows the experience of pleasure—that having lost it, it should be pursued and attempted once again. There is an anguish in the heart on account of having been dispossessed of the enjoyment, and this anguish will continue for any length of time. The attempt at happiness is repeated. Whatever be the number of times we attempt to contact the mind with objects for pleasure, so many times we will be unhappy.

Hence, this anguish of the heart cannot subside. There is anxiety even at the time of the enjoyment of a pleasure. It is very strange that even at the time of enjoying the pleasure, there is an anxiety that it is going to be lost and there is unhappiness. Further, the imagination that it will end in itself becomes an eviscerating factor, even at the current moment. This is the *tapa* that follows, the agony that is inherent in the very process of enjoyment of the pleasure. Earlier there was anguish because it was not there, and now when it comes, there is anguish that it is going to be lost. And when it is actually lost—well, the heart burns with great sorrow. Thus, in the beginning, in the middle and in the end it is all a kind of tension, though it looks as if

a great satisfaction has come. This is the thing for which one is working.

A third difficulty is that this experience of pleasure produces an impression in the mind; it creates a groove. A *vasana* is produced, and these *vasanas*, these grooves formed in the mind, will remain there latent for all time to come. They are permanent copperplates produced in the mind, and we can manufacture any number of gramophone records so that there is an urge for repetition of these experiences, manifest or unmanifest. If the conditions are favourable, they will manifest immediately. If conditions are not favourable, they will keep quiet, and when conditions become favourable—even after years, even after births—they will again motivate the mind towards that enjoyment. Thus, the *samskaras* produced by a particular experience of pleasure are going to be sorrows in the future.

There is another danger about this: if the *samskaras* are very strong, if the impressions or grooves formed are very marked, then what will happen is that they may take effect even in future lives. And, when these impressions take effect in a future life and direct the mind towards the very same type of objects with which they are connected, as it happened in an earlier life at the originating time, the desire of the mind might have changed. So, when we come in contact with a particular condition on account of the motivation of these impressions, we do not want that experience any more. Then it comes as a pain, and we wonder why we experience pain. What has happened to us? Why is nature punishing us? Nature is not punishing us; it is only giving what we asked for. But, unfortunately, time

has elapsed to such an extent that we have completely forgotten that we wanted those things, and now when those things are given to us, they are not the wanted ones. The needs of the mind change according to the vehicle which it enlivens—the body-mind complex. The body which the mind enters in a new birth is constituted in a fashion which conforms to the type of desires which are going to be fulfilled in that particular life according to the *prarabdha karma*. So, naturally, it does not mean that the desires of this life will be the same as the desires of the next life. They will be changing in their form and shape.

The impressions formed by experiences in this life will produce effects of a similar character at a time when they come as pain rather than as pleasure. Thus, pains and pleasures are both things which we have asked for. They have not been thrust upon us by anybody. When our individual constitution is in harmony with those external conditions, objects, etc. which come in contact with us or with which we come in contact, we call that experience a pleasure. But if that relationship between ourselves and the external circumstances is disharmonious for any reason whatsoever, then that experience becomes unhappiness. Well, this is a very strange thing which the mind at the present moment cannot understand. It is sowing the seeds of its future sorrow now, by pursuing pleasures of sense which it thinks are desirable at present, but later on they will come like pricking thorns. This is the sorrow of *samskaras*.

Also, the *gunas* of *prakriti* are the cause of all experience: *guṇavṛtti virodhāt ca duḥkham eva sarvaṃ vivekinaḥ* (II.15). These *gunas* are called *sattva*, *rajas* and

tamas. It is the *rajas* that is present in the mind which creates desire. The purpose or function of *rajas* is distraction, externalisation, or driving the mind towards objects; so as long as *rajas* functions, there must be unhappiness. The reason is that when the mind is urged against its own self and towards the objects of sense, it is in a state of tension. Therefore, there is unhappiness until the moment of the enjoyment of pleasure, which is all caused by *rajas*. The cessation of this function of *rajas* at the time of the contact one has with an object is the cause of pleasure. *Sattva* is the cause of pleasure; *rajas* is the cause of pain.

The temporary manifestation of *sattva* at the time of the cessation of the activity of *rajas*, on account of the contact of the senses with objects, is what we call pleasure. But, inasmuch as the *gunas* of *prakriti* oppose each other and react upon one another, there is no stability of the three *gunas*. They always rotate like a wheel that is moving, and we cannot say that we can be in any given particular experience of one quality or property of *prakriti*. One may predominate at this point in time; at another time, another may be predominant, and according to the predominance of the intensity of the manifestation of a particular property of *prakriti*, there is a particular corresponding experience. Therefore, on account of the movement of the *gunas*, it is not possible that we can choose only one quality. On account of the opposition among the *gunas*, or the rotation of the wheel of the *gunas* of *prakriti*, it is not possible to have permanent happiness. For all these reasons, it is all *duḥkham eva sarvaṁ vivekinaḥ*. This is the meaning of this

sutra: pariṇāma tāpa saṁskāra duḥkaiḥ guṇavṛtti virodhāt ca duḥkham eva sarvaḥṁ vivekinaḥ (II.15).

Thus, it has been pointed out that the *klesas*—*avidya*, *asmita*, *raga*, *dvesa*, *abhinivesa*—are sources of unending trouble. They are made up of trouble itself. There is nothing else of which they are made; and, unfortunately, everyone and everything is made up of these complexes called the *klesas*. They have also motivated another peculiar law, which is called the law of *karma*—all of which is a different way of describing the manner in which desires function and the reactions that are produced by the desires. The one mistake that has been committed in the form of error of perception—namely, affirmation of the individuality, *asmita*—has caused us so much trouble.

These conditions cannot be overcome merely by an action in an ordinary sense. There should be an overall transformation brought about for the purpose of dealing with these *vrittis*, because any one-sided approach to it will not succeed. If we touch any one aspect of these *vrittis*, other aspects will revolt. They will support, in affiliation, the particular *vritti* that has been encountered for the purpose of control. When we attack the *vrittis* or try to control them, they have to be taken in a group and not individually, because they are connected, one with the other. What we call these *kleshas*, or *vrittis* of the mind, are a group. They are intertwined in a bundle, one inside the other; and so when any aspect of it is faced and suppressed with the force of will, the other aspects gain strength—the very same strength which we have withdrawn from the particular aspect which we have suppressed.

Thus, it is not wisdom on the part of any seeker to look at only a single side of this issue, or even at a few aspects of this issue. We should take the total issue in one stroke. This means to say that we have to have a proper understanding of the nature of our mind in its comprehensiveness. We should not study ourselves only as we appear to ourselves today. "What am I today? This is not what I am really, because what I look like today is only one phase of my real nature, and what I am is much more than what I appear today. Every day my mood changes, the desires change, the way of the thinking of my mind changes, and so on and so forth, on account of a certain predominance of the *vrittis* in the mind."

If we take an average, for instance, of the various experiences that we passed through for the last one year, we will have a fair idea of what we are made of. We may take an average of even three years, if we like. What sort of attitudes did we develop continuously, for days and days, for the last three years, for instance? This is a difficult thing to remember, but a cautious student will keep a note of all these things. Many of the things can be remembered; we cannot forget them. What are the moods through which we passed? What are the desires that appeared in our mind? What are the things that attracted our attention? What are those things that repelled us? What are the things that annoyed us? What are the things that distressed us?—and so on. Taking an average of all these conditions through which we passed during the last few years will give a fair idea, though not a complete idea, of the stuff of which we are made.

Now, this is an indication of what is to be done. We have suffered from various diseases for the last ten years. What are the kinds of disease that attacked us? We can find out the predominance of these illnesses and the peculiar characters of the diseases to which we are susceptible—the major problems of our life as illness. Likewise, the major or predominant character of the *vrittis* of the mind can be discovered by a careful analysis of an average taken in this manner. Everyone has desires; everyone has *vrittis*; everyone has distresses, anguishes, etc., but they vary in tones of expression.

The way in which one reacts to the external conditions of life, normally speaking, is the nature of one's person—and it is this that has to be subdued. This is the essence of *yogaḥ cittavṛtti nirodhaḥ* (I.2). It is not one *vritti* that we are subduing; it is the entire tendency of the mind to manifest as *vrittis*. It may manifest itself as many *vrittis*, many types of *vrittis*, but whatever be the types or the ways in which it manifests itself, it has a general character. The general character is the indication of the difficulties that are likely to be faced by us in the future. The past will give an indication of the kind of future that we have to face. Though details may vary, the general features may be the same. We have lived for so many years in this world and we can understand what sort of experiences we had. Similar types of experience are likely to be repeated.

This general feature of the mind, the total character of the *vrittis*, should be taken into consideration at one stroke at the time of the practice of meditation in yoga. This cannot easily be done by a casual look at the mind or a desultory analysis of the ways in which our mind manifests

itself. Many a time we forget various aspects of the mind and take into consideration only certain aspects. Also, it is unlikely that we may agree that the *vr̥ttis* of the mind are all defects of the mind. Many of us will be under the impression that they are certain justifiable moods that the mind manifests for certain benefits. But it is not so. Every *vr̥tti* is a defect. It cannot be regarded as a benefit in any manner whatsoever because a *vr̥tti*—whatever be the nature of that *vr̥tti*—is an urge within to drive us away from ourselves to a condition which is external.

What is yoga except the prevention of this tendency of the mind and an attempt of a counteracting nature, enabling it to rest in its own self? The *vr̥ttis* of the mind, to which reference has been made in the *sūtra*, *yogaḥ cittavṛtti nirodhaḥ* (I.2), are summed up in the single word ‘*citta*’. What is to be suppressed or eliminated is not any one *vr̥tti*, but the *citta*-stuff. *Citta* is not merely the conscious mind or the mentation process, but the stuff of the mind. “The modification of the mind-stuff” are the words used. The stuff of the mind is the substance out of which the entire internal organ is constituted—what we call thinking, feeling, willing, memory or remembrance, etc. Various functions are there, including even ego.

These functions all put together are the *citta*, the stuff of the mind. This stuff it is that reveals itself as various functions, though it is true that the stuff itself cannot be discovered and we can know its nature only from the functions that it performs. Nevertheless, we can know something about this stuff by the nature of this function. As I mentioned, we should take an average of the types of functions which the *citta* has been performing for the last

several years, and we can know what stuff it is made of and what is it that is in store, inside it. When the task on hand is taken up, as it was mentioned, we have to strike the iron while it is hot, as they say. The total mind has to rise up to the occasion in a comprehensiveness that would be necessary to deal with the problem, just as when there is a national war, the whole nation girds up its loins. It is not only a few people that start thinking about it; the forces constituting the entire nation get stirred up into a single energy of action for the purpose that is on hand. Likewise, the energy of the total system is to be harnessed for the purpose of encountering this total situation that is called the *citta*.

When we get into trouble, we will find that we get trouble from every side; it will not be only from one side. When people start disliking us, everyone will start disliking us, and not one will like us afterwards. So is the nature of the mind. When it likes a particular thing, the whole of the mind will pounce upon that object which it likes and the entire resources of the mind will be there to back it up in the execution of this deed; and when it dislikes a thing, there will be a wholesale dislike. This is the peculiar way in which the mind works. In yoga we have to note this feature of the mind and act on it in the manner in which it acts in respect of objects. A wholesale view has to be taken. It is the total man that rises to the occasion for the purpose of subduing the total mind. It is not a partial aspect of ours that is functioning in yoga. It is a movement of the whole, towards the whole. So, we have to keep a cautious eye on every direction—externally, as well as internally.

The circumstances which may aggravate the desires of the mind should be avoided, though the aggravation has not taken place. It is not that the mind is always thinking of an object of sense, but it is likely that it can fix itself upon an object when conditions become favourable for it. Therefore, knowing that such and such conditions may aggravate a particular desire of the mind in respect of a particular object, it should be wisdom on the part of a seeker not to place oneself under those circumstances which are likely to aggravate the desires of the mind even in the future. This is because even a single desire, when it takes action, will be difficult to control since other desires which are there will also back it up. Wisdom consists in knowing what can happen in the future, though it has not taken place. We should not try to understand a situation only when it has taken place, because then it has gone out of hand. We should try to read the indications of the future by the present conditions, using a process of logical deduction.

Therefore, conditions which are likely to stir up the activity of desire should be avoided now itself. Anyone with a little bit of understanding will know what are those conditions, inasmuch as we know what are the predominant desires in our mind. So, avoid the conditions—external first, and internal afterwards. This is called *vairagya*, really speaking: an avoidance of all those factors and conditions which are likely to stimulate the mind towards enjoyment of sense. And, simultaneously, there should be practice; this is *abhyasa*, which we mentioned earlier. Together with this withdrawal of the mind from conditions which are likely to aggravate it in

respect of fulfilment of desire, there should be practice of meditation on the ideal that has been chosen—namely, salvation of the soul.

The practice of yoga is an attempt of the mind to direct itself to the salvation of the soul, ultimately—the *moksha*, or the ultimate freedom which it is aiming at—so that it is doubly guarded in the practice. On one side, it has wrenched itself away from all those aggravating conditions, and on the other side, it has fortified itself further by an intensified concentration of itself on the great, glorious, magnificent goal which is going to be its destination.

Chapter 64

DISENTANGLEMENT IS FREEDOM

What is attempted through the practice of yoga is to gain an insight into the misconception that has arisen on account of an admixture of characters which belong, on the one hand, to the principle that is responsible for seeing, and on the other hand, to the principle that is responsible for anything being seen. How is it that something is seen? And, how is it that something sees? The character of seeing is different from the character of being seen. One is called *drasta*; the other is called *drishya*. *Draṣṭṛdrśyayoḥ saṃyogaḥ heyahetuḥ* (II.17) is the *sutra*. But for common understanding, no such difficulty seems to arise because everything is clear. “I am seeing things,” is a very glib statement that one can make in respect of the perceptual experience. The feeling ‘I see an object’ is not a simple phenomenon; it is a tremendously complex arrangement of various features which constitute an apparently single compound of an experience of ‘I-ness’ in respect of the phenomenon of perception. Even the very consciousness of ‘I’ in this process of perceiving an object is an effect produced by a confusion, as has been pointed out in our earlier studies, and is designated by the term ‘*asmita*’ in the *sutra* of Patanjali.

It is impossible to have consciousness of an object unless one has made oneself susceptible, in the very beginning itself, to the process called perception. It is necessary that the perceiving subject should have the characteristics necessary for the process of perception. That which is perceived is an object, and the subject which

perceives the object should have sympathetic characters, not dissimilar ones. On par should be placed the subject as well as the object. If the object is phenomenal, the subject that perceives the object also should be equally phenomenal. A super-spatial and super-temporal subject cannot perceive a spatial and temporal object. That which is metempirical cannot be the subjective consciousness which perceives an empirical object. There should be a concourse between the seeing and the seen principles, by means of features which are common to both. Both should be in space, and both should be in time; that is one condition. Secondly, the abstraction of a particular point in consciousness, which goes by the name of individuality, is essential prior to the attempt at perceiving an object. In other words, we have to be conscious of our existence first, in order that we may be able to be conscious of an object outside.

First of all, we are aware that we exist; and then everything follows, as the case may be. We have inwardly a conviction of our being something endowed with certain special attributes. Even when we get up in the morning after being fast asleep, the first experience would be a sensation of being, and not sensation of the world outside, which comes later on. There is a faint feeling of one's existence, and then a more distinct feeling of one's existence as a special entity—a particular something. Sometimes when we get up from deep sleep, we do not know where we are—in which place we went to sleep. To find out where we have slept requires a few seconds—"Oh, I am in such and such place." Sometimes we forget the direction. We do not know where the door is. We go and

hit ourselves against the wall, thinking it is the door, if we are fast asleep. There are people who forget the locations, directions—everything—and it takes a few minutes to know where they have slept.

Then, we come to a distinct consciousness of our being something—at some place, in a particular manner, for a particular purpose, and so on. After that, the activity starts as it would be required by the circumstances in which we are located. Likewise, there is a subjective consciousness, first of all, which places itself under peculiar conditions due to *karma* of the past, as I mentioned earlier. We noted that the experiences one passes through, the conditions into which one is born, the span of one's life, etc., are all determined by those factors which are responsible for the very birth of this psychophysical individuality—this body-mind complex. Therefore, the circumstances in which the individuality finds itself are also responsible for the conditions under which perception of objects would be possible.

First of all, initially, there is the assertion of a specific type of individuality. The adjective 'specific type' is essential, inasmuch as perceptions vary from one individual to another and are responsible for the different types of experience which people pass through. While it is possible that different objects may attract the attention of different subjects, it is also very well known that the same object may cause different types of experience in different individuals, according to the conditions of their minds and other circumstances which govern their lives. Hence, there is a specific conditioning of the individual by innumerable

factors which consequently conditions the type of experience which the individual passes through in respect of a given object or a set of objects.

It is this conditioned individuality, the specific type of *asmīta*, that allows itself to be subjected to the ways in which the medium of the mind works. The mind, or the *antahkarana*—the psychological organ—is the medium through which perceptions are made possible because every perception, whatever be its character, is an externalisation of consciousness. The refracting medium of consciousness which externalises it in respect of an object outside is the mind. The mind is a peculiar lens, as it were, placed in the proximity of consciousness, which detracts it in a given direction. We can focus the consciousness in the direction of the object only when the mind is tending towards that object.

It is the tendency of the mind towards a particular object that is responsible for the consciousness of that object, just as the inclination of the bed of the river will determine the way or the direction in which the water flows. The bed is already laid, and the water only has to flow over it—that's all. It cannot flow in any other direction except in the direction of the bed. Likewise, though the objects are innumerable in number (they are located everywhere in space), the consciousness tends only towards certain objects on account of the bed that is already laid before it. The direction is already pointed out, and the tendency is chalked out and laid down specifically by the structure of the mind.

This is the means of perception, while the cause of perception is pure consciousness, *drasta*. This is the

purusha tattva in us—ultimately what is called the *atman*, which is impersonal in character, like the water in a river. It has no personality of its own, but it can be channelled as if it is personalised on account of the media through which it is directed.

The psychological organ is the restricting medium. The consciousness, when it is not so restricted, can simultaneously become aware of everything, anywhere, while the restricted medium through which it is channelled compels it to be aware of only those objects which are within the purview of the mind, so there is a limited perception instead of cosmic perception.

When the consciousness passes through the medium of the mind, it identifies itself with the mind, just as light passing through a mirror becomes indistinguishable from the shining character of the mirror. We attribute the shining character to the mirror itself and say the mirror is shining, while the mirror is not shining—it is the light that shines. The mirror is only a medium through which the light has been reflected, but they have been identified to such an extent that the one is practically inseparable from the other. Thus, the subtle faculty of the psychological organ, which is the *buddhi* in us, the intellect, does various things simultaneously—namely, reflecting the consciousness in it, limiting it, distorting it, and channelling it towards a particular object. All these things are done at one stroke. It is pulled, as it were, with great force.

This identification of consciousness with the psychological organ is the first stage in the process of a perception of an object. An identification has already taken

place. The limitation of the consciousness has been effected thoroughly, effectively, and then it is drawn towards a particular location which is called the object. We have studied enough about this earlier—how the mind pervades the form of the object, identifying with the form of the object, and then there is an awareness of the formation of the object. Then it is that we say, “I am aware of an object.” In this I-am-aware-of-the-object experience there is, therefore, a limitation of consciousness to the circumstances of the object on account of the peculiar way in which the mind functions.

The identification is, therefore, twofold. Firstly, there is the identification of consciousness with the psychological organ, and then a subsidiary identification of it with the object, which takes place afterwards. In this consciousness of an object, self-consciousness has already been lost completely. One loses one’s consciousness first, in order that one may be conscious of an object outside. Self-loss is the condition of the gain of an object. One cannot concentrate one’s mind on an object unless one has forgotten oneself first, because one has moved away from the centre which is one’s self. The self has transferred itself to another location, found itself somewhere else, and the object becomes the subject of phenomenal experience. This is called *samsara*; this is called involvement. Consciousness gets involved. It is not an ordinary kind of involvement; it is an identification which makes it impossible to detect of the phenomenon that has taken place. That is the very meaning of identification.

Hence, in the awareness of an object, or world-consciousness, there is a total loss of the original status of

the seer, or the pure *drasta*, and a getting mixed up with the means of knowing, as well as with the object that is known. The purpose of yoga is to disentangle consciousness from this involvement. It is because of the entanglement that one is unable to detect the cause of suffering. The suffering is caused by this involvement. The changes that are characteristic of the object are attributed to consciousness, which is changeless, and then there is a feeling that one's Self is undergoing modifications. There is birth and death even, which is really not capable of being ascribed to consciousness as such, but this is being done on account of the transference of the transitory characters of the object to the unchangeable character of consciousness.

The endeavour in yoga is to properly gain an insight into what has happened, what sort of involvement has taken place, and what the truth of things is, ultimately. The present state of awareness—the nature of knowledge that we are endowed with at present—is not the real nature of the true Seer, the Ultimate Seer, because it is impossible to condition the Seer in any manner whatsoever. The first mistake is that there is a false notion of the principle of consciousness as being projected outside, as if it is an object. Consciousness can never become an object. It cannot be externalised because to be externalised is to be dissociated from oneself. There is no such thing as dissociation of consciousness from itself, because the very process of dissociation requires another factor which is other than itself, and the nature of consciousness is such that something alien to it cannot exist.

Thus, there is a fundamental mistake involved in the very notion of this dissociation and the consequent

perception of an object outside. Hence, all suffering can be attributed to a kind of misconception or error that is there in the very experience through which the individual passes. There is, therefore, a necessity to withdraw oneself gradually from the effect to the cause by a recession of the effect into the cause, as was mentioned in an earlier *sutra*. How the bondage has arisen and what are the stages of the development of this bondage is to be understood first. Then, the freedom of the soul can be achieved by a reversal of process: the way in which we got down, in the very same way we get up—backwards, through the very same process. Though there are multitudes of causes which have brought about this involvement and suffering, broadly speaking, as it was mentioned, there is an initial identification of the pure consciousness, which is infinite, with the limited psychological organ, and then there is a subsequent identification of consciousness through the medium of the psychological organ with the object outside.

Thus, the first attempt in yoga would be to dissociate the mind from the objects so that there may not be attachment. The attachment has arisen on account of not knowing what has happened. What has happened is very clear now, but this is not clear to the mind in the process of perception and experience. There is such a thoroughgoing admixture of qualities between the mind and the object that the mind never realises that it has undergone an inward change in order to get identified with the nature or the form of the object. The object has not become the mind, really speaking. The mind has only transformed itself into the shape of the object, and contemplated the object in such

intensity that it has become practically a part of its experience.

The prescription which was originally given in a *sutra* in the first section, the Samadhi Pada—namely, the practice of *vairagya*—is the remedy for this mistake that the mind has committed in its identification with the object. We have noted what this *vairagya* means. It is the discovery of the inner constituents of the very experience of an object, which experience generally is so vehement in its expression that an analysis of this kind is not possible. In the perception of an object, especially when an emotion is involved, we cannot go into an analysis of what has taken place, because the emotion will not allow this analysis. The energy which charges the emotion in respect of a particular perception ties the consciousness to the object with such force that an extrication of it from the object is not practicable under ordinary circumstances. We cannot discover what defect is involved in our perceptions if our mind is intent upon that perception and wants the perception for its own purposes.

Therefore, a detached attitude—a scientific attitude, we may say—may be necessary for the purpose of knowing if there is any defect in oneself. Suppose we are convinced that we are not at all faulty in any way whatsoever, and we have no defect; then, there is no question of analysis. We have already passed a judgement on ourselves in our own favour and, therefore, we cannot further go into the nature of the background of these perceptions. There is, therefore, a necessity for a detached attitude, especially where oneself is involved; and, in every perception we are involved—nobody else. We have, therefore, to go into the roots of the

process of knowing itself. How is it that we are able to know an object at all? How do we know that a thing exists?

I am only repeating what I have told you many times earlier—that the very consciousness of an object is an inscrutable mystery, and we simply take it for granted; therefore, it appears as if it is very clear. The awareness of a distant object is especially a mystery because that which is distant—which is spatially remote from the perceiving consciousness, which is located in an individual body—cannot become the content of consciousness by any stretch of imagination, because it is far off. It is remote; it is not in the proximity of the consciousness. So how is it possible that we are aware of things outside? What is the means of connection? How is it that consciousness gets connected with remote objects and becomes aware that they exist? Is it not a wonder? But nobody bothers about it; they take it for granted. It is all very clear—we know things. But how do we know things? This is a question which we have to put to ourselves.

If we enquire into this structural pattern of perception of an object inwardly, we will find that unless some superhuman factor is involved in perception, knowledge of an object is not possible. The eyes cannot see an object, as they have no consciousness—they are inert, fleshy balls; nor can light be their source of knowledge, because it is also unconscious. Nor can the instruments of physical perception, the organs of sense, or the external factors like space and light, etc., be regarded as causes of perception. The knowledge of an object is brought about by factors other than light, space, the physical organs, etc., but these other factors are outside the purview of knowledge because

they are involved—and, therefore, they cannot become objects of investigation.

But, yoga requires that the very first step that one takes should be one of non-attachment to the experiences one is passing through. The first qualification of a student of yoga is the capacity to investigate into the causes of one's experiences. That is called *viveka*—the capacity to discriminate carefully between the real and the unreal elements in experience. This analytical process will reveal that there is a conscious element involved in perception, and also something unconscious which identifies itself with consciousness, somehow or other—this unconscious principle being what is known as the principle of externality. That is the mind. Nobody can know what the mind is made of. It is not physical; it is also not non-physical. A very great mystery it is! The mind is a peculiar feature which isolates consciousness from itself in a false manner, because consciousness cannot be isolated from itself. It externalises it—that also in a false manner, because consciousness cannot really be externalised—and, consequently, creates a false perception of self-identification with an object.

Inasmuch as some kind of error—a grave error—is involved in object-perception, there is also an error in the notion that there is pleasure in the objects of sense. If the very perception of an object is erroneous, basically rooted in some mistake, the experiences that follow from that perception cannot be other than the cause of the perception. The reactions set up by these perceptions also are equally false, and they are involved in the same error as the perception is. What Patanjali wants to drive into our

minds is that the pleasures of sense are not really pleasures; they are errors of perception that have passed for normal perceptions on account of the identification of consciousness with these processes. And so, there is a necessity for the retrogression of the effects into the cause—a withdrawal of the process from the external to the internal, so that gradually there is, first of all, a disentanglement of the mind from the objects of sense, and later on, a disentanglement of consciousness from the mind itself.

This final disentanglement is equal to the resting of consciousness in its own Self, free from identification with this distracting medium called the mind, and free from also the subsequent identification of itself with the objects of sense. Such Self-establishment is called *kaivalya*, or *moksha*, or liberation.

Chapter 65

KARMA, PRAKRITI AND THE GUNAS

Prakāśa kriyā sthiti śīlaṁ bhūtendriyātmakaṁ bhogāpavargārtham dṛśyam (II.18) is a very complicated aphorism which describes the nature of the object of knowledge. It was pointed out in an earlier *sutra* that the subject of knowledge is a characteristic that is brought about by a mixture of consciousness and externality—or, to put it plainly, the *purusha* and the *manas*, the *atman* and the mind. The principle of externalisation gets identified with the indivisible essence of consciousness, and there is then a sudden rise of individuality-consciousness which is the subject of perception and knowledge. The individuality aspect belongs to the externalising feature of the mind, whereas the consciousness aspect belongs to the *purusha*, or the *atman*. Therefore we have two things combined in us: we have consciousness, and also the awareness of being individuals, of being separate entities. This separateness that we feel, the affirmation of isolated existence that is a part of our nature, is due to a factor that is different from consciousness but has got identified with consciousness, and vice versa.

Hence, there is consciousness of individual being. This was referred to earlier as *asmita*. This *asmita* is the cause of all phenomenal experience in this world. The phenomenal experience is nothing but a series of processes which affirm consciousness as well as externality—continuously, without break—and cause a peculiar kind of experience in the individual which is mixed up with consciousness as well as externality. It is the principle of consciousness in the

individual that brings about happiness, and it is the principle of externality that creates desire. Desire in the individual is due to the urge for externalisation of oneself, and happiness is due to the presence of consciousness in oneself. When consciousness gets identified with the movement of desire, there is unhappiness. There is a tendency of consciousness to move away from itself when it is mixed up with the force of desire, whose very essence is rushing towards external objects. When consciousness stabilises itself and frees itself from the urge of desire, for whatever reason, there is a temporary settling down of itself in itself, and we experience pleasure or happiness.

Thus, we have a complex character in our personalities, part of which belongs to one realm, and another part belongs to another realm altogether. We have the earthly part as well as the celestial part combined in us—the divine and the elemental—due to which we belong to this world as well as the other world at the same time. We are gods and brutes at one stroke. This is the reason why we have daily experiences of vicissitude and an urge for the quest of what has not been achieved, and a tendency to ask for more and more, never getting satisfied with anything that is provided. All this is the individual nature of the *drasta*—the perceiver, the cogniser, the experiencer of the phenomenal.

The object of experience is constituted of the elements which have subtle forces behind them as their causes. These elements are principally known as the *mahabhutas*—*prithvi, jala, tejo, vayu, akash*—earth, water, fire, air and ether. These elements, by permutation and combination, form all the objects of this world—whether animate or inanimate. Every body, whether it belongs to a living

organism or it is merely inanimate matter, is made up of these five elements. What we call a living organism is nothing but a physical body animated by a percentage of consciousness. When the percentage of consciousness that animates a physical body is very meagre, very feeble, then it is what we call the vegetable kingdom or the plant life, where there is only a slight indication of there being life. When it gets intensified it becomes the animal, the human being, etc.

Thus, all the variety of beings that we see in the world—in all the fourteen realms, we may say, whether living or non-living—are the product of the admixture of *purusha* and *prakriti*, consciousness and matter. This material background of the world, which is known as *prakriti*, is constituted of the three *gunas*—*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, as we know very well. These *gunas* are referred to in this *sutra* as *prakasha*, *kriya* and *sthiti*. *Prakasha* means light, luminosity, transparency, resplendence—the capacity to reflect. That is the *prakasha* condition, the essence of the *sattva guna*, which is one of the properties of *prakriti*. It is something which is different from what we know as kinesis and stasis. It is a third thing altogether which we cannot see in this world. It is not activity; it is not inertia. It is something quite different from both. *Rajas* is activity, dissipation, division and isolation. Self-affirmation of individuality, desire, restlessness—all these things are the essence of *kriya*, or the *rajasic* principle. It will never rest in itself. It is always in a state of motion. The opposite of it is *sthiti* or stability, inertia, rootedness, fixity, which is the character of *tamas*. It will not move. It is the weighty fixity

of character which we see in objects under given conditions.

The physical nature is constituted of these three forces which we may call dynamism, stasis and equilibrium. Dynamism is *rajas*, stasis or inertia is *tamas*, and equilibrium is *sattva*. We never see equilibrium anywhere in this world. Everywhere it is either activity—movement, or there is inertia—stasis. We have flashes of *sattva* in conditions we call happiness or joy, but that is very rare. It is not always; it will be found infrequently.

Prakāśa kriyā sthiti śīlaṁ (II.18). Thus, the property of any object in this world is threefold. It can rest as a potency for any of these aspects—*sattva*, *rajas* or *tamas*—so that no object can be in any particular state. When there is a preponderance of any particular aspect in an object, the corresponding side which is the subject is attracted towards it, and simultaneously, or conversely, there is the pull of the subject in respect of the object on account of the preponderance of certain aspects of its own nature. The objects towards which the senses move, as well as the senses themselves, are both constituted of these three *gunas*. Bhūtendriyātmakaṁ (II.18). *Bhuta* is the elements—earth, water, fire, air and ether. These five elements which are the physical substances, visible, tangible, or sensible, as well as the forces, the energies which contact these objects in perception, are made up of the same force—namely *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*.

This is something very interesting because it gives a clue to the reason why there is a possibility of perception of objects. The perception of an object by a subject is caused by the affinity that exists between the sense powers and the

constitution of the objects. The affinity is the substance out of which these are made—the *gunas*. The senses, which belong to the subject side as the apparatus of perception of the subject, are constituted of the very same *sattva-rajastamas* complex as the objects outside are made.

Therefore, there is a desire on the part of the senses to move towards their own brethren in the outside world, mingle with them, and become one with them. This is also the point made out in a verse of the Bhagavadgita: *guṇā guṇeṣu vartanta iti matvā na sajjate* (III.28). *Guṇā guṇeṣu vartanta*: Properties mingle with properties, move towards properties. Senses move towards objects; that is the meaning. When the senses move towards objects, it is *prakriti* that is moving towards *prakriti*. It is one aspect of *prakriti* that is coming in contact with another aspect; or rather, it is the movement of the very same forces of *prakriti* within its own bosom—like one wave of the ocean dashing against another wave, which process does not imply any kind of structural difference between one wave and the other.

Hence, there is no structural difference between the senses and the objects, though the formation may look different. When consciousness gets identified with the senses, it forgets that the activity of sense perception is a process that is taking place in objective nature and does not belong to its own self. That is, anything that is externalising in its character cannot be regarded as part of consciousness, because nothing can move consciousness from its own status. It is only an *apparent movement* that is observed in sense perception; really, there is no movement. The nature that is outside, constituted of the five elements—earth,

water, fire, air and ether—is, therefore, universal; it is everywhere. It comprehends even the subject of perception, so that we may say the process of knowledge is included in *prakṛiti*. It is not outside.

Therefore, even the highest knowledge that we can have is phenomenal. We cannot have transcendental knowledge with the help of the faculties provided to us by *prakṛiti*. That means to say, intellectually or rationally, we cannot know the ultimate Truth, because this rationality is nothing but a property of *prakṛiti*. And, whatever is phenomenal, natural, which belongs to *prakṛiti*—that alone can be known with these individual endowments. The ultimate nature of reality cannot be known through any amount of intellectual ratiocination, because this *buddhi tattva*, this intellectuality in us, is a transparent form of *prakṛiti* itself, so that whatever be the effort of it, it will know only what is within *prakṛiti*, and not beyond. Bhogāpavargārtham dṛśyam (II.18). The purpose of this object is to bring about experience in the individual, and then liberate it from its clutches by the gradual process of evolution. The very existence of the object has a purpose, and the purpose is to serve the intentions of the subject.

The world of nature, the vast physical cosmos in which various individuals find themselves, is supposed to be a field that is provided for the causing of necessary experiences in the individuals which inhabit it. At the time of the creation of the universe, subsequent to the cosmic dissolution, or *pralaya*, a new set-up of the constitution of the universe is suddenly manifest, in which one thing is determined forever—and that determination is what sort of universe is to be manifest. Out of the infinite potentialities

of *prakriti*, only certain aspects manifest themselves as this universe. It does not mean that *prakriti* is made up of only these things that we see with our eyes. The very purpose of the creation of this world is to provide a field for the experience of the *jivas*, or the individuals. And what sort of individuals are manifest in this *kalpa*, or cycle of creation? It is only those groups of individuals whose *karmas* have matured enough to find an occasion for experience.

When unfulfilled desires which have lied buried in the individuals who have not been liberated at the time of the previous *kalpa* manifest themselves and begin to be ready for the maturity of experience, there is a necessity simultaneously felt for providing them with the requisite field of experience. So, there is a simultaneous creation of the individuals and the universe. The subject and the object rise together. It is not that one comes first and the other comes afterwards, because the world that is outside is not really a physical substance but a condition of experience for the totality of individuals—which are the contents of the universe, or rather, constitute the parts of the universe itself. The individuals inhabiting the universe are related to the universe as threads are related to a cloth, we may say, so that they are themselves constituting the universe. They are not outside the universe. It is very difficult to distinguish one from the other.

The *bhoga*, or the experience that is referred to in this *sutra*, is the undergoing of the pleasures and pains by individuals consequent upon their previous *karmas*. Therefore, this world contains only those things which are necessary for the experience of the pleasures and the pains of the various *jivas* which have been manifest in this cycle.

It will not contain anything more, and it will not contain anything less. The world does not contain anything in excess of what is necessary; nor is it undernourished. It contains exactly what is requisite for the purpose of the experience of all the *jivas*—not just one or two—who have been manifest in this cycle. So, *bhoga* does not only mean enjoyment; it is experience of any kind. The purpose of the contact of the subject with the object is experience, and the purpose of experience is to exhaust the forces of the past *karmas*.

Why do we come in contact with things? Why do we want experience of any kind? It is because this experience is what is called for by the urges of the forces of past *karmas*—the desires, we may say. When their momentum is exhausted by experience, there is liberation, or *apavarga*—*moksha*. Naturally, we become free when the term of our imprisonment in a jail is over—unless, of course, we commit another crime inside the jail itself. Then, we will not be released. Sometimes we do make that mistake. While we are provided with this experience for the purpose of exhausting the momentum of past deeds in order that subsequently we may be freed—attain *moksha*, or *apavarga*—we commit another mistake in the very process of exhausting the past *karmas*. That is called the *agami karma*, the *kriyaman karma*. Then this *apavarga* will not come. When even in prison we commit a blunder, how will we be released?

The dispassionate law, the impersonal regulation, provides that ultimately there should be freedom, because freedom is the essence of everyone. Bondage is not our essence. Bondage has come accidentally on account of

karma, and when the force of *karma* is exhausted by experience or *bhoga*, freedom should come. But it does not come because of the creation of further *karmas*—that is a different aspect altogether. A purely metaphysical basis of the experience of the objects of the world is explained in this *sutra*, not the further complications that arise there, which is a different subject altogether.

The *sutra* tells us plainly that the object of experience is constituted of the three *gunas*—*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. We should remember that these properties are forces which are like fluids rather than solids, which intermingle with one another, influence one another, depend upon one another, and create a quick permutation and combination of characters among themselves. They are energies, forces, rather than things which are of a solid and substantial character. These forces are the building bricks of all physical substances, all objects, everything in nature, as well as the sense-powers which perceive the objects, so that, inwardly and outwardly, everything is made up of these forces only. Na tad asti pṛithivyām vā divi deveṣu vā punaḥ, sattvaṁ prakṛitijair muktaṁ yad ebhiḥ syāt tribhir guṇaiḥ (B.G. XVIII.40). Not in all the worlds, whether on earth or in heaven, can we find anything that is free from the clutches of these *gunas*. Not even Indra is free from this. Everything is under these forces only. There is nothing anywhere which can be regarded as outside the purview of the *gunas*.

Inwardly and outwardly, everything is under the bondage and subjection of these *gunas*. This bondage, as already explained, is caused by the identification of consciousness with the *manas*, which goes towards objects

for the purpose of creating an experience in order that it may exhaust the momentum of past *karmas* for the sake of ultimate freedom, or liberation. That is the meaning of the *sutra*, *bhogāpavargārtham dṛśyam* (II.18).

Chapter 66

UNDERSTANDING THE NATURE OF OBJECTS

Since the objects are constituted of a substance which is similar to the substance out of which the senses are made, there is a spontaneity of movement of the senses towards the objects. They do not require any exertion. As waters incline towards a depression without any effort on their part, senses incline towards objects without any specific effort. It is the nature of the senses to move towards objects because of the similarity of structure in the nature of their substance. This is the reason why the senses begin to throb in joy when they perceive an object especially to their liking; and when the senses begin to throb in joy, the consciousness also begins to throb, so it looks like we are throbbing in great joy at the time of the perception of a desirable object. The breath changes its course, speech trembles, and even the movement of the bloodstream is affected. The temperature may get heightened or lowered; the blood pressure may change. Every bit of cell in the body changes when there is a throbbing sensation of the senses in respect of desirable objects on account of their being charged with consciousness, which goes with them and feels what the senses feel.

This is the catastrophe that has befallen man, the individual *jiva* who has fallen into the midst of dacoits, as it were, and has become their servant. Whatever they do, whatever they say, whatever they order him to do, he has to execute. This poor thing called consciousness in us has become subjected thoroughly, root and branch, to the power and the impetuosity of the senses. The reason

behind all this is simply stated as the identification of consciousness with the structure of the senses which are in sympathy with the objects on account of the similarity of the substance of both the senses and the objects. With the friendship the senses have with consciousness, they also have, simultaneously, what is called a ‘fifth column activity’ in their affiliation to the objects outside.

This is brought out in the phrase *bhūtendriyātmakaṁ bhogāpavargārtham dṛśyam* (II.18): The object, therefore, brings satisfaction in this manner. It is also mentioned why this situation has arisen. It has arisen on account of the necessity to fulfil certain *karmas* of the past which have revealed themselves now as the concrete psychophysical individuality, this body-mind—the *prarabdha karma* which, if it is exhausted by experience, liberation should follow. But, unfortunately, liberation does not follow for other reasons—namely, *karmas* get accumulated in every birth. Though the intention is to exhaust the *karmas* of the past, an unfortunate thing takes place simultaneously with this process of exhaustion—an adding to the old stock of *karmas* due to a misconception which gets confirmed and intensified because of repeated sense-perception and experience of pleasure in the objects.

Viśeṣa aviśeṣa lingamātra alingāni guṇaparvāṇi (II.19) is another *sutra* that follows. The stages by which *prakṛiti* manifests itself are stated in this *sutra*. *Viśeṣa* means particularised, gross, visible and demarcated; that is *viśeṣa*. *Aviśeṣa* is not so demarcated—a little bit hazy, not clear, not distinct. *Lingamātra* is faintly visible, only a symbol; an indication of it is there, but it itself cannot be seen properly. *Alinga* is completely indistinct; we cannot even know that it

exists. These are the four stages in which *prachana*, or *prakriti*, manifests itself in the process of evolution.

The completely indistinct condition is the original nature of *prakriti* where there is *gunasamyavastha*, the balance of the three properties of *prakriti*—*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*—where one is not predominant over the other. Because of that equality of the properties, the poise in which they exist, there is no distinct manifestation of any form or name. There is, therefore, no perception of objects possible. The isolation of the subject from the object has not taken place. They merge together in an indistinct form on account of the non-manifestation of the *gunas*.

This is a state prior to the manifestation of things. It is *alinga* because we cannot have even any indication of it being existent, just as in deep sleep we cannot have even an indication that we exist. Everything is obliterated. Even our personality has gone, so who is to know that something exists? There is a very peculiar extinction of all distinctions—a total ‘wiping out’ of all particularities so that there cannot be perception of any kind. Inasmuch as for the *jiva* the individual perception means an externalised form of knowledge, and because externalisation is not possible where *rajas* is not predominant and *rajas* is not predominant in this condition of equipoise, therefore, no perception of anything is possible here—and, therefore, no knowledge. This is the *alinga* condition mentioned.

Lingamatra is faintly visible, but not clearly visible. That is the *mahat-tattva*, the first manifestation of *prakriti*—the Cosmic Intelligence, as it is usually called. It is indistinct because it has also no particularities. It is all-pervading, omnipresent; it is in everything. Inasmuch as it is cosmic, it

cannot be particularised and seen as an object of individual perception. Yet, it is there. It is the first form in which *prakriti* reveals itself in a tendency to objectivity. As they say, there is a consciousness of 'I am', or 'I am that I am'; that is the Cosmic-conscious condition. This cosmic awareness is 'I-am-ness' of a universal type, which includes all objects which it knows. It is impossible to describe because such a thing is never heard of, not seen anywhere and, therefore, not thinkable by the human mind.

We cannot imagine what it is to be simply aware of oneness of oneself, free from all objects outside. For us, this is only an academic acceptance; practically, such a thing is unimaginable. But such a thing is there, as they say. That is the *mahat*, the Great Intellect, the Cosmic Intelligence, also called Hiranyagarbha in certain other schools of thought—the repository of all the possibilities of future manifestation, the potentiality of all particulars that are going to be revealed in the future, and the latency of all the effects that will come out afterwards as the names and the forms of experience. It is Cosmic-consciousness. At once there is knowledge of all things simultaneously. It is not the indistinct, unconscious equipoise of *prakriti*, but it is the conscious equipoise of cosmic awareness where all *jivas* get merged into a totality. They exist as part of this consciousness. They hang upon it as its limbs, as it were. Such is the *mahat-tattva*; we may also call it the *Isvara-tattva*. And, for all practical religious purposes, this is the God of religion. We cannot think of anything more than this. What religions in the world call God is this supreme *mahat*. It is indistinct, because it is cosmic, yet it is there as

a possibility of all future particularities and diversities. This is what is referred to in this *sutra* as *lingamatra*.

Further on is the *avishesha*, a grosser form of manifestation where there is a beginning of the diversity of things. The first stroke is dealt to cut off things from one another, and there is an indication that the Cosmic Being is going to be diversified into the particulars of experience. It has not taken place, but there is an indication. As they say, the ordinance has been passed, but it has not yet come into effect. Likewise, this peculiar condition of the tendency to become diverse is called *avishesha* in this *sutra*. It has the possibility of *viseshata*. It is going to become *visesha*, or particular; and it also is decided that it is going to take place—but it has not happened yet. This is what is known as the *tanmatras* of the elements, the *pancha-mahabhutas*. *Shabda*, *sparsa*, *rupa*, *rasa* and *gandha* are the Sanskrit terms for it. These are the potentialities behind sense perception. They are the fine, subtle, ethereal backgrounds of not only the senses which perceive objects, but also the objects themselves.

In some respects, though not entirely, we may compare this condition to the fine atomic stage of physical matter, as modern science calls it. What they call the atomic condition of physical substances where physicality is there, and a form of diversity also is there, but it is indistinct—this is the *tanmatra*. ‘*Tanmatra*’ means the subtlety of essence of that which is to be subsequently manifest as a gross form. The potentiality in each substance to manifest itself as a particular object is the *tanmatra*. The function to be performed is already laid down—which object will perform

what function—though it has not started performing the function.

There is an urge to concretise itself into a particular shape or form. The presence of this urge, not yet manifest as a form, is the *tanmatra*. It is not merely an abstract urge in the sense of a feeling or a thought isolated from the content, but it is the potentiality of the content itself—just as, to give the example I mentioned, the atomic condition of a physical object is not a quality of that object; it is the very substance of the object. What they call the atoms behind objects are not the qualities of the objects—they are the substances out of which the objects are made. They are the objects themselves, in a subtle form. Likewise, these *tanmatras* are not mere properties or qualities. We should not think that what is known as *shabda*, *sparsa*, *rupa*, *rasa* and *gandha* is a vibration which emanates from an object. Rather, it is the force which is the constituent factor of the object itself.

This is what follows from *mahat*. Sometimes the Samkhya, and even the Vedanta and other schools of thought, posit an intermediary condition called the *ahamkara*; not the *ahamkara* we know of, but a cosmic substance which feels its existence, which is indistinct from *mahat*. Inasmuch as this *ahamkara* is one with *mahat* and cannot be separated from it, it is not specially mentioned here in this *sutra*. They are identical. The moment *mahat* manifests itself, the *ahamkara* is also there; the ‘I-am-ness’, as I mentioned, is the cosmic *ahamkara*. It is one with that *mahat-tattva*; they are the same. The way in which the *mahat-tattva* feels itself is called *ahamkara*. This is not

mentioned separately in the *sutra*, but it is there, as the doctrines of Samkhya and Vedanta tell us.

These *tanmatras* are there as the *avishesha*, or the indistinct potentialities of future manifestation as forms, which afterwards become *visesha*. Actual manifestation takes place. There is an actual war, as they say. The effect has taken shape, and it has become what it has to become. There is the wonderful colour and pageantry of this creation. The objects are grossly manifest, the senses are cut off from them, and there is an immediate feeling of isolation on the part of every subject associated with the senses. There is a desire to run after the objects on account of this isolation. Well, the story continues, as we already know.

These are the *gunaparvas*: *viśeṣa aviśeṣa lingamātra alingāni guṇaparvāṇi* (II.19). *Parva* is a knot, a chapter, a section, a halting place, a connecting link—whatever we may call it—where a particular stage ends, or commences. That is called a *parva*, just as there are so many *parvas* in the Mahabharata—Adi Parva, Sabha Parva, etc. Here, in these *parvas*, or knots, the *gunas* of *prakriti* undergo a transitional process; and the processes, though infinite in their detail, are, broadly speaking, these as have been mentioned: *visesha*, *avishesha*, *lingamatra* and *alingani*. The purpose of reiterating this point is that the objects of sense have, at their background, a power that is superior to what is visible to the eyes. They are helped by certain other factors, which is the reason why it becomes difficult for a single individual to encounter them.

Though we think that a particular person is our enemy, we forget that this enemy has the background of support

from other people and other sources, on account of which he presses himself forward and has the boldness to attack us, and we cannot visibly perceive this background behind the object that is encountering us. Why is it that the object is so forceful and attacks us, and we cannot withdraw ourselves from it? It has a background. It has a power which gives sustenance to it, which we cannot see with our eyes because these powers which sustain the objects in their activity and their manifestation are super-physical—the *tanmatras*, etc. The total pressure of the whole cosmos can be said to be present behind every object. Therefore, when we face an object, even a small pinhead, we are facing the whole world behind it. Even one wave in the ocean is the whole ocean; it is not cut off from the ocean. And so, when we face or encounter an object, particularly in the techniques of the practice of yoga, what is actually encountered is the interconnected network of support that is behind the visible object of sense.

This should explain why it is so hard to withdraw the senses from the objects. The unity of things, which is revealed in the cosmic condition of *mahat*, is the reason behind the rushing of the senses towards objects. It is ultimately a desire to become one with all things. The force of unity that is behind everything is the urging energy behind even the activity of the senses, so even the wickedest of actions have the unity of things behind them, though they are distorted and moving in a different direction altogether. Merely because a stream of a gushing river is washing off the villages of poor people, it does not mean that the stream has ceased to be the river. It is the same Ganga. It may be the holiest of rivers, but it has no pity

upon villages. It will simply destroy everybody if it is misdirected—if we would like to call it that—in the direction of the villages of poor people. If it is channelised properly, it may go to Ganga Sagar; otherwise, it will go any place if there is another channel for its movement. The force is the same; it is not something else.

Likewise, it is the unity of things that urges itself forward in experience, which keeps us restless. The restlessness of the mind, which is attributed to the desire of the senses for objects, is ultimately caused by the unity behind things. Even the desire for objects is due to that. If the unity of things were not to be there, there would not be desire for objects of sense. Hence, we can imagine how a wrong thing can be based on a right thing. This is what has happened. It is wrong because of a peculiar twist it has taken, though the background of it is right. It is something like a soldier going mad at home and attacking his own mother with his gun. Well, this can happen if his mind is out of order. He is supposed to be trained for war, not to attack his own family in the house. Likewise, this urge of the mind for unity with things takes the form of an externalised attachment to objects of sense due to involvement in space, time, etc.

The *sutra* gives us a metaphysical and a philosophical analysis of the stages of the manifestation of these cosmic forces which are at the background of the objects of sense, and the caution that has to be exercised in the practice of yoga. We are not dealing with individuals, even when we encounter a single individual. There is no such thing as an individual here; everything is cosmic, but looking like individuals. That is the mistake in perception. Therefore,

any individual is terrible, under given conditions. Anything can attack us and harass us because of the cosmic background of things.

The stages of the ascent of the soul are also indicated in this *sutra*. The mind does not suddenly jump to the cosmic. It moves gradually from lower unities to higher unities. It is, first of all, caught up in diversity, and in this consciousness of diversity it has forgotten the unity that is behind as the purpose. It requires a herculean effort on the part of the understanding to realise that the intention of objective desire through the senses is something pious and holy—namely, the realisation of the unity of things. That is called *viveka*. That itself takes all the time. It may take our entire life to understand what has happened, but once this *viveka* dawns, it is supposed to be easy for the individual to wrench itself from attachment to things. That wrenching is called *vairagya*. The renunciation or the detachment that we feel in respect of an object of sense is due to an understanding that has arisen that there is some mistake in the attachment of the senses to objects. The realisation of this mistake is *viveka*, and the consequent withdrawal is *vairagya*.

Then comes the real practice—the *abhyasa*. That *abhyasa* is by stages, from the lower to the higher. We have to read these *sutras* together. The preceding *sutra* together with the present one give a single doctrine as a precept—namely, that there are stages of ascent, and these stages of ascent have to take into consideration the location of an object, the circumstances of the individual, the conditions under which practice is made, etc., so that we cannot disregard any experience when it is actually being processed

through, or undergone. Detachment from the object does not mean hatred for the object. It is not dislike; it is an understanding. And, the understanding should be of such a nature that one should utilise the present relationship of oneself with the object for the purpose of transcending this relationship.

The consciousness of an object implies a faith in the reality of the object; and to the extent of the intensity of this faith, the object becomes impossible to avoid completely. And so, it has to be refined in its relationship with oneself by a proper method. This refinement of the relationship of oneself with the object, gradually, is the *bhoga-apavarga* process. Enjoyment or experience, and freedom from the object, is also a gradual experience. Freedom may mean ultimate freedom, *kaivalya* or *moksha*, or it may also mean any stage of freedom that we achieve in respect of an object to which we have been attached earlier. Even the first step in freedom is freedom, though it is far removed from ultimate freedom.

The freedom from an object of sense cannot be achieved easily unless the nature of the object is understood and one's relationship to it is known properly, in its correct context. Thus, when the understanding arises, one has also to know what to do with that object. As it was mentioned, it is not love or hatred that we are discussing, but a proper appreciation of the position of the object. It is a totally impersonal attitude, a scientific attitude, where we neither love nor hate anything. We understand it; that is all. What is the understanding? It is an appreciation of what is to be done under a given condition—how to utilise that particular circumstance for a higher step. This involves a

double process: *bhoga* and *apavarga*. The purpose is freedom from the object, but that freedom can be achieved only by a proper harnessing of the present situation of the relationship with the object. It is not a sudden severing of oneself from the object, but a gradual and very systematic process of gaining mastery over the object and not cutting oneself off from realities, because no one can cut oneself off from realities. The moment the reality is there as an accepted thing, it gazes at us, stares at us, for a proper attitude from us.

Mastery over the object is what is mentioned in the *sutra*, *vaśīkārasamjñā vairāgyam* (I.15). Mastery over the object can be gained only by an insight into the nature of the object. What is this insight? It is the recognition of the fact that any kind of empirical relationship is brought about by the contact of senses with the objects due to the similarity of structure. The *gunas* are the same, both in the senses and the object: *guṇā guṇeṣu vartanta iti matvā na sajjate* (BG III.28). We will not be attached if we know that this attachment has arisen on account of a peculiar movement of the senses towards their own mother, which is the object also. Thus is *viveka*, or understanding, to be developed, and mastery over attachment to be gained.

Chapter 67

CONSCIOUSNESS IS BEING

Draṣṭā dṛśimātraḥ śuddhaḥ api pratyayānupaśyaḥ (II.20): The pure seer or experiencer is consciousness, absolutely uncontaminated by features that are extraneous; yet, this pure seer principle seems to get associated with the faculties of perception. This is the meaning of this *sutra*. The *drasta*, or the pure experiencer—the seer of all things—is a principle of consciousness whose existence is very strange when compared to the existence of anything else in the perceptible world. While everything in the world is made up of certain things, consciousness is not made up of anything. It is what it is. It is not constituted of anything other than what it is, while everything in the world is made up of things which are components and are dissimilar in character. For instance, the atoms which constitute a physical object do not have the characteristics of the object. The colour, the shape and the sensory reaction which the object evokes cannot be found in the atoms which are the basic essences of the object. Every physical object, and everything that is sensible in any manner whatsoever, is an effect of permutations and combinations of forces or essences which are different in nature from the object itself as it is visible, tangible, etc.

Not so is consciousness. Consciousness is not constituted of atoms or forces. It is not anything that one can imagine in the mind, it is not anything that one has seen with the eyes, and it is not anything that the senses can comprehend in any manner whatsoever. It is not an object that sets up reactions. It is not capable of coming in contact

with anything, and it cannot be set in relation to anything other than its own self. It is impossible to say anything about it, because it defies all definitions. It has no characteristics; it has no features; it has no length, breadth and height; it has no weight. It has no qualities that can distinguish it from other things and, therefore, it is logically indefinable, sensorily ungraspable, mentally unthinkable, and intellectually un-understandable—such is the pure seer. Apart from these peculiarities of the principle of the seer which is consciousness, it has another strange characteristic: it is not capable of partiteness or division. It cannot be divided into parts and it cannot be mathematically calculated, because that which has no parts cannot be subject to arithmetical calculation.

Hence, logic and mathematics fail in respect of the assessment of the nature of that which is consciousness. It is not divisible, and it is not of the nature of indivisibility that we see in atoms and electrons. Electrons also are supposed to be indivisible, but this is not the kind of indivisibility that we are speaking of when we refer to the nature of consciousness. While the electron is indivisible, it is only an arithmetical indivisibility, not a metaphysical one, because the definition of indivisibility is the incapacity to relate itself to any other similar object. There are many electrons—which means to say, they are divisible bodies. There is a connection of one with the other. One can be related to the other, one can be defined in terms of the other, and one fixes the velocity, the path and the position of the other in respect of the arrangement among themselves that is necessary for the formation of an atom or an object.

The indivisibility of consciousness is of a different character. Here, indivisibility means identity with infinity. Finitude of any kind is the characteristic of divisible objects. That which is finite is also divisible, and that which is not divisible is not finite. So, the indivisible principle of consciousness is also trans-finite in every respect, and the characteristic of finitude is, again, the location in space and in time. It amounts to saying that consciousness is not in space, and is not in time. If it is not in space, naturally it should transcend space; therefore, it should be vaster than space. If it is not in time, it should be in the past and present and future. All these things follow from the position that consciousness is not spatial and not temporal. It is as vast as space—even vaster than space—and timeless, durationless, and not conditioned by the limitations of the divisions of time known as past, present and future. Inasmuch as space is a content of consciousness, and even the vastness of space is that which is known by consciousness as an object, it follows that the principle that knows this vastness of space should be as vast as space itself.

Consciousness is vast like space. And, that which can connect the past, present and future in a series of successions should also have the capacity to transcend these relationships of past, present and future; so, it is timeless. It is spaceless and timeless—which means to say, it is infinite and eternal. That which is spaceless is infinite; that which is timeless is eternal. Such is the characteristic of the pure seer. And, we are also seers. We can see things. The definition of the seer given in this *sutra* implies certain unthought-of characteristics present even in individual

perceivers, and we come to a very startling conclusion that we are something quite different from what we appear to be—even to our own selves.

The principle of awareness that is in us is something different from what it appears to be in its association with this body. Due to the connection of consciousness with this body, it appears to be a means of contacting external objects and becoming aware of them conditionally in space and in time. But a careful analysis of the nature of consciousness, as we are trying to do now, will reveal that it cannot be connected to the body like that. It cannot be limited to the location of the body, and it cannot be subjected to the activities of the senses in respect of objects, because all this conditioning would amount to saying that it is limited, finite, spatial and temporal—which, on the very face of it, cannot be the nature of consciousness.

This consciousness, which is of this transcendental character, appears to be associated in a strange manner which individuals cannot know. Philosophy stops here. Inasmuch as philosophy is logical conclusion, it fails and gives way to a new type of knowledge—we may call it intuition—when it comes to a question of the ascertaining of the nature of the very precondition of all thought and the presupposition of logical thinking. The axioms of logic are themselves limitations of logic; therefore, they become the halting point of all analytic thought and investigative analysis, giving way to an insight which surpasses all that the human mind can comprehend.

This impossibility of knowing the nature of consciousness arises on account of our trying to define consciousness in terms of the body and its relations. We

have always a prejudgement in respect of what we are; and in terms of this judgement that we have formed about ourselves, we try to define things—even consciousness itself—not knowing the fact that it is at the very background of even the attempt at thinking. A great thinker said, “I think, therefore I am—*cogito ergo sum*,” but this is to put the cart before the horse. We do not think because thoughts are the cause of our being. Rather, our being is the cause of thought. Our existence is prior to the very process of thinking. “I think, therefore I am,” is not the way of putting it. Instead we should say, “I am, and therefore I think.” If we are not, how can we think?

The thinking is a subsequent arrangement which comes into manifestation in respect of external relations, but there is a prior being which is the reason for and the condition for the processes of thought in respect of objects. The association of consciousness with the mind, as we have studied earlier, is the reason behind our defining consciousness as a means of knowledge, as if it is an adjunct to the process of knowledge and only auxiliary to an ulterior purpose, which is the contact of senses with objects—which again we define as real knowledge.

Our definition of knowledge in this world is such that it amounts to nothing more than a comprehension of the characteristics of an external object by means of the senses. But we are not able to discover that the very activity of the senses is due to the operation of the mind inside; and, the function of the mind itself is due to the presence of a consciousness which is different from the mind. We have to distinguish between mind, or mentation, and consciousness. While the mind is a process, consciousness

is not a process. The mind is conditioned by the *gunas*—*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. It is constituted of these *gunas* and has, therefore, mutations. It undergoes transformations, and it has a meaning only in respect of objects that it knows. But, consciousness has a meaning of its own. It has a status of its own. It has an intrinsic value and worth not dependent upon anything else that it knows or does not know. External conditions do not affect consciousness, because it is consciousness that gives meaning to every external condition.

Such is the nature of the pure seer. *Drisimatrah*: knowing without an object, existing without space, living without time-awareness—all these are involved in consciousness. We cannot imagine how one can live without time, because to live is to be in time. But here, there is a type of existence which is not limited by the existence of space or of time, and it can be independent of every value that we associate with life and knowledge in this world. We cannot understand what is *drisimatrah*, or pure consciousness. Many philosophical schools have come a cropper due to their inability to comprehend what pure consciousness can be, independent of objects, because consciousness is always supposed to be something which has a relation to that which it knows—consciousness having content. Minus content, what is consciousness? It looks featureless. But it does not mean that *drisimatrah*, or the pure consciousness condition, is a featureless transparency bifurcated from the content.

The consciousness that we are speaking of is not a mere transparency without any content inside. It is more solid than the heaviest of objects; it is inclusive of all contents

that we can think of. Inasmuch as it has already been accepted that consciousness, by its nature, should be indivisible and, therefore, spaceless and timeless, infinite and eternal, it should follow that it should include within itself all the contents of experience, also. The objects that we call the contents must be inclusive. They should not be exclusive. They should not be lying outside the purview of consciousness because, if there can be objects outside, it will be finite; they will condition its being.

The difficulty in defining consciousness independent of all externality is removed by a further extension of its definition in terms of an inclusion of all contents in the consciousness itself, so that consciousness is 'being'. It is not merely abstract consciousness minus being, because that which is not—that which is divested of being—is non-being. If we attribute being to objects, and consciousness is to be regarded only as a process of knowing, it would be divested of the being of things, and consciousness would be non-being; it would be non-existent. But that cannot be, because being is what gives value to anything. Minus being, nothing can be. Therefore, the being of a thing cannot be divested of consciousness; and vice versa, consciousness cannot be divested of being. Existence is consciousness, and consciousness is existence. They cannot be separated. They are not two things; they are only two words—two defining features of one and the same indivisible being.

It is consciousness which is being; it is being that is aware of itself. They are not two different things. It is not a process of consciousness which is trying to have a relationship with its content outside; nor is it a consciousness which is divested of content. It is solid

content, and not content in the sense of something being contained in something, as water is in a vessel. It is not content in that sense. It is not a content in the sense of something being inside something, or supported by something. It is an identity of 'being'. Even the word 'identity' is something that can fall short of the real definition, because it is not the unity of one with the other. It is an appreciation and appraisal of the impossibility of division of characters in that particular thing that we call being-consciousness.

Such is the meaning of this word '*drisimatrah*'. The word 'seer' is used here, which does not mean seeing with the eyes, or looking with the organs of sense. It is not looking at things, but it is Self-awareness. Now, this *drisimatrah*, or pure awareness of the seer, is not the self-awareness of the *asmita* condition which was regarded as a kind of obstacle or a development of *avidya*, an effect of *avidya*. The Self-awareness that is referred to here as the nature of the seer is not *asmita*, because *asmita* was defined as an awareness that arises on account of the identification of consciousness with the mind. But here, we are defining it as something independent of mental processes.

Thus, *drisimatrah* means not even the self-awareness of *asmita*; rather, it is the awareness that is behind even *asmita*, because what we call *asmita* is a mixture of two qualities: the awareness aspect, as well the conditioned body-mind complex aspect. That aspect of limitation to body and mind is what distinguishes *asmita* from pure consciousness. The latter is not conditioned by body-mind. It is not a sense of 'I am-ness' as distinguished from others' being, but it is the awareness of totality of being, if we

would like to call it that. All definitions fail because even the word 'totality' would imply a bringing together of particulars, which is not the nature of Reality. It is something transcending these in quality.

Drasta drisimatrah: The seer is 'pure seeing'. That is the meaning. The seer is made up of 'pure seeing', and what we call the seen, or the object, is only a later development that has arisen on account of certain difficulties. This development is due to the presence of a peculiar medium through which the consciousness expresses itself. We have known it as the *citta*, or the mind. Due to that, the seer becomes *pratyayanupasyah*—'looks on' at the objects of sense, sees the world outside, and experiences contact with things, as it were, merely because of the presence of the mind.

The *drisya* or the object of perception—that which is experienced through the senses—has a meaning and a significance only in respect of this consciousness that experiences objects. The meaning of an object is in the consciousness; it is not in itself. This is a new thing that we are told in the next *sutra*: *tadarthaḥ eva drśyasya ātmā* (II.21). The object serves a purpose, and the essence of the object is the capacity to serve this purpose. The purpose is the purpose of the Self, which is the seer; and what is the purpose? *Bhogāpavargārtham* (II.18). It is already mentioned in the earlier *sutra* that the *drisya*, or the object, exists for the *bhoga* and the *apavarga* of the seer. The phenomenal experience as well as the ultimate freedom of the seer is the purpose of the existence of an object of consciousness, and that is the meaning of the *sutra*: *tadarthaḥ eva drśyasya ātmā* (II.21). *Atma* is Selfhood. The

very Selfhood of the object is for the purpose of the experience and freedom of the consciousness which is the onlooker or the seer of the object.

But, we cannot usually appreciate this position because we seem to be controlled by the objects. If the objects exist for our purpose, how is it that we are running after objects? It appears from this *sutra* that the objects subserve the subject. They are existent for the purpose of the self. They are servants, as it were, of the self; they have significance only in relation to the self, and, therefore, they are adjectival rather than substantive. But, that is not what is happening. The self is running after the objects as if the objects are the self and the self is the adjective. That which is the substantive has taken the position of the adjective. The very urge of consciousness to move towards objects would imply that it is subservient to the purpose of the object, which is the reverse of what the *sutra* is saying.

This has happened due to habitual attachment from many births, and also subjection of consciousness to the processes of the mind—the mind being made up of the *samskaras* and *vasanas*, the desires that have been left unfulfilled. The velocity of the mind in respect of the objects is due to the similarity of structure, as we have said, between the senses and the objects. The *gunas* of *prakriti*, existing both in the object as well as in the senses, become the cause for the movement of the senses towards the objects, and it is impossible to prevent the movement of the senses towards the objects as long as it is accepted that both are made up of the same *gunas*—*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. And so, when there is an identification of consciousness with the senses, it looks as if, together with the senses, there

is a movement of consciousness towards the objects. While it is natural for the senses to gain union with the objects outside on account of similarity of structure, it is unnatural for consciousness to follow the senses and appear subservient to the existence of an object.

The world seems to control us, subject us to its laws, and immerse us in a craving for things, so that it is impossible to believe that the subject—the awareness within, or the consciousness—is superior to objects. The superiority has been undermined by the impetuosity of the senses. They have been completely adulterated. The turbidity that has been caused by the activity of the senses has prevented the lustrous manifestation of consciousness within, even as the brilliancy of the sun that is seen reflected in water can be completely made to look otherwise by shaking the water, especially when it is muddy.

The pure nature of consciousness is not an object of direct experience on account of the turbidity of the mind due to the preponderance of *tamasic* qualities, and also the shaking of the mind due to the *rajas* in it. There is dirt due to *tamas*, and also shaking due to *rajas*. Both these put together make it impossible for consciousness to reflect itself purely in the mind, and it has become what the mind itself is—turbid and shaking.

Thus it is that there is agony and a restlessness that is attributed to pure consciousness itself, while in fact it is *drisimatrah*, pure awareness, inclusive of the contents of its awareness. Hence it should be unbelievable that there should be a necessity for it to run after objects. On the other hand, as the *sutra* puts it, the objects should run after it—because they subserve this existence of the seer. The

knowledge that the objects subserve the seer and that, therefore, there is a need to reverse the process of thinking is the condition of yoga that is pondered over in this *sutra*.

Chapter 68

THE CAUSE OF EXPERIENCE

Every experience in the world is intended to bring enlightenment to the soul. The purpose of experience is not harassment or punishment of any kind; it is a process of training and education for higher knowledge. Sva svāmi śaktyoḥ svarūpopalabdhi hetuḥ sarṁyogaḥ (II.23) is the *sutra* which makes out that experience is for the purpose of ultimate wisdom and freedom. The continuous experiences provided to the soul by means of its contact with the objects of sense provide occasions for newer and newer types of enlightenment because every experience is a revelation of the circumstances of the experience, so that if one is careful enough to observe what actually takes place at the time of an experience, one would be enlightened in respect of it and gain an insight in regard to it. Experience is not supposed to create bondage; it is intended to bring liberation. The bondage aspect of it is an unfortunate consequence that arises due to one not being able to take advantage of this occasion provided by the means of experience.

The contact of consciousness with objects is not merely an experience of pleasure and pain. It is also an occasion for gaining new insight into the circumstances of this contact, as it is the case with every type of experience at any time whatsoever. An experience is a reaction produced in consciousness by conditions outside. These reactions are teachers and not merely instruments of punishment or infliction of pain. The question of enlightenment in regard to experience arises on account of there being an occasion to enter into the causes of the experience. An experience

becomes a teacher, an enlightener, when it can also provide an insight into the causes thereof. Why is it that this experience has come, and how is it that my reaction to this experience is of such and such a nature? To give a concrete instance: why is there pleasure, or why is there pain? How am I happy under given conditions of experience?

The bondage aspect of experience is due to the emphasis laid on the pleasurable or the painful aspects of experience alone, minus the insight aspect which is also implied there. But, the liberating aspect of the experience comes to relief when we pay due attention to the other side of the experience also, not merely the pleasurable or the painful aspects of it—namely, the conditions that have been responsible for bringing about the experience itself.

Apart from the fact that a particular experience is pleasurable or miserable, there is also another side to it—namely, that this experience has come due to some cause, whether it is happy or unhappy. The pure emphasis on the happy or unhappy aspect of the experience is the untutored reaction of the mind which is not properly enlightened into the circumstances. But a cautious mind will open its eyes into the circumstances of the case and learn by this experience.

If I am happy due to a particular experience, what is the cause of this happiness? From where has this happiness come? This is how we learn by experience. If it is pain, we also learn by that pain. How has this pain come? What is the reason behind the pain that is attendant upon this particular type of experience? Why am I happy or why am I unhappy at all, at the time of a particular experience? So, the understanding of the nature of the cause of a particular

experience is the aspect of enlightenment involved in it, whereas the mere reaction of a tit-for-tat attitude in respect of the pleasure or the pain involved in the experience is the bondage aspect. But the ultimate aim of all experiences is not to create bondage, because the essential nature of things is not bondage, it is freedom—and everything is striving towards freedom. Thus, anything that happens anywhere, at any time, under any condition, should be a step taken towards freedom of a higher degree. That this freedom is not recognised is due to a different factor which has to be investigated. It is due to a misconception in regard to the nature of the experience itself.

Every experience is an exhaustion of a particular momentum that has been responsible for it, as we have noted in our previous studies. The *karmas* of the past are mainly responsible for our experiences. It was mentioned earlier in a *sutra* that these forces of past deeds, thoughts, feelings, etc., are the causes of the species into which we are born, the length of life for which we live, and also the experiences that we undergo. All these are conditioned, motivated by the forces generated by the past *karmas*. Hence, the experiences that are provided by means of contact are processes of self-exhaustion, just as fever is a kind of exhaustion of the conditions that have been introduced into the system by toxic matter. The intention of fever is not to punish us but to purify us, though it looks like a pain that comes upon us. In the same way, every experience is a purifying process in the sense that thereby there is an exhaustion of the causes that were responsible for the experience; and together with the exhaustion of these causes by the diminution of the intensity of the

momentum thereof, there is an understanding involved. The understanding is that experiences by means of contact with objects are revelatory of the nature of the objects and also of the weaknesses of one's own mind. Both these things are known at the time of an experience. We know our mind, and we also know the object which has caused the reaction in our mind.

If we are careful enough to go deep into the nature of any experience, we will know something more about the object which has caused that experience than we did earlier, and also we will know a little more about our own selves at that particular time. The susceptibility of the individual to a particular type of experience is also known because of the experience itself. All experiences are due to susceptibilities on the part of the subject; otherwise, there would be a universal experience in our mind at every time. All things in the universe will be known to us simultaneously if we are not to be susceptible only to certain types of reaction, and impervious to others. Thus, we know something about ourselves by means of the knowledge that we are susceptible to certain characters in the world, and also we know something about the object because it starts becoming less and less attractive by more and more experience.

The object gradually discloses its true character by repeated experience thereof, because the purpose of the contact of the senses with objects is to exhaust the forces of *karma* which are responsible for the contact. When there is a diminution of the intensity of the forces of *karma* which are the causes of this experience, the intensity of the feeling involved in the experience also diminishes, and so the

attraction for the object also diminishes. The pleasure that we get from the object also decreases and then, finally, we get disgusted with the object; we do not want the object any more. That thing which caused so much joy once upon a time becomes an object of dislike after awhile, merely because the reason behind the experience of the object is no more existent. The purpose for which the contact was motivated does not any more operate.

It works out like this: experiences are intended for the *purusha*, for the soul, for the consciousness, for the purpose of exhausting its previous *karmas*, and also for the purpose of newer types of experiences. The *sutra* in this connection is: *sva svāmi śaktyoḥ svarūpopalabdhi hetuḥ saṁyogaḥ* (II.23). *Samyogah* is contact. The contact of the senses with objects is for a purpose, for a *hetuh*. What is a *hetuh*? *Svarūpopalabdhi hetuḥ*—for the purpose of the recognition of one's own self. Whose self? *Sva svāmi śaktyoḥ*—one's own self, as well as the object. The nature of one's own self, as well as the nature of the object, is revealed at the time of an experience; and this revelation on both sides takes place simultaneously. It is simultaneous because the subject-object relationship is the cause of all experience. The subject alone cannot become the cause of experience, nor can the object alone, independently; they must come together and collaborate to bring about the experience.

Thus, experience is a reaction more than an action. It is a new type of product which comes out of the union of the susceptible conditions of the subject and the corresponding characters of the object. Just as when there is a reaction between acid and alkali there is a new product coming out, likewise there is a new product which is called experience,

whether it is pleasurable or otherwise, caused by this union. Though the experience may look like a new product altogether, it is a mixture of the properties which have been inherent in the object as well as the subject. It is not an entirely new thing. Whatever be the taste of water and its capacity to quench thirst, it is nothing but a compound of hydrogen and oxygen. It is nothing but that, in certain proportions. We cannot know that it is made up of these components because of the emphasis we lay on the product alone and not the cause of it.

Likewise, this product called experience, irrespective of the fact that it is made up of aspects of the subject and the object, looks like a new thing altogether—and we run after it. This is caused by *avidya*. *Tasya hetuḥ avidyā* (II.24) is another *sutra*. That we regard an experience of whatever kind as a new thing altogether, and we want it to be repeated again and again—notwithstanding that it is not a new thing altogether because it is brought about partly by the qualities of the subject and partly by the characters of the object—this is called *avidya*. Ignorance of what is actually happening is called *avidya*. This is to be rooted out by yoga.

All this long, long dissertation is an introduction to what yoga is to do, what is supposed to be done, and how one has to prepare oneself for higher practices. The techniques of practice are described by these methods of philosophical dissertation. The ignorance, which is at the background of this impossibility to perceive the character of the experience at any time, is the object which yoga is to remove. It has to be dispelled. This understanding that experience is a process of self-exhaustion of *karmas* is itself

a step in the practice of yoga. It is called *viveka*, and a percentage of this *viveka* is necessary before actual practice is taken up.

In this contact called experience, there is a forgetfulness of two things: one forgets oneself, and one forgets what the object is. We can neither know ourselves, nor can we know the nature of the thing which we have contacted at the time of the experience itself. The consciousness gets absorbed in the experience by forgetfulness of both these aspects. Why the object has been the cause for this experience, we cannot know; and why we are experiencing this condition is also something not known. How is it that this object alone is pleasurable, and not something else? This cannot be known. This impossibility to know is *avidya*, because if we start knowing, then the pleasure will decrease. The more is the knowledge of the nature of an object, the less is its capacity to produce pleasure, and so an ignorance about it is necessary so that pleasure may be enjoyed. This is very strange.

So is the case with one's own self. The less we know about ourselves, the more is the desire generated in us towards objects of sense, and the greater is the pleasure we experience by such contact. The more one knows about one's own self, the less is this tendency to go towards objects, and the less is the intensity of the pleasure or the pain that is brought about by experience.

To conclude, the experience, therefore, is an educative process. It is for the refinement of personality, for the progression of the individual towards its goal which is universality of experience, far removed from this contactual experience of the mind with the object. The purpose of

experience, as it was pointed out, is liberation. And so, yoga tells us that we must take advantage of every experience as a lesson that is provided to us by nature, from which we learn something new in regard to the true nature of things, and we should not be so foolhardy as to ask for a repetition of that experience—just as a person who learns a lesson would like to have further lessons of a new character of a higher degree, rather than ask for a repetition of the same lesson again and again. The asking for the repetition of the same lesson means that we have not understood that lesson; otherwise, if we had grasped it, we would not ask for a repetition of it. We are asking for a repetition of the same experience, especially if it is pleasurable, because we have not understood what it implies and why it has come to us. This is the ignorance aspect of the experience. The purpose of experience is not to provide pleasure to us; the purpose is to teach us a lesson. This is what we cannot understand, and this not understanding is called *avidya*.

The intention of nature is not to give us pleasure or pain. It is not at all concerned with it, just as law does not operate for individual pleasure or individual pain. It is a universal *modus operandi* for bringing about a new order of things. Likewise, the law of nature works with an impartial attitude in respect of everyone and everything. If someone is happy or unhappy at a particular time, that is due to another reason altogether, quite far removed from the intention of nature. The intention of nature is the liberation of the spirit—freedom ultimate. The association of pleasure and pain with this experience is a mistake on the part of the subject, which has lost sight of the goal or the intention of this experience, which comes as a lesson—

just as a captive in a jail may simply take his captivity as a kind of harassment that has been inflicted upon him, not knowing the other legal or social aspects involved. Also, when we take a bitter medicine, we may think only of the bitter aspect or the aspects which make us dislike it, not considering at all the reasons behind the necessity for taking the medicine.

There is no such thing as pleasure or pain in this world from the point of view of nature itself, because these are reactions from the side of the individual due to different reasons. The universal law of nature acts impartially for educative purposes only—for the purpose of refinement of personality, for the purpose of improvement in the quality of individuality—which is to become more and more comprehensive as it advances in the process of evolution. It is wisdom and insight and experience of a greater degree of reality that is the intention of nature—not the individual pleasure. This is a very important thing to remember: we do not live here for the enjoyment of anything. We live here for the purpose of progress into an experience of a larger degree of truth. This is the intention of nature. This is the intention behind every experience. This is the cause of the experience, and this is the insight that we gain by experience. So, this is what is meant by the *sutra*: *sva svāmi śaktyoḥ svarūpopalabdhi hetuḥ saṁyogaḥ* (II.23).

This contact, which is the cause of the experience, is mentioned as caused by *avidya*: *tasya hetuḥ avidyā* (II.24). *Vivekakhyātiḥ aviṣṭavā hānopāyaḥ* (II.26): The avoidance of this ignorance, the obliteration of the causes of this contact, is possible by discriminative understanding which is unceasingly operating. It should not operate only for a

moment, and then vanish. *Aviplava viveka khyati* means a continuously flowing discrimination or understanding in regard to every experience through which we pass. Thus, every experience becomes tolerable because it is educative. Any educational method should be a necessary, inevitable, and pleasant aspect of experience. Therefore, there is ultimately no experience which is useless or not educative. Every action and every reaction is a correlated movement of the totality of nature towards the ultimate goal of existence, which is the universality of experience.

Thus, experiences are to be taken as stepping stones to greater and greater success. A useless thing does not exist in nature. An absolutely unimportant thing does not exist anywhere, because if it were absolutely useless, it would not exist. The very fact that it exists shows that it has some meaning, some significance, and it plays a role in the process of evolution. Also, the very fact that we are aware of it shows that we have some connection with it. If we are totally unaware of it, that is a different matter, because according to the system that we are studying, every awareness is a contact of consciousness with an object; and every such contact is brought about by some reason behind the cause, which is the product of previous *karmas*. So we have some connection with this experience; and whatever we experience, whether we like it or not, is a necessary experience. It is, therefore, to be taken as a step in one's education towards higher experiences.

Therefore, there should be no attitude of like or dislike in respect of an experience. This impartial attitude that we are supposed to develop is what is meant by *viveka khyati*, or discriminative understanding. We should not say, "Oh,

how pleasurable it is,” or “Oh, how horrible it is.” That is not proper, because a thing is neither pleasurable nor horrible. It looks like that due to some mistake in the perception of values attached to the experience. The causative factors behind the experience are completely out of the ken of perception and, therefore, the experiences look pleasurable or otherwise. If the causative factors are known, there would be a scientific perception of things and not an emotional reaction in respect of things. An impartial perception is impossible where emotion is attached to that experience, and emotion goes with the experience on account of feeling being there behind it—that is called *avidya*. The discriminative faculty gets submerged temporarily by the preponderance of the feeling aspect, and that is what is called emotion. The dominance of feeling over understanding becomes the cause of our reaction in terms of pleasure and pain, and *viveka khyati* is not there. Hence, what is expected of us is not merely an emphasis on feeling or emotion in respect of an experience, but a probe that is of a more impartial character. That is *viveka khyati*.

All this is terrible for a beginner in yoga because emotions are part and parcel of our nature, and we cannot exist without them. We are what these emotions are. And so, we can imagine the extent of training that is necessary to allow the understanding to gain an upper hand in our life, far surpassing the forces of emotion which try to supplant it; but this is a precondition to yoga. Yoga is the most scientific of attitudes that we can think of because it is the most impartial.

Chapter 69

UNDERSTANDING WORLD-CONSCIOUSNESS

What is known as the perception of an object is really a reading of some meaning into the object by the perceiving consciousness. It is not merely a bare reflection of the object in the mind, as something may be reflected in a mirror without the mirror having any say in the matter. It is not simply a featureless, bare, unconscious reflection. If it were a mere mechanical reflection, there would be no attachment towards objects. For instance, I may physically touch an object and yet I may have no contact with it, because psychological contact is different from physical contact or proximity. The bondage of the soul is not merely the physical contact or the proximity of one thing with another. It is a psychological transformation which affects oneself wholly. That is what is known as the bondage of the soul.

Hence, the perception of an object is of a very peculiar character. It is not merely a meaningless perception. It is a consciousness of an object with great significance behind it. It is this significance that is read in the object that causes the transformation in the mind—otherwise, there would be no bondage. The self must be connected with the object; and as the self is consciousness in its essence, if this aspect is withdrawn or is absent, physical contact may not bring bondage.

A thing with which one is not psychologically connected may be sitting on one's own head, and yet may not cause bondage; but a thing with which one is psychologically connected may be millions of miles away,

and yet it may cause bondage. Therefore, bondage is not a physical distance, remoteness or proximity. It has nothing to do with the physical character. It is something which is evaluated by the mind as meaningful in itself, as having something to do with its own process of existence; and then it is that there is a change or transformation taking place within oneself.

The perception of the object is a mental act, not merely a physical contact. And, as the mind is perpetually illumined by consciousness, which is one's own essential nature, the mental act looks like the act of one's own self. While it is the mind that perceives the object for a particular purpose, it is made to appear that we, as total individuals, are the perceivers of the object—and then we say, "I perceive the object." It is not that 'mind' perceives the object, but 'I' perceive the object, because the 'I' is, for certain reasons, one with the mind. The mind's reading meaning in the object is also based on certain circumstances which have brought about the birth of individuality. The causes of the incarnation of the individual in this particular world phenomenon are the determining factors of the manner in which a mind or a particular individual will react towards certain groups of objects, because perception is more a reaction of the mind than a kind of action. It is a stimulation of the mind in respect of certain circumstances, forms, shapes, colours, sounds, etc.

This stimulation of the mind is really the perception of the object, and it is caused by certain urges within oneself with which one is born, and which are really the causative factors of the birth itself. We have referred to these urges as

karmas. There is no English word, unfortunately, to bring about the proper meaning of what this word '*karma*' means. The word '*karma*' has been associated mostly with an action that we do, such as walking, grasping, etc. But as we had occasion to observe, the forces of *karma* are different from the mere movement of the limbs of the body which are usually called actions, or *karmas*. What we are concerned with here is an impetus that is generated within oneself, an impulse that urges itself forward for various purposes. It is ultimately a complex urge which cannot be attributed either to the body, to the mind, or to the soul independently. The Upanishads, especially the Katha Upanishad, mention that the experiencer is a complex of the soul, the mind and the senses: *ātmendriy-mano-yuktam bhoktety āhur manīṣiṇaḥ* (K.U. I.3.4). It is not one thing alone that acts; and what is known as the individuality of a person is also this complex.

Hence, the peculiar urges which are engendered by a particular sense perception become the forces that create further experiences of a similar nature, and inasmuch as the span of physical existence is not long enough to provide occasions for the fulfilment of all these urges that have been engendered in this manner, there comes about a necessity for rebirth. Death is nothing but the exhaustion of the forces which could be fulfilled through a particular body. And when the instrument, which is the body, has fulfilled its purpose of the fulfilment of a set of urges, its work is over. Then it is cast out and there is the reconstitution of the existent urges into a new pattern altogether. This new shape that they take according to their inner structures is the cause behind a new type of body that is born. Then, this

body that is born once again becomes a new instrument for the operation of these urges.

Why do they operate? The purpose is self-exhaustion, as it was stated earlier. They want to exhaust themselves by experience. The coming in contact of the senses and the mind with the object is called experience; it is called *bhoga*. And, the purpose of this *bhoga* or experience is *apavarga* or *moksha*—liberation.

This contact with the objects cannot cease as long as the mind continues to read significance into the objects. If there is a value in a thing, we cannot abstain from seeing it, because it is the value that draws one's attention towards it. What is the value? It is that the object can subserve a particular individualistic purpose of the subject. Some needs of the subject can be fulfilled by the object—whatever be the needs, according to the circumstance of the case. The value of the object is nothing but the capacity of the object to fulfil the needs of the individual, and when the capacity is not there, it has no value. When there is no value, one is not interested in it, and then there will be no psychological transformation in respect of the perception of an object. There would not be attachment.

Thus, attachment cannot cease as long as meaning is there in things, and meaning cannot be absent as long as needs are felt within, and needs will not be absent as long as we are what we are—which is a situation that is arisen on account of *avidya*: *tasya hetuḥ avidyā* (II.24). We have originally committed a sin, a mistake, which theologians call the 'original sin'—the primitive fall of the individual from the cosmic, the isolation of the conscious subject from

the Universal subject. This is the real fall; and this is *avidya*, specifically as well as generally.

As long as the subject-consciousness is isolated from Cosmic-consciousness, there cannot be a remedy for this situation. The remedy is, once again, a resetting up of the old constitution—namely, the harmonious adjustment of the subject-consciousness with the Universal. But, this cannot easily take place for various reasons. It cannot take place because the *asmita*, or the ego principle, is very vehement. It is very forceful, very powerful, adamant, and it will not listen to any argument. Philosophy will not work here because the intellect, which is the philosophising principle, is itself a servant of the forces which are the causes of the birth of individuality which are seeking satisfaction through contact. Therefore, tad abhāvāt saṁyogābhāvaḥ (II.25), says the *sutra*. The contact of the subject with the objects outside can cease only when ignorance ceases, and not before. As long as the root is there, the cause is there, and so the effect must be there.

We cannot, by any amount of individualistic effort, wrench ourselves from contact with objects. Merely because we close our eyes, it does not mean that we are not thinking of the objects. Even our consciousness that we exist is an object-consciousness, because self-consciousness is objectivity itself. Whatever be one's effort, it will not succeed here because the efforts do not ultimately obviate the possibility of space-time-cause awareness and the consequent object-consciousness. Therefore, *avidya* must go. If *avidya* goes, *asmita* goes. If *asmita* goes, *raga* and *dvesha* go, and then everything goes—all bondage ceases. It

is *raga* and *dvesha* that are the causes of the perception of things.

We may wonder how the perception of a stone can be due to attachment. We are not attached to a stone that is on a hill, or to a tree that is standing in the forest. In what way are we attached to it? How can it be said that attachment is the cause of perception? If there is a small pebble on the top of a hill, we are not attached to it; and yet, we see it. Attachment here does not mean a conscious motivation of emotion; it is a deeper thing altogether. We may not be consciously aware as to what is happening. Love for an object philosophically, metaphysically, does not mean an active movement of the emotion towards the object on the conscious level. The personality of the individual, as we have been repeating again and again, is not merely on the conscious level. It is something very, very deep. Hence, whether there is attachment to an object or not cannot be known merely by studying the conscious level of the mind. It may be completely clean like a slate and yet it may be turbid at the bottom. It is this inside structure or the deep-rooted nature of the individual that is the cause of reactions in the form of perceptions.

We react totally, and not merely in a mentation aspect. It is not merely the thought that is reacting, or the will that is reacting in an isolated manner, but the whole thing that we are reacts. Every time the whole thing starts functioning, even when merely the conscious level is operating, it is urged by the subconscious and unconscious layers which are at the bottom, and which lie unconscious but yet are very active. What we call the unconscious or the subconscious level is not really unconscious like a stone or

a dullard—it is a very active principle. It is called unconscious only for the purpose of psychological analysis because it does not take part in the active operations of the individual in respect of experience. But it has another kind of activity altogether.

As we studied in the Samkhya, there are three *gunas* of *prakriti*—*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. When *tamas*, or even *rajas*, is predominant, *sattva* gets submerged. Therefore, there is no proper consciousness of what is inside, or what is happening inside. When *tamas* is predominant, consciousness is obliterated. There is a complete darkness, as in sleep. In sleep we are aware of nothing, but it does not mean there is a total absence of things. We are not absent in sleep; we are very wholly present. Everything is there, and yet we are not conscious. We are wholly present in sleep, but we are unconscious. It is also a fact that everything that is worthwhile, everything that is meaningful, everything that will cause pleasure and pain is also there.

Sleep is not a dead condition; it is a very active one. Therefore, it is also called a *vritti* in the Yoga Sutras: *pramāṇa viparyaya vikalpa nidrā smṛtayaḥ* (I.6). Even *nidra* is a *vritti*; it is an operation of the mind in a particular manner. Even if the army withdraws itself, it is an action that it is doing; it is not simply a cessation of activity. Likewise, there are various stages in which the personality manifests itself. Inasmuch as the very atmosphere into which we are born—the world phenomena of which we are contents or citizens—is regarded as the necessary field for experience of the individual, it goes without saying that even a bare perception of an object has a cause behind it.

That cause has come from the deep-seated urges of the individual.

Thus, in a highly philosophical sense, we may say that every perception is an attachment. And, it is held that a total absence of attachment would bring about a total cessation of perception of things. We will not be even aware that things exist when our attachment completely ceases. But this is a very advanced condition of the mind where it will be completely oblivious of externality, because that state supervenes only when the unconscious comes to the conscious level, as psychoanalysts tell us, and we become complete masters of what we are. At present, we are not masters of ourselves; we are slaves. We think we have freedom, though our so-called freedom is only a conscious motivation of unconscious urges inside.

This is very difficult to understand because when we are completely subject to a particular force, we cannot know that we are so subject. That is the difficulty. But this is what has actually happened. The automatic functions of the body are themselves proof of our inability to control the system. We cannot change the course of the movement of the heart, or the lungs, or the digestive system, or even the brain cells; they have to work according to their own fashion. So what control have we over ourselves, although we say we are masters? Well, that is a different question. The point is that there is a subjection of the very structure of the body-mind complex to the forces that are responsible for its birth. And, these forces are responsible for the experiences thereof in respect of objects, and they are the causes of perception.

Therefore, go back to the cause. We will find that there is a cause behind every cause. There is a long linkage of

these causative factors, and unless the precedent cause is rectified, the ensuing effect cannot be controlled. While *abhinivesa* is caused by *raga* and *dvesha*, that again is caused by *asmita*, and *asmita* is caused by *avidya*. Thus, this ignorance, the source which is *avidya*, has to be overcome by deep meditation, for which purpose the *sutras* are expounded.

Tad abhāvāt samyogābhāvaḥ (II.25). *Samyoga*, or contact with objects, ceases when *avidya* ceases. Then, we will not desire things. The desire for things is due to the loss of the essentialities of our own being. Some aspects of consciousness have been screened over by the presence of the urges within. And, these aspects of oneself, which have been so screened, become causes for desires.

Every effort is born of *avidya*, so the question is: How are we to work on this *avidya*? Even the understanding of the intellect is permitted by the structure of *avidya* at a particular time. For this, graduated steps are suggested. A sudden stroke cannot be dealt to *avidya*; that is not possible. It is a very slow process of a gradual digging into the depth of our difficulties. These stages are what are known as the stages of yoga: *yama*, *niyama*, *asana*, *pranayama*, *pratyahara*, *dharana*, *dhyana* and *samadhi*. A very scientific recipe is provided to us here, for gradual extrication of consciousness from the clutches of objects. The extrication should be very gradual. It should not be suddenly done, because if the conditions of the previous stage have not been fulfilled, the next step cannot be taken. Every level of existence has a law of its own, and we have to fulfil the law of that particular stage in which we are. We cannot go above it and say, "I belong to another realm."

That will not be possible, because we belong to that realm of which we are conscious. If we do not belong to a particular realm, we will not be even conscious of it.

There is no use saying, "I do not belong to this world. I belong to Brahmaloaka." This is not true, because we do belong to this world, which is proved by the fact that we are aware of the existence of the world. And so, we are controlled by the laws of this world, and the world is not merely a physical substance of earth, water, fire, air, ether. It is a mix-up; it is an association. What we call world, or *samsara*, is an association of consciousness in a particular manner with the atmosphere outside. Therefore, the extrication of consciousness from bondage is an extrication from associations. It is not a giving up of things, as we usually say in a mood of *vairagya*. We do not give up anything. We are only trying to release ourselves from the bondage into which we have entered on account of having no control over ourselves, no mastery over the processes of thinking, feeling, willing, etc.

The stages through which we have to pass, which are very gradual, are also very scientific. That is, the most concrete of facts is taken into consideration first. The immediate reality—which we cannot gainsay, which hits upon us as the only reality—is taken into consideration first, and our debts to that realm are paid first. That the most insistent demands are to be provided for before the milder ones, though they may be deeper, is noticed further.

The world-consciousness we are speaking of, which is the real bondage of the soul, is a very complicated matter. World-consciousness does not merely mean mountain-consciousness, river-consciousness or building-

consciousness, etc. This is only a very glib way of describing a crude aspect of it. But the real world-consciousness is a very complicated involvement. This is why we cannot understand ourselves thoroughly by a mere look at things, nor can we understand the causes of this involvement, just as a disease is not caused by one factor merely. It is brought about by various susceptibilities, external as well as internal, and a medical diagnosis should observe these factors carefully before treatment is done. Likewise yoga, which is the treatment of the illness of *samsara*, has to first of all diagnose the case in all its aspects, internally as well as externally. This is because world-consciousness, which is an involvement of consciousness, is an external involvement as well as an internal involvement. We cannot say which came first and which came afterwards. They appear to have arisen simultaneously.

However, whatever be the philosophical or the scientific truth about this involvement, the teacher here gives due regard to the sentiments of the individual. We know very well that reason does not work always. Sentiment works very quickly, so the sentiments are noticed and dealt with in an appropriate manner. The sentimental feeling of the individual is towards the social atmosphere in which it exists. The very first consciousness of a child is of a social environment, which is physical as well as human. That we, as individuals, also are involved in our own external environment and have contributed much to bring about our social and physical experiences is a different question to be dealt with later on. But, as I mentioned, the very gross aspect of this experience is observed first and treated at the very outset.

The physical world and the social world are the first things that we observe, and we are associated with them in a particular manner. They bind us in a particular way. We have a bondage in respect of the physical world and also to the social atmosphere. Patanjali discusses first what bondage is, and then the prescription for it is provided accordingly.

Chapter 70

THE SEVEN STAGES OF PERFECTION

Tad abhāvāt saṁyogābhāvaḥ hānam taddṛśeḥ kaivalyam (II.25): The absence of ignorance which is responsible for perceptions is itself liberation; that is the freedom of the spirit. The absence of bondage is the same as the presence of freedom. These are not two experiences, but a self-identical revelation like the passing of the night and the rising of the sun. This experience of freedom, or *kaivalya*, is not possible of attainment as long as there is even the least tendency or susceptibility to object perception—whatever may be the justification which the reason may put forth for such perception.

As we have had occasion to study, these tendencies to object perception are deep-seated and they can be present—sometimes actively present—even when they are apparently imperceptible. The conscious non-apprehension of an object is not necessarily an indication of the absence of this tendency to object perception in the deeper layers of one's personality. The urges of the individual are nothing but the building bricks of the individuality itself. What is known as self-consciousness, or individuality, is a pattern or shape taken by this tendency to object perception. As long as the individuality-consciousness persists, even in its minimum formation, one can safely conclude that these tendencies are still there, because when they are absent, the individuality also vanishes, just as when we pull out every brick from the house, the house itself is not there.

This body is the house. This individuality is the vehicle that has been manufactured by these tendencies to object-

perception, and they themselves form the substance of this body-mind complex. And, the presence of this vehicle is simultaneous with the attachment of consciousness to that vehicle; this is the bondage of the soul. Thus, it is hard for one to attain salvation, because it is the abolition of individuality itself—a total extinction of personality that is known as *nirvana*, the complete vanishing from sight of the very possibility of objectivity. The blowing out of a lamp is what is actually meant by *nirvana*. The lamp of world-consciousness—the light with which we see objects—is blown out completely, and there is the return of the spirit to its own pristine purity and status.

This is the meaning in substance of these *sutras*: tad abhāvāt saṃyogābhāvaḥ hānaṃ taddṛśeḥ kaivalyam (II.25); vivekakhyātiḥ aviṣṭavā hānopāyaḥ (II.26); tasya saptadhā prāntabhūmiḥ prajñā (II.27). What is the way to this attainment? Discriminative knowledge is the way, which has to be attained by the practice of the limbs of yoga—and there is no other alternative. Nanya panthā vidyate ayanāya (R.V. X.90.16), says the Rig Veda. We cannot have any other, simpler method here. There is only one method. This is a single-track approach, and everyone has to proceed along the same road which others have trodden from ancient times. This is the *viveka khyati* that is referred to here. The enlightenment that follows understanding of the true nature of things—this is *viveka khyati*. This understanding should be perpetual; it should be second nature to us.

The understanding in respect of the true nature of things, which we are trying to entertain in ourselves as the faculty of correct perception, is to be the only way of

looking at things. That is the only method we can adopt in seeing, and this is the only way we can think. There is no other way of thinking. Our life should be a continuous process, *aviplava*, of the manifestation of this understanding, so that even in our day-to-day life, in our working hours also, our mind should think only in this manner and there should be no other way of thinking—just as even when we are intensely busy we cannot forget our identity of personality, and even the heaviest business cannot obliterate the consciousness of the world that is in front of us or that we are awake to at this time. A thing that is in front of us is visible to us, even if we are intensely busy with any amount of enterprise, because that kind of awareness has become part of our very existence; so should become this *aviplava viveka khyati*. The moment we open our eyes, the moment we think, the moment we feel, the moment we act or react, this should be the attitude. This is the continuous operation of *viveka khyati*, which is the only way to salvation. No other way is there.

This *viveka khyati*, or understanding, arises by stages; it does not suddenly burst like a bomb. In the beginning it very gradually reveals itself by effort, and later on it becomes a spontaneous feature. In one of the *sutras* we are told that there are at least seven stages of the manifestation of this understanding. The number seven is very holy, and it has been held holy in all religions and in all mystical fields, whether of the East or the West. Something very strange it is. In all the scriptures we see this number seven mentioned as a holy number. These are supposed to be the stages of the ascent of the soul to its perfection.

The earlier stages are those of personal effort, exertion and deliberate attempt, whereas the later ones are automatic. We are merely carried away by the momentum of past effort where, on account of the diminution of the intensity of individuality-consciousness, the question of personal effort does not arise. The gravitational pull of a totally different realm takes us by the hand and we are led along the direction of that pull, which is a different thing altogether from the pull of this earth, against which we have to put forth effort in the earlier stages.

Tasya saptadhā prāntabhūmiḥ prajñā (II.27): Consciousness is sevenfold. The awareness of this type arises by gradual degrees, in seven stages, according to the meaning of this *sūtra* as agreed upon by interpreters, because the meaning is not given here as to what these stages are. It simply says there are seven stages. We are told that the seven stages are the stages of the discovery of reality, by degrees, in the phenomena of experience.

The first stage is supposed to be the detection of the defect in the objects or things: there is something wrong with things, and they are not as they appear to be. This is the first awareness that arises in a person. Things are not what they seem, as the poet said. Even the best things are not really what they are. They appear to be best under certain conditions. The valuable things, the worthy things, the virtuous things, the beautiful things—all these are conditionally valid, and they are not valid in their essence. That the objects of sense, the things of the world, are constituted of a nature essentially different from what they appear to the senses and the mind is an awareness that arises in the discriminating, and not in all people. Crass

perception takes the world for granted, and people run after things as moths run to fire, not knowing that it is their destruction. The awareness arises, pointing out that there is some mystery behind things which is quite different from the colour and the shape of things visible to the senses—that there is pain in this world, and it is not pleasure. Pain is rooted behind the so-called pleasure of the world. Sorrow is to follow all the joys of the world, one day or the other. The first step is the awareness or discovery that pain is present and it cannot be avoided under any circumstance as long as things continue to be in the present set-up.

The second stage is the discovery that there is a cause of this pain, that it has not come suddenly from the blue. How has this pain come—this suffering, this sorrow? What is the reason for this defect behind everything? There is a reason. Without a cause, there is no effect. The discovery of the cause of this troublesome situation is the second stage of knowledge. That is a greater control that we gain over our situation. When we know that there is some trouble, and we do not know how the trouble has arisen, we are in a difficulty. But the difficulty is a little bit ameliorated when the cause of it is known, because we feel a confidence that, after all, this is the cause, and we shall try to tackle it. So, in the second stage of awareness there is a recognition of the causal background of the troubles of life, the pains of experience.

The third stage is the recognition of a way out of these causative factors. Even if we know the causes of the trouble, is there a way out of it, or is it impossible to do anything? That must be seen first. We will find out that there is a way. We can get over these causes of pain and trouble. This gives

greater confidence and a satisfaction that, after all, we are not going to suffer like this for all time; there is going to be an end to it. That is the discovery that there is a possibility of getting over the causes of pain. But this stage comes very late, because while everyone can feel the pain and can sometimes attribute the pain to certain causes, they cannot find the way out. Not finding the way out is *samsara*, the essence of suffering. When the way is discovered, there is an effort that automatically arises in oneself to work out this way which is the redemption of the sorrows of life. The awareness that there is a state which is beyond the sufferings of life is itself a great solace.

These stages directly correspond to the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism, what the Buddha taught originally as his gospel. The stages of yoga are nothing but these, mentioned here in a new language altogether.

There is an awareness of the presence of a state beyond all suffering; and when the existence of this state beyond suffering becomes an object of one's awareness, coupled with a feeling that there is a way to it—that is the beginning of the actual freedom of the soul. Then, there is a complete shaking up from the very roots of one's being. The internal organ, the mind, whose purpose is to bring about *bhoga* and *aparvarga* to consciousness, begins to withdraw its sway over consciousness. The power that the mind has over us gets lessened, and instead of our being mastered by it, we seem to have a chance of gaining mastery over it. This awareness arises only when experiences in the world which are to be undergone in this span of life are about to be exhausted. Until that time, the awareness itself will not be there.

When we are fast asleep, snoring, we are not even aware that the sun is about to rise. The awareness felt subtly within that perhaps the day is dawning is an indication that we are not fully asleep. We are half-aware of the coming dawn. Likewise, when the mind becomes aware of these stages it puts forth effort, as it has slowly risen from the slumber of life and is now dreaming of the possibility of a higher experience.

The efforts that are mentioned here are nothing but the efforts of the practice of yoga. When the mind loses control over the consciousness, which is the fifth stage, there is a dismantling of the house of the *gunas*. As I mentioned, all the material of the house of this individuality is pulled out. The materials are the *gunas*—*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. The prison of this individuality is pulled out, broken down, because the material of this individuality, which is nothing but the complex of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, is withdrawn within its cause, and this complex of body-mind ceases to operate. That is the sixth stage.

The seventh stage is the return of consciousness to itself, where the self becomes aware of what it is—completely freed from all bondage. *Yogāṅgānuṣṭhānāt aśuddhikṣaye jñānadīptiḥ āvivekakhyāteḥ* (II.28): When there is complete purification of the mind by the practice of yoga, there is an automatic and spontaneous manifestation of consciousness in the direction of its freedom. ‘*Avivekakhyateḥ*’ is the word used here in this *sūtra*. The effort should continue until correct discrimination dawns. We should not withdraw the effort, or cease from the effort, until perfection is attained in this understanding. Perfection is symbolised in the experience of the total freedom which

one gains over the forces which were, once upon a time, masters over oneself. These forces are physical as well as psychological, external as well as internal, as we already know.

The powers that are mentioned in the Yoga Sutras, which a yogi is supposed to attain by practice, are the experiences one passes through on account of the ascent of consciousness to higher degrees of perfection. One does not meditate merely for the sake of powers. They automatically arise. They are the spontaneous reactions that follow from nature outside due to the harmony one establishes with nature as a whole. Powers are nothing but the outcome of harmony with nature. When there is disharmony, there is weakness; when there is harmony, there is strength, because it is nature that is powerful. Nobody else can be strong; and the strength of nature comes to us when we are in harmony with it.

At present, our body, our mind—everything—is in disharmony with nature. The earth, fire, water, air, ether—every element is in disharmony with us. Thus we have hunger, thirst, heat, cold, fear of death, and all sorts of things. All these troubles arise on account of a dissonant attitude which the body-mind complex has adopted in respect of natural forces.

We cannot agree with anything. We always disagree. That is why we are suffering. When we totally agree with everything in every respect, at all times, from the depths of our being, we become harmonious with all things. Then the powers of nature enter us. As a matter of fact, there are no such things as powers; these are only ways of expressing the experience of freedom. It is bondage that makes us feel that

there are things outside us. There are no things outside us, really speaking. The things which appear to come to us as the result of achieving powers in yoga are only aspects of our own nature which we have forgotten, which we have lost sight of on account of *avidya*, or ignorance.

Therefore, the perfection of understanding, or the *viveka khyati* referred to, is a gradual widening of the grasp which consciousness has over the substances of nature. At present, one has no grasp over anything because there is an isolation of oneself from the cosmic substance due to the affirmation of the ego, or the *asmita*, and the weakness of personality. Whatever be the type of that weakness—physical or psychological—it is due to the inability of cosmic forces to enter into oneself, just as the sunlight cannot enter the rooms of a house if all the doors and windows are closed. Even if the sun is blazing outside, we may be shivering inside due to the doors and windows being closed, preventing the light of the sun from entering.

Likewise the forces of nature, which are really what are meant by the powers of nature, cannot enter into the personality of an individual on account of the very presence of individuality. What we call individuality is nothing but the closed house of the *asmita*, where every avenue of entry of cosmic force is closed completely due to the intensity of self-consciousness. One is so intensely aware of oneself as an individual that it is impossible for cosmic forces to enter that person, so that one begins to rot from within due to this ego, and undergoes intense suffering which is the direct outcome of the absence of freedom which is equivalent to the harmony of oneself with nature.

The stages of yoga that are going to be mentioned—the limbs of yoga as they are called—are the stages of the mastery which one gains over phenomena, external and internal, by a systematic ascent to greater and greater degrees of harmony. Thus, yoga is, in a sense, a system of harmony. The Bhagavadgita has put it very beautifully: *samatvaṁ yoga ucyate* (B.G. II.48).

In every stage there is an establishment of equilibrium of oneself with the atmosphere. The study of the limbs of yoga is a study of the various stages by which we have to establish this harmony of ourselves with the atmosphere. What is called ‘atmosphere’ is only a term used to indicate the presence of a factor that is external to oneself. The externality consciousness also gets diminished gradually as mastery is gained more and more.

Two things happen simultaneously. The first one is the diminution of the intensity of one’s externality-consciousness. The feeling that there is a world outside is so intense in us that we have no say in the matter of things in this world. We seem to be helpless. In the ascent that we are going to speak about, there will be a slow decrease in the intensity of this feeling of externality and a corresponding feeling of harmony of ourselves with the atmosphere outside.

Secondly, there will be a diminution of the extent of the object world in front of us—which is, at present, hanging upon us as a heavy weight. The individual subject looks upon itself as a minute content of the vast world of objects, so that we always think that the world is larger than we are. It is far bigger than we are, so we are frightened of the world. The object is much bigger than the subject. That is

why the subject is frightened always. It is always in a state of insecurity and sorrow.

As the ascent progresses, there is also a diminution in the extent of this object world, and the subject becomes wider and wider. As we go higher and higher, the extent of the jurisdiction of the subject becomes more and more, and that of the object becomes less and less, so that the world becomes smaller and we become bigger—the reverse of what is happening now. There is a diminution of the content of consciousness in the form of the object world and a simultaneous expansion of the jurisdiction of the subject consciousness, as well as a diminution in the intensity of the feeling of externality in oneself. This is what happens, stage by stage, by the practice.

Thus, these limbs of yoga—the eight limbs especially mentioned in Patanjali—are the eight degrees of mastery which consciousness gains over its environment by the development of harmony with its atmosphere. We cannot have mastery over anything unless we are harmonious with that thing. The moment we are disharmonious, we become puppets in the hand of that thing with which we are disharmonious. Harmony and power are identical. The more we are harmonious with a thing, a person, an atmosphere or a condition, whatever it is, the more say we have in the matter of that thing—which means control over that thing, power over that thing.

We are coming to the conclusion that the highest power is identity of oneself with that thing over which we want to have power. That is intuition. What is known as intuition is the insight which one gains into the substance of that thing which is now regarded as the object of perception, and

which is then to become the very self of the thing. So, as we approach nearer and nearer to the subjecthood of the object, we gain greater mastery over it, and then it is that we have greater feeling for it, greater sympathy for it. This is what is known as the harmony that one has to establish with the object.

Hence, the harmony that we are speaking of is nothing but the development of the consciousness of a selfhood in the object, in consonance with the selfhood of one's own self. The object ceases to be an object as the consciousness rises in its awareness of itself, because what is called an object is nothing but an aspect of the self itself, which has got separated by peculiar factors. That is called ignorance. It is this separatist tendency that has become responsible for one aspect of the self recognising another aspect of it as the object, so that there is a fight of oneself with oneself, as it were. So, the world is nothing but a war of oneself with oneself.

This is to be obviated by the development of *viveka khyati*. The purpose of yoga is the enhancement of enlightenment in regard to things by the adjustment of oneself with the object atmosphere in greater and greater harmony—which is another way of saying that we have to become more and more sympathetic with the selfhood of things, rather than recognising their object nature. The equilibrium that is the essence of these stages of practice is the essence of the enlightenment that one has to attain, because the rise of enlightenment within is simultaneous with the establishment of harmony outside. Hence, there is a simultaneous change taking place internally, as well as externally.

When we change within ourselves, the world also changes for us. It is not that we change only inside our house, and outside everything remains chaotic. This is not so. There is a corresponding change in the outer atmosphere when there is an internal transformation, because the internal is commensurate with the external. The one is not really outside the other. There is a transformation of existence itself when there is a transformation of consciousness. The attainment of the perfection of consciousness becomes also, at the same time, the attainment of the perfection of all existence, which is the goal of practising the eight limbs of yoga.

Chapter 71

THE EIGHT LIMBS OR STAGES OF YOGA

Yogāṅgānuṣṭhānāt aśuddhikṣaye jñānadīptiḥ āviveka-khyāteḥ (II.28): The practice of the various stages or limbs of yoga leads to the purification of the self and to the revelation of knowledge up to the attainment of perfection. These limbs of yoga, or the stages, are really stages of purification and enlargement of the dimension of personality—an enhancement of one's comprehension of the extent of one's being.

This calls for a preparation which is uncanny in every way. It needs no mention that unprepared minds cannot take to yoga because the resort to this practice is not merely an activity that is undertaken, but a rebirth that one takes into a new type of thought and feeling, so that all preconceptions may have to be set aside when this new system of thinking is to be introduced. Everything that we regard ordinarily as the meaning of life ceases to be a meaning here. There is a new type of meaning which will come to the surface of one's mind when one properly prepares oneself for this practice.

These preparations are not really intellectual, academic or even scientific in the common parlance. It is a readjustment of oneself to a new order of reality—a task which is difficult to undertake without guidance from a competent teacher. This is, right from the beginning to the end, a process of living and not merely gathering information or understanding in any type of extrinsic manner. It is, through and through, a process of living and being, and not merely an understanding of things

externally. There is nothing in yoga if it is not lived. Therefore, it is quite different from study in the sense of a vocational pursuit or the idea of education that we have in our minds, because our studies in the world are generally not connected with life. They are certain auxiliaries to life, whereas here we are not going to enter into any auxiliary, but go right to the heart of life itself.

Hence, the preparations called for are all-round. It is not merely one type of preparation that is required. It is moral, it is physical, it is intellectual, it is social, and it is spiritual. All things at once are focused into a single point of the student's preparation for yoga; and when this purification process begins, there is a spontaneous purification of personality. All dross in the form of *rajas* and *tamas*—the tendencies of the mind towards enjoyment of things rather than wisdom in regard to things—ceases, and there is a revelation, *jnanadipti*. It has to be reiterated that this *jnanadipti*, or illumination, is not merely a vacant light that flashes itself forth on certain objects; it is an enlightenment of oneself—a knowledge of Truth and an insight into Reality. Therefore, it is difficult to understand with any stretch of imagination what sort of knowledge it is.

Because of our inability to comprehend the nature of this knowledge, we still have doubts. Even till the end, this doubt persists as to the relationship of oneself with God, world and society, and there are even doubts concerning the nature of one's status after liberation, and so on, which are the remnants of the doubts concerning the relationship of oneself with other things. The doubts arise on account of a bifurcation of knowledge from its object, inasmuch as we

are born into this doubt, into this world of this distinction that is persistently made between knowing and being. But, every step in yoga is a step towards the unification of knowledge and being, so that we are trying to tread a path which is far removed from the common ways of the man of the world. This is the reason that there is such an insistence on isolation, sequestration, and guarding and protecting oneself from the onslaughts of feelings which are usually connected with the ways of life that the world knows.

These stages, these limbs of yoga, are the ardent and fervent blossoming forth of oneself into the higher stages of one's own being, which calls for utter self-restraint at every step. Yoga is nothing if it is not self-restraint. It is humanly impossible to understand what this self-restraint actually means if one is not endowed with qualities which are really superhuman, because self-restraint, or self-control—which is the very base, the essence and the quintessence of yoga—is not withdrawal, as it is usually understood, from anything that is existent. It is not cutting oneself off from life in the world; nor does it mean indulgence in the life of the world. The restraint of the self is an attitude of consciousness, an adjustment of oneself which is different from physical activities or psychological withdrawals from realities, against which our modern psychoanalysts are so opposed due to a misconstruing of the nature of Reality and the purpose of yoga. There is, therefore, a necessity to reorientate the very concept of one's goal of life and, consequently, the methods that have to be adopted for the fulfilment of this goal.

These preparations in the practice of yoga are the gradual changes that are introduced into the outlook of life

which one entertains, and the very first step, known as the *yamas*, is indicative of our attitude to things in general. What do we think about people? What do we feel about things? What is our opinion about the world as a whole? This subtle feeling, reaction, attitude, opinion or conception that we hold in respect of persons, things and objects outside us is symbolic of the stuff that we are made of and the extent to which we are prepared for this higher practice, because our opinions about things are the prejudices that we have in our minds. They cannot be got rid of, inasmuch as we are born into these notions. We need not be taught that the world is outside us, that we have friends and enemies, that there are things to be liked or not liked, that there are good and bad things, that there is a beautiful thing and an ugly thing. These things need not be taught to us. We know very well, instinctively, that such things do exist in the world, but it is precisely these things, these notions, these ideas that we have to shed because the presence of these prejudged ideas in our minds becomes the obstacle that we have to face in the future.

As a matter of fact, what are known as the impediments in yoga are nothing but the concretisations of the prejudices that we have already in our minds, which we have suppressed for various reasons in the earlier stages, because the ideas that we hold are our own children—they are our own selves—and nothing can be dearer to us than our notions, ideas, concepts, feelings and opinions. And, who can give up one's own opinion? One's own opinion is the only opinion that can be in the world and, therefore, it is so intimate to one's being. How can we get rid of notions? Notions are the very ways in which the mind

works, and the mind is inseparable from our phenomenal personality.

Hence, the practice of even the most initial of these stages is a herculean task. It asks for a complete turning of the tables round and bringing about a complete revolution in the way of thinking, which may sometimes deal a deathblow at common practice and the tradition of the world. Nothing can be more painful. Sometimes it is even capable of producing reactions, as happened in the case of many saints of the past who were mortified by society on account of the sudden revolutionary thoughts that they held in the light of the Reality which they faced in their experience, but which the world could not understand and the world will never understand.

It is a hard job; and it would be a part of the wisdom of the student to see that even strong thoughts and revolutionary ideas which may be in conformity with the nature of Reality do not suddenly set up phenomenal reactions—physical or social. Well, certain things are beyond one's control. Occasionally, experiences of such a type may arise in oneself which may have their own say in the matter; and, for good or for bad, whatever consequences follow may have to be tolerated. But as far as one's understanding goes, to the extent of the capacity of oneself in judging things, it should be proper that extreme steps should not be taken. A very careful harmony should be introduced into our idea of the relationship between ourselves and the world, and also the relationship between ourselves and the goal of life—God Himself—so that it would be wisdom to be moderate, and patient, and go stage by stage without missing even one step.

The limbs of yoga are mentioned to be eight. Yama niyama āsana prāṇāyāma pratyāhāra dhāraṇā dhyāna samādhyayaḥ aṣṭau aṅgāni (II.29). These are the stages through which we have to pass. The *angas*, or the limbs of yoga, are really the realms of being which we pierce in our concentration. These are the various levels of the density of cosmic atmosphere, all which have their own gravitational fields differing one from the other, through which we have to pass with adamant will and force of thought. But the yoga system also provides us with a clue as to how we can tune ourselves to these gravitational fields of different densities so that there may not be a jerk, or a pull, or a kick at different knots, or junctures, or places of coordination of one level of density with another.

These limbs of yoga are not like isolated rungs in a ladder, one disconnected from the other. They are called 'rungs in the ladder of yoga' no doubt, commonly speaking, but they are rungs of a different and novel type. They are not disconnected, one from the other. They are not isolated. There is an organic connection of one stage with the other, just as we may say the stages of life such as childhood, adolescence, youth, old age, etc., are rungs in the ladder of the growth of one's personality. We know very well how these rungs are connected with one another. We cannot know where one ends and another begins. One fades into another gradually, and there is a living connection of every stage with every other stage so that we may safely say that the whole practice of yoga is one continuous process, like the flow of a river. No disconnection, no disjointed parts can be seen in the flow of the Ganga, notwithstanding the fact that we may conceive of parts in the flow. The parts are

only conceptual; they are not organic—not real, and not really there.

Inasmuch as these rungs of the ladder of yoga, these stages, are vitally connected one with the other, there is to some extent the presence of the element of every stage in every other stage. They are not completely different, like watertight compartments, though the predominance of a particular element makes it go by a particular name and designation. These eight stages are names given to certain predominant features of the experiences one has to pass through, though the other features are also present—just as when we say something is *sattvic*, *rajasic* or *tamasic*, what we are referring to is the dominant character of a particular person or thing, and do not imply thereby that the qualities which are not dominant are totally absent. Every stage of yoga is every other stage, and so we have to be prepared, basically, for the advent of a very comprehensive experience which will take possession of us one day or the other. Therefore, the preparation that is taken up is also to be of a similar character. The means should have, at least in some measure, the characteristics of the goal towards which it is moving.

These eight limbs of yoga are really the eight conceptual segments of a single act of meditation or concentration of mind on the goal of life, which was very pithily stated in the earlier sections of the *sutras* of Patanjali, especially in the Samadhi Pada. Patanjali does not go into such details because he regards these details as intended for mediocre aspirants and not for advanced ones. The advanced aspirants do not pass through stages in this manner. Though it is true that everyone has to pass through every

stage, they are all compressed together in a single concentrated focus. Here, in the Sadhana Pada, they are a little bit dispersed, and they are taken up one by one for the purpose of easy understanding and practice.

Hence, as I stated, the very first step, which is the discipline known as the *yamas*, is really symbolic of one's total outlook of life. If we can know what our outlook of life as a whole is, we will also know the extent to which we can succeed in the practice of these *yamas*. If the outlook is one thing, naturally the practice cannot be another, contrary to it. What do we feel, from the recesses of our heart, in respect of things around? Do we like them, or do we not like them? What is it that we feel? Do we want something from them, or do we not want something from them? Are we fed up with them? Are we happy about them? Do we think we are outside them, or they are outside us? What is it that we think about all these things?

This is what will determine the extent of success in the practice of these *yamas* which are most difficult things, really speaking, because these *yamas* of which yoga speaks are the counterattack upon the natural prejudices of the mind in respect of things. Naturally, we are inclined to like or dislike, to appropriate, to harm, to hurt, to assert, and so on. Now a counterblow is dealt by these practices. The natural tendency to assert oneself, the natural tendency to be pleased with the pains and sorrows of others, the natural tendency to indulge in physical and psychological pleasure, the natural tendency to appropriate things which need not necessarily belong to oneself, and such other inclinations are indicative of one's immersion in a set-up of things—an

evaluation of the world which is opposed to the structure of Reality.

Why is there so much insistence on the practice of the *yamas*? What is the point about it? The point is simple. These attitudes of the human being, which are the opposite of the *yamas*, are the expressions of a vehement insistence of the mind on those features which are opposed to the nature of Reality. We are living in a world which cannot be coordinated with the features of Ultimate Truth if we are to live a life of insistence on those features which are the opposites of the *yamas*.

Thus, to introduce into the very blood of the student the basic features, the foundational features of the goal which he is aspiring for, the practice of the *yamas* is regarded as necessary because the opposites of these *yamas* are nothing but the externalised urges of the human being. These are what the psychoanalysts call the libido—the desire principle, the motive force in the individual which always presses it forward, onward, externally towards those things which one regards as existing outside oneself; and we know very well that there is nothing outside the Real or the Ultimate Truth. These insistent urges are those which are to be sublimated and harnessed for the purpose of higher concentration. The externalisation of the urges, which is the feature of the opposite of the practice of the *yamas*, is contrary to the attempt at yoga in the practice of concentration and meditation, because concentration and meditation mean the conservation of the motive force, the energy in oneself, and not its externalisation. Meditation is the universalisation of energy, whereas the personal urges

normally present in people are the pressures towards externalisation of energy.

While the counter-forces of the *yamas* are pressing us forward externally towards dissipation of energy, yoga requires us to move in a different direction for the purpose of the universalisation thereof. Therefore, we know very well why the *yamas* are necessary. The *yamas* emphasise the need to develop an outlook or attitude of life which will befriend those features of Reality that are going to be the object of one's meditation. The tendency to universalisation is the requisite of yoga; and the tendency to externalisation is the demand of the senses and the pleasure-seeking ego. Hence, it should be very obvious and simple to understand why there is so much of emphasis laid on the practice of the principles of the *yamas*, which are much more than what we know as moral principles or ethical mandates.

The *yamas* do not mean merely moral mandates. They are the disciplinary processes of the total personality, the complete individuality of oneself, which includes not merely the moral nature but other factors also, in such a way that we may say that the practice of *yamas* means a readjustment of oneself in one's total being to the character of that Supreme Object which is going to be the aim of meditation in yoga.

Chapter 72

THE PREPARATORY DISCIPLINES

The purifications and disciplines known as the *yamas* and *niyamas* in yoga are not ordinary or simple steps that can either be bypassed or be practised with a stepmotherly attitude. They are very important stages which contribute to the strengthening of one's being—the entire personality—and make it fit for the higher practices. But if we read, in the history of religion, the lives of seekers who have endeavoured hard to practise yoga, we will be surprised to observe that they had always some difficulties, and most of these difficulties are connected with these essentials—which are often regarded as non-essentials in comparison with the higher stages of *dharana*, *dhyana* and *samadhi*.

These little steps, known as the *yamas* and *niyamas*, become stumbling blocks when not properly attended to in the further stages of practice. This applies particularly to the *yamas*. As a matter of fact, we have no obstacle in yoga except the troubles that are created by the inattention that we pay to the essentials of the *yamas*. Most people go scot-free under the notion that they are prepared adequately for confronting the higher objective in meditation, but this is not the case, because the practice of the *yamas* is really the process of fortifying oneself against all the weaknesses that are characteristic of human nature. As a matter of fact, they are the ways in which we become actively conscious of the vulnerable spots in our personality which are to be

protected from the onslaughts of powerful forces which we have to face in the future.

Sometimes it is difficult to understand where we are actually, at a particular stage, and it is easy to miscalculate our situation, due to either over-enthusiasm or lack of proper understanding. Everybody imagines that he or she is well prepared. Well, that is not the case, because our strength will be seen only in the war field; we cannot see it in the kitchen. That is very difficult to understand. When we actually face the problems, we will know our energies, our strengths, and our capacity to tolerate the pairs of opposites.

Many of the difficulties of modern students of yoga are due to the unfavourable circumstances in which they have to live; and the whole world is ridden over with these circumstances. The modern age is, unfortunately, of such a nature that we cannot find isolation, solitude or sequestration anywhere in this world, even if we go to a jungle. Nowadays there are no jungles; everywhere there are people, and we will have every difficulty anywhere. This is a great handicap. It is to be emphasised that these purifications cannot be properly practised in the humdrum of a society of temptations where we are deliberately taken along the wrong path and purposely driven in the erroneous direction by the very characteristic of human society and the things of the world.

Therefore, modern institutions—even yoga institutions—may be said to be inappropriate and unsuited for a strenuous practice of yoga, because the institutions are mostly social in their character. For whatever reason it might be, their status is social, and it is impossible to

completely wrench oneself from these social relationships and the consequences that follow from these relationships. Hence, all the practice—whatever be the intensity with which one takes to it—has been mostly of a diluted character, and it cannot be very intense because the surroundings, the environment in which one lives, dilute the intensity with which one starts the practice. Thus, it should not be forgotten that there is always a chance of getting diverted along the channels of these social relationships; and a little aperture created by any relationship of this kind will be enough to burst the whole bubble, and the person is finished in a moment.

Hence, one has to be very careful in not overestimating one's capacities or powers, miscalculating one's energies and wrongly imagining that the powers one has conserved are equal to the powers of nature as a whole. Not all the sages put together could face this nature—it is terrible. Therefore, one has to be very, very cautious; and it is impossible to be cautious under the circumstances of this world, as I mentioned. It has to be regarded as very unfortunate indeed, but this is the fact of the matter and it cannot be overlooked.

There were great masters who took very great care to protect their children, such as Sage Vibhandaka who took care of his son Rishyasringa under such favourable conditions that human beings could not see that boy. He was guarded from all sides because the sage, the father, was very wise. He knew what the world is made of, and what difficulties one may have to face if a long rope is given to personal relationships and external contacts with objects of sense. So this boy Rishyasringa was very well guarded, and

a great example of ideal nurturing of the tender mind is given to us in this wonderful instance. But all that failed. It did not work because we cannot protect a person like that, by putting them in a jail. Though we may imprison the body, the mind cannot be imprisoned. Whatever be the care that we take, there will be some little loophole which we might have forgotten. It is impossible to be aware of every aspect of the matter. Something is forgotten because that is the weakness of human nature and the very inadequacy of the nature of the mind itself.

If such protected minds like Rishyasringa could not succeed, and they could be sidetracked by the very things of the world from which he wanted to guard himself, what to talk of other people? As Bhartrihari says in one place, “The whole mountain of India will float on the ocean if people who eat rice, *ghee*, milk, etc., every day can control their senses.” Mountains will float on the ocean? It is impossible. People who lived on air and leaves could not control their senses; and people who drink *ghee* every day will control their senses? It is not possible. If that could be done, the Himalayas would be floating on the surface of the Pacific. These are cautions. Cautions have been given millions of times, but they go like empty sounds before the tricks of nature.

Therefore, it is to be reiterated that these preliminaries in yoga, the *yamas* especially, have to be practised from the very beginning. It should be, in a sense, the duty of the parents themselves to bring up the children in a spiritual atmosphere. It is very unfortunate indeed if parents think that the way of yoga is contrary to the welfare of life or the good of the world, and children are brought up in

atmospheres which are totally the opposite of what is spiritually good. How can one suddenly retrace one's steps from this muddle in which one has been brought up for years together and suddenly become divine overnight? That is not possible. But this is the difficulty of people. They have been born and bred in unfavourable atmospheres, whether in villages or cities. The whole thing is rotten—it is good for nothing. But that is where we are born; we cannot help it. We have been living there for years and years, and suddenly one night we change our minds and try to live in Brahmaloaka. That is not possible. This, again, is an unfortunate feature of modern life. The psychology of yoga practice calls forth a discipline at a very early age in one's life so that there is a tendency of the mind to appreciate certain conducive atmospheres, and it is not suddenly presented with a surprise in the form of a monastery, or a temple, or a life of *sannyasa*, etc.

The importance of these canons of *yama* cannot be over-emphasised because these terrors, which even sages like Swami Visvamitra and Parashara had to face, were nothing but these very things which we regard as non-essentials, or initial stages, or things which we already know and have mastered to some extent. It is very unfortunate to think like that, because the canons of *yama* are the ways in which we lay the very foundation to protect ourselves for the future onslaughts which everyone has to expect. No one can be exempt from these difficulties. What path one has trodden, another also has to tread; and what difficulties I have, you will also have. You cannot escape them. Perhaps the difficulties will come in the same form, though at different times and through different instrumentalities.

Thus, at the very beginning itself, the physical atmosphere, the social conditions and the external relationships ought to be such that they should be helpful in the practice of the *yamas*. We cannot live in the distracting atmosphere of Piccadilly or Hollywood and then start thinking along the lines of a higher practice. The physical conditions should be chosen, the social atmosphere should be properly selected, and a proper mood of the mind also should be there.

We need not repeat that one should be in the immediate presence of a Guru or a spiritual master. One cannot read a book and become a *yogi*; that is not possible. The tradition of the Guru is an eternal tradition. Nobody can gainsay it, and it cannot be amended. It is an absolute necessity. The immediate presence of a spiritual guide is also a great protection against the problems and difficulties of a personal character. Whatever the problems be, they can be rectified if they are properly exposed and relayed before the competent mind of the master.

Side by side with this, one has to guard oneself consciously against getting into unwanted ways by placing oneself deliberately in unfavourable atmospheres. As far as possible, the atmosphere that we select should be favourable, and we should not be under the impression that we have advanced so much that we can live anywhere in the world. It is difficult to believe that anyone is so far advanced. It is very easy to think like that, but very unfortunate to do so. Anyone can fall; nobody can be free from this possibility.

The fall is merely due to carelessness and the careless attitude that we bestowed upon ourselves at the very

beginning, thinking that we know very well all things of yoga and that the secrets of life are laid bare before us. This is a kind of foolishness that can take possession of a student. While for some time, maybe even for fifty years, everything looks all right, after that period we will find that we are in the midst of a storm. A whirlwind will blow from all sides, and this can happen even at the end of our life, when we are about to become a *jivanmukta*, as we may imagine. A wind will blow in such a tempestuous manner that we will be cut off from the very roots, all because we have been under the wrong impression that we have been well-off and well grounded in the practice of yoga.

The needs of the body, the cravings of the senses and the susceptibilities of the mind are terrible. They are not ordinary things. Even hunger is very serious indeed and it can upset one's peace of mind when it comes like a torture. Those who do not know what hunger is cannot appreciate this situation. One should know what it is. We should be starving for days together, and we will know what we do at that time. Any sin can be committed by a man who is hungry; no sin can be away from him. Likewise is the impetuous character of any desire when it is completely curbed and bottled up without satisfaction and not allowed to come out at all.

Bottling up a desire is not the practice of *yama*. Something else is intended here, because even though it is possible for a person to suddenly be away from homestead and chattel, as they call it, and go to a monastic atmosphere and live a life of complete isolation from normal satisfactions of life, the desire for satisfaction cannot cease, though the satisfactions are not there. It is *rasavarjam*, as

the Bhagavadgita puts it—the taste for things will not cease. Whatever be the distance we maintain between ourselves and an object of sense, the desire for that object of sense cannot cease. It will be there like a drop of honey at the bottom, which we would like to lick at any moment. Though it is hidden in the midst of bushes of thorn, that little drop of honey will be there tempting us all the way, because either we have not tasted it, or we have deliberately and wrongly imagined that it is not worthwhile.

The worthwhileness of a thing does not depend upon our mere notion about it. One has to pass through it by experience. This experience may be either merely rational or sensory. One is, by the power of rationality and investigative capacity, able to understand the nature of things and be in a position to be away, psychologically, from their tempting characters. Or, one might have passed through the experience physically and known what it is, so that there is less likelihood of getting into it again—though one is not, of course, really free from it.

Hence, the stages of yoga called *yamas* and *niyamas* are not unimportant stages. They are the very things that will ask for their dues one day or the other, in a manner which will be very unpleasant, because if we do not honourably and intelligently tackle this question at the very outset, we will be compelled to do it later on under painful conditions. Therefore it would be wisdom on the part of a seeker not to be over-enthusiastic about things, and to be very dispassionate in the investigation of one's mental make-up and susceptibilities.

If one is sufficiently honest to oneself, it would not be difficult to know one's weaknesses. If we do not want to

know them, that is a different matter. Sometimes we would not like to know that we have weaknesses; that is a very foolhardy attitude. But if we are dispassionate enough and cautious enough to probe deep into our own nature, it will be easy for us to know our weaknesses in a few days. Perhaps in a single day we can know what our weaknesses are. Many of us know them, only we would like to smother them under the veneer of a notion which is more pleasant than this painful conduct of an enquiry into one's own nature. But this is going to be the ruin of a seeker if he is really intent upon the practice of yoga, because yoga is the blessedness which one seeks deliberately for one's own self, and it is not thrust upon oneself by anybody else, so there is no use merely posing a perfection which one does not have.

Ahiṃsā satya asteya brahmacarya aparigrahāḥ yamāḥ (II.30). Śauca santoṣa tapaḥ svādhyāye Īśvarapraṇidhānāni niyamāḥ (II.32). These are the *sutras* of Patanjali which state the principles of the *yamas* and the *niyamas*. All these things are known to us. I do not want to go on in detail explaining what the *yamas* are, what is *ahimsa*, etc., because these subjects have been treated earlier. But the background of it and the rational foundations of it have to be properly understood before we step into the higher stages, because if the foundation is strong, the building will be strong. It is already well known that there is no use thinking of erecting a grand palace on a sandy foundation.

The scriptures say that the senses are our enemies, and that the mind is also an enemy when it is a friend of the senses, because a friend of an enemy is also an enemy. The mind is a friend of the enemy, which is the senses, and so

mind also has to be regarded as an enemy. We are vitally associated with the mind, and it is a part of us. We ourselves are the mind; nevertheless, we have to be cautious because it is this that comes up to the surface one day and asks for its dues.

The student of yoga, in the present age especially, should exert a little more than was the case for students who lived ages back. First of all, we cannot find Gurus. It is very difficult to find a Guru in this age. We cannot find a place to sit, because every place is infected with some difficulty or the other. And, we have weaknesses of body, and mind, and senses. We have so many difficulties—personal weaknesses, unfavourable conditions outside, and an absence of a proper spiritual guide. We have all these problems, so how are we going to take up the practice of yoga?

Our exertion should be very intense. Though we cannot find a Guru, we may be benefited by staying in the midst of people who are elder to us, who have lived at least a few more years than we have—people with a little more experience and understanding. Though a person may not be helpful, at least the person may not be obstructive. Such persons may be regarded as friends, at least in the beginning, and this may be accompanied by a non-obstructive atmosphere, even if it is not positively conducive. Such wisdom should be exercised in the beginning. And one has to be, as I mentioned earlier, very intensely aware of one's susceptibilities. One should not deliberately place oneself in conditions which would evoke these susceptibilities. If we have a drinking habit we should not live near a brewery because it is very easy to go to the

brewery and have a drink. So we should go away from it, to a place where it would be very difficult to have it. Similarly, all these susceptibilities should be overcome in the beginning by physical apparatus of the dissociation from objects which are likely to stimulate these susceptibilities.

Then, one has to engage oneself in deep study. Most of us lack study, lack learning, lack understanding, because we lack proper information about things. If we have not the fortune of having a good teacher who will give us all the necessary information directly by personal instruction, at least we should have recourse to what we call negative *satsanga* with sages—namely, the study of scriptures such as the Upanishads, the Bhagavadgita, the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, etc., which will keep us engaged throughout the day and enable the mind to absorb these thoughts into itself—which itself is a process of strengthening the mind to a large extent. And one has to take to a disciplinary *sadhana*, like *japa* of a *mantra*, which will also keep one engaged so that the mind should not be given a chance to think idle thoughts, because any single idle thought is enough to draw the attention of all the unwanted forces of the world. Thus, with these fortifications, one has to take to strengthening one's personality by the practice of these *yamas*: *ahimsa*, *satya*, *asteya*, *brahmacarya* and *aparigraha*.

As I mentioned, I am not going to explain every one of these, as I have already touched upon them earlier and we know what they are: non-injury in thought, word, and deed; truthfulness in its proper spirit, which is very difficult to understand; an absolute refraining from accepting what is not earned by the sweat of one's brow; continence of the senses; and not appropriating things which do not really

belong to oneself, by the law of the spirit itself. All these are well known to everyone, but are most difficult things to assimilate and practise for reasons which are obvious.

Śauca santoṣa tapaḥ svādhyāye Īśvarapraṇidhānāni niyamāḥ (II.32). The purification of the body, the speech, and the mind, and an attitude of contentment and satisfaction with what is bestowed upon oneself by the grace of God and by the circumstances of life; an austere type of living, which accepts not anything of a luxurious character and is satisfied only with the minimum of needs; and a life devoted to sacred study of scriptures and love of God—all these are the basic foundations of the *yamas* and the *niyamas*.

In scriptures like the Manu Smṛiti, it is said that the *yamas* are more important than the *niyamas*. These canons called the *niyamas*—śauca santoṣa tapaḥ svādhyāye Īśvarapraṇidhānāni niyamāḥ—are less important than the *yamas*, as the *yamas* are more difficult to practise because they lay the foundation for one's moral character and the toughness of one's personality. Therefore, one has to bestow a little more attention on the *yamas*, as the *niyamas* may take the form of a daily routine of a positive character, but the *yamas* are not a routine—they are a spirit that we maintain, which is very difficult to entertain in the mind always.

When one is properly placed in an atmosphere of mastery which is provided to oneself through the practice of the *yamas* and *niyamas*, the Yoga Shastra tells us that one is spontaneously endowed with an energy which is an indication of the extent of mastery that one has already gained. These disciplines, or preparations, are not merely

punishments meted out to us by the scriptures or the Gurus—they are necessary processes of purifying one's personality in order that it may receive the energies of the cosmos. Strength immediately follows as a matter of direct experience when the purification is effected thoroughly, or at least to an appreciable degree.

It is very clear that it is the presence of impurities of the mind—such as *kama*, *krodha*, *lobha*, etc.—which prevent the entry of the light of the divine into oneself and make one feel famished, physically as well as psychologically. As it was mentioned earlier, the weakness of one's personality is due to one's isolation from nature—ultimately an isolation of oneself from God Himself, Who is the source of all strength, power and energy. Therefore, this isolation is artificial. Really we are not so isolated. It is a psychological isolation, and this has come about on account of the dross in the mind—the presence of *rajas* and *tamas*. It is necessary that these impediments to the revelation of the divine light and the force of nature within oneself in the form of *rajas* and *tamas* be completely eradicated by such disciplinary practices as these *yamas* and *niyamas* in their true spirit, and not merely in their letter.

The letter is very easy to understand, whereas the spirit is difficult to understand. The spirit comes into question when it is understood that this practice is intended for the growth of one's personality and the increase in the depth of one's being towards the evolution of oneself for unity of oneself with the Absolute. This understanding will give an idea of the spirit which has to be maintained in the practice, apart from merely an appreciative understanding of its literal meaning.

Chapter 73

NEGATIVE CHECK AND POSITIVE APPROACH

These principles and disciplines of *yama* and *niyama* are regarded in yoga as unconditional and absolute. This is a very peculiar insistence in the system, perhaps due to the difficulties that one may have to face in case these disciplines are relaxed even a little, because the relaxation of these preparatory principles, though it may be in a very mild form and in a negligible degree, may lead to a powerful outburst of those very urges which have been kept in check for a long time by these practices. So, to avoid any such possibility of giving a long rope to these instincts and confronting them later on with pain as the result, the *sutra* tells us that these disciplines should be absolute—which means to say, there should be no proviso or conditional clause. There is no limitation of these principles either by circumstances, or by time factors, or by the location of one's existence. That is the meaning of these principles being absolute.

Jāti deśa kāla samaya anavacchinnāḥ sārvabhaumāḥ mahāvratam (II.31). The disciplines of yoga are called *mahāvratā*, the great vows, and not ordinary vows or small vows that can be broken under certain conditions. And they are *sārvabhaumāḥ*, which means to say they are universally applicable, under every condition and to every student of yoga—there is no exception at all. Such a rigid prescription is made for the purpose of protecting oneself from possible encounters of forces which are undesirable, as I mentioned.

These principles are not to be conditioned by place. For example, there are people who do violence and harm of various types to animals and other subhuman beings, but they put a condition upon it, saying, “We will do it only in such and such a place,” or “We will not do it in such and such a place.” “In holy places, I will not eat meat; in other places I can eat,” is the meaning. Or, “I may catch fish—not in Rishikesh, but in some other place.” So, this is a condition of ‘place’, where the prohibited act is permitted at certain locations, though it is not allowed in some other places. It is not to be conditioned like that, says the *sutra*. It is not that we can do harm at one place, though we may not do it at another place. It should not be done at any place. That is the *sarvabhaumah*, or the universally applicable form of this vow.

It should not be conditioned by species. For example, “I will kill only fish. I will not kill any other animal.” That is conditioned by species, and it also is not allowed. The harmlessness that one has to extend to creatures has to apply to everything—whether it is an ant, a fly, a moth or a fish, it makes no difference. It should not be conditioned by place, and it should not be conditioned by species. That is the meaning of the terms ‘*jati*’ and ‘*desa*’. It should also not be conditioned by time. “On holy days I will not do it, but other days I will.” That also is not allowed. It should not be conditioned by a time factor; it has to be applied at all times. *Samaya* is occasion: “Under certain conditions and circumstances I will do it, but not always.” That also is not allowed.

Therefore, this principle, this vow of *yama* and *niyama*, is unconditioned by species, by space, place, time and

occasion or circumstance. But, it is such a terrible thing to practise it. The author knows very well that the opposites of these feelings are likely to take hold of a person one day or the other, and sometimes in such a strong way that it will be difficult to face them. For that, the simple recipe provided for is that one should contemplate, as far as possible, daily, unremittingly, the opposites of these possibilities of the violation of these virtues. That is called the *pratipaksa bhavana* method—what is called the substitution method in psychoanalysis. Instead of pursuing an entirely wrong path, we pursue a slightly innocuous path. Though it is not far removed from it, yet it is not as harmful as the earlier one.

Vitarkabādhane pratipakṣabhāvanam (II.33) is the *sutra* mentioning this *pratipaksa bhavana* method. When there is an inclination to violate these principles due to the common weakness of human nature, one should contemplate the feeling of the opposite. Common sense tells us that one cannot contemplate the opposite at the moment one is possessed by the instinct. That is not possible. This is a kind of prophylactic that is provided so that the instinct may not come at all. It is not that we should treat the disease after it has come; it should not come. Hence, one has to guard oneself in the beginning itself by a continuous *pratipaksa bhavana* practice, even when the inclination towards the opposite has not arisen.

It is not that we should try to control the impulses when they have come. They should not come, because once they come, they cannot be checked. So, it does not follow from this instruction that the *pratipaksa bhavana*, or the counterposing attitude, should be developed in the mind at

the time of the attack. The attack should not take place, because one knows very well that once it takes place, there is no remedy for it. We cannot check ourselves when we are already under subjection of an impulse. This is also a kind of daily *sadhana* that is prescribed.

This is something very interesting and very subtle to understand. The thinking of the opposite generally and normally implies a subtle thinking of that which we want to avoid, because it is impossible to think of the opposite of a thing unless that thing also is thought in the mind simultaneously. It should be a positive entertainment of an idea, and not merely a negative check that is placed before an undesirable impulse. When the *pratipaksa bhavana* 'I should not kill' is entertained, the idea of killing is already there in the mind. Though we are thinking that we should not kill, we are using the word 'kill' and also thinking of that idea. This should not be allowed in the mind because the opposing idea is not supposed to have any kind of psychological relationship with that which is being opposed.

Pratipaksa bhavana is not merely a negative substitution method. It is a method of developing a positive attitude, such as love instead of hatred. It is not thinking of non-hatred, but of love. So we need not think of non-killing. The idea of non-killing is not the point there. The point is the positive aspect of it that when there is a fraternity of feeling and affection and love, which is the movement of the mind in the direction of a unity of things—when that arises in the mind, the substitution is already adopted.

Also, a way is prescribed in one of the *sutras* of how this *pratipaksa bhavana* can be entertained in the mind. The daily contemplation on the positive aspects of these principles should be along these lines, says the *sutra*. What is the line? Vitarkaḥ hiṃsādayaḥ kṛta kārita anumoditāḥ lobha krodha moha pūrvakaḥ mṛdu madhya adhimātaḥ duḥkha ajñāna anantaphalāḥ iti pratipakṣabhāvanam (II.34). One has to contemplate the consequences of one's actions. It is because we cannot properly have an insight into what will follow from what we do that we commit a deed which is objectionable. At the time of the impulse manifesting itself into an action, the consequences are forgotten because the impulse takes a stand at that given moment of time on a particular aspect of the experience only, and completely ignores the other aspects. We get angry and we want to hit somebody on the head. That is the only aspect that comes to mind, and no other aspect comes, such as, "What will happen afterwards if I do this?" We are not bothered about what will happen afterwards. The mind will not allow us to think like that because if it does, the impulse will get weakened. Hence, the vehemence of the impulse mainly depends upon the restriction of the impulse to a particular mood and emotion, completely oblivious of consequences.

The consequences should be deeply pondered over, says the *sutra*. What are the consequences of a wrong deed? Nature will revolt against us. It is not only human beings that will revolt, because a wrong does not mean wrong done against a human being merely. It is not the violation of a social principle; that is not what is meant by 'wrong'. A wrong is that which is contrary to the law of Truth itself.

So, the natural order of things will be set against us, the consequences of which are obvious. We have a false notion that we can do a wrong very secretly so that others may not know it and so the consequences will not follow, but this is not true. This is a wrong notion that people entertain.

The wrong is not done privately, though it may be behind a screen and not observed by other human beings. If a wrong is really a wrong, against the law of nature, there is no such thing as doing it behind a screen, because nature is within and without. It is all-pervading, and so it will set up a reaction in its own way at a particular time. The consequences of a wrong deed are what are known as the nemesis of *karma*; the retribution law begins to operate. It can operate in our own personality, it can operate in society, or it can operate in a future birth. It can be in any place, at any time, and in any manner whatsoever.

If it is a purely physical violence that we have committed against our own body due to overeating or overindulgence of any type, the retribution will be in the form of a physical illness and a diminution of physical vitality, and such other things. If it is something connected with other people, which is social in principle, it will have a reaction from society. But if it is a subtle thing which cannot be observed easily, and a secret wrongdoing has been projected by the mind against what we call natural justice and law, the retribution may follow in a future birth, or it may be even in this very birth if the wrong is very intense.

Kṛta kārta anumoditāḥ (II.34). Here, a very cautious definition is given in regard to wrongdoing. A wrong is not necessarily what we directly do with our hands. Even if we

cause it to be done, it is a wrong, and a share of it will come to us. “You go and do it,” we tell somebody. Somebody else has done it, but we have caused it to be done. We have been the incentive behind it; we have instigated that action. The instigator will certainly be bound by the nemesis of the action, because the cause is not the actual doer; the instigator is equally a cause since he has pushed the person as an instrument of action. Therefore, one who does it deliberately is the cause, one who causes it to be done also is a cause, and one who approves of it also is a cause—*anumodita*. “Well done. Very good.” If we say that, we will get some share of it.

We cannot simply go scot-free like that saying, “I have not done anything.” We have approved of it. We may approve of it verbally, or even mentally. “Oh, very good; it should be like that. The fellow deserved it.” If mentally, we think like that, we will get some share because we had that thought. Even if a rat is being killed by a cat, we should not feel satisfied: “This wretched thing has gone. It was troubling me yesterday.” We may not say it, but we feel that it is very good. This kind of feeling is atrocious. Somebody’s pain cannot cause us pleasure.

Kṛta kārīta anumoditāḥ (II.34). The doing, the causing to be done, and the approval—all three are equally culpable. The consequences will be equal, and one cannot be exempted from the consequences of those deeds. Here, the psychological aspect is more important than the verbal and the physical. Even a thought in this direction is subject to this law. As a matter of fact, thought is real action. The physical deed is not as important. What the mind thinks, feels and affirms—that is the real action. Though physically

we have not done something, mentally we have committed a violation that will bring retribution. Actions which are wrong—either done, or caused to be done, or approved—have their painful consequences. Let one contemplate this truth every day. We cannot simply be happy, thinking that nothing will happen to us, because every little wrong deed that we do, every little wrong deed that we have caused to be done in one way or the other, even subtly or indirectly, and anything that we have abetted—even that will come on our heads one day or the other. Knowing these things, understanding the subtlety of this law and the inexorable manner in which this law works, one has to be very cautious in doing a very wrong thing.

Vitarkaḥ hiṁsādayaḥ kṛta kārīta anumoditāḥ lobha krodha moha (II.34). These wrongs are done due to the impulses of greed, anger and infatuation. The impulses do not arise on account of knowledge or wisdom; they arise on account of the absence of wisdom. Inasmuch as the causative factor of the wrongdoing is ignorance, naturally we can imagine the nature of the consequence and what will follow from it. Ignorance is the cause. “Why have I done this mistake? It is because I could not understand the situation properly.” Ignorance is at the background, and so there is the rise of the impulse. *Kama*, *krodha* and *lobha* are the causes of evildoing of any kind, and they are based on ignorance, because a person who understands a thing correctly will not have these impulses acting so forcefully. Knowing that these impulses have arisen on account of ignorance, greed, anger and confusion of thought and, therefore, knowing what will follow from this attitude and action, one should refrain from wrongdoing.

Mṛdu madhya adhimātaḥ (II.34). The consequences that follow are either mild, mediocre or intense, according to the nature of the action. What is the type of harm that we have done? Accordingly, we have the retribution. How much harm have we caused—to what quantity and what quality? In that same measure we will get it back—in that quantity and in that quality. This cannot be escaped. A little harm will also have its own results. One cannot escape the law even in the smallest measure. Even in the tiniest degree it cannot be overlooked or violated. Whatever the degree be in which it has been violated, in that degree it will react, just as the voltage of an electric wire will determine the nature of the kick that it gives to us when we touch it, or the consequences that follow from that. Likewise, the actions which are mild will bring a consequence of a similar nature, and so on, the point behind which being that even the least wrong cannot escape the notice of natural law. We cannot say, “After all, it is a very small thing I have done.” Even the small thing will be noticed by the shrewd eye of nature.

There is a story in the Mahabharata where Mandavya, when he was a small boy, pierced the wing of a moth with a broomstick. He was only a small boy; he knew nothing of the consequences of *karma*. He pierced the wing of a moth with a little stick. That was all he did—and afterwards he had to be put on a spear which pierced through him, bottom to top. Some stories are like that; it is a very interesting thing. That is to say, it makes no difference whether actions are knowingly done or unknowingly done—nature will observe them. The law is a very peculiar thing. Ignorance of it is no excuse. This is a very famous legal cliché: “Ignorance of the law is no excuse.” We cannot

say, “I did not know it, so I made a mistake. Please excuse me.” If we did not know it, then we will know it hereafter. Nature is a very hard taskmaster, very severe in dealing blows, and there is no excuse at all. Though we call her Mother Nature, she’s a very severe mother, not an ordinary one, and will not exempt us from any of our wrong deeds.

Duḥkha ajñāna anantaphalāḥ (II.34). What follows in the end? Great sorrow follows. Sorrow follows because a wrongdoing produces a *samskara* in the mind, and we become susceptible to doing it, and then repeating it. Once we have done it, the mind develops an inclination towards the repetition of that action. This is a peculiarity of the mind. Any habit that is repeated becomes second nature, and we become that. Then we need not contemplate doing it; we will be forced to do it. Just as a river inclines towards a depth, we will be inclined towards this action because once we have done it, a second time we have done it, a third time we have done it, and now also we will do it.

Intellectual inhibition of these *vrittis* may not succeed always when there is an emotional pressure from behind on account of the *samskaras* already ingrained in the mind due to the action that has been perpetrated. Hence, sorrow will follow sorrow, one after the other. *Ananta duhkha* will follow; endless pain will be the result if a proper check is not imposed upon the *vrittis* at the proper time, in the proper measure.

Ajñāna anantaphalāḥ (II.34). Ignorance will also get thickened by the repetition of these deeds because the knowledge of right, or rectitude of righteousness, will get obscured by a continuous perpetration of these actions. The conscience will become blunt after some time. A cannibal

has no conscience, we may say. He cannot feel that he is doing something wrong, because there is no conscience at all. It is absent. He is doing action like an automaton. What conscience has a tiger when it pounces upon a cow? It is acting upon its instinct, which is its own nature. Likewise, this impulse will become one's own nature, like the animals, and there is no question of checking it afterwards.

The impossibility of checking the instinct arises on account of a total ignorance of the law of nature that is behind it. It is a total ignorance, completely obliterated. It is not there at all, even in the least degree. We cannot know what is happening and why we have done it. This is how the instincts work. Instincts are the vehemence with which the personality acts or reacts on the basis of a total ignorance of the ultimate law of things. And, the *sutra* says that the sorrow must continue endlessly. We cannot say when it will end, because later on it will become a kind of vicious circle that cannot be broken. A habit is the seed that we sow for a vicious circle. However much we may try to escape from it, we will not succeed, because habit is nothing but a natural inclination of our whole personality. How can we change an inclination which is our own nature?

Therefore, the advice here is that this *pratipaksa bhavana* method should be practised every day with a positivity of background behind it rather than making it merely a negative check that is imposed upon the instinct. Though in the beginning it looks like a negative check, later on it should become a positivity of approach. In the beginning it is a law—thou shalt not. But, that is not the whole of religion. Religion does not consist merely in 'thou shalt not's'. It is only a beginning stage which has to lead

later on to a positive approach—to an understanding of the unitary nature of things. Love is positive, while non-hatred may be regarded as its negative aspect. It is not enough if we merely not hate, or if there is only an absence of hatred; there should be also positivity, which means to say there should be affection. Even if we do not do harm, we may not be doing any good. This ‘not doing any good’ may produce, one day or the other, a tendency to do harm, because we cannot keep the mind blank.

A vacuous personality is a dangerous one; it should be always filled with something positive. In the beginning, the *pratipaksa bhavana*, which is initially a negative check, is a necessary prescription for the purpose of enabling us to develop the higher qualities of affection, love, and a total positivity of approach in everything. As a positive approach is more difficult than a negative one, the *pratipaksa bhavana* method is prescribed first. The method of substitution is not always successful, as psychologists know very well. Sometimes we have no other alternative; we have to adopt it, because the intention of this substitution is ultimately sublimation, not opposition. The *pratipaksa bhavana* is sometimes akin to opposition. We are counterposing the *vritti* by another *vritti* which is just the opposite of it. When it is channelised along some other activity or some other type of feeling, it becomes a substitution, but all these are preparations for sublimation of the *vritti* in a higher mood.

Unless the instincts are completely boiled and melted into the menstruum of a cosmic *vritti* which is love of God and the ultimate goal of life, they cannot be controlled, because a snake is a snake, whether it is inside a box or

moving and wriggling outside. Whatever it be, it is the same snake. An inactive snake does not cease to be a snake; it is still only that. If we touch it, it will raise its hood.

Therefore, the instinct should not be allowed to remain even by checking because while in the beginning the check is necessary in the form of an implementation of a law since there is no other alternative at that moment, it should not be the end of it. Afterwards more positive, educative methods have to be adopted in respect of that instinct because the instinct, or the impulse, is nothing but we ourselves moving in a wrong direction. We are not contemplating or looking at something which is other than us. What we call the instinct is nothing but we ourselves moving through space and time towards an object of sense, either in love or hatred. Who can control oneself? One can control anything, but not oneself. Hence, we can imagine how hard this effort is. Therefore we are asked to contemplate—unremittingly—the virtues, or the aspects of righteousness, which are necessary to divert these undesirable *vrittis* along the channels of those contemplative features which are the characteristics of the ultimate goal of life.

Chapter 74

THE PRINCIPLES OF YAMA AND NIYAMA

The indications which are given that the practice of the *yamas* and *niyamas* is successful are mentioned in the *sutra* that follows, which give one an idea of the extent of one's success and a consolation that the direction that has been chosen is the right one. In intense practice of *ahimsa*, which is a most comprehensive term, there is a natural reorientation of one's environment, and a change in the atmosphere in which one lives begins to be felt. The *sutra* in this connection is: *ahimsāpratiṣṭhāyām tatsannidhau vairatyāgaḥ* (II.35). Animosity, which is ingrained in the personality of a human being and in every living being, loses its sting, becomes diminished in its intensity, and its aura is felt by the very fact of animosity not being there.

Of all the vows or the principles of the *yamas*, *ahimsa* is the most difficult. The other ones are not so difficult. One can practise them, but this one is almost impossible because it includes every other thing. Therefore, it is also difficult to understand, since one can easily overlook the fact that the tendency to hate is the essence of *himsa*. It is not actually going and belabouring someone, or attacking physically. The very urge that is ingrained in oneself, even though unmanifest, to dislike another is the essence of *himsa*. And, who is free from it? Not one that is born is free from it. Therefore, it is also difficult to follow other rules, because this one vitiates everything else. But one can, with a great effort, suppress this tendency which asserts one's ego and cuts off the values of other egos, which is the background of

dislikes; and then there is a manifestation of spontaneity in oneself.

Artificiality of nature, whatever be its character, is due to a pretended expression of personality, which is contrary to the essence of the personality. It is this artificiality that creates all the troubles of life—physical, psychological and social. It is impossible to see a human being who is natural in his behaviour. Always one is unnatural because it is impossible to live in this world by expressing one's nature wholly and entirely, for reasons which are very peculiar. In this spontaneity that is expected of a seeker, there is naturally an absence of selfishness, because the difficulty in becoming spontaneous is the presence of some kind of selfishness in the person. Who can express this selfishness? The other selfish centres, who are equally intense, will obstruct the manifestation of it, so it puts on an artificial atmosphere of concordance with other egos.

This will not work because the feel of nature has nothing whatsoever to do with the artificial harmony that we have apparently expressed in social life. What it is concerned with is the very structure of the inner individual, who is more important than the outer one. The social personality of ours is not our true personality, and so whatever affection we may express outside is not genuine. And, this has nothing to do with the requirements of natural laws.

Hence, *ahimsa* is the abolition of the very deep-rooted tendency to dislike anything, which spontaneously follows from the recognition of an equal worth in everything—which is called love. No one can have complete mastery over oneself, or mastery over anything in this world, unless

there is a total absence of selfishness—which is the last thing that one can achieve in this life. The *sutra* says that the absence of the tendency to animosity in oneself opens up the gates of the system of unity behind things; and the force that is generated by the manifestation of this unity, which is automatically expressed in oneself in one's own life by the absence of selfishness due to the practice of *ahimsa*, has an impact upon others outside. Animosity, hatred, ill-will and discord of every kind get mitigated, and even abolished completely, in the vicinity of the person who has mastered himself by the eradication of selfishness.

The power that one generates in oneself is a spontaneous energy that speaks in its own language; and it is a language of all things, which can be heard and understood by everyone. Even inanimate things will know what this language is. It is the language of nature itself. It is not Sanskrit, or English, or Hindi. It is something else altogether. It is the feeling of things, which is different from psychological functions. These feelings, which are supernormal, are nothing but the vibrations that are produced in harmony with the natural system of things.

It is not merely that dislike and hatred are absent in the presence of such a person; there is something else much more than this that happens. There is positive love emanating from that person, and love coming to that person from everyone else. The Chhandogya Upanishad says, "As vassals offer tributes to an emperor, so do all directions offer tribute to this emperor of the world." Everything flows towards this person, because this person is no more a person. He has become a centre of universal gravitation; therefore, there is a pull exerted by this so-

called supernormal person. This is the goal of the practice of *ahimsa*, an achievement that has come merely by the eradication of selfishness which is the root of individuality and the cause of our likes and dislikes. This is the meaning of the *sutra*: *ahimsāpratiṣṭhāyām tatsannidhau vairatyāgaḥ* (II.35). Neither we will dislike anyone, nor will anyone else dislike us. That state of affairs will ensue if the personality is scrubbed of all personal feelings and subtle desires that are attached to this body-mind complex.

Satyapraṭiṣṭhāyām kriyāphalāśrayatvam (II.36): If we stick to truth, our words will become true. What the great masters speak materialises itself on account of the correspondence between their speech and the truth of things. Speaking the truth is nothing but the maintenance of coordination between fact and what one expresses as a definition of that fact. Because of a continuous practice of this maintaining of harmony between the words that one speaks and the facts that exist, a result follows which is surprising indeed. Everything that they speak corresponds to fact; and so, when something is said, it happens.

Words which emanate from the mouths of these great masters are really forces that stimulate facts and stir the materialisation of values. The materialisation of the words that they speak is effected on account of the practice of this coordination that they have maintained between the words that they speak and the facts that are existing. They are accustomed to this harmony between their words and the facts of nature and, therefore, nature regards them as a friend. Then, everything is friendly, so that there is a friendly coordination between what is uttered and what exists.

Sometimes, even thoughts will materialise. It is not merely words that are spoken, because there is a connection between words and thoughts. We may not speak, but we may merely think—that is enough; it is equal to speaking. If there is a feeling in our mind, that will take effect. If we think something, that will happen, merely because of the same reason—that the thoughts, which always maintain a connection with words, have been accustomed to a harmony between themselves and facts. Therefore, when thoughts are generated in the mind, they always correspond to facts, and so they compel the manifestation of a fact corresponding to the nature of the thought. Thus, thoughts materialise and become true, and words take effect due to the practice of truthfulness. Such is the great, wonderful consequence that follows from the practice of *ahimsa satya*.

Asteyapraṭiṣṭhāyām sarvaratnopasthānam (II.37): Everything comes to us if we do not appropriate things that do not belong to us. One who wants nothing will get everything. It is the asking for things that is the bane of life, because asking for a thing is the restriction of our demands to certain things alone, and eliminating other things as if they are good for nothing. Everything is equally valuable in this world. And the *asteya* which is mentioned here is not merely a gross form of stealing as we understand it, but an inclination of the mind to appropriate; that is called stealth. We need not actually carry anything physically. There may be even a tendency, a feeling, a like, a longing: “Let me have it!” That is stealth, because mental stealth is real stealth. We may not have taken it, nor we can be punished for it; but some other law will work because we must always

remember that thoughts are more powerful than physical actions. Thoughts are real actions.

We will be rewarded or punished for the thoughts that we entertain, not merely for the movements of hands and feet. Our feelings, our volitions and our thoughts are what determine our personality and our future. Non-appropriation, even in thought, and not expecting anything from anyone, is a power which stimulates sources of wealth everywhere—again, for the reason that this practice of the vow implies an abolition of selfishness, because such an attitude of non-appropriation cannot be present in a person unless that person is utterly unselfish.

Always there is a desire in the mind to have something, to get something. Who can be free from such longing? But if this can be achieved, we will empty ourselves in such a way that things will automatically flow to us. “Empty thyself and I shall fill thee,” said Christ. If we empty ourselves, everything shall flow unto us. *Asteyapratīṣṭhāyām sarvaratnopasthānam* (II.37). Everything comes to us. All wealth, jewels and all property in the world will be ours if we do not ask for anything. Do not ask for anything, even in the mind, even by feeling. That is important. It is not only more important—it is the only thing that is important. If we do not say anything with words, but mentally think that it would be good if we have it, then we have asked for it. Then there will be a limitation of our thoughts to certain things, and other things which are not contained in these thoughts will be eliminated. There will be love and hatred, and the whole thing is spoiled. Again, it is very necessary to be cautious in the understanding of these principles. When they are properly understood and practised in their spirit,

these consequences follow. Everything comes to us, provided we expect not anything from anyone. This is the meaning of the *sutra*.

Brahmacaryapratiṣṭhāyām vīryalābhaḥ (II.38).
Adamantine energy comes to a person who is self-controlled—like Hanuman’s strength, which is supposed to be the pinnacle of conceivable energy. This comes not by dieting, or exercise, or any such extraneous means, but by an inflow of energy which is perpetual in nature. *Brahmacarya* does not mean ordinary celibacy, or continence, in common language. It is a very difficult thing to conceive because it is the conservation of energy by the blocking of passages of the senses from channelising themselves towards objects outside. Humanly, it is impossible for ordinary people; but once it is achieved, these consequences will follow. We become adamant in energy, indefatigable in our work, and tireless in our efforts. The mind and the body become strong, and we feel a sense of lightness and buoyancy in our spirit.

The *vīrya labhah* that is mentioned here is not an ordinary energy, but a conservation of the energies of all things which are usually regarded as objects of sense. The withdrawal of senses from objects is not merely a negative action, as one would wrongly imagine. It does not mean that we merely cease from thinking of objects and that there the matter ends, and nothing else is happening. This is not the case. When we cease thinking of objects but yet maintain consciousness, the energy that is diverted to the objects gets driven back to oneself and something surprising takes place. Instead of our energy flowing

towards the objects, the energy of the objects begins to flow towards us. We can imagine why we must be strong.

The strength of personality that is referred to here is consequent upon the converging of objective forces upon oneself due to the withdrawal of the senses from their functioning, which otherwise divert the energy of the body to objects and deplete one's strength completely by indulgence. Hence, *brahmacaryapraṭiṣṭhāyām vīryalābhah* (II.38). Automatic strength manifests itself in one's system due to this practice of the spirit of the withdrawal of the senses from objects; and it is then that the object becomes friendly with us.

Our asking for the object is really not a manifestation of love for the object. It is a kind of hatred, metaphysically speaking, because if the object is not different from us, why do we ask for it? To regard anyone as different from us is not love; it is a subtle dislike. If I always consider you as different from me, would you like it? You would like me to consider you as one with myself; that is real friendliness. But my asking for a thing, loving a thing, craving for a thing is a subtle indication that it is different from me. Thus, hatred is the undercurrent of love and, therefore, there is bereavement and a running away of objects from oneself—a consequence which is most unexpected. Hence, loves end in bereavements and the senses are defeated in their purpose. Foolishly they run after things, thinking that they will get the things. The way of getting the thing is not by asking for it or going towards it, but by withdrawing oneself from it, because then alone the natural laws are allowed to operate—wherein the objects stand in harmony, in tune with the self of a person. Then it is that the strengths of

nature flow towards the person, and energy automatically effloresces. That is the essence of the meaning of this *sutra*: brahmacaryapraṭiṣṭhāyām vīryalābhaḥ (II.38).

Aparigrahasthairye janmakatharṁtā sambodhaḥ (II.39). When we do not keep things with us which are not expected to be contributory to the maintenance of our life, we are supposed to be living a life of austerity. This austere living, which does not allow the entry of thoughts regarding things which are unnecessary, releases the tension of the system. Our lack of memory of previous lives and our not knowing the future is due to a tethering of the mind to the body to such an extent that it does not allow the reflection of anything in itself other than this present body. The love of the mind for this body is so much that it does not allow anything to enter it except this bodily complex. The *sutra* tells us that when the mind is free from this attachment to the body by eliminating ideas of appropriation, gathering of things, accumulating of goods, etc., the attachment slowly gets loosened; and the loosening of attachment to the body is simultaneously followed by a reflection of other things with which the mind is really connected.

The mind is really connected with everything in the world. It is not connected merely with this body; that is a false notion. Because of this false notion of the identification of the mind with this present body alone, there is a complete lack of knowledge of one's relationship with any other thing and every other thing. Thus, we are like ignorant people knowing nothing of the past or the future. But when this attachment to the body is loosened, it eliminates itself automatically, and things begin to reflect themselves in the mind—all things with which it is really

connected, even the past. Even the previous lives through which one has passed will become objects of one's awareness, says the *sutra*: *aparigrahasthairye janmakatharṁtā sambodhaḥ* (II.39).

Śaucāt svāngajugupsā paraiḥ asaṁsargaḥ (II.40). The purity that one is expected to maintain, which is known as *saucha* in this *sutra*, enables the mind to be perpetually conscious of the true nature of the body. Again, this ends in a detachment of the mind from the body. It is an improper understanding of the nature of the body that causes attachment to it. We have a wrong notion about this body; therefore, we love it so much. If we begin to know what it is made of, how it has come, how it is maintained, and why it looks all right—if all these things are properly known, we will find that the mind is automatically detached. The defects of the body get revealed. It has to be maintained every day by bath, by cleanliness, by scrubbing, by diet, by sleep, by rest, by exercise, and so many other things. If any one of these is withdrawn, we will find that the body loses hold over itself, like a house that is not maintained properly. It will begin to collapse.

The body has no stand of its own; it stands on something else, and it is this 'something else' that makes it appear as if it is all right. This is the nature of this body, and it is the nature of every body in this world. If we know the structural defects of the body—its origin, its maintenance, and its eventual dissolution—if all these things are brought before the mind's eye, one will feel that attachment to it is something unthinkable. We will neither be attached to ourselves, nor will we be attached to others. We will get fed up with this body. "How many days I have to bathe it? One

day, two days, three days—endlessly!” It will show its real nature and start stinking if we do not bathe it for some days.

The body is not fragrant; it is not beautiful. If we ignore it or neglect it, it will show itself: “This is what I am, and what others are.” Thus, due to this realisation of the inner structure of the physical organism, one feels a sense of “enough with it”, and a sense of “enough with everything else”. We neither get attached to others, nor do we have any fondness for our own body.

Sattvaśuddhi saumanasya aikāgrye indriyajaya ātma darśana योग्यत्वानि च (II.41). These are some other things that follow from purity of oneself. The mind becomes lustrous due to the realisation of the transitory nature of things and the defective character of objects of sense, including the physical body. That lustre of the mind is what is called *sattva suddhi*. We are despondent, melancholy, brooding, and unhappy constantly on account of the presence of *rajas* and *tamas* in the mind. The presence of *rajas* and *tamas* means, in other ways, the presence of desires for the body as well as other bodies connected with this body. When they are eliminated by the absence of desire and the detection of the evil in things—the defects of objects in general—there is *sattva suddhi* and also *saumanasya*. There is peace of mind. Peace of mind is the manifestation of *sattva* in the mind—the absence of *rajas* and *tamas*. Distraction and torpidity are eliminated—at least in a large measure, if not totally. Then, there is a beaming of the light of *sattva*, which is what is called *saumanasya*, or serenity, or tranquillity of the mind.

Then comes concentration of mind. Concentration becomes difficult on account of the presence of *rajas* and *tamas*. But when, due to the detection of evil, transitoriness, etc. in phenomena, desire gets diminished, there is also an elimination of *rajas* and *tamas* to that extent. There is, therefore, a consequent manifestation of *sattva*, and immediately concentration of mind follows because *sattva* and concentration mean one and the same thing. This leads to complete mastery over the senses—withdrawal of the energies which are centrifugal, or tending away from the centre. And then, a tendency to universality manifests itself automatically—which is the condition for the manifestation of Self-knowledge, *atmadarsana yogyatvani*.

Chapter 75

SELF-CONTROL, STUDY AND DEVOTION TO GOD

The purification of the mind that gradually takes place brings a natural satisfaction which will become a permanent asset—a satisfaction which one will not be dispossessed of at any time, inasmuch as it has not been caused by temporary factors. A satisfaction that comes by causes that can cease to exist one day or the other will also cease to exist when the causes thereof cease. But here is a spontaneous joy on account of *sattva suddhi*, which is the basic reason behind one's being happy at all. It has been reiterated that happiness is not due to any kind of movement of causes from outside. It arises on account of a condition that manifests inside; and if this condition is perpetuated, and if it does not stand in need of being stimulated by external causes, then this satisfaction will be permanent. But if we need a goad at every time so that the mind may stir itself up into a condition of *sattva* for satisfaction, then when the goad is withdrawn, the joy also goes. *Sattva suddhi* is a purification of the mind that brings about *saumanasya*, or serenity, which is a perpetual, permanent, unceasing character of one's total being. There will be serenity in the face, contentment in the expression of the person, which will be part and parcel of one's permanent behaviour and conduct. Here, the conduct or the behaviour is an expression of a permanent mood that has arisen inside. Therefore, the expression will be permanent.

When this contentment arises and serenity of mind is attained, it is understood that distractions are not there; and the absence of distractions is the same as concentration of mind. Thus, the power of concentrating the mind arises automatically on account of this rise of *sattva* within oneself. In the Chhandogya Upanishad we have a similar proclamation regarding the results that follow from the development of *sattva*. *Āhāra-śuddhau sattva-śuddhiḥ, sattva-śuddhau dhruvā smṛtiḥ, smṛtilambhe sarva-granthīnaṁ vipramokṣaḥ* (C.U. VII.26.2), says Sanatkumara to Narada in the Chhandogya Upanishad. *Āhāra-śuddhau sattva-śuddhiḥ*: When there is a purification of the modes of intake by the senses—when what the senses grasp by way of knowledge is pure—purity of mind is automatically generated within because the mind is made up of nothing but the impressions of the senses. So, whatever the senses convey, that the mind also is, and does.

The message that is conveyed through the senses is the character that is imbedded in the mind. Hence, when the senses receive pure food, the message that they convey, being pure, makes the mind also pure because the mind has nothing to say and nothing to do except what the senses direct. The intake of the senses means the perceptions of the senses—the objects that they perceive or contact, the way in which they evaluate things, and the reactions they set up in respect of their perceptions. All this is what is known as *ahara*, or the diet of the senses.

This diet of the senses should be pure, which means the feeling that arises in the mind immediately after a sense perception should be in consonance with the nature of Truth; it should not be dissonant. It means that we should

not be stirred into an anxiety, a mood of unhappiness, dissatisfaction or fear as a consequence of sense perception, as that would be incommensurate with the nature of Truth, because the perception of Truth will not cause fear.

When we grasp things by the senses, our perceptions go deep into the universals that are present behind the particulars which are the sense objects. Then it is that this diet of the senses is supposed to be pure. Then perceptions make no sense; they carry no impression. Whether we look at an object or not, it will make no difference, because the perception of an object will be the same as the harmony of oneself with the object. Then it is that *sattva* arises in the mind and there is concentration of mind, which is what is known as *smṛiti lambha* in this passage from the Chhandogya Upanishad. Then, there is a breaking of the knots of the heart. Sarva-granthīnaṁ vipramokṣaḥ—there is freedom.

Sattvaśuddhi saumanasya aikāgrye indriyajaya ātmaśānti yogyatvāni ca (II.41) is the *sūtra* of Patanjali which tells us that luminosity—lustre of the mind, tranquillity, a serenity of mood, concentration, or the power to focus the mind, and control over the senses, indriyajaya—all these are spontaneously the results of purity, which finally ends in fitness of oneself to receive the light of the Self.

Kāya indriya siddhiḥ aśuddhikṣayāt tapasaḥ (II.43): Austerity purifies the body, purifies the senses, purifies the mind, and endows a person with certain peculiar powers which cannot usually be seen in people. Kāya indriya siddhiḥ are the words used. *Siddhi* is a perfection, an endowment, a power or a capacity, an energy; all these

meanings are implied in the term '*siddhi*'. These three perfections in respect of the body and the senses arise by the practice of *tapas*, or austerity. Any attempt which subdues the senses is *tapas*—which, impliedly, involves, of course, the control of the mind, because one depends on the other and one works in connection with the other.

Every act of self-control—even if it be only a modicum, only a jot of practice—generates new strength in the system, just as even a drop of honey will taste sweet though it is only a drop. It is not much; it is not even half a spoon. Notwithstanding the limitation in the quantity of the practice, the effect of it will be felt. Even the least step that is taken in right directions will produce those advantages mentioned here, and one will feel their presence in the intensity equivalent to the intensity of the self-control.

The body and the senses get adjusted between themselves. The body will not any more be a servant of the senses. There will be an agreement between them so that they become a compact whole. Then, there will be no dissipation of energy due to the impetuosity of the senses and the subjection of the body to the senses. Also, there will gradually come about a cessation of the cravings of the senses—naturally, by gradual practice. Further, the satisfactions that follow from the restraint of the senses and the mind and the disciplines of the body will give a conviction and bring about a new type of joy in oneself, because they indicate that one is progressing correctly. The powers that we acquire and the energies that are generated within will indicate the righteousness of one's procedure. They will, in return, bring greater and greater joy because

when joy is increased in quantity and quality, there is less inclination of the senses to go to objects.

It is dissatisfaction within that makes us run to things of the world—a kind of vacuousness in our system and an emptiness in the senses and the mind. We feel a bankruptcy in every sense and, therefore, there is felt a necessity to go to objects outside. But, this vacuum will be filled up by the joy that arises within, and then the senses will feel less necessity to go out of their seats.

Due to the destruction of impurity, *asuddhi ksayat*, there will be the realisation of one's powers. We are unconscious of what we are, what we are endowed with and what our capacities are, due to a certain dross that is covering the mind and, consequently, covering everything that we are. The powers that we seek, the joys that we expect, do not come from anywhere other than our own selves. All the powers are inside us, just as tremendous energy is hidden in an atom. It does not come from outside, from somewhere else. It is there inside and has only to be released by adopting certain procedures. If it is not released, it will seem like nothing; it is a meaningless particle of matter about which nobody will bother, in spite of the fact that it is charged with such power and impregnated with incredible energy.

Likewise is the human being and anything in this world—everything is inside it. All powers and all perfections are potentials and, therefore, what is required is not an externalised effort in the direction of contact with the objects of sense, but an inward research which will find out ways and means of releasing this energy that is latent inside. It is a great foolishness on the part of anyone not to

know this fact and to pursue ideals which are different from, or even contrary to, what is really good for oneself. The whole practice of yoga is an inwardisation of effort for the purpose of the release of the potentialities that are inside, and the realisation of their presence and capacities, which will put an end to all cravings of the senses, the mind and the ego. This removal of the dross, or the impurity of the mind, is what is known as *asuddhi ksayat*. When this takes place, when the impurities of the mind are removed, there is perfection of the body, the senses and the mind—all of which is the effect of *tapas: kāya indriya siddhiḥ aśuddhikṣayāt tapasaḥ* (II.43).

Svādhyāyāt iṣṭadevatā saṁprayogaḥ (II.44): By daily holy study, we set ourselves in tune with the masters who have been responsible for the writing of the scriptures and whose great ideals and ideas are sung in the scriptures. The study of great scriptures like the Bhagavadgita, the Mahabharata or the Ramayana puts us in tune with the great thoughts, brains and minds of Vyasa, Valmiki and such other great men. Then, there is a stimulation of a corresponding idea and ideal in our own selves so that we become fit to receive their grace. Not merely receive their grace, we can even contact them, says the *sutra*. The idea, or the content of the scripture which is the object of our daily study, or *svadhyaya*, is the medium of contact between ourselves and the ideal of the scripture—the deity. It may be the *rishi*, or it may be a divinity that is the *ishta devata*. The desired object is the *ishta devata*, and we will come in contact with it because of the daily contemplation on it through *svadhyaya*.

These three methods—*tapas*, *svadhyaya* and *Ishvara pranidhana*—are really the training of the will, the intellect and the emotion. It requires tremendous will to practise *tapas*, great understanding or intellectual capacity to probe into the meaning of the scriptures, and emotional purity to love God. These three are emphasised in the canons of *tapas*, *svadhyaya* and *Ishvara pranidhana*. By *svadhyaya* there is *ishtadevata samprayogah*, says the *sutra*; there is union of oneself with the deity of one's worship and adoration by a daily brooding over its characters.

Whatever we think in our mind, that we will become, and that we will get. But, this thinking should not be a shallow thinking; it should be a very deep absorption of oneself in what one expects. The whole of us should be saturated with our longing for the ideal which is in our mind. There should be no other thought except of the qualities, characters and nature of the ideal which is in our mind. Anything and everything can be obtained in this world if only there is a will behind it. If the force of thought is intense enough, there is nothing which is impossible. This is the point made out in this *sutra*.

The *svadhyaya* that is referred to here is not reading in a library. It is not going to the library and reading any book that is there on the shelf. It is a holy resort to a concentrated form of study of a chosen scripture. It may be even two or three texts—it does not matter—which will become the object of one's daily concentration and meditation, because what is known as *svadhyaya*, or Self-study, or holy study, or sacred study is a form of meditation itself in a little diffused form.

The scriptures are supposed to contain all the knowledge that is necessary for the realisation of the Self. It is a spiritual text that we are supposed to study, which is meant by the word 'svadhyaya'. It is not any kind of book. A holy scripture is supposed to be a *moksha shastra*. A scripture which expounds the nature of, as well as the means to, the liberation of the soul is called a *moksha shastra*. This is to be studied. All the ways and means to the liberation of the Self should be expounded in the scripture; and the glorious nature of the ideal of perfection, God-realisation—that also is to be expounded in it. The means and the end should be delineated in great detail. Such is the text to be resorted to in *svadhyaya*. By a gradual and daily habituation of oneself to such a study, there is a purification brought about automatically. Inasmuch as it is nothing but meditation that we are practising in a different way, it is supposed to bring us in contact with the ideal.

Samādhisiddhiḥ Īśvarapraṇidhānāt (II.45): The mind gets inclined to *samadhi* by the love of God. There is an inclination of our entire being to self-absorption, due to the daily adoration of God. Inasmuch as God is universal—omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent—a surrender of oneself to God, a daily adoration of God, a worship of God, and a daily thought and feeling and will directed to God will naturally compel the mind to adopt characters which are of the nature of this ideal. There will be, therefore, a mood generated in the mind to sink into itself, rather than move out of itself. Distractions will cease. The contemplation on the nature of the All-pervading Being is supposed to be the best form of meditation, inclusive of every other means. All objects of meditation are

comprehended here, included here. This is the ocean of all things.

If only we can direct the mind to All-Being, the supreme nature of the Almighty, there would be no need of searching for objects of meditation. Everything is here. The result that follows is a resting of the mind in itself, inasmuch as the omnipresence of God prevents the mind from going to objects of sense. That is the first stroke which the contemplation of universality deals to the cravings of sense. The deep feeling for God, Who is everywhere, is an antidote to the restlessness of the senses which ask for things outside. A daily hammering into the mind of the idea of all-existence, omnipresence, will not only withdraw the senses from their objects, energise them and bring joy to them, but will also turn the mind inward and make it visualise the cause of its activities, the purpose of its movements, and its ultimate intentions. Thus, the *yoga sutra* tells us that *Ishvara pranidhana*, or surrender of oneself to God, is an ultimate method—and, finally, it must be regarded as the best of all methods of concentration, meditation and Self-absorption.

These practices are practically the be-all and end-all of the preliminaries of yoga. Though they are usually called preliminaries, they are such essentials that without them it would be impossible to imagine any success in yoga, because yoga is not merely sitting in a posture, restraining the breath, and so on, as one may imagine in one's enthusiasm. Though it is true that meditation proper starts with the direct practices commencing from *asana*, etc., these higher stages will be impossible of approach, and success will be far from oneself, if there is a pull

permanently exerted on oneself from behind. Whatever be our ardour for a movement forward, that will be prevented by the pull that is exerted by certain forces from behind us; and if this pull is not stopped by adoption of proper means, there will be no movement.

Even Garuda, who is the fastest of birds, cannot move if he is shackled with iron chains. What is the use of saying that he is a very fast bird? He cannot move, because he has been tied to a peg with strong ropes or chains. Likewise, whatever be our ardour, whatever be our longing or fervour, that would be set at naught by the calls of the earth—the demands of the senses, the feelings of the mind, and the loves of the emotions. These are terrific things, and the teacher of yoga has been cautious in laying the basic foundations in the very beginning itself so that these impediments may be obviated to a large extent. No one can be completely free from them, not even the best of sages. One day or the other they will come in some form, but at least they will be in a milder form—not in a violent, wind-like form.

The advice intended by these *sutras* propounding the *yamas* and the *niyamas* is that no one, not even the best of students of yoga, can be free from the possibility of a reversion. There is no such thing as the best of students—everyone is in some stage which is other than the best. And so, there is always a chance of it being possible for one to listen to the calls of the realms which one has attempted to transcend, inasmuch as the senses, or the means of perception belonging to the earlier stages, are still present.

It may look many a time that soaring high into the realms or empyreans of yoga in the higher stages would be

like a bird flying into the sky, higher and higher, not knowing that its feet are tied with a thread to a peg at the bottom, on the surface of the earth, though the thread may be miles long. Imagine a kite which has been tied with a thread to a peg in the ground—a thread which is some five miles long, or ten miles long. The kite can go up and never know that it has been tied like that because it seems free. But, a stage will come when it will feel its limitations and know that it is not possible for it to go further because it is already restrained by certain conditions, which is the thread in this example.

Likewise, there are certain conditions to which we are subject, and if we are completely ignorant of the presence of these conditions and move idealistically, in an unrealistic manner, into the higher stages of yoga, there may be a satisfaction of having risen, or even of having had some visions—a conviction that something is coming—but, with all that, there would be a susceptibility to withdrawal into the earlier stages on account of not being cautious enough to probe into the possibilities of fall and the chances of self-limitation by the very make-up of one's own personality. We are humans; and, as long as there is a feeling that we are human beings, we cannot escape the limitations of human beings. Though we may sometimes think we are gods, we are only human beings because we cannot forget that we are human beings. Our consciousness itself is our bondage.

This is a caution that is given as a timely warning. A warning of this kind has to be given at every step because one cannot say at what moment of time, at what stage, and under what conditions these subliminal impressions will sprout into a wild tree and then cast their shadow upon us

so that the light of our aspirations may be blurred. Thus comes the necessity to maintain an unremitting awareness of the presence of God and a perpetual effort to keep oneself, or place oneself, in such ideal conditions which will not, to the extent possible, tempt one to the sensory activities and the mental functions or egoistic operations which are characteristic of the lower human nature.

Chapter 76

ASANA IS FIXITY OF POSITION

The proper practice of yoga commences with a continuous attempt at a suitable position of the body, which is known as *asana*. This is really the beginning of the practice proper. Here, the first step is taken to set oneself right in the requisite manner so that the seed is sown for the development of a harmony of one's system with the universal atmosphere. There is a characteristic agitation of the body and everything that is inside the body, due to the restlessness caused by the *kleshas*, or the afflictions of the mind filled with countless desires—fulfilled desires which have left some impression, or unfulfilled ones which have kept the mind in a state of anxiety. In either case—whether the desires have been fulfilled or not—there is restlessness. All these desires blow like winds inside one's system, tossing the mind hither and thither. The intimate connection of the mind with the body is enough to keep both the body and mind restless, in a fidgety mood, so that there is no fixity, either of the body or of the mind. Yoga is nothing but fixity, attention and an emphasis on a given direction of thought, mood, and position of the whole system.

This position of the system we are referring to is not necessarily the physical position, but a position of everything that we are made of. What we are aiming at is a fixity of the entire system, which we may call the human personality—the total mood which has to be focused in the direction of the ideal of yoga. Everything that we are made of is to be taken into consideration. Every bit of our

personality has a part to play in this practice. Even the least within us and the lowest element that is present in us has a role of sufficient importance, so that it is not only the body that is to be seated in a fixed posture. The bodily posture, or the physical *asana*, is one of the necessities which call for other necessities of a similar nature—namely, the position of the emotions, thoughts, volitions, memories, and all such other functions of the psychological organ.

There is no use in merely fixing in position a part or aspect of what we are and allowing other aspects to take their own course. It would be something like supporting a building on pillars, some of which are shaking, while some are fixed. If we have eight pillars which support the roof of a building, and we fix only one pillar in position and allow the others to shake, then the fixity of one pillar will not be of much avail—though it is fixed—because that which is fixed also will collapse due to the shaky position of the other pillars.

Thus, while it is true that concession has to be given to the weaknesses of human nature and, therefore, practice has to be done gradually, step by step, from one aspect to another aspect, we should not be completely oblivious to the necessity of bringing into harmony the other aspects also. They have to be kept in mind. This difficulty is, to a large extent, obviated by a sufficient advance in the practice of the *yamas* and the *niyamas*. We cannot practise all the eight limbs at one stroke, though it is true that they have to be borne in mind at all times. A considerable strength is gained by an appreciable mastery over the canons which are enunciated in the stages of the *yamas* and the *niyamas*. Even though it would be humanly impracticable to set

oneself earnestly to the practise of all the eight limbs suddenly, the first step—namely, the *asana*—will put the other aspects in a mood of coming into harmony with the ideal that is in the mind on account of the announcement that we have already made through the *yamas* and the *niyamas*.

Though a law may not be actually implemented yet, it is announced first; a mood is created, an atmosphere is prepared, and intimation is given as to what is going to come by the proclamation of a particular enactment. Likewise, these *yamas* and *niyamas* are a kind of enactment of what is going to happen, what is intended, and what we should be prepared for. This atmosphere that is created will be a kind of guard, or protection, against the unnecessary intrusions of those aspects which we may not be able to consider with sufficient emphasis at the time that we are engaged in one step, or one stage, of the practice—such as the *asanas*.

With these guarded cautions borne in mind, one should resort to a place of non-disturbance, in every sense of the term—non-disturbance, both to the senses and to the emotions, so that there is a tendency of the body to yield to the demand of a fixity of a position. One should be seated, is the instruction: *sthira sukham āsanam* (II.46). This requisition of yoga—that one should be seated—is the outcome of a practical convenience that follows from this position. We have to be in some position, and that position has to be chosen. It has to be fixed, once and for all.

In what position are we going to sit when we focus our attention on a given subject? There is no other conducive, helpful or suitable position except a fixed, seated position.

We cannot be lying down; we cannot be standing; we cannot be walking—what else are we going to do? The only alternative is to be seated because every other position, other than the seated one, will lay too much emphasis either on the *rajasic* aspect or the *tamasic* aspect. If we lie down, we may like to go to sleep; if we stand, we may fall down; if we walk, there is *rajas*. So, there is no other way left than to strike a *via media* where there is a little bit of effort in keeping the body in position, and yet not as much of an effort as required in walking, for instance.

Āsinah sambhavāt (B.S. IV.1.7) is the relevant *sutra* in the Brahma Sutras. Quick success is supposed to follow from a steadiness of the body, which sympathetically affects the nervous system in a manner which is also fixed. There is complete chaotic movement of the whole body-mind complex on account of the reasons I mentioned, so that due to the vehemence of the subconscious, the unconscious, as well as conscious movements of desires, there is complete anarchy, as it were, prevailing in the whole body. Anything can happen at any time, and anyone can do anything. Any thought can occur at any time. It is not possible for one to determine what one will think after one minute, and this is due to a lack of a governmental system in the body. There is no rule at all. It is all complete absence of regulation due to having given a long rope to the whims and fancies born of desires in the mind. The whole body-mind is made up of desires only, and nothing else is there. These desires are of various degrees, and so, according to the intensity of their expression, they bring about a chaotic condition. There is helplessness felt by the individual at every step, and in every condition, due to an absence of regulated living.

Thus, it becomes practically an impossible task to fulfil the requisition that is made to bring about order in the system. One is not accustomed to such things. We are used to living a life of moods and fancies, which is the contrary of what is expected in yoga. It is not possible for a person to sit in one position for a long time due to this difficulty—let alone have the concentration or the focusing of the mind. Even sitting is difficult, because the moment we make a decision to sit—even before sitting—the agony is felt. We have not started sitting; we have only decided that we have to sit. That decision itself is enough to cause sufficient sorrow in the mind that some trouble is coming. It is like an order of execution. Though we have not executed the person, the order is already there. That has caused sorrow.

The mind and the body do not want any kind of discipline, because every discipline is a kind of restriction of movement of their ways and usual requirements to which they are accustomed. So there is, in the beginning, a great sorrow; it is a painful thing. We will have aches of body and mind at once—even in a single day. But, we are not expecting milk and honey at the very first step in the practice of yoga; it is all very intense.

Yat tad agre viṣam iva pariṇame'mṛtopanam (B.G. XVIII.37), says the Bhagavadgita. It is all like poison coming in front of us, as it were—a very bitter thing indeed, because every discipline is painful, whatever be the nature of that discipline. Every regulation is unwanted. Every rule, every system, every law is anathema to the human system because of one's being used to a life of abandon and loose activities. This is to be checked, says yoga, and so we are taking up a task which is most unexpected by the physical

system. But, later on, one gets used to it—like breathing. We do not feel pain in breathing, though every second we are breathing up and down. We do not feel any agony on account of the body getting used to this activity right from birth. Due to the habituation of oneself to a particular way of living, that way of living becomes natural and ceases to cause pain of any kind.

Every great thing has been achieved by some pain only; it is not a joy right from the beginning. It follows that a daily habit of sitting has to be formed. Even if we are thinking nothing, let there be merely sitting. That itself is an achievement. The usual opinion of teachers of yoga is that if we are able to sit in a posture for about three hours at least, continuously, whether or not we are thinking anything in the mind—that is a sufficient achievement, because one usually cannot sit for three hours in one position; there will be great suffering. So if this could be done, it is really a praiseworthy achievement. Then the body will open up the gates for the possibility of a higher harmony in the muscles, the nerves, the *pranas*, etc., which are going to follow.

The restlessness which is obstructive in this practice is the intensity of the urge of the senses to move towards objects. The senses are very particular about it, and they do not want that their movement towards objects should be put an end to by any kind of counter-activity, even if it be a yoga activity. So, they start putting obstacles in the beginning itself: “What do you achieve by sitting like this? You have freed yourself from all possible joys of the world; you are sitting in an isolated place where you can see nothing, hear nothing, contact nothing, enjoy nothing.”

This inward grief causes an anguish which disturbs the body. Here *viveka*, or discrimination, has to be utilised. The *viveka*, or the power of understanding, will tell us that this pain that we inflict upon ourselves is a voluntary law that we have imposed upon ourselves for a great satisfaction that is going to come.

Every achievement is preceded by some kind of sorrowful discipline—whether it is study, education, training, or whatever it is. But later on there is freedom as the outcome of this discipline. Everyone knows this, even in ordinary life. Hence, it is very important to put oneself to this hard task of sitting. If one carefully investigates into one's own personal life, one would realise that no one can sit like this. Very few will be able to sit like this; and no one has even tried it, because even before trying, we always tell ourselves, "That is not possible for me." Therefore, it is not possible. When we have already told ourselves that it is not possible—naturally, it is not possible. So, it is necessary now to tell oneself that it is a requirement, and not merely a choice. We are not asked whether we can or cannot. We *must*, if we are going to be free from the trammels of the human mind.

In the beginning, one may be seated for a few minutes—not necessarily for three hours, which is an achievement of months. If the knees ache, stretch the legs, stretch the arms, open the eyes, rub the face, breathe deeply and so on, so that the pain is lessened. Then, again sit in a crossed-leg position. The remedy for the pain that is caused in sitting for a long time is to relax oneself periodically, now and then, even after a few minutes; it does not matter. If we can sit only for five minutes, we sit for five minutes. After

the sixth minute, we stretch our legs or even walk about, and then again sit—which means to say, we have to spend a long time in this practice. Many hours may have to be spent even in this discipline of sitting, in order that we may become used to it. Then we will find that this sitting posture becomes natural, and we will not be able to sit in any other posture. We will be only in that posture, always.

Prayatna śaithilya ananta samāpattibhyām (II.47). It is also said that this sitting posture should not be a forced one; it should be natural. ‘Prayatna saithilya’ is the term used in the *sutra*. We should not trouble the body by pressing the limbs hard into a position for a long time. From the very beginning it should be a relaxed attempt, gradually brought about by infusing the limbs of the body to come to the position required—gradually, without causing agony to the body. This is the meaning of *prayatna saithilya*, or the relaxation of the system. The effort should be relaxed so that we do not feel the effort in sitting. If we force the limbs to be seated in a posture which is very hard for us to achieve, then there will be pain. So, in the beginning, bend the knee only a little bit, at a small angle—not completely at a right angle or more. Then go on bending it, a little more and more, into the position required. Do not try impossible postures; try only those which are helpful and not too unpleasant. Gradual release of the consciousness of effort in respect of the practice of *asana* is advised.

Prayatna śaithilya ananta samāpattibhyām (II.47). Here itself, Patanjali brings into play the role of the mind in the practice of *asana*. Even in the seated position of the body, which is known as *asana*, the mind is active; it is

cooperating and it is doing something. What is the mind doing when the body is made to be seated in a posture? This is hinted at in the phrase '*ananta samapatti*'.

It is very difficult to explain what is actually in the mind of Patanjali, and exponents give various ideas about it. The most reasonable meaning of it seems to be that there should be a gradual attempt on the part of the mind to cooperate with the ideal of the practice of the *asana*. Inasmuch as position of the body is possible only after achieving some amount of freedom from distraction, and as long as the distraction is present this position would be difficult to maintain, it is necessary that the mind also should cooperate, as far as possible, in this attempt at bringing about a cessation of distraction.

What is the cause of a distraction? As it was said, the restlessness of the senses in respect of their objects—the running of the senses towards externality—is the cause of the distraction; that itself is the essence of distraction. A consciousness of externality is the essence of distraction, and this causes many other subsidiary and sympathetic distractions. If the mind could be requested to contribute its part to bring about a mitigation of the vehemence of this distraction, even in this stage of the practice of *asana*, that would be very good.

What is this contribution that the mind can make at the time of the practice of the *asana*? The mind can think something, and that thought would certainly help the maintenance of the position, provided that thought is free from distractions. Every thought of an object is a distraction. Whatever be that object—good or bad—it is a distraction, inasmuch as it is outside the body, outside the

mind, outside one's consciousness. The very awareness of the presence of something outside is the cause of the distraction. We feel agitated because something is there outside us.

The mind can, with the aid of the energy it has already gained by the practice of the *yamas* and *niyamas*, prevent this distraction of externality-consciousness by a contemplation of the infinitude of things. *Ananta* means endless, or infinite. The Infinite is that which has no external, because that which is called external, that which is outside, is also a part of what is infinite. 'The Infinite' is a term that we use to designate that which includes everything; and that which includes everything should include the objects also.

Thus, the contemplation, the thought, the feeling, and the mood towards the Infinite should naturally include a satisfaction of having brought within one's thought or feeling the very thing that the senses are asking for—namely, the objects. It is not meditation that we are speaking of here, but a mood that the mind is expected to develop by a sense of satisfaction that it has to rouse in itself merely by the single thought that infinitude includes even the objects of desire. So the thought, the feeling, or the affirmation of the presence of the Infinite would release the mind and the senses from this natural distraction caused by their having to move towards the objects. In the Infinite there is no movement, because there is no externality. Hence, the position that the mind maintains on account of the feeling of the Infinite is the highest type of fixity conceivable, and it will act upon the body. When we think nothing in the mind, the body will also be seated in a fixed

position. It is because of roaming thoughts and uncontrolled feelings that the body also becomes fidgety.

By these two hints given in the *sutra* (II.47)—*prayatna saithilya* and *ananta samapatti*—one is expected to be able to be seated in a particular posture. Effortlessness and relaxation, a feeling of spontaneity and a mood of the mind towards the presence of the Infinite—these two are supposed to be conducive to maintaining the position of the body. When the body is not in position, we have to find out why it is not in position. It is either because we have sat for a very long time—beyond the limit prescribed or possible—or there is some other thing which is harassing the mind.

If we are highly agitated in the mind due to some reason, the *asana* will not succeed at that time. Thus, a study of the feelings should precede this practice of the attempt at the position of the body. Either too much exertion on the part of the body in maintaining a position, or too much oscillation of the mind on account of some restlessness present in it may be the cause of the inability. We have to find out why we are not able to sit. If we have an engagement, the mood will be towards the engagement. Then, naturally, we cannot sit. Therefore, when we are about to attempt sitting for a protracted period there should be no immediate engagement; it should be a little far off. For some hours there should be no engagement of anything whatsoever.

Hence, the mind has to be prepared, and the body has to be prepared. The place, the time and the circumstances are also to be considered. Where are we sitting? That will tell upon the extent of success that we will gain. At what

time? Is it a suitable time? Is it midday, or midnight, or are we tired? Is it after lunch, or before lunch? Are we hungry? Are we overloaded? What is happening to us? These also are important factors to consider. If we are very hungry, we cannot sit; or if we had a heavy lunch, then also we cannot sit. We must know the circumstances, the conditions, the place and the time, as well as the mood of the mind and the atmosphere—all these factors have to be considered in finding out what amount of success we may achieve in the practice of the *asana*. So, even this *asana* is a very difficult thing, because it is a yoga. It is not merely a joke that we are making. It is not a hobby. It is not an unnecessary limb of yoga. It is a very necessary limb.

These two *sutras*—*sthira sukham āsanam* (II.46) and *prayatna śaithilya ananta samāpattibhyām* (II.47)—give us some idea, in an outline, of the things that we have to do at the time we are trying to sit in position. The position should be comfortable and not painful, is the advice. The *asana*, or the posture, should be pleasant. We should be happy that we are sitting. We should not be grieving that we are in that position. That is the meaning of the term ‘*sukha*’. And, because the position is pleasant, it will also be fixed—*sthira*. If it is unpleasant, there will be no fixity. So let there be pleasantness, which is possible only if the position is not strained or forced by mere will against the limits or limitations of the bodily system. A daily attempt at gradual relaxation, as suggested, together with the mood of the mind gravitating towards the presence of the Infinite—we call it the presence of God—will certainly put the body in position.

Chapter 77

THE IMPORTANCE OF ASANA AND PRANAYAMA

If tangible success is our aim in the practice of yoga, the habit of sitting for a long time, every day, becomes an equally necessary item of the practice. It is impossible to gain control over the mind and expect concentration, or attention of consciousness, if there is a persistent inclination to go about, run about, see people and talk, and do many things. This is an indication of restlessness; and such a person is certainly unfit for a life of meditation.

We can study and learn our own nature by the daily activities of our life and the moods that pass through our mind. The way in which we speak, the expressions that we use, the manner in which we conduct ourselves—all these are indications of the characteristic of the inner personality, which will also indicate our fitness for meditation. It is not anyone that is chosen. “Many are called, but few are chosen,” said Christ. Millions may be asked to apply for a position though only one may be chosen. Likewise, it is not everyone who struggles that will succeed. Even among those who strenuously put forth effort, very few will succeed because the effort called for is literally superhuman, inasmuch as a tenacity of an extraordinary nature is called for here. When we actually take to it, we will see the seriousness of it.

It is the opinion of the author of the Yoga Sutras that when mastery is obtained in a posture—an *asana*—one can be impervious to the onslaught of the pairs of opposites like

heat and cold, even hunger and thirst. These normal biological reactions of the body also may be lessened in their intensity of experience if the metabolic functions in the system are controlled by the steadiness of the posture. There is a continuous transformation of the cellular structure in our bodies called the processes of anabolism and catabolism—both of which, put together, is called metabolism. This is a tendency to change physically, and to change for the purpose of building up the bodily system, due to which it is that we feel hunger and thirst, and fatigue if proper food is not taken. Also, heat and cold and such other physical experiences are due to the compulsion of the body to adjust itself to changing conditions of life for the purpose of maintaining itself.

This difficulty will be, to a large extent, kept under control if the biological activity is reduced to the minimum. Even our eating may become less if our activity becomes less. It is because we run about too much that we have to eat too much, and also have to sleep too much, and so on. Thus, the reduction of physical activity in the form of wastage of energy and a depletion of force would be a great assistance in reducing the intensity of the calls of the physical body. Food and drink, and even sleep, can be controlled and reduced to the minimum, provided the causes of these are properly understood.

Why is it that we feel hungry? Why are we thirsty? Why do we feel sleepy? Why are we exhausted? The causes of this should be found out. If we can have a control over the causes to some extent, the effects also are controlled. The causes are, at least in their outer shape or form, the activity of the physical body, which is kept always in a state of

restlessness on account of its needs, its demands and its requisitions of various types, which go hand in hand with the cravings of the senses. The control of the senses and the reduction of the needs of the body organism go together—and it is not an exaggeration to say that even the powers of the senses get reduced if there is a mastery over the *asana*, or the posture of the body, in which one can be seated for hours. It is to be emphasised that this posture should be maintained for several hours in a day, though not necessarily continuously—with breaks. The practice has to be one of intense continuity and persistence, so it may become necessary, where the practice is very arduous and earnest, to sit for several times in a day.

One of the hints that can be given for easy success in a posture is to be seated in a chosen posture always, whatever be the work that one does. Even if we sit for a cup of tea, we sit only in that posture; we do not sit on an easy chair or on a couch. If we talk to our friend, we sit in that posture and talk. If we have our meal, we sit in that posture and eat. Whatever be the work that we do which can be done while seated should be done only in that particular posture, so that even unconsciously, spontaneously, as a matter of course, the posture is maintained. Then, even without our knowing what we have been doing, we have been sitting in that posture for hours. Even in *satsang*, we sit in that posture only. We do not go on fidgeting and changing position. Wherever we are, and whatever we are doing, we should let that posture be maintained, unless of course we are compelled to walk for some reason or the other. When it is not necessary to stand or walk, this posture should be maintained—whatever be the work that we are doing, even

if it be office work—so that this becomes a habit. We will have no other alternative than to sit only in that pose. Then the body gets accustomed and it will not feel pain when we are seated for meditation.

This habit of sitting becomes second nature to oneself on account of this adoption of the pose under every circumstance, at every time, whatever be the function that one may be performing. Due to this control that one gains over the system due to the reduction of *rajasic* activity, there is, as I mentioned, a reduction in the intensity of the metabolic activity of the system, and one will feel less hunger, less thirst, and need less sleep. This can be seen by practise, and one cannot know it merely by hearing or studying. The appetite for food will lessen. The habit of gorging will become less, and we will have the least desire to eat or drink anything, or even to see people. We will have no desire afterwards. We would like to close our eyes and shut ourselves off, merely because of the reduction of *rajas*. It is the intensity of the *rajasic* property of *prakriti* in the system that perpetually compels us to be outward-looking through the senses and the mind, so that it is impossible for a person to sit alone—even for a few minutes—without anxiety, restlessness and unhappiness.

These are the ways in which we have to diagnose our system and find out what is the extent of our fitness for meditation. But, when this diagnosis becomes successful and we have a proper knowledge of what our strengths and foibles are, the results that are indicated in the *sutra*, *tataḥ dvandvāḥ anabhighātaḥ* (II.48), follow automatically. *Dvandva* is a pair of opposites, one counterbalancing the other. Where there is heat, there can be cold; where there is

pleasure, there can be pain; where there is exhilaration, there can be sorrow. These oscillating, ambivalent moods—physically, socially and psychologically—are the processes and vicissitudes through which our organism has to pass, due to which it is always kept in a state of sorrow, whether visibly or invisibly, consciously or subconsciously. This can be obviated, says the *sutra*, by mastery over the *asana*.

Therefore, a great importance is laid upon the practice of the posture for meditation. Here the posture, or *asana*, does not necessarily mean the eighty-four *lakh* (8,400,000) postures mentioned in the hatha yoga *shastras*, but a single chosen one for the maintenance of the balance of the system, because the aim of yoga is meditation. Everything has to converge on that point. For the purpose of this ultimate aim of yoga, which is meditation, all these practices are undertaken. For the purpose of the fixity of the mind there should be fixity of the body, fixity of the muscles, fixity of the nerves, fixity of the *pranas* and fixity of emotions. For this purpose it is that the limbs of yoga are prescribed—*asana*, *pranayama*, *pratyahara*, *dharana*, *dhyana* and *samadhi*. These stages of yoga are the steady practices of control of the various layers of the body—the physical, the vital, the emotional, the intellectual, etc.

Hence, the first and foremost requisition, as mentioned in the *sutra*, is the gaining of an appreciable mastery over *asana*. It goes without saying that when the first step is taken, and it is taken firmly without there being any need to retrace the step, the foundation stone is automatically laid for the next step. The harmony that is introduced into the system by one particular step spontaneously invites the harmony of the next stage, and there is an inclination of the

next step to tend towards the harmony which is the aim of the practice in the higher stage.

Tasmin sati śvāsa praśvāsayoḥ gativicchedaḥ prāṇāyāmaḥ (II.49), says the *sutra*. *Tasmin sati* means: after having gained mastery over. It is a very important phrase. It means: after having done this—not before that. This means to say, one should not take to a serious practice of *pranayama* if one is a restless person. If one has activities of a distracting nature, if one is a busybody, if one is always compelled to move about, if one is a travelling train inspector, one has no time to sit. One cannot practice *pranayama* in that case because the agitation of the physical body will tell upon the *pranas*. It would be very dangerous and unwise to meddle with the *pranas*, even in the interest of bringing harmony to them, if the body is restless or exhausted, or is unwilling to yield. If the body is not amenable, the *pranas* will not be amenable. Thus, from our daily physical conduct, social behaviour and emotional moods, we can have an indication of the extent to which we can sit for *pranayama*. Is there a subduing of emotions and feelings? And, what are the inner cravings which have been kept under check for a long time without fulfilment? Tensions are quite the contrary, or the opposite, of the requisites in *pranayama*.

After having gained a sufficient mastery in *asana*—that is the meaning of this *tasmin sati*—then śvāsa praśvāsayoḥ gativicchedaḥ (II.49) will follow. It is not advised that one should take to what they call alternate breathing, etc., in the beginning. No one should take to this alternate breathing at the very outset. What is advised in the beginning is only

deep inhalation and deep exhalation, which itself is a great achievement.

Most people do not breathe in or breathe out in a systematic or harmonious manner on account of distractions in the mind. The distraction of the *prana* is an indication of the agitation of the mind. The more are the desires in the mind, the more is the restlessness of the *prana*. There is an arrhythmic flow of the *prana* with heaves of wave emotions, which has to be brought down by calm and quiet pondering. Deep breathing is the only possibility for a beginner—not alternate breathing. There should be only one-way breathing, and not these sideways and alternate processes. Even that would be a difficult thing if we are not in a position to sit for a sufficient time. If we are running about, how will we breathe?

In fact, the breathing practice should not be done after any kind of exhausting work. For example, we should not start breathing after returning from a walk. We know very well what our body is like after we return from a three-mile walk. There is warmth in the system, sometimes also perspiration, and a very rapid movement of the *prana* on account of the activity called walking. If we try to check the *prana* at that time, we will be treading in a danger zone because the *prana* is trying to adjust itself with the requirements of the body which has already undergone this fatigue called walking, and we are trying to do something the opposite of it. Therefore, no *pranayama* should be practised after walking. Also, it should not be combined with physical exercises such as *dand baithaks* (knee bends) etc., because these physical exercises—or *vyayama*, as they are called—of modern types are exercises which extrovert

the *prana*, drive the *prana* out of the system, whereas *pranayama* is the opposite process which drives the *prana* inside.

Therefore, we should not do two contrary activities. It is said that even yoga *asanas* should not be combined with physical exercises, for the same reason—because the purpose of yoga *asanas* is to tend the *prana* inwards for toning the system, whereas the purpose of physical exercises is to drive the *prana* out. And so, after having exhausted ourselves in a volleyball or a tennis match, we find ourselves heaving with heavy breath, with a warmed-up system, and wishing to lie down if possible. But this is not so after we practise *asanas*. We do not feel tired. On the other hand, we feel relaxed.

Inasmuch as there is a great contrary effect produced by yoga *asana* and physical exercise, these two should not be combined; they are absolutely two different things. Even more caution is to be advanced in the case of *pranayama*, because it is a more dangerous practice than physical exercise or *asana*. It is very important to remember that unless one is able to sit for an hour or two continuously, this composure of the *prana* cannot come about. We must sit for half an hour or one hour without getting up. This is very important to remember. Only then should we start thinking about the deep breathing exercise.

The purpose of this system called *pranayama* is to cleanse the nervous system through which the *prana* flows. Generally, when the *prana* flows in the usual manner, there is a so-called normalcy maintained, but the system is not cleansed due to a peculiar reason. We have, for instance, water flowing through a pipe. If water flows through a pipe

in one direction only, and we allow the water to flow in the same direction for months, it can be seen that some sand or silt becomes deposited inside the bottom of the pipe, and this silt is not disturbed by the flow of the water due to its getting accustomed to the intensity of the flow. The silt remains there at the bottom. Though the water is flowing over it, it will not be removed. But, suppose we drive the water in the opposite direction, and repeatedly drive the water this way and that way—both ways—we will find that the silt is disturbed. The silt is stirred up into activity, and the pipe is cleaned completely. We can clean the pipe by running the water back and forth, again and again, repeatedly, with force.

Likewise, this alternate system of breathing called *pranayama* is something like driving water back and forth through the pipe for the purpose of cleansing the pipe—called the nerves or the *nadis*. Usually this alternate breathing is not practised. People breathe only in a single, linear fashion. Hence, though there is a flow of *prana*, the silt is there; the nerves are not cleansed. There is some kind of deposit which is not observed and which is the cause of various kinds of difficulties in the physiological system. The purpose of the bringing about of this cleansing through *pranayama* is, of course, obvious. It needs no mention that it should keep the body flexible and malleable, so that there will be no ache or feeling of fatigue in the body.

The quick feeling of exhaustion and fatigue in the system is due to the presence of some dross in the body—whatever be that dross. It may be due to continuous overeating or continuous eating at wrong times; or, it may be due to eating the wrong food, which is not required by

the system, and so on. It may be due to constipation, etc. There are umpteen causes for the toxic matter getting deposited in the system. Thus, there is always a feeling of unhappiness in the body; it is never happy. Always people complain something is wrong—either here or there. It is quite understandable.

The prescription given here is to avoid these feelings by various means of purification. We have to bring into memory once again the canons of the *yamas* and *niyamas* mentioned earlier. Every succeeding stage implies and involves the preceding stage, so when we are in the stage of *asana* or *pranayama* it does not mean that we have forgotten what was told to us in the stages of *yama* and *niyama*. *Saucha* was mentioned as a purifying process, and we were told of many other means to purify the whole system; and some sort of purification was effected. Now we are going to effect a greater purification with a greater intensity and tenacity of practice. As we go higher and higher, as we take further steps, at every step there should be a *simhavalokanam*, as they call it—a retrospection of the previous stages that we have passed through so that there cannot be, or need not be, or should not be a forgetfulness of what has happened in the past.

When we study a book, it does not mean that when we advance through the pages we forget the earlier pages; that is not a good study. When we reach the hundredth page of study, we must close our book and recall what we have read up till that time. If we have forgotten the first page, second page, or third page because we are at the hundredth page, it is not a good study. Many students forget what they have studied earlier, merely because they have advanced. So here,

‘advanced’ does not mean cancellation of the earlier, but transcendence of the earlier stages by their sublimation and absorption. Hence, in this process of purification called *asana* and *pranayama*, the implication of the canons of *yama* and *niyama* is already there. This is to be remembered always. We are going to effect greater and greater types of purification, and not entirely newer types of purification.

Tasmin sati śvāsa praśvāsayoḥ gativicchedaḥ prāṇāyāmaḥ (II.49), says the *sutra*; and there are two more *sutras* which give some idea as to the nature of the practice. In three *sutras*, the whole system of *pranayama* is summarised by Patanjali. The second *sutra* is: bāhya ābhyaantara stambha vṛttiḥ deśa kāla saṁkhyābhiḥ paridṛṣṭaḥ dīrgha sūkṣmaḥ (II.50); and the third is: bāhya ābhyaantara viśaya ākṣepī caturthaḥ (II.51). These are very short *sutras*, but are very difficult to understand because they contain everything concerning *pranayama* in a single aphorism. Śvāsa praśvāsayoḥ gativicchedaḥ (II.49) was what was told in the first *sutra*. The normal movement of the *prana* is restrained and diverted in a different fashion altogether in the process of *pranayama*. That diverting of the process of the *prana* in a different fashion is called *gativicchedaḥ*, or *svasa prasvasayoh*; or it may also mean the restraining, the inhibiting, the setting, the positing, and the stopping of the flow. The ultimate aim of *pranayama* is to stop the breathing. Alternate breathing is not the end, or aim; it is only a beginning.

As I mentioned, in the earliest of stages there should be only deep inhalation and deep exhalation. The next higher stage is where we breathe alternately, and simultaneously

try to hold the breath until a point of suffocation is reached, and do not go beyond that. But, the main or central purpose is to stop the breath in *kumbhaka*. Why we should stop the breath may be a query that the mind raises. What is the intention behind stopping this breath? What do we gain out of it? This is a very great subject which is not only biological and psychological, but also philosophical.

The breathing process is a great obstacle to concentration of mind. The *svasa* and *prasvasa* processes, what we call respiration—inhalation and exhalation—are constant goads that keep the mind restless. Suppose you want to sit quietly in one place, and I come there and push you; you will feel disturbed. “I am sitting quietly and am being disturbed by this man.” Then, I come from the front and push you again, and then I come from behind and push you for a third time. I push you from the front as well as the rear, constantly. I will not allow you to keep quiet. What sort of quietness can there be?

The mind is trying to keep quiet and focus itself in what is called meditation, the aim of yoga. But these *pranas* push it from behind as well as from the front. They are like two brothers. One pushes from the front, the other from behind; one pulls from the top, another pulls from below. They are the *prana* and *apana*, as they are called. They cannot allow the mind to keep quiet. We cannot concentrate. No meditation is possible—no focusing, no attention, nothing of the kind—as long as this breathing process continues, because the constant pushing of the *pranas* hampers our attempt at concentration. That the retention of the breath is simultaneous with focusing, or concentration of mind, can be seen in daily practice where

we are sometimes able to stop the breath spontaneously, without knowing it, when we are gazing at an object intently. Suppose there is a snake charmer, and he brings a snake with its hood raised. We stare at it and our breath stops—not because we are deliberately stopping the breath but because our mind is so much concentrated on what is happening there.

Or, walking along a narrow bridge: suppose there is only one plank along Lakshmanjhula bridge—a small, sleeper-like thing which is long enough to cover the entire length of the bridge. We know the plank is only one foot in width and the length is of the entire length of the bridge, and we have to walk on it. How will we walk? Just see. A little carelessness means down we go into the water. We know that very well, and we know it will be the end of the matter. So, we are very cautious. We will never talk to anybody at that time, even to a friend. The nearest and dearest may be there, but we will not be conscious of him. Every step we take will be measured carefully—stepping this way, that way, due to such a narrow width of the plank that is serving as the bridge. There, the breath stops. We will observe the breath is not functioning at that time.

Or, we pass a thread through the eye of a needle. We see at that time what happens to the breath. We are unable to see the small hole in the needle. We keep looking at it to find out where the hole is; and however much we may try, the thread will not go in—it will come out. Great caution is necessary to thrust the thread through the needle's eye; and there the breath stops—we will not breathe. Or, we are archers pointing an arrow towards the target, and we see what happens; and so on. When we are compelled to

concentrate the mind on a given objective, function or task that we are doing, the breath stops. It is very clear that the breath must stop if the mind is to concentrate; otherwise, there is no concentration.

Inasmuch as the intention of yoga is deep meditation—the absorption of the subject with the object, the embracing of the subject and the object together in a fraternal embrace of union—inasmuch as such a tremendous concentration is called for, which is most uncanny and weird, we can imagine why the yoga *shastras* lay so much emphasis upon the regulation of the breath. When the *pranas* do not cooperate with the intentions and aspirations of the mind, the intentions and aspirations fail.

Hence, these two should go together. The attempt at the concentration of the mind and the subdual of the movement of the *pranas*—both these should go together harmoniously, so that the *rajas* in the mind as well as the *rajas* in the *prana* are put down in order that the level of *sattva* be raised, which is the same as concentration of mind.

Chapter 78

KUMBHAKA AND CONCENTRATION OF MIND

There is a constant pressure felt within every individual due to an outgoing tendency which manifests itself continuously, right from birth onwards until the dissolution of the body. This outgoing tendency is the activity of the *prana*. It is an energy which seeks an outward expression, like a rushing stream which can flow only in one direction and its flow cannot be stopped because of the vehemence of the movement. It will topple down whatever is in its way and push onward due to the force of its flow. Likewise is the work of this energy within us called the *prana*. It is an impetuous urge directing itself in some particular fashion known to itself alone.

Together with its movement, it drags with itself all that is within us—our feelings, our thoughts, our emotions and what not—so that we are extrovert personalities throughout. We can think nothing inwardly; everything is outside. The moment we wake up in the morning, we begin to peep through our eyes into the external world and look at the atmosphere which is around us, incapable of knowing what is inside us. This is the great harassment that is caused by what is called the *prana*. Though it is the principle of life—without it no one can exist and live—it is also a direct medium of distress of every kind due to the incapacity of the mind to settle in itself, which is what we call lack of peace of mind.

The *prana* is different from the breath. This is also a feature that has to be observed. The *prana* is a very subtle tendency within us. We may say the characteristic of the

total energy of the system is the *prana*. It is not located in any part of the body particularly. Though it has special emphasis laid in different parts of the body, it is equally distributed everywhere. *Prana* is nothing but the sum total of the energy of the system. Whatever our total capacity is, that is our *prana-shakti*. But, this capacity is outwardly directed. This is the difficulty. It is not introverted, and it is impossible to draw the *prana* within. We cannot hold the breath even for a few seconds, such is the strength of this outward tendency of the *prana*. And, from the force of this outward expression of the *prana*, we can also infer to what extent we are introverts or extroverts. How far we can withdraw the mind from thinking of objects, etc. can be known to some extent from the way in which this *prana* is functioning. Concentration is impossible for most people because they are completely 'sold out' to the outside world. We become slaves of conditions and circumstances, and puppets in the hands of these extrovert forces.

This is precisely the thing to be noted in the practice of yoga. This tendency has to be brought back to its original causative condition. Why has this urge arisen? Why are we running like this? Why is this total energy, or sum total of what we are, pressing itself forward? What is the purpose? What is the intention? What does it seek? And, why are we so restless? This subject was studied to some extent in the *sutras* preceding those which we are studying now. Now we are actually at the point of practice after having a comprehensive understanding of the causes of this urge within us; and the practice consists of a gradual retention of the breath, of the flow of this outward tendency in us, the

prana, by the technique called *pranayama*. We were trying to understand an outline of this process previously.

Patanjali's *sutras* relevant to this subject are very few. Bāhya ābhyanāra stambha vṛttiḥ deśa kāla saṁkhyābhiḥ paridṛṣṭaḥ dīrgha sūkṣmaḥ (II.50) is a comprehensive *sutra*, followed by bāhya ābhyanāra viśaya ākṣepi caturthaḥ (II.51). There are some people who cannot breathe in with force; there is a shallow intake of breath. There are others who cannot breathe out with force. It depends upon the peculiarity of the individual. They can breathe out, but they cannot breathe in—there is shallow breathing in, though there is a satisfactory breathing out; and conversely, there are others of a different nature.

The *pranayama* technique intends to shorten the period of these inhalation and exhalation processes in order that the force with which this process goes on, or continues, is brought to the minimum so that there is no strength in this flow, though the flow is tending to go outward and inward as it has been doing ever since the birth of the individual. How long does the breath remain outside in exhalation? How long does it remain inward in inhalation? These are the things to be observed, which is what is meant by these two terms in the *sutra*. *Desa* is space, or place, or location. The extent or the measure, spatially, of the movement of the *prana* during the process of respiration is the meaning of the term '*desa*' in the *sutra*.

Generally it is believed that when we breathe out, the breath moves out to the extent of a cubit, or a little less than that. To find out where the breath is, we can place a little cotton in front of our nose and see whether it moves when we exhale. If we keep it near our nostrils and breathe

out, we will find that the cotton moves because of the breath that is blown out. Then, we take it a little further and further away. The spot where the cotton ceases to move at the time of exhalation is the terminus of the movement of the exhalation process. From that we can find out the length of the exhalation.

As far as the inhalation is concerned, we cannot use this technique; we have to infer the movement of the *prana* when we inhale merely by feeling its movement within. If we are cautious and contemplative, we can feel how the *prana* moves when we deeply breathe in. The purpose is to stop this lengthening of the breath, outwardly as well as inwardly—to shorten it as far as possible, until it becomes so short that there is practically no movement at all. That cessation of movement is called *kumbhaka*.

This cessation of the breath can be brought about in many ways. Though the yoga *shastras* speak of several types of *pranayama* or *kumbhaka*, Patanjali concerns himself with only four types—which are actually not four, really speaking. They are only one, mentioned in four different ways. *Bāhya ābhyantara stambha vṛttiḥ* (II.50) are the terms used in the *sutra*. *Bahya* is external; *abhyantara* is internal; *stambha* is sudden retention; *vṛtti* is the process. The external retention is what is known as *bahya vṛtti*, the internal retention is what is known as *abhyantara vṛtti*, and the sudden retention is what is known as *stambha vṛtti*.

These *vṛttis*, or the processes of the movement of the *prana*, are measured across different parameters, as enumerated through the other terms in the *sutra*, *deśa kāla saṁkhyābhiḥ* (II.50), for calculating the retention of the

breath. The *prana* can be stopped by way of retention after exhalation. This was referred to in an earlier *sutra* where a particular method of breathing was prescribed as a way of bringing about peace of mind when the mind is very much disturbed. That *sutra* is in the Samadhi Pada: *pracchardana vidhāraṇābhyām vā prāṇasya* (I.34). *Pracchardana* is expulsion; *vidharana* is retention. The expulsion and the retention of the breath are supposed to be one of the means of bringing about composure of mind.

This is almost the same as one of the *pranayamas* mentioned here as *bahya vritti*. We breathe out, gradually and intensely, in a very spontaneous, flowing manner, and then do not breathe in; this is one *pranayama*. We can press the abdomen inward and then raise up the diaphragm. After the inhalation, generally the chest is forward at this time. The breath is then blown out—not suddenly with a jerk, which should not be done—but very calmly so that we will not even know that it is blowing out. Then, we do not breathe in immediately; we see how far we can maintain this position of expulsion without it being followed by inward breathing. This sort of retention of the breath, which means to say the cessation of breathing in after the breathing out, is called *bahya vritti*—the *pranayama*, or the *kumbhaka*, which follows expulsion.

Or there can be *abhyantara vritti*, which is retention of the breath after inhalation. We breathe in, in the same way as we exhale—calmly, forcefully, deeply—and then do not breathe out. That retention of the breath after deep inhalation is a *pranayama* by itself. The way in which we retain the breath is called *kumbhaka*. *Kumbha* means a kind of pot which can be filled with things. We fill our system

with the whole *prana* in *pranayama*. You may ask me, “Is not the body filled with *prana* at other times? Is it filled with *prana* only during *kumbhaka*?”

The idea behind this filling is very peculiar. Though the *prana* is moving everywhere in the system even at other times than during the time of *kumbhaka*, something very peculiar takes place during *kumbhaka* which does not happen at other times. During *kumbhaka* the *prana* in the system is filled to the brim, and it remains unmoving and unshaken, just as a pot may be filled to the brim and the content or liquid inside does not shake due to its being filled up to the brim, to the utmost possible extent. There is no movement of the *prana* in *kumbhaka*; it is not trying to escape from one place to another place.

The escaping of the *prana* from one place to another place actually means the difference which it introduces in the density of its activity, which is the cause of unequal distribution of energy in the system. Because there is no equal distribution of force in the body, there is difficulty—physiological as well as psychological. The senses, especially, become very active and uncontrollable on account of the unequal distribution of energy, or *prana*, in the system and a capitalist attitude of the *prana* towards the senses only, where it is stored up in an excessive measure, depriving the other parts of the required energy.

When a particular sense organ is very active, there is an excessive measure of *prana* supply given to that particular location of the organ which intends to fulfil itself. There is the irritation of the senses or an itching of the particular organ due to the excessive flow of the *prana* there. It may be the eye, the ear, or any organ. We have ten organs, and

one of the organs will start itching. This itching, or irritation, or craving of a particular organ is due to an abundant supply of *prana* in that particular part of the body, which implies a deprivation of other parts of the body from the requisite energy.

This is also one of the reasons why people with intense cravings have a peculiar physical feature—which can be observed, to some extent, if we are cautious. The beauty of the body that is seen in childhood vanishes gradually when the body grows into the stages of youth and adult. There is a sort of equal distribution of the *pranic* energy in childhood, so that we see a blooming youthfulness, beauty and exuberance in children which is absent in youths and adults because the sense organs of grown-up persons are more active than the sense organs of children. Due to a particular vehemence of a group of senses in adults, or grown-up people, the energy withdraws itself from other parts of the body and directs itself only to that particular part which is asking for fulfilment, so a kind of absence of symmetry can be seen in the system. Symmetry is beauty. Where symmetry and beauty are absent, we find a kind of ugliness gradually creeping into the system, due to the simple reason that the *prana* is unequally distributed. Hence, the unequal distribution of the *prana* in the system is due to the presence of desires. The child also has desires. It does not mean that desires are absent there, but they are not manifest; they are not revealed. They are not pressing themselves forward in any particular manner.

The *prana* shifts its centre of pressure from time to time according to the circumstances, and this should be prevented. The *kumbhaka* process is a technique by which

this excessive emphasis which *prana* lays on any particular part of the body is obviated, and it is allowed to equally distribute itself in the whole system, which is another way of saying that the *rajas* of the *prana* is made to cease. The excessive emphasis of the *prana* in any particular part of the system is due to *rajas*, which means there is movement. Without movement, how can there be any kind of unequal distribution of energy? This is prevented by the process of *kumbhaka*. The filling of the system with the *pranic* energy means distributing the energy equally in the whole system and making it felt everywhere equally, with equal intensity, and without the special favour it sometimes does to a particular limb or organ. This is what happens in *kumbhaka*. It can be done, as mentioned, either after exhalation or after inhalation. Either we breathe out and retain the breath, or we breathe in and retain it. These are the two types of *kumbhaka* mentioned as *bahya vritti* and *abhyantara vritti*.

There is a third type called *stambha vritti*, which is not followed either by inhalation or exhalation. Suddenly a cobra drops on our head, just now. What will happen? Our breath will stop at that time; we will not breathe in or breathe out. From the ceiling some snake drops, and we see it on our lap. What happens at that time? The breath is not there—it has stopped. Did we breathe in or breathe out? Neither did we breathe in, nor did we breath out; nothing has happened. We do not know whether the *prana* exists at all. It has immediately stopped activity due to the shock it received. Any kind of sudden stopping of the breath is called *stambha vritti*.

Of course, it does not mean that this *stambha* is to be introduced into *pranayama* by shock or fear; that is not the idea. What is intended is that the absorption of the mind in the object or ideal of yoga should be so comprehensive—so deep and absorbing, and intense—that there will be no time for the mind to supply the motive force to the *prana* to move at all. When we are deeply absorbed in a particular thought, very deeply absorbed, and we are not able to think anything other than that one particular thought due to intense affection or intense hatred, or for any reason whatsoever, the *prana* stops; there will be no breathing at that time. When we are overpowered with the emotion of love, or fear, or hatred, there will be a stoppage of *prana*. Thus, *raga*, *bahya* and *krodha* are the causes of the *prana* suddenly stopping—intense *raga*, intense *bahya* and intense *krodha*.

Here we are not concerned with *bahya* or *krodha*, or with *raga* of the ordinary type; but if we want to call it *raga*, we may call it so. It is a great love for the great ideal of yoga; the ardour that is expected in every student of yoga. The yearning that he cherishes within, the longing that is uncontrollable for God-realisation may be regarded as a kind of superior *raga* that is present, which prevents the mind from thinking anything else. When the *prana* is suddenly withheld—not accompanied either by expulsion or inhalation—that type of retention which is suddenly introduced, for any reason whatsoever, is called *stambha vritti*. They are the three types of *kumbhaka* mentioned in the *sutra*, *bāhya ābhyantara stambha vṛttiḥ* (II.50).

Now Patanjali mentions *deśa kāla saṁkhyābhiḥ paridṛṣṭaḥ* (II.50). The measure or the calculation of the

method of breathing for the purpose of retention is referred to here. We can find out to what extent we have mastered the technique of *pranayama* by the extent of the length of space occupied by the movement of the *prana*, externally or internally. As it was suggested, a cotton fibre held near the nostrils will give us an idea of the space that is occupied by the *prana* in expulsion. When we have greater and greater mastery over the *prana*, the distance will be lessened gradually so that we may have to bring the cotton fibre nearer and nearer the nose to see its movement.

So also is the case with internal movement, or inhalation. This has to be practised very, very gradually. What the *sutra* tells us is that *kumbhaka*, or retention of the breath, should be acquired by a gradual diminishing of the distance covered by the movement of the *prana* in expulsion as well as inhalation; that is *desa. Kala* means the time, the ratio, or the proportion that is maintained in the processes of inhalation, retention and expulsion.

There are various views or opinions expressed by the yoga *shastras* and by adepts in yoga in regard to this proportion. Proportion means the time that we take to inhale, the time that we retain the breath for, and the time that we take to exhale. This is what is called proportion—that is the ratio. While there are many different opinions in regard to this, the usually accepted one is that if we take one second to inhale, we must take four seconds to retain, and two seconds to exhale. One is to four is to two—that is the proportion maintained. This is not a standard prescription for all people, but the usually accepted method. It does not mean that the number should be four in retention at the very beginning itself. As it was pointed out previously, there

should be no retention at all in the earlier stages; there should be only deep inhalation and exhalation. For some days and months perhaps, we may have to practise only inhalation and exhalation without retention. Later on, when retention is introduced, it should not be in this ratio of one to four to two, as it is a more advanced practice. There should be only a comfortable retention, to the extent possible, even if the ratio is not maintained.

But the suggestion given in this term '*kala*' is that a ratio is maintained, and that ratio can be modified according to one's convenience, level of evolution, the extent of practice, etc. This has to be done with the guidance of a Guru. One should not meddle with the *prana* without knowing what happens. Thus, the ratio that is associated with the processes of inhalation, retention and exhalation is what is meant by the term '*kala*'.

Samkhya is the number of rounds that we practise. People who are exclusively devoted to the *pranayama* process sit for it often. In advanced stages, it is said we may have to sit four times—in the morning, at noon, in the evening, at midnight. These are the four times that we sit for meditation and practise *pranayama*. How many times, how many rounds of breathing, can we practise at each sitting? This calculation is the number that is mentioned—*samkhya*. It should increase gradually, not suddenly. *Pranayama* is a most dangerous practice when it is not correctly understood, because we are dealing directly with the physical system, and so one has to be very cautious. We should not interfere with it unnecessarily. It should be done with a great understanding of one's strengths as well as one's weaknesses.

Deśa kāla saṁkhyābhiḥ paridṛṣṭaḥ (II.50). By the measurements of the processes of breathing, in respect of place, time and number, the quality of the *pranayama* should be determined. It is either *dirgha* or it is *sukshma*; it is elongated, protracted, or it is short and subtle. It may be a protracted breathing, or it may be a very subtle breathing, which means to say that it can be elongated in quantity and intensified in quality; that is the meaning of *dirgha*. Or it can be contracted, and reduced in quantity as well as in quality; that is *sukshma*.

This definition that is mentioned is only a kind of theory for beginners who are not accustomed to the type of breathing that is prescribed here, as one will not know what this elongation is, what this shortening is, and what the space is, etc. For us it is only a kind of story, like the Mahabharata or the Ramayana. It has no sense, because when we actually sit for practice of this kind, we will know what changes take place in the system. And, nothing but practice is what is intended here. Yoga is nothing but practice, a hundred-percent practice—only that and nothing but that. We are not going to tell a story or listen to any kind of narration. It is a very serious matter that we are discussing, which is life and death for us—namely, how we can become better inwardly as well as outwardly so that we take one step, at least, towards the superhuman condition which is waiting for us.

When this is acquired, this mastery is gained, some sort of a control is maintained over the *pranic* movements. Great consequences—unexpected and unforeseen—will follow. We will see strange phenomena appear within us as well as outside us if we gain mastery over the *prana*,

because this *kumbhaka* that we are speaking of is nothing but another form of concentration of mind, as the mind is associated with the *prana* always. The object, or the ideal before oneself, is united with the meditating consciousness in a fast embrace, as it were, when the *prana* is withheld, and it is made to stick to one's consciousness inseparably. It becomes one with one's own self, and there is a sudden impact felt upon the object on account of the *kumbhaka* that we practise. The *kumbhaka*, the retention of the breath that we practise, coupled with concentration of mind on the object that is before us, will tell upon the nature of that object which we are thinking of, whatever be the distance of that object. It may be millions of miles away—it makes no difference. This is because *prana* is omnipresent. It is like ether, and so it will produce an impact upon the object that we are thinking of in our meditation. It will stir it up into an activity of a desired manner, according to what we are contemplating in the mind. This effect cannot be produced if the *prana* is allowed to move hither and thither, distractedly. If we want quick success in meditation, the retention of the breath is absolutely necessary because it is this that impresses upon the object of meditation the necessity to commingle itself with the subject. Therefore, a combination of *pranayama* and *dharana*, concentration, is the most effective method of bringing about a union of oneself with the ideal of meditation.

Chapter 79

THE INCLINATION OF THE MIND FOR CONCENTRATION

The four kinds of retention of breath have been explained in two *sutras*, as we noted previously: that which follows an exhalation, that which follows an inhalation, that which is suddenly brought about without reference either to exhalation or inhalation, and a fourth one which is supposed to follow, gradually, as a result of continuous alternate breathing and retention. These methods of breathing exercise are called *pranayama*—the subdual of the energy known as *prana*, which is the most uncontrollable force that one can contemplate or think, because it is very tempestuous and not so simple a thing as one would, in an untutored condition, conceive. In fact, there is nothing to be achieved after the *prana* is controlled—everything comes automatically as a consequence. All those things which yoga speaks of that follow this stage of *pranayama* become something natural, not requiring much effort, if this stage is properly grasped and brought under control, because the difficulty experienced here will also be felt elsewhere. The other stages, which are supposed to be higher, cannot be easily brought within the control of one's consciousness as long as there are impediments—hindrances which detract its attention. These impediments are nothing but the movements of the *pranas*.

When one comes to a level of experience where this *pranic* energy is sufficiently brought under control, there is

an equivalent control of the mind, because the force that impels the mind to work in terms of objects—the fuel required for the operation of the mind in terms of its desires—is supplied by the *prana*. We may say, by an analogy, that this *pranic* energy is something like the petrol that we put into the vehicle which is this psychophysical organism, and its extent and potency also determines the extent and the potency of the activity of the organism.

It is this distracting medium that prevents restful thought and an insight into the essential nature of things, within as well as without, like turbid waters which prevent a correct and clear reflection of things. The turbidity of one's system, which is indicated by the activity of the *prana*, prevents insight into the deeper nature, or the reality of things. This reality is called *prakasha*, or light, in the *sutra* that follows. The covering over of this light is called *avarana*—*prakasha avarana*. Like clouds that may cover the brilliance of the sun in the vast sky, these turbid movements within prevent a reflection of the light within, and naturally an insight into the depths is prevented.

Tataḥ kṣīyate prakāśa āvaraṇam (II.52), says the *sutra*. *Prakasha avarana* is the veil that is cast over the light of consciousness. This veil is not something made of matter or a substance that comes from outside. It is a peculiar restlessness within—a kind of tempestuous wind that blows inside us, so that we cannot even open our eyes and see things properly when there is a cyclone. And we are perpetually in a cyclonic condition, so that there is not a moment's rest for any part of the body or the mind. We cannot know rest because there cannot be rest as long as the *prana* functions. Like gadflies that move from place to place

without any proper aim or objective, the *pranic* energy is directed hither and thither, in various ways, and we are tossed about in the direction in which the *prana* moves. This is the most difficult thing to understand, because the direction of the *prana* is determined by the direction of the subconscious desires. This is another psychology that is behind even the activity of the *prana*. They are not just mad movements or meaningless activities.

As it is not possible to determine the movement of an electron which is hovering around a proton, on account of our inability to determine its movement, people have come to a very peculiar conclusion these days—that there is what is known as the law of indeterminism. This is a peculiar law in physics that everything is undetermined and anything can happen at any time, and nobody can foresee the future. This conclusion is arrived at by an observation of the movement and the velocity of the electrons around the nucleus, which they say is indeterminable. The electrons run about in any manner whatsoever, and we cannot predict the future location or position of a particular electron by any amount of mathematical calculation. This has led people to believe that the impossibility to determine the position or future location of an electron should be really the revelation of the ultimate nature of things—that everything is indeterminable. But the reason why these things are undetermined in their movements is something quite different from what people think. It is not true that the movement of electrons is indeterminate. The hectic movement of these electrons, in an apparently chaotic manner, is due to the disturbance caused by the instrument used for observing them. A peculiar instrument, whatever

be the subtlety of it, is used to observe the movement of these energies. The moment the instrument is brought near, it disturbs the movement of these particles and they run hither and thither like frightened bees. So, naturally, there is no way of knowing them. In order for us to know, we have to use an instrument; and the instrument, the very presence of which disturbs the normal motion of these particles, becomes itself a hindrance.

Likewise, we may come to the wrong conclusions by not knowing the reason behind the movement of the *pranas*. They look very hectic—very undetermined, very chaotic, and having a freedom of their own so that they can drive us anywhere they like. But, it is not so. They are all controlled by a very systematic law, though they look very undetermined, uncertain and unpredictable in every manner. Though it is true that we cannot know when an eclipse will occur—in that sense it is undetermined—mathematically we can determine when it will occur because even this undetermined future has a determining factor behind it. These determining factors behind the so-called undetermined movements of the *pranas* are the psychological conditions of oneself, by which we do not mean merely the mental processes in the conscious level, but the whole personality itself which is the vehicle that the *pranas* move. They are integrally related to the vehicle, not separate.

The coming down of the force of the *pranas* in an extrovert nature brings down also, correspondingly, the force of the mind in that direction, and so there is a gradual elimination of the *rajasic* property of *prakriti* inside; when it subsides, it gives way to the other property—namely,

sattva. The revelation of *sattva* is the lifting of the veil, or the *prakasha avarana*. By the subdual of the *pranas*, says the *sutra*, there will be a gateway opened for the revelation of the inner light. The *avaranas*, or the obstacles to the revelation of consciousness, are the potencies of the *karmas* which are the causes behind the activity of the *pranas*. The *pranas* are working only to exhaust the *karmas*; their purpose is simple. They are nothing but the instruments of these *karmic* forces. They are agents employed by the desireful actions which we performed in the past, leaving behind a residuum that has come down upon us now as the impulsion for further action. Gradual and systematic protracted practice in the retention of the breath, as prescribed, will bring oneself under control; we will subdue ourselves. Then, there will be an understanding attitude in ourselves, rather than an unpredictable nature. There will be a satisfaction that follows as a result of having gained mastery over oneself. The mastery which we refer to here is really the control that one can exert over oneself by means of the cessation of extroverted movement of the mind as well as the *pranas*. It is this condition that becomes an immediate preparation for concentration of mind and meditation, which are the stages to follow.

Dhāraṇāsu ca योग्याता मनासाः (II.53). The mind becomes inclined to meditation after the cessation of the intensity of the *rajas* that is present in the *pranas*. Otherwise, there will not be even an inclination to meditation. There will be a kind of displeasure expressed by the mind at the very thought of meditation, because we know very well what causes pleasure and what causes displeasure. That which is contrary to the intentions of the

mind is naturally the source of its displeasure. Meditation cannot be regarded as something which is the intention of the mind. The mind's intention is something different—namely, contact with objects and activity in terms of the fulfilment of its wishes. So, this *dharana* and *dhyana*, the concentration-meditation process, may come like a deathblow—a fatal blow that is dealt at the very intention of the mind—and therefore there is a disinclination towards it, a kind of sorrow which will work from within and prevent progress.

The inclination of the mind towards meditation is important. We cannot compel even a servant to work against his inclination. It is a very undesirable attitude if such a pressure is to be exerted where inclination is not present, because it will produce a reaction which is most disadvantageous. We cannot have concentration of mind against the wishes of the mind. This is a very important thing to remember. The practice of yoga, which is a gradual movement towards the aim of meditation, is not merely a forceful exercise of the will against the emotional attitudes or the feelings of the mind, but something different—namely, a healthful bringing into alignment of the very forces of emotion and feeling which otherwise have their own directions chosen. There is no parallel movement between the aims of yoga and the emotions of the mind. That is the reason why there is mostly a difficulty in bringing the mind round to the point of concentration. If we carefully probe into ourselves—very rarely do we find time to do that, but if we could succeed in doing it—we can discover the little foibles that are in our nature which will make us unfit for this endeavour known as *dharana* or

dhyana, concentration or meditation, because the little weaknesses that may come later on as large mountains in front of us have become a part of what we are. This is something very important to remember and most difficult to understand, because what is a part of our nature cannot become an object of observation, so nobody can study it, much less study one's own self, and the little mistakes in the attitudes of thought are going to be the terrible impediments that we have to encounter in the future.

We have been trying to conduct a little bit of analysis in this direction since some time, and what we have discovered is that it is very easy to be complacent in one's attitude under the impression that one is ready for yoga—which is not at all the case. A simple question may be put to one's own self which will give a peculiar answer, to our own surprise and astonishment. Our attitudes and judgements about things around us, human as well as non-human, will give us an idea of the purification of mind that we have arrived at and the extent of understanding we have about the things around us. A person who is prone to sudden reaction to a stimulus from outside cannot be regarded as fit for yoga—whatever that stimulus be, whatever that reaction be, whatever be the extent of the justification behind it or the rationalisation that can try to substantiate this reaction. All these tricks will not work here, because these are the peculiar circumventing attitudes of the mind which will somehow or the other, by hook or by crook, see to it that our objective is not reached.

Again we come to the need for a proper guide, especially now that we are approaching very dangerous realms, if we could put it that way, because of the fact that

we are entering realms which are unknown, unseen, unheard of and unthinkable—indefinable in every respect. We do not know what sort of environment we are going to enter, what reactions will be produced by this environment, and how we will be able to face them or withstand them. All these things are hard for the mind at the present level to understand; and so, the requisition of a proper guide. There were many cases of yogis who were held up, stuck, and got involved in a whirlwind of confusion—even in advanced stages of concentration and meditation—and the Guru had to come to their aid. There was a case in this very ashram—many, many years back. I was not here at that time. A *brahmachari* started concentrating in a wrong manner. He got stuck in the middle of the eyebrows and he became cataleptic, unconscious, and people who did not know what was happening were under the impression that he was in a state of *samadhi*. This condition led to great catastrophic results—he passed away, and his body disintegrated. It was very unfortunate. But these things happen on account of an overenthusiastic estimation that one has about oneself, while not knowing the difficulties that one has kept buried within. Again, to come to the point, we should be able to scrub out those extraneous fungi that have grown over ourselves which have, unfortunately, become one with us. There are certain accretions to our personality which we mistake for our own self. These accretions are the prejudices, the notions, the emotions, the feelings, the desires, and what not. These things have become one with us. They are like our babies whom we are fondling constantly, and we cannot get away from them; they are with us—they are us—and these things are our obstacles.

Thus, together with an attempt at these techniques, such as the retention of the breath and the concentration of the mind, there should be a daily self-analysis. We have to maintain what is called a spiritual diary, if we like, with queries commensurate with our own stage of evolution and our own peculiar difficulties. Also, one has to guard oneself. The more is the protection that is provided to us, the less is it that we must deal with.

When we progress further—either in the capacity to retain the breath or in the ability to concentrate the mind—we will find that buried treasures will come up, and these ‘treasures’ are the devils; they are not the nectar. This is very important to remember. When we churn the ocean, we do not first get the nectar; we get the poison, and the fumes, and the venom, and the suffocating noise, and the humdrum, and the clattering disturbance created by those silent ‘friends’ who have been keeping quiet up to this time, lying in ambush to attack when the opportunity arises. They are like coiled snakes sitting in a corner—and we have not observed them. Coiled snakes are nevertheless snakes, and these are the submerged and subjugated emotions which have not been sublimated. These things pertain to the natural desires and the biological needs of the human individual. Even our normal needs such as hunger and thirst—if they are pressed down too much, and if we violate them beyond a certain limit, they set up reactions. I am mentioning only the least of known problems, namely hunger and thirst. We cannot go on starving ourselves under the impression that we are yogis, because this will set up reactions of a peculiar nature, and then we know what will happen. Therefore, no need, no necessity, no emotion,

no feeling and no inclination can be regarded as unimportant or non-essential, because these little straws which have no apparent weight will become heavy like an iron hill later on, and it is this little particle of dust sticking to our eyes that will prevent us from looking at that glorious light of the sun.

Hence, a daily self-analysis should accompany the actual positive practice of the retention of the breath and the concentration of the mind. This self-analysis is not an easy thing, because we can go to bed every day with the notion that we are well off and our balance sheet is clear, which will be quite the contrary. So it is necessary, until we are able to see the light of truth by ourselves, to take the guidance of a superior and find out if our diary is properly maintained and our balance sheet is properly cast, and there is no mistake in our calculations. Evidently, there are mistakes which will be indicated by the moods with which we get up in the morning, and the feelings that arise immediately when we encounter the world outside, and the way in which we pass the day. These things will tell us where we stand, irrespective of our concentrations and meditations, the retention of breath, etc. These are the guarding cautions that we have to keep in our pocket always as ready remedies for any kind of illnesses that may present themselves from within. The great Patanjali tells us that if everything is okay and all goes well, the mind will tend towards meditation automatically and we need not force it.

We must feel a great joy that we are in a state of meditation. We should not feel grieved that we are forced to meditate. Nobody forces us; we know it very well. Even

though it is a voluntary undertaking in the beginning, later on it may become a kind of compulsion, just as the very government that we set up at our own discretion may afterwards become a harassing factor to us. We may cry over the very thing that we have created, due to a peculiar shift that it has taken and the way in which it has got out of our control. The mechanism that we produced may become our own trouble. This is what they call 'Frankenstein's monster'. All the machines that we create are our doom. Likewise, it could happen that our undertakings, which were once upon a time very deliberate and voluntary, and were happy processes, may become a deadweight upon us.

This is very important: I would like you to read a very beautiful book by Sri Aurobindo known as *The Psychology of Social Development*, which goes by another title these days, *The Human Cycle*. He has given very interesting sidelights on how the very institutions that we create, socially and psychologically, can become a devil that is standing before us. We may have to face it and pierce through it. It may look as if we are attacking our own mother. Well, that may be the case, but that is what is to be done. Even Sri Ramakrishna had to attack his own mother afterwards, the Divine Mother, according to the advice of his Guru. Most painful it is! We cannot kill our own child. How is it possible? But everything that we created is our child. It may be a social institution; it may be psychological condition; it may be a feeling; it may be an emotion; it may be prejudice; it may be a love; it may be a kind of dislike—whatever it is. Everything becomes a painful factor which we cannot get over, which we cannot face and which we cannot attack. They become so intimately friendly with us,

and these 'friends' are our deadly enemies. We will find later on that those persons and things which we regarded as our dearest friends are our obstacles, and that we have no other enemies. These are very horrifying observations, no doubt, and most painful encounters which one has to face, undaunted in vigour, at a time when we will have no help from anybody. Even the very earth on which we stand may lose contact with us, and we may be in the winds—literally. At that time it is that the Guru comes. Again, we come to that point of a guide who is necessary when we are completely off our feet.

The conditions that follow a proper restraint of the *prana* by way of retention and cessation of emotional reaction of the mind are what are known as the tendencies to concentration and meditation, which is what is indicated by the *sutra*, *dhāraṇāsu ca योग्याता मनसाह* (II.53). The mind will get naturally inclined towards the processes of concentration, and it will concentrate on anything which we bring before it. It will become a crystal—pure in itself, capable of reflecting any object that is brought before it—and endowed with a capacity to set itself in tune with anything that is made the object of its observation and concentration. At a stage, we will realise that any object can be regarded as an object of concentration. The question of choice does not arise, though that is there in the beginning. The question of choice arises on account of the presence of likes and dislikes in our minds. We have certain attractions for certain conditions, for certain definitions, for certain features, for forms and circumstances. These 'likes' are the reasons why we have to choose the object of meditation; the *ishṭa* comes into play. But that is only in the beginning

stage where the emotions are still predominant and we still have loves and likes—which are opposed to the dislikes which are present there, side by side.

Later on, the peculiar attractions felt for chosen objects cease and the feeling for the object of concentration gets more and more generalised, so that we will find in any object whatever we find in any other object, just as we find the very same teakwood or rosewood in a chair, or a table, or a door, or a shutter—whatever it be—which is made out of this wood. This is a generalised condition in which we will be able to be happy and at ease with ourselves at any place, under any condition. We will not complain, “Here is a lot of noise; I cannot meditate. This is not a suitable place; these people are disturbing,” because we will find that every condition is suitable. We have only to be inclined towards concentration. They say the best appetizer for lunch is the hunger that is present. If we have no hunger, no lunch will be delicious. But if we have intense hunger, everything is delicious. Likewise, when there is an intense yearning for this glorious aim that we are seeking through yoga, we get accustomed to everything, and we are in a friendly atmosphere wherever we are and whatever be the atmosphere around us.

The inclination of the mind towards concentration is important. We must find out, before we sit for meditation, whether the mind is inclined or not. This is the first investigation that is to be conducted. We should not suddenly say, “It is now six o’clock; I’ll sit for meditation.” The time is not the only thing that is to be noted. Are we prepared? Are we ready? Are we inclined, or we are disinclined? We are not in the mood; something has

happened to us. Is it so? What has happened? This has to be properly found out. We might have received shocking news, and though it is six o'clock and time for meditation, we cannot sit for meditation at that time because there is harassing news which is disturbing us from within. Or, there may be something physically wrong, physiologically upsetting, psychologically very irritating or emotionally distracting. Is there any such factor? If these things are there, we must tackle them properly, put them down in a manner which is intelligent, with discretion, and then be seated for our concentration and meditation.

Let us remember that it is not the length of time for which we sit that is important, but the quality of concentration that is there. If there is a disturbed feeling or emotion within, even hours of sitting will bring no result. That will be like threshing old straw which will bring no harvest, and nothing will come out of it. But if there is a qualitative readiness of the mind—an inclination towards meditation—then only five minutes will be sufficient for us to charge ourselves with an energy that we would not have otherwise got even after hours of sitting. It is like turning on a switch—the wire should be a good conductor, and there should be proper contact—and immediately there is a flash. But if the conductor is bad—the switch is out of order and there is no working connection—we can go on turning on the switch for hours but nothing will come. Likewise is the necessity behind an investigation into the readiness of the mind for meditation, and also the finding of the causes of the non-readiness of the mind. With these preparations, we are asked to gird up our loins for the glorious task that is ahead of us—namely, concentration and meditation.

Chapter 80

PRATYAHARA: THE RETURN OF ENERGY

When the inclination for concentration arises in the mind, a great change will be felt in one's own self. A new type of mood will rise within, and it will look like the whole world is changing its colours and relations. There will be a total confirmation of the nature of one's feelings when this inclination to concentration arises in the mind. We have to bear in mind the importance of this *sutra*, *dhāraṇāsu ca yogyatā manasaḥ* (II.53), which means that there should be the mind's preparedness or readiness for concentration, as a mere pressure of the will cannot bring about concentration.

Every stage of yoga, every step in its practice, is a healthful growth and not any kind of pressurisation from any source. Therefore, it is a very gradual ascent because the natural inclination does not arise quickly, due to the presence of other impressions in the mind. So, if we properly bear in mind the significance of the earlier steps mentioned—right from *yama* onwards, up to *pranayama*—we will be able to understand the types of preparation that we have to make for this readiness of the mind to concentrate. Most of us are not ready for concentration, and if we ask the mind to concentrate when it is not prepared, how will we take to that practice? We cannot even take our meal when the stomach is not ready for it. Nothing can be done when the system is not prepared. Neither can we walk, nor can we sleep, nor can we eat, nor can we speak if we are not ready for these things. For every action, function or conduct, there should be a readiness of

the system—a preparedness, a mood, a tendency, an inclination.

While this is so in the case of various other functions of life, it is much more so in the case of concentration where the readiness is not expected merely from one part or aspect of the system, but from the total system. How is it possible that everyone will agree to a single point? Rarely is this found. The majority may agree; the minority may not agree. But, here, we do not want a majority merely. The total group of the forces of the system should be ready. The whole army should be up for action; not one soldier should malingering. Not one cell in the body should be reluctant. Such is what is called the preparedness for meditation. If the intellect is ready, the emotion is not ready. If the emotion is prepared, the intellect is not understanding. If both are ready, the will is not working. If everything is okay, we are sick. If this is the case, how will we meditate?

It is difficult to find all things working together. This is a great difficulty, indeed. What can be called a difficulty in life, if not this? If everything went well, we would be in heaven by this very moment—but, unfortunately, this does not happen. Something or other will not click properly, and then the machine will not move. But it has to move and everything has to click in an orderly, spontaneous manner—that too, not by force or pressure. See how many conditions are laid. Everything has to be prepared. Body, mind and spirit are all together in preparedness for action—in completeness, in full force of aspiration; that is one thing. The other thing is that it should be free from pressure. We may not take a drug to cause a readiness of the system for meditation, because then the system is not

ready—we are whipping it. Whipping cannot be called ready. If we give a blow to the horse which is unable to pull the cart, it jumps up due to the whipping, but do we call it spontaneous action? The result would be that the cart is turned upside down due to the kick given in resentment by the horse. If we apply force with a drug or any kind of stimulant—even a forced will is a kind of stimulant only, and even such stimulants are not allowed. If we apply these vacuum brakes to a fast-moving train, there will be catastrophe following. Therefore, '*yogata*' is the term used very wisely by Patanjali. *Yogata* means that there should be fitness for concentration. Are we fit? What is the meaning of 'fitness'? Are we spontaneous in our action? That is one question. Or are we being compelled by somebody? If there is a motive of compulsion that is behind the sitting for meditation, there will be a counter-urge of the mind to come back to its original position from where it started. If we are forced to work in an office, we know how long we will work. We will be looking for the first opportunity to get out from that place. As early as possible we want to be out when the pressurising influence is lifted. Also, the quality of work falls because of the pressure. Quantity is less, and quality is nil; this will happen in meditation if we force it.

Hence, there should be a willingness on our part due to the satisfaction we feel on account of the recognition of the value of the step that we are taking. First of all, it is difficult to see the value, whatever be our aspiration. We cannot recognise or visualise the entire value of meditation, because if the entire value is seen, it would be unthinkable how the mind can come back from that. How could we

explain the mind coming back from a resourceful treasure which it has dug up and possessed? But it is unable to recognise the value. It is like a monkey seeing a huge treasure trove; it does not know the worth of it. It is simply like a huge weight of material; it has no meaning. Likewise would be the attitude of an unprepared mind, and there would be, therefore, a consequent repulsion. There would be no *yogata*, or preparedness.

Svaviṣaya asaṁprayoge cittasya svarūpānukāraḥ iva indriyāṅgāṁ pratyāhāraḥ (II.54). When this significance or value in the object of meditation is properly recognised, there is an automatic disconnection of the senses from their objects. The vehicle of the object is severed from its relation with the engine, which is the senses, and then the objects will not move, because there is no movement of the senses in respect of the objects. ‘*Vavisaya asaṁprayoge*’ is the term used in the *sutra* defining *pratyahara*, which is the beginning step of the central court of yoga. It is the severance of the senses from contact with objects, which is something very strange indeed, because it is not easy to understand the meaning of ‘contact’. Contact is different from the union that is the aim of yoga. The ultimate purpose of yoga is a kind of merger of consciousness in the object which it contemplates. That is the true union that is aspired for. But the senses, when they contemplate an object, are not supposed to be in union with the object; this is the difference. If the senses are in union, what is it that we are trying to do by severing them from the objects? There is no union of the senses with their object when they are contacting it.

‘Contact’ and ‘union’ are two different things. When sunlight falls on a pot kept outside in the sun, the pot is illumined by the light of the sun and so we are able to visualise the presence of the pot in the sun. The pot shines on account of the light that has fallen upon it, and becomes one with it, almost. We cannot separate the light of the sun from the pot on which it has fallen and which it illumines. Nevertheless, we know that the light has never become the pot; it is quite different from the pot or the object which it illumines. Can we say that the light of the sun has entered the pot and become one with it in union? No, not at all. There is only a contact—though it may look like an inseparable contact, which is really the case. So intimately is the contact of the light with the object that we cannot differentiate one from the other. We begin to say that the pot is shining; this is what we generally say. What is shining is the light, not the pot. But the identity is such, apparently, that it looks that the object itself is shining, and so we are able to perceive the presence of the object in the daylight of the sun.

Similar is the case with the contact of the senses in respect of their objects. They do not unite themselves with the object. If there is a real union, how can there be separation? How can there be bereavement? How can there be sorrow that one is dispossessed of the object which one liked? There has never been union—there was only contact. And this contact is, really speaking, the opposite of what the senses are aiming at through that means which they adopt in the cognition of an object.

The intention of the senses is not the same as what is really happening there. The intention of the senses in

respect of its object is that it wants to grab the object, to assimilate the object, to digest it, and to make the object part of its own being. Though this is the intention, this will not take place for certain reasons. What actually happens is that the senses are repelled by the structure of the object. We may call it an electrical repulsion, if we like, just as there is the repulsion felt by the tactile sense when there is contact of the sense with the physical object. What we call the touch sense of the fingers, for instance, on account of which they feel the solidity of an object, is not really a union of the tactile sense with the object, but it is a kind of repulsion that is produced by the particles of matter which constitute the object and are electrically charged—as also are the particles which constitute the structure of the tips of the fingers, or the nerve-endings. This produces a different type of reaction altogether, like positive and negative joining. But here, positive and positive are repelling. There is a kind of electrical repulsion produced by the nature of the object and the workings of the senses, though this repulsion itself sometimes looks like a satisfying condition due to a mistaken notion about what is really happening.

Suppose we are kicked and we fall down into a pot of honey; do we call it a great satisfaction? Well, we have fallen into a pot of honey; but we have been kicked and, therefore, we fell down into it. Likewise, these senses are being kicked by the object. But they think they have fallen into a pot of honey; and they are licking it, not knowing that it was very undeserved, really speaking. The intention was quite different.

The union that is aspired for in yoga is not of this nature. Therefore, inasmuch as union is not achieved in the

contact of senses with objects, the defect, which is the cause of this repulsion and the mistaken satisfaction that arises on account of this contact, is to be recognised. For this purpose the senses have to first be weaned back from the objects. This process is called *pratyahara*.

What happens in *pratyahara* is mentioned in the *sutra*: *svaviṣaya asaṁprayoge cittasya svarūpānukāraḥ iva indriyāṅām pratyāhāraḥ* (II.54). There are two changes that take place in this action of the senses in their abstraction from the objects. Firstly, they are disconnected from contact with the object due to the withdrawal of the consciousness which is animating the senses. Secondly, which is more important, the senses turn back to the mind and assume the character of the mind. '*Cittasya svarūpanukarah*' means 'the senses accompanying the mind in its essential nature'. They become almost one with the mind. In the usual activity of the senses, they are not one with the mind. They drag the mind out from its own chambers and then compel it to contemplate an external object, in which case the mind is something like a slave of the senses; the master has himself come under the subjection of the servants. But in *pratyahara*, this is not what is happening. The master is recognised—and his worth is known. The senses return. They do not return of their own accord. If the gas in the engine is completely removed, the vehicle will not move. The gas is the motive force, and that motive force is the consciousness that is attending upon the activity of the senses. If the supply of energy behind the movement of a vehicle is withdrawn, the vehicle cannot move. And, as long as the supply is there, the vehicle cannot be stopped. The vehicle may be said to be

the senses which are running towards some objective. They cannot be stopped in their activities unless the energy is withdrawn. That energy is the consciousness.

Therefore, first and foremost, what is required is a severance of the attention of consciousness in respect of the movement of the senses towards objects. The attention is diverted. That is why sometimes, when we are deeply thinking over some important matter, even if we may be looking at some object, we may not see it. Our eyes may be open; it may appear that we are gazing at something, but we are seeing nothing at all on account of the fact that the energy that is necessary for the cognition of an object is withdrawn. There cannot be perception when the attention is diverted in some other way. Thus, in *pratyahara* there is first a diversion of attention from one place to another place. We have to find out what that place is, which is the object of meditation.

In this withdrawal of the consciousness from its movement along the lines of the senses, what happens is, it returns to the source from where it started. It will be difficult for one to distinguish between the senses and the mind at this moment. The senses and the mind become one. Here, the mind becomes powerful because when we turn off all the lights, turn off all the fans, and all the expenditure of electric energy is cut off on account of the turning off of all the switches, we see that the power station feels the surge immediately. The energy returns to the power station because we have turned off all the switches; there is no expenditure of energy. All the sources of the external movement of energy are severed on account of the turning off of the switches; naturally, the energy has to

increase at the source, and we will see the indication of the increase in kilowatts recorded in the meters of the power station. The engineer in the power station will find out that people have turned off all the switches, because consumption of energy has gone down.

So is the case with *pratyahara*. It is the turning off of all the switches of action through the senses by which there has been expenditure of energy. The senses coming in contact with objects is like turning on the switch—the fan is working, the light is working, the fridge is working—everything is working, and so all the energy is spent. Sometimes it may be impossible for the power station to supply the requisite energy on account of the intense activity of the senses. When this happens, the connection is severed. What happens to that energy which was being spent through sense-activity, which was being utilised for perception, cognition of things, and enjoyment of objects? What happens to that energy? It goes back. It goes back to the source from where it was generated, from where it was conducted outward through the media of the senses. Then there is a rise or a swell of energy within—suddenly coming up and overflowing, as it were. The mind will feel a new type of health within itself on account of the exuberance of energy that it has due to the reversion of the energies through the channels of the senses from the points of objects towards which they were previously moving. This is the meaning of the term '*cittasya svarupanukarah*': the energy returning to the power station on account of the severance of contact with the points of expenditure. Then one becomes powerful, strong, indefatigable, energised—charged with a new kind of buoyancy of spirit, and brilliant

in one's expression, on account of the energy being stored within oneself rather than its being outwardly directed for expenditure through contact. So the senses are disconnected from contact with objects—that is one thing that is expected here, and that is done. Secondly, the energy returns on account of this disconnection—this is *pratyahara*. *Svavishaya asamprayoge* and *cittasya svarupanukarah* are the two essential points mentioned in respect of the practice of *pratyahara*.

Tataḥ paramā vaśyatā indriyāṇām (II.55). We then become supreme master of the senses and can direct them wherever we like. The senses no more compel us to act against our wish, and do not any more make us puppets in their hands, on account of the control gained over their activities. But this *parama vashyata*, the great mastery one gains over sense activities, is gained with great, hard effort. A very intensely strenuous effort is necessary—for years, perhaps—to gain this sort of mastery over the senses. We think that the senses will automatically come back from their objects; but, they will not listen to us. They are very powerful, and they will simply show their thumbs before us if we talk to them. It requires persistence, tenacity and untiring effort—day in and day out—doing the very same thing, even if we may fail in our attempt. It does not mean that every day we will succeed. One day they will listen, and for ten days they will not listen. Then it will look like our effort has been a failure. We will complain, “What is the matter with me? For ten days I am struggling; nothing is happening.” But, on the eleventh day they may listen. This is the peculiarity of these senses and the mind, so one should not be dejected.

It was already mentioned on an earlier occasion that this melancholy mood is a great obstacle in yoga. *Duhkha daurmanasya* are the two things mentioned—sorrow or grief, and dejection of spirit—on account of not having gained mastery, or not having achieved anything. This should not come, because not even an adept can know what mastery he has gained, where he is standing, and what are the obstacles preventing him from achievement. Nothing will be known even to an expert. Even such a person will be kept in the dark; such is the mysterious realm that we are treading and walking through. But, the great watchword of this practice is: never be diffident. We should never condemn ourselves or be dispirited in our practice. It may be that for months together we may not achieve concentration, which is also possible due to the working of certain *karmas*. Even then, one should be tirelessly pursuing it.

There is a story in which it is told that Robert Bruce saw a spider falling down many times—climbing up and falling down and climbing up. Robert Bruce was defeated in a war. He was sitting in a cave somewhere, crying. He did not know what to do. Then he saw a spider climbing up the wall and falling down—again it went up and again it fell down. A hundred times it fell, and finally it got up and caught the point to which it wanted to rise. Then he said, “This is what I have to do now. I should not keep crying here.” So, he went up with the regiment that he had and the forces available, and launched a frontal attack once again, and won victory in the war. The moral of the story is that we should not be melancholy, dispirited or lost in our conscious efforts, because the so-called defeatist feeling that

we have in our practice is due to the operation of certain obstructing *karmas*. Otherwise, what can be the explanation for our defeat in spite of our effort to the best of our ability?

We have been struggling for days and nights, for months and years—and we are getting nothing. How is it possible? The reason is that there is some very strong impediment, like a thick wall standing in front of us, on account of some *tamasic* or *rajasic karma* of the past lives. All our time is spent in breaking through this wall. The achievement is something quite different—that will come later on. So why should we weep that we have achieved nothing? We have achieved; we have pierced through the wall. It is like Bharatpur Fort which the British wanted to break and could not, due to the thickness of the wall. Somehow or other, after tremendous effort, they made a hole and went in. We can imagine what indefatigable effort and what kind of persistence was required in breaking through the fort. Otherwise, one would give up and go back. It was impossible to break in because the wall was too thick—fifty feet thick and made of mud. One could not break it by any kind of bullet—such was Bharatpur Fort. They did not succeed, but they were very persistent. Somehow or other they made a hole and went in, and the fort was captured.

Likewise, the first day's effort need not necessarily bring illumination because of the great efforts that are necessary to break through the fort of the veil of ignorance and *karma*, which is itself sufficient and weighty. Even if we spend three-fourths of our life in this work only, it should not be regarded as a kind of defeat. Often it so happens that

the major part of our life is spent only in cleansing and in breaking through this veil. Once this negative work of cleansing and breaking is effected, then the positive achievement will take place in a trice. How much time do we require to see the brilliance of the sun? We have only to remove the cataract veil that is covering our eyes and immediately we see the sun shining. The effort is to remove this veil. Hence, this *vashyata*, or the mastery over the senses which the *sutra* speaks of, is gained with very hard effort, and no *sadhaka* can afford to lose heart in the attempt. It is declared in the scriptures on yoga that the only thing that works, and succeeds, in this noble endeavour is persistence. If we go on persistently doing a thing—again and again, whether we succeed or not—we will succeed eventually.

Chapter 81

THE APPLICATION OF PRATYAHARA

Abstraction of the mind from the objects for attainment of the spirit is what is known as *pratyahara*. This is not only a most misunderstood aspect of the practice of yoga but also the most difficult one. Perhaps because of its intricacy it has been misconstrued and, therefore, it has become a painful process. Consequently, one finds oneself in a very awkward position when one reaches this stage. Firstly, there is an inadequate understanding of what is happening and what is required. Secondly, the very first attempt seems to be a very painful one and, therefore, there is a falling of the ardour of the mind with which it commenced its practice.

There is a great amount of doubt in the minds of seekers, even well-informed ones, as to what exactly is intended to be done in this stage known as *pratyahara*. Is it withdrawal? Many questions arise due to a mix-up of philosophical doctrines, as well as practical difficulties. Some of them are: What is it from which the mind is being abstracted? Is it from the form of the object or from the reality of the object, the very existence of it?

The omnipresence of the spirit should preclude any kind of withdrawal. Also, there is the doctrine of devotion which recognises the presence of God in everything, and the all-pervading characteristic of God would not demand a withdrawal of the mind from anything, inasmuch as God is present everywhere. Next, there is a doubt that the abstraction of the mind may mean a kind of psychological introversion, which is what is objected to by psychoanalysts, because the introverted attitude is the

opposite of the extroverted one, and it is equally bad—as bad as the extroverted attitude. Whether we are tied up inwardly or bound outwardly, it makes no difference—anyhow we are bound. And, topping the list there is the painful aspect of it, because it is impossible for the mind not to think of that which it desires. If it is not to think of what it desires, then of what is it to think? What else are we to think—what we don't like? We are expecting the mind to wipe out the thought of things from its memory, including even those thoughts which it wants and regards as valuable and worthwhile. What else is it to think, if everything is removed from its memory? All these are the difficulties.

Questions of this type all arise because of an improper grounding in a philosophical background, which is the preparatory stage of the practice of yoga. Yoga is a practical implementation of a doctrine of the universe. An outlook of things is at the background of this very technique. This is what is perhaps meant by the oft-repeated teaching of the Bhagavadgita that yoga should be preceded by *samkhya*. Here the words 'yoga' and '*samkhya*' do not mean the technical classical jargons. They simply mean the theory and the practice. Eṣā te'bhihitā sāṅkhye buddhir yoge tv imām śrṅu (B.G. II.39): "I have talked to you about *samkhya* up to this time. Now I shall speak to you about yoga," says Bhagavan Sri Krishna. There should be a correct grasp of what is to be done. This is what we may call the *samkhya*, or the philosophy aspect. And when we actually start doing it, that is the yoga aspect.

In every branch of learning there is the theory aspect and the practical aspect, whether it is in mathematics, or physics, or any other aspect of study. Here it is of a similar

nature. Why is it that the mind is to be withdrawn from the object? The answer to this question is in the theoretical aspect which is the philosophy. What is wrong with the mind in its contemplation on things? Why should we not think of an object? Why we should not think of an object cannot be answered now, at this stage, when we have actually taken up this practice. We ought to have understood it much earlier. When we have started walking, it means that we already know why we are walking and where is our destination. We cannot start walking and say, "Where am I walking to?" Why did we start walking without knowing the destination? Likewise, if our question as to why this is necessary at all is not properly answered within our own self, then immediately there will be repulsion from the mind and it will say, "You do not know what you are doing. You are merely troubling me." Then the mind will not agree to this proposal of abstraction.

Hence, there should be a very clear notion before we set about doing things; and this is a principle to be followed in every walk of life. Without knowing what is to be done, why do we start doing anything? Even if it is cooking, we must know the theory first. What is it about? We cannot run about higgledy-piggledy without understanding it. The purpose of the withdrawal of the mind or the senses from the objects is simple; and that simple answer to this question is that the nature of things does not permit the notion that the mind entertains when it contacts an object. The idea that we have in our mind at the time of cognising an object is not in consonance with the nature of Truth. This is why the mind is to be withdrawn from the object. There is a peculiar definition which the mind imposes upon

the object of sense at the time of cognising it, for the purpose of contacting it, etc. This definition is contrary to the true nature of that object. If we call an ass a dog, that would not be a proper definition; it would be a misunderstanding of its real essence. The object of sense is not related to the subject of perception in the manner in which the subject is defining it or conceiving it.

Hence, the very activity of the mind in respect of this cognising or contacting is misdirected from the very beginning itself. Yoga asks us to set right this notion first; and this setting right of the notion cannot be done unless the mind is first withdrawn from the object. If there is a very serious illness from which someone is suffering, and the illness has come to a crisis, to an advanced stage, we first of all put the patient on a kind of semi-fast and isolate the patient completely from all contact of every kind—social and personal, even psychological—so that there is a proper atmosphere for the investigation and diagnosis. This is the *pratyahara*—the complete quarantining of the patient, and not allowing any kind of intrusion from outside. Physically and in every sense of the term there should be isolation so that we can have a clear observation of the situation and also a study of the various techniques that have to be adopted for rectifying the mistaken notion that is in the mind. *Pratyahara* is not yoga proper. Just as the isolation of the patient in a ward is not the main treatment but is a necessary aspect of the treatment, likewise, *pratyahara* is an essential part of yoga though it is not yet yoga. Yoga is yet to start. For a few days the doctor may not do anything at all and will simply keep on observing what is happening. After days and days of

observation, the physician may come to a conclusion as to what is the condition of the patient, and then the treatment will be started. Likewise, the mind is first of all segregated from its involvements. This segregation is *pratyahara*.

There is a prejudiced notion which the mind entertains in respect of its things, of its objects. This prejudice has arisen on account of a preconceived notion that is already there; and that notion has only one objective in front of it—namely, the exploitation of that object for its purposes. It has got a single intent, a deeply concentrated objective. If a wild beast looks at a prey, it has a single intention, which is not very complicated. Likewise, the mental cognition of an object, especially when it is charged with a forceful emotion, is backed up by a single intent. This is the prejudice, which is very irrational, and it will not be amenable to any kind of rational analysis.

A sentiment or a prejudice cannot be rationally analysed. It will not be subject to analysis, and it will not agree to it either—that is the force that is behind it. So there is a need to completely isolate the mind in its individual aspect as well as its externally related social aspect. The mind may not think of an object when it does not like it. This is one kind of *pratyahara*. Suppose we are averse to a thing; we will not think of that thing. But this is not yogic *pratyahara*, because the spontaneous dislike that arises in the mind on account of that particular object being an obstructing factor to its satisfactions is not a healthy condition.

The *pratyahara* process is a healthy and positive process. It is not brought about by compulsion, or due to certain impediments that present themselves in the form of

those things which are other than the ones which are desired by the mind. The mind sometimes does not think of objects when it is not concerned with them. This is another kind of *pratyahara*, but it is different from yogic *pratyahara* which is a philosophical withdrawal and not a negative kick that the mind receives or a complete oblivion or ignorance of the presence of a thing. It is a conscious attitude, and nothing unconscious should be allowed to interfere with it. We are aware of everything that is happening in the process of *pratyahara*. We are not ignorant of any aspect, and are not unconscious of anything. Even the things that we like and the things that we do not like—both these are objects of analysis. The withdrawal is not merely from the negative side of experience—namely, the objects which one does not like—but also from the positive objects which one really likes. Both the likes and the dislikes of the mind are two aspects of an involvement, and what *pratyahara* endeavours to accomplish is precisely the relief of the mind from involvement. Involvement is a kind of illness that has taken possession of the mind, from which it has to be freed, of which it has to be cured. Whether we have a positive like for a thing or a negative dislike for a thing, we are equally involved in either case. And both these are defects—very serious impediments from the point of view of yoga.

Why this involvement has taken place, and what is the defect that is there behind it, cannot be understood as long as the mind is impinging upon the object and clinging to it. The proper direction of the mind in a requisite manner can be effected only in a higher stage, which is called *dharana*, or concentration. But prior to this there is the need for bringing the mind back from the wrong direction that it has

taken. Before we direct it in a proper way, we have to bring it back from the improper way it has taken. This is the meaning of *pratyahara*—the mind has taken a wrong direction of action, and so we have to bring it back from that direction. It has taken a wrong course, and after we bring it back to the point from where it started on the wrong course, we direct it on a proper course.

The bringing of the mind back from its improper course is *pratyahara*, and the directing of the mind in a proper course is *dharana*, concentration. We can now appreciate the necessity for *pratyahara*. When you are persistently doing something wrong, and I expect you to do the right thing, first I would enlighten you as to the mistake that has been committed, and then inform you about the way of rectifying the situation: stop doing that which is improper, and then start to do that which is proper. The cessation of doing that which is improper is *pratyahara*, and the actual doing of the thing which is proper is *dharana*. But, as I mentioned, this is a painful process. Though we may philosophically argue with the mind that it has taken a wrong direction, it will not listen to this argument because it has got involved emotionally in that particular object towards which it is moving in a wrong manner. Though it is wrong in an ultimate sense, it also has to be noted, with sympathy in respect of the mind, that it has become one with the object due to its recognition of a peculiar twisted value in that object, for the purpose of the fulfilment of which it is moving towards it. There is a need for *viveka*, a proper understanding of the whole circumstance under which the mind has got involved in this manner. Then only is it possible to wean the mind

from the object and bring it to the point of right concentration, which is real yoga.

The pain involved in *pratyahara* is the result of a love that the mind has for that object towards which it is wrongly moving. Inasmuch as the direction which the mind has taken towards the object is wrong, the affection that it has towards the object is also wrong, and the pleasure that it derives from the object is also a misconstrued, misconceived idea. There is some complete topsy-turvy effect that has taken place on account of a basic error in the total attitude of the mind towards the object. In an earlier *sutra* we have studied that, to the discriminative, all is pain in this world: *duḥkham eva sarvaṁ vivekinaḥ* (II.15). It is to the understanding spirit and to the mind that the painful aspect of a thing is made clear. But to an unclear mind, this painful aspect will not become obvious. Who can ever believe that the objects of sense are made, or constituted, in a manner quite differently from the way in which they are seen by the eyes?

The belief in the concrete structure of an object and the stability of its position is so intense that any kind of contrary philosophical analysis will not be appreciated by the mind at that moment of time. Thus, while there is a need for a rational force of mind in the bringing of the mind back from the object, there is also a need to consider the emotional aspect, which should not be completely forgotten, because the mind is made up of various aspects. Thinking is not the only aspect of the mind. It has the aspect of feeling, and there is the aspect of will. They all work together in connivance. When the mind thinks wrongly about an object, the will also works wrongly in

respect of that object and confirms that thinking, and then the feeling charges it with the requisite force. It is like dacoits coming together; though they move in a wrong direction, they have a force of their own, so it is difficult to encounter all of them at once without proper precaution. The force that is behind the wrong activity of the mind is the emotion, and unless this force is withdrawn, we cannot check that activity.

Thus, in the effecting of the *pratyahara* or the abstraction of the mind from the objects, we have to consider the thinking aspect, the willing aspect and also the feeling aspect. What are we thinking about that object towards which we are moving? What is the amount of will that we have exercised in fulfilling our wish? What is the deep-seated feeling that we have got in respect of it? All these three have to be isolated threadbare, if possible. The thinking, the willing and the feeling, though they all work together almost simultaneously, are three different aspects, and they can be pulled out independently like threads from a cloth. The most difficult thing to tackle is feeling, and less difficult to encounter is the will, and still less is the aspect of thinking. Therefore, in the beginning, it would be to the advantage of the seeker to analyse the easier aspect—namely, the thinking aspect. What are we thinking about that object? Why did we go towards it? What is our intention behind it? Then we can go to the other aspect, which is the will. We have a determination for the purpose of confirming the attitude that we have adopted on account of a thought in respect of that object. But the deepest aspect of it is the emotion—the feeling.

No *pratyahara* can be effective unless all these three aspects are properly analysed and isolated from the nature of the object. Though the mind may not be thinking about the object, there may be feeling towards it; then there is no *pratyahara*. Not only that—the thinking, willing, feeling aspect has also a subconscious element in it, which also is to be probed into before complete mastery is gained. There may be a subtle restlessness at the time of the effecting of this practice. That restlessness may be due to the presence of a subconscious like for that very object from which the mind has been consciously withdrawn, which aspect is pointed out in a verse of the Bhagavadgita: *rasavarjam raso'py asya param dṛṣṭvā nivartate* (B.G. II.59). The mind and the senses appear to be withdrawn from the objects of sense in *pratyahara*, it is true. But how do we know that the mind and the senses have no taste for the object? Hence, *pratyahara* is not merely a physical isolation or even a conscious disconnection of oneself from the object, but is an emotional detachment that is necessary—wherein alone is it possible to have no taste for a thing. The taste may go to the feeling; and as long as the taste is present, there is every possibility of the other aspects rising once again into action. As long as the root is there, there is every chance of the sprout coming up one day or the other.

Complete *pratyahara* is not practicable unless an aspect of concentration and meditation is combined with it. The positive side should also be brought into the role of the practice, to some extent at least. Just as in medical treatment, together with the particular prescription for the treatment of the illness we also give a constructive tonic so that there may not be a deleterious effect of the weakness of

the system on account of an intensive treatment, likewise we have to be very cautious in dealing with the mind—that in withdrawing the mind from objects, we are not merely focused on the aspect of withdrawing. We are not only emptying the mind and giving nothing else with which to fill it. There can be a parallel filling of the mind with a positive content, together with the emptying of it. Then the painful aspect of it will be mitigated to a large extent. We are not going to merely starve the mind and give it nothing. That would be a very difficult thing to stomach. Together with this starvation and the emptying or vacating of the mind gradually by detaching it from its usual objects of contact, it can also be positively filled with the content of *dharana*, whose winds will start blowing, gradually, with their own fragrance and solacing message, together with this deeper preceding stage of *pratyahara* or withdrawal.

With this, the Samadhi Pada of the Yoga Sutras concludes. From the Vibhuti Pada onwards, we are given a passport to enter into the inner realm of yoga, which is concentration, meditation, and communion with the noble, great object of meditation. The Vibhuti Pada begins with *dharana*, or concentration of mind. Deśa bandhaḥ cittasya dhāraṇā (III.1): The fixing of the attention of the mind on the given object—wholeheartedly, spontaneously and entirely—is called concentration.

THE SADHANA PADA ENDS

THE VIBHUTI PADA

Chapter 82

THE EFFECT OF DHARANA OR CONCENTRATION OF MIND

At the very commencement of the Vibhuti Pada of this great work, the Yoga Sutras, Patanjali introduces us directly to the quintessential essence of the practice of yoga. In comparison with this attitude which is adopted in the Vibhuti Pada in such right earnest, everything that has been said and explained in the Sadhana Pada should be regarded as preparatory. In fact, this is exactly what the author feels. When we come to the point of concentration of mind, which is the subject with which the Vibhuti Pada begins, we are face to face with a tremendous atmosphere. It looks, as it were, that everything is up in arms against us, and every atom of creation becomes aware of our existence. What actually happens, and what one has to encounter at the time when one is ready for the concentration of the mind according to the techniques prescribed in yoga, is not clear to many people. This is because we have the commonplace notion of the concentration of the mind, such as the type that we have when we are solving a mathematical problem, or building a bridge across a river, or thinking deeply about some issue, and so on. These are types of concentration which are different from the type that we are concerned with in yoga. It is not a particular point in an isolated capacity that we are trying to think in concentration, while

this appears to be the case ordinarily in the workaday world.

What actually happens in yogic concentration is that we exert a pressure at a particular point, which immediately communicates a message to everything else with which it is connected. This is very important, a feature which distinguishes yogic concentration from every other type of concentration. It is something like encountering a ringleader directly. When he is faced openly, we can imagine what he will do. He will immediately send a message to all his cronies that he is caught. There are ways and means of doing this, which is a subtle secret of nature. The activity of natural forces is different from the activity that we are accustomed to in the workaday world. Communications do not require any kind of physical medium in the case of the working of natural forces. There is no need for an electric wire or cable, or any such conceivable material medium. A reverberation of forces is automatically created on account of a disturbance felt at a particular point in space. Any pressure intensely felt at the bowels of the ocean will be communicated to the entire ocean. The manner in which it is done, the ocean only knows. We may say, in a sense, that this world is like a reverberating chamber where everything echoes in every corner, and not even the sound of a pin dropping can go unheard. Not only that, sometimes it seems that this pin-drop sound gets magnified in certain corners according to the circumstances of the case; and forces are alerted immediately to do the needful on account of this disturbance that has been created.

I am advisedly using the word 'disturbance' because of the peculiar reactions that are set up when concentration is commenced. Though ultimately, in the sense of the goal that is in view, it cannot be called a disturbance but a tendency to a readjustment of things, in the beginning it looks like a disturbance. Suppose there are a thousand soldiers standing in a chaotic manner—anyone is standing anywhere in any manner whatsoever, without any order or system—and the general issues an instruction that they be aligned in a particular manner; immediately they re-group themselves to stand, or sit, or do whatever it is, according to the instructions given. The harmony, adjustment, or alignment which the general wants to introduce into the group is the disturbance he causes in the order—or we may call it the disorder—which was there in the group of soldiers. Notwithstanding the fact that the readjustment—which must be called a disturbance of the existing order—is intended for a higher alignment, nevertheless it is a disturbance. A disturbance is anything which completely changes the existing condition, though it may be for a better valuation and experience of things. The aim is not what is to be considered here. It is what actually happens that is the point.

Likewise, though the intention is a rearrangement of things and a harmonisation of all the forces in a cosmic sense, this does not happen immediately. One soldier will run this way and another will run that way to be in a proper position according to the order issued. We can see that there is the same kind of disturbance taking place in the midst of people. We do not know what is happening, why they are running about hither and thither. They are doing it

for the purpose of an alignment which is required of them. Likewise, forces will start rushing from point to point for the purpose of the order that they are expected to maintain according to the advice given at the point of concentration.

The effort at concentration of mind is the order issued by the general of the army, that the soldiers may be aligned, or ordered, or adjusted in a particular manner. The existing system is chaotic compared to this intention of the order. So there is a running of the forces in different directions—movements directed in various ways, like flies running from all corners. Bees begin to fly to the hive to place themselves in particular holes there, as they have a function to perform in the beehive. But when they fly, they fly higgledy-piggledy, in all places. When they come from different directions, we do not know from where they come, or in what manner they come. They appear to have no order, system, or anything of that sort, but the intention of their moving about is something which is order, system and method.

The danger that is possibly going to be faced by a meditator is the condition in which he will find himself at the time of this readjustment of forces. This is a very crucial point which one should not miss. We should not be too complacent or happy about the goal that is ahead and what we are going to realise in the end; that is not what is important. What is of consequence is the thing that is happening just now. It is possible that, due to the force of concentration, the forces connected with the personality of the individual may get stirred up into activity in a particular manner. Inasmuch as these forces are connected with the personality of the individual, they will have an impact upon

the individual. It is this impact that is to be expected even before it comes. It is not possible to give an explanation of all these details because they are purely personal matters and vary from individual to individual according to the conditions of the mind, etc.

We will not find these described in any book on earth, except perhaps in rare mystical volumes. Even there we cannot find every minute detail. Each one is peculiar to each individual because the reactions that follow and the experiences which one passes through at these moments of concentration depend upon the type of personality one has, and the strength of will that one has, as well as the intensity of the *karma* that one has to work up through one's individuality. When the concentration is mild, we will feel nothing. It looks as if nothing is happening. It will be like pouring water on a rock—it will not percolate, and the rock will not even feel the water falling on it. This is what one would feel even after some months of concentration, because months of effort may produce no result, for reasons which are very peculiar and are very guarded secrets of nature. Nature will not reveal her treasures like that, at one stroke, merely at the call. But when the effort becomes insistent and we persist in our concentration irrespective of the results that follow, not bothering about what happens—"results or no results, I will continue and persist"—if this is our attitude, then some miracle will take place.

That miracle will be, in the beginning, a torture. It will not be a pleasant thing that comes, because we are trying to reconstitute the existing set-up of things. We can imagine the difficulty that has to be faced by a pioneer in any field,

whether it is in the political field, or the social field, or any kind of work. The pioneer has to work very hard because he has to rearrange everything that is already there, from the standpoint of the idea that is in his mind, according to the goal which he visualises—the ultimate aim of his endeavours. In the beginning, the reactions would be such that it would be difficult to understand what is happening. In rare cases one can know what is happening. In some cases, it is not possible to know what is happening—though we will feel that something is happening. When people are running about from place to place, we may not know why they are running about. Are they happy or unhappy? Is something wrong or is something right? What is the matter with these people? Why are they running back and forth? We do not understand this merely by looking at their movements. But if we have a foreknowledge of the circumstances in which they are living, the atmosphere which they are in, we will have an idea as to what is happening. Similarly is the case with these psychological conditions that arise at the time of intense concentration of mind.

As I mentioned, concentration is a pressure that is exerted in a particular manner at a particular point. The point is not isolated; it has a subtle inward relationship with many other things in this world. It is like a social group, if we would like to designate it thus. A society of individuals which introduces a sympathetic character or quality of a uniform nature among the individuals which constitute it will naturally tell upon each individual when its order is interfered with. The Indian nation, for example, is such a social group. When we interfere with the national character

of the country, we are interfering with the character or the position of every individual, because each individual is connected with that character. Likewise, there is a social group of forces, we may say. They may be called 'social' in the sense that kindred forces group themselves into a particular pattern in respect of a particular individual. The way in which this kind of grouping is done depends entirely upon the structure of the individual personality and the subtle relationships it has with the external atmosphere on the basis of its own needs and desires, whether fulfilled or unfulfilled. It is this peculiar atmospheric condition, or the psychological environment, which I designate as the social group of forces subtly working around the individual, that the psychoanalysts—especially Jung, etc.—call the collective unconscious. It is not really unconscious, as they call it. Well, we may call it unconscious in the sense that it cannot be probed into directly by an individual intellect. But it is not unconscious, because it is alert, it is active, it can work, and it can have an effect upon us. So how can we call it unconscious? It is not unconscious; but for practical purposes of individual psychological investigation, we call it unconscious. Whatever it is, conscious or unconscious, such a group exists, and this collective force is what is disturbed at the time of the concentration of the mind.

What it is that we are disturbing is a very interesting point to recollect at the present moment. We are interfering with those silent forces which have been, up to this time, lying dormant, inactive, on account of unfavourable circumstances for germinating into conscious experience. We are now compelling the fruit to ripen under conditions that we are introducing by the power of concentration, so

the latent energies, which would not have otherwise woken up into activity, are made to wake up. This is what we call the waking up of sleeping dogs; and we do not know what the dog will do when it wakes up. It can go the other way, or it can attack us. Hence, we have to be very cautious, first of all. What would we do when these forces are stirred? It is not very wise for an untutored mind to stir up forces like that in an act of concentration. It is not merely concentration of mind that is expected of us; we must also know what we are in our deposits, at the bottom.

When we wake up all these forces that are deposited within, we must be able to face them. In the concentration process, the forces that are awakened are nothing but those things which are within us and everything that is sympathetically connected with the external atmosphere. The affections that are deep-rooted inside—the deposited potencies of likes, etc.—stir up the corresponding objects outside in the world. And so there is an awakening of forces within as well as without when we concentrate the mind. If we are wise enough, if we are discriminative enough, we can understand what is inside us, and we can also understand what we will awaken, because the things that will wake up are those counterparts of the deposits of potencies that are psychologically buried inside. That is why Patanjali has been so cautious to give us a detailed analysis of the psychological functions of the mind, not only in the Samadhi Pada but also at the commencement of the Sadhana Pada. A wise understanding and probing into one's inward constitution is necessary before one takes up the work or function of concentration of mind.

In the *sutra* which begins the Vibhuti Pada, deśa bandhaḥ cittasya dhāraṇā (III.1), Patanjali gives us a definition of concentration. The binding, or fixing, or tethering of one's attention at a particular point is called concentration. This is not a joke. We cannot do it easily, because we cannot think of one thing continuously for a long time. The reason is that the mind has not been accustomed to it; we have always been taught to think a hundred things at a time. Even when it appears that we are concentrating on one particular point, there is a subconscious distraction of attention towards other things. An officer at work may be concentrating his mind on the task on hand, but it does not mean that subconsciously he is forgetting his family. He is thinking of his family also at the same time. It may not be on the conscious level, but subconsciously it is there. His wife may be at home, ill. How can he forget that, when he is working in the office? So there is another side-activity going on in the mind, together with the issue that is directly on hand. Or he may be a judge in the court; it does not matter. He may be passing a judgement, but he cannot forget his child who is seriously ill at home. That is a subconscious activity that is going on as an undercurrent, together with this directly adopted attitude of conscious concentration on the particular work on hand.

Likewise, we will find that in concentration an undercurrent of thought may be there, which is subconsciously working in a different direction. That is called distraction. Hence, in *dharana*, or concentration, a wholesale and thoroughgoing fixing of the attention will not be possible at the very outset. That takes place at a later

stage. What happens at this point is that we undertake a kind of activity in the mind which, together with its endeavour to allow a continuous flow of thought on a particular point, tries at the same time to eliminate certain other thoughts which are adverse or derogatory to the issue on hand. When we want to think of 'A' in concentration, we also feel a necessity to eliminate all thoughts which are concerned with 'B', 'C' or 'D'. We do not want 'B', 'C' or 'D' to interfere with the idea of 'A', which we are trying to entertain in our mind. Thus in *dharana*, or concentration, there is a double activity.

This is what is known in Sanskrit as *vijatiya vritti nirodha* and *sajatiya vritti pravaha*. *Vijatiya vritti nirodha* is the inhibition or the restricting of all those psychoses which are connected with things unrelated to the point of concentration, and *sajatiya vritti pravaha* is the allowing in of only those ideas or thoughts which are in consonance with the object of meditation. Both these activities are taking place simultaneously. On the one hand we do not allow certain things to enter, and on the other hand we allow certain things to enter—just as on a railway platform the ticket collector may be allowing in those people with tickets and not allowing in those people without tickets. He does both things at the same time—stops some and allows some. This process continues in the stage of what is known as *dharana*, or concentration. It is not merely this. Something else is happening there. We will be aware of ourselves, we will be aware of the object, we will be aware that we are thinking, and we will also be aware that there are things to be eliminated. So there are four factors, at least, involved at the point known as *dharana*: we do not

want to think something, and we are aware of three things: ourselves, the process of thought, and the object that is to be concentrated upon.

Desa bandha means the tying of the mind to a particular point. What is this point, or *desa*? What is the point which we are trying to concentrate upon? This is a great subject by itself, on which volumes have been written. What are we going to think of? What are we going to meditate upon? What is the purpose behind meditation? If we answer these questions, we will also know what object to choose for concentration. Why are we concentrating the mind? What is the intention? What do we want to gain out of it? The purpose that is behind our effort in concentration will give us an idea as to what it is that we have to concentrate upon, because the act of concentration of the mind on an object is the effort of the mind to achieve idealisation, actualisation and realisation of that object. We want to get that thing and become one with that thing, if possible. That is the thing that we are concentrating upon. So, what is it that we want to achieve? On that we concentrate. The purpose of concentration of the mind is the achievement of a result. But first the result must be clear in the mind. What is it that we require? What consequence do we want to follow? On that we fix our attention. This 'point' that the *sutra* mentions has various meanings, according to our concept of a point.

Generally, when we speak of a point, we think of a geometrical location. This is what an ordinary schoolboy will define 'point' as—it is a point in space. This is the crudest definition of a point that can be given. A dot, a full stop, is a kind of point. The centre of a circle is a point, and

so on. Inasmuch as it is a geometrical point that we are conceiving, naturally it has to be in space. Because every point is a point in space, and because space is outside as well as inside, this point can be outside as well as inside. Wherever space is, there the point also is, because a point is nothing but a part of space. Where is the point of concentration? It is outside, or it is inside.

This is a general definition of the location of an object of concentration. But we have to say something more about this point. Are we meditating on a point in the sense of a dot or an ink spot? Or is it something else? This point is not merely a dot. It is a figurative term used to designate an ideal which is in the mind. It is not a physical dot in the sense of a full stop that we put when we write a sentence. It is a metaphorical expression intended to give the characteristics of what we ought to think in our mind for the purpose of achieving our result. So, before we actually sit for meditation or concentration, we have to have some idea in our mind: “What is the matter with me? What do I want?” What is it that we want? It is not uniform to every person. It varies from one individual to another.

Therefore comes the necessity for initiation. We cannot have a wholesale mass-initiation given by a Guru to thousands of people. That is not possible because the needs of individuals vary from one to another. We cannot announce through the broadcasting station: “Let all take this medicine.” This is not possible, because how can we prescribe a single medicine to masses of people, not knowing what diseases they are suffering from? It would be a foolish broadcast. Likewise, we cannot give a mass initiation. Each individual is a specific character by himself

or herself. Thus, when we come to this point in the practice of *sadhana*, we come to an individual issue—and that is the need felt for initiation by a Guru. What is it that we need? What are our requirements? Why are we concentrating the mind? This will reveal many other things also, simultaneously. The method that we have to adopt in meditation also varies.

There are hundreds and thousands of methods of concentrating the mind, according to the way in which the mind works at a particular given moment of time. It is not one single method. Also, the method of concentration has to be accompanied by many other accessories, such as a particular physical posture. A single posture cannot be prescribed for everybody. There are various other moods of the mind that have to be adopted, as well as the type of atmosphere in which one has to find oneself. Many other things have to be considered. Hence, we are here at a stage when personal guidance is necessary. It is not easy to give a public lecture on this subject, nor can we find this information in textbooks, because it is all general information that books give. A very detailed analysis of the individual situation cannot be found in any textbook, and it is not possible to listen to it in a lecture. But this is the crucial point and most important thing to be remembered and taken into consideration. The objective of meditation is ultimately the realisation of the Supreme Being—God-realisation, the realisation of the Absolute. This is known to everybody, and this is perhaps the aim and objective of everyone born in this world.

So far, it is general information that is given to people. But we know this Absolute is a terrific Reality, and we

cannot conceive it in the mind. Who can conceive the Absolute? Thus, we have to approach it in an appropriate manner, on the basis of the level of mind that we are in at this moment. Though the Absolute is the Supreme Reality, omnipresent and transcendent, it is also immanently present in the very level of thought which we are capable of entertaining in our mind. Hence, we can spot out this Absolute and put our finger upon it at every condition of the mind, because every condition of the mind reflects the Absolute in a particular way, though in a very inadequate manner. We must, first of all, find out the condition of the mind in which we are, and the way in which we can contact the Absolute from the point of view of that particular condition of the mind in which we are. We should not idealise things too much. "Oh, I want the All-pervading Father of the Universe." This kind of talk is useless. It is all simply nebulous because it is only a theoretical way of speaking of things, whereas our condition is different. We are hard-pressed by certain inward tensions, and it is well known that these tensions will not allow us to think of or contemplate on universal realities. So it is useless to merely divert the mind to theoretical abstractions, even if it be in the name of the Absolute.

We have to take hard realities on their bare connotation—as they appear. Though Reality is our intention ultimately, appearance cannot be completely brushed aside, because we have to pierce through appearance for the sake of contacting Reality. So, we first of all bestow some thought upon the nature of the mind which is our dear possession, which is inseparable from us, through which alone we have to do the concentration.

When we probe into the structure of our own mind, we will find that it is constituted of various layers of ideas and ideals, some of which have come up to the conscious level, and some of which are deeply buried inside. Our duty it is to bring up to the surface of consciousness these deep-seated ideas and ideals.

Many of the things that we thought as children may be lying deep-seated at the bottom, not having found an opportunity to express themselves. When we were small children, we must have thought very seriously about some things, and we could not fulfil those ideas for various reasons. Now we have become different people altogether due to the pressure of circumstances, etc. But those ideas have not gone—they are there. They may be in a mild form or an intense form, they may be in an interrupted form or they may be in an expressed form. Whatever the form is, they have to be brought to the surface of consciousness.

There should be a total awakening of the personality to the conscious level before one takes up yoga practice. There should be nothing hidden inside. If we start hiding things to our own selves, we are fools of the first water. We cannot hide things like that. Hence, the first thing that is required of a meditator is to bring every subconscious urge into the conscious level, and see them face to face—openly to their face—and try to find out what is to be done with them. They have to be dealt with in an appropriate manner, according to the circumstances of the case. Then we will find what methods we have to adopt in eliminating the undesirables and allowing in the desirables for the purpose of concentration.

Chapter 83

CHOOSING AN OBJECT FOR CONCENTRATION

Deśa bandhaḥ cittasya dhāraṇā (III.1). Tatra pratyaya ekatānatā dhyānam (III.2). These two *sutras* at the commencement of the Vibhuti Pada of the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali define the processes of concentration and meditation. The fixing of the attention of the mind on a particular objective is called concentration, and the continuous flow of the mind uninterruptedly for a protracted period in respect of that objective is called meditation. This fixing of the mind on the objective is itself a very difficult task, and the very fact that so much preparation had to be done in the form of *yamas*, *niyamas*, *asana*, *pranayama*, *pratyahara*, etc. for getting into this mood of concentration should prove the nature of the difficulty. The mind will not agree to concentration on anything exclusively because the structure of the mind is like a web which has its warps and woofs and is not a compact substance like a piece of diamond. It is a fabric constituted of various individual and isolated functions which get together into a so-called compactness and create the appearance of there being such a thing as a self-identical mind.

The mind is constituted, to some extent, in a way similar to the structure of the physical body. That means to say, even as the body is not a compact indivisible whole and is constituted of many, many minute parts, down to the most minute called cells and organisms, and yet the body appears to be a single concrete substance, so is the case with the mind. It is constituted of functions—*vrittis*, as they are

called—and yet it appears to be a single entity. This singleness of its existence is an appearance, not a substantiality or reality, even as the single concrete presentation of the physical body is only an appearance. It is not there really. The peculiar structure of the mind—namely, its internal disparity of character—prevents it from focusing itself wholly on any objective. What is it that prevents the concentration of the mind on any one thing continuously? It is the mind itself. The nature of the mind is averse to the requisitions of concentration. Concentration is the flow of a single *vritti*, one continuous idea hammering itself upon an object that is presented before it. But the mind is not made up of a single idea. The mind has hundreds and thousands of ideas hidden within it, and it is made up of these ideas, like a cloth is made up of threads. Because of this composite character of the mind, which is made up of fine elements inside in the form of these *vrittis*, it becomes difficult for it to gather its forces into a single focus.

The gathering of the forces of the mind into a single focus becomes difficult because the internal elements, which are the *vrittis* of the mind, do not agree with each other. The members of the family have independent views. If one member does not agree with another member in the family, we can imagine the nature of the family and the kind of life they live in the house. If at every step a member disagrees with the other, and yet he belongs to the family, there would be a continuous restlessness felt internally in the family. This is what is happening to the mind. It is a restlessness continuously felt inside on account of the disharmonious relationship of the ideas, or the *vrittis* in the

mind, which hanker for different types of satisfaction in respect of different objects which they want to grab on different occasions. That the mind is ordinarily contemplating on a particular object of sense at any given moment of time is not any indication that it will not like other objects.

The particular attention that the mind and the senses pay to a given object at a particular time is an indication of the preponderance of the particular *vritti* at that particular time in respect of that object, for the sake of fulfilment thereby. But the fulfilment by contact of the senses with the objects is variegated, and it is not of any specific character. The reason why there is an endlessness of desires, and a continuous dissatisfaction felt even in spite of the fulfilment of desires, is due to the presence of infinite urges in the mind which want to press themselves forward in respect of their own objects. But, due to unfavourable conditions, all of them cannot press themselves forward at the same time. Though a hundred people may have a hundred desires in their minds, it may be that every desire cannot be fulfilled at the same time because of the different conditions which contribute to the fulfilment of these desires, so each desire will raise its head at the appropriate moment. Hence, the mind is filled with these urges and is made up of these urges. How will we bring all these urges together in a compact mass and focus the whole of them into the direction of the object of meditation?

The very first step is the most difficult step. This requires a very terrible adjustment of ideas. The *sadhaka*, the seeker, has to work very hard to introduce some sort of an organisation in the midst of the variegated ideas which

run hither and thither in disparity—just as the head of a family, if he is wise enough, may bring about some sort of an organisation in the family in spite of the fact that the members disagree among themselves, as otherwise there will be only disagreement and no such thing as a family. The very purpose of there being a head of the family is to introduce system into the chaos that would be there otherwise. The aspiration for the realisation of a higher goal acts like the head of a family which brings this disparity of ideas into a focused attention. It does not mean that the mind is really united in the act of concentration, or *dharana*. It is still disunited inside; therefore, there is a vast difference between the stage of *dharana* and the further advanced stages, which are yet to be reached, where there is a complete union of ideas. There is no such complete union in *dharana*—there is still restlessness. But there is a force exerted upon the mind as a whole by the aspiration that is at the background of this effort at concentration.

The fixing of the mind on the point also implies the choosing of the point. What is the point on which we are concentrating? We have the traditional concept of the *ishta devata*, a term designating the nature of the object of meditation, which gives a clue as to what sort of object it should be. It should be *ishta* and it should be our *devata*. Only then we can allow the mind to move towards it entirely. We must worship that object as our god or goddess, our deity, our alter-ego, our centre of affection, our love, our everything; that should be the object. And, it is the dearest conceivable. There is nothing in this world so dear to us as that—such a thing is called the *ishta devata*. What is there in this world which is so dear to us, which we

worship as God Himself? Is there anything like that? If there was no such thing as that, it would have to be there; otherwise, the mind will not move towards the object. How can the mind move towards an object which it does not regard as the highest ideal, which it regards as only one among the many? If the idea is that there is a possibility of other objects also, equally valuable as the one here presented, why should not the mind turn to other directions?

When there is an equal reality or value recognised in the other objects of the world, then there is every chance of the mind moving towards other objects also, because of an equal reality and value present there. Then there is no question of *ishta* or *devata* here. If there can be another ideal which is equal to this, this cannot be called *ishta*. The *ishta* is the highest conceivable object of affection and, therefore, it is necessary to feel the presence of the highest values in this object of meditation. Here the difficulty that one feels is really insurmountable, because there is no conceivable object in this world which can be regarded as the dearest, with nothing equal to it. How is it possible to imagine such an object? There are other things also equal to it; and as long as this feeling is there that other things are equal to it, there is a fallibility of concentration, a coming down of the aspiration and a lessening of the intensity of the process.

With a tremendous effort of will and understanding, we have to create an object of concentration if we have not got one already—one which is physically available to us in this world. All that we need should be present in it. Only then the mind will go there. What is it that we need? Do we find

it there in the object of our concentration? If we are convinced that everything that we require, everything that is the ideal of our aspiration is present there, naturally there is a point in the mind going towards it. But if we think that our ideals and loves are somewhere else, then the mind will naturally go somewhere else and not to this object. So it is necessary at the outset to make an analysis of our needs, aspirations and requisitions. Why are we concentrating the mind at all? Why have we taken up this task? What is the purpose? The purpose is to achieve something. What is that something?

This something which we achieve, or wish to achieve through concentration, is something very difficult to understand in the beginning. People are very restless in their minds and incapable of thinking about one thing continuously, even for a few minutes. That is the reason why they cannot understand what is good for them. If we ask a person, “What is it that you want?”—he cannot answer this question. He does not know what is good for him. Even a very intelligent man cannot answer this question, because this intelligence, ordinarily speaking, is useless when we come to this difficult problem of choosing the highest objective of one’s life. Such a thing does not exist; it is not conceivable. Nobody has seen it and nobody can think about it. But now comes a time when it is necessary to pinpoint this object, and we cannot continue to hobnob with various other sense-objects, thinking that each one is equally good. If each one is equally good, even then, what prevents the mind from choosing one, since it is as good as the other? Why is it that the mind is restless?

Again we come to that original analysis of the nature of the mind—why it is moving like that, from object to object. It has got many aims in intention, and these aims are nothing but the satisfaction of the different types of *vrittis* of which it is constituted. So it will not be amenable to any kind of pinpointing, because this pinpointing implies the satisfaction of a single *vritti* only, leaving the other *vrittis* unsatisfied. This is a difficulty which it feels, and a suspicion that it has got: “You are trying to compel me to concentrate on one thing, so that I may get only that, but what about my other children who also ask for many things?” If only one child is satisfied, the father is not happy. Other children are there, and they also have to be satisfied. So, what about the other children—the other *vrittis*—whom we have completely ignored, as it were, in our attempt at driving any one particular *vritti* only in the direction of the object that we have chosen now? The mind cannot appreciate that this object of concentration is not going to be the fulfilment only of a single *vritti*—that it is going to be the fulfilment of every *vritti*. It is something which can satisfy all our children and is not merely the goal of only one child. This is what the mind has to understand. But it will not understand.

The objects in this world are, unfortunately, constituted in such a way that they can attract only a particular *vritti* at a particular time; they cannot attract all the *vrittis*. Hence, we are not accustomed to the conception of any object which can attract all the *vrittis*. Such a thing has not been seen in this world, and now we are saying that such a thing is possible. Is there anything which can draw the attention of the entire force of our mind at one stroke? We have not

seen such a thing, and so we do not believe it when we are told that in yoga such a thing is possible. One thing that is important here is to make the mind awaken itself to this enlightenment that the object of meditation is not the satisfaction of one *vritti* merely, like the objects of the senses. It is the total aspiration of the whole structure of the mind getting fulfilled. "The whole family will be happy," we must tell the mind, "not merely one *vritti*."

The desires of the mind generally cannot get fulfilled, on account of an infinite craving that is behind the *vrittis* of the mind. It is not a finite desire that we have got; our desires are infinite. The reason is that we are in some way connected, rightly or wrongly, with something behind us that is endless. We are not completely cut off from the forces of nature, though it looks as if we are outside them. There is a pressure exerted by the vast reservoir of the entire nature, due to which it is not possible for any *vritti* to be satisfied entirely.

Therefore it is that no desire can be really satisfied, because the intention of a desire is not merely the contact of it with an object; it is a satisfaction that it seeks, not contact with objects. That satisfaction cannot come as long as the asker for the satisfaction is an infinite background. The infinite is asking for infinite joy through the little tunnel, or the pipe, which is the mind that connects the individual with the objects. The whole ocean cannot pass through a pipe; it is not possible. But yet this is what is expected. We are trying the impossible; therefore, we can never be happy in this world. The impossibility of fulfilment of desire arises on account of an infinite urge that is at the background of a finite desire. This is a

contradiction. A finite desire cannot comprehend or contain within itself the energy of an infinite asking, so we are kept in suspense at all moments of time. At any given moment of time we are forcefully driven to the object for the achievement of a satisfaction which is really not in the hands of any *vritti* of the mind. This difficulty is there at the base of even the effort at concentration and meditation.

This difficulty has to be solved first, by proper *viveka* and *vairagya*—a clear understanding of the difficulty in which we have been placed, the nature of the difficulty or the reason behind it, and the way out of it. How do we know that meditation is the remedy for all these problems? Why is it that we take to yoga? It is because we have got great sufferings in life. The whole of life is nothing but an endless medley of confusion, chaos and pain. We want to get out of this. That is why we take to yoga. But how do we know that yoga is the remedy for it? How is yoga going to rectify all these difficulties? Unless this is understood properly, the mind cannot be taken to the point of concentration. We cannot simply hear someone saying that yoga is the way, and then proceed. The mind has to be convinced that this is the remedy, and that this is the remedy because this is our problem. When we know the nature of the disease, we can also know the nature of the medicine. If we do not know the disease itself, how can we know the medicine? How can we know that yoga is the remedy unless we know what our problem is? So, what is the problem? What is the difficulty? What is the trouble? Why are we crying? What are we asking for? If this is clear to the mind, the way out of the problem also will be clear automatically. We will at once know that yoga is such a

peculiar thing that there can be no other alternative for this problem.

As a little hint, I have mentioned what this problem is. It is the problem of fulfilment of desires—nothing but that. The whole of life is nothing but this difficulty. The desires spontaneously arise in the mind but they cannot be fulfilled for various reasons, the main reason being that they are propelled by an infinite urge which seeks infinite satisfaction; but this cannot be achieved due to the little aperture through which the finite movement of the mind moves towards finite objects. Thus, the means adopted in the achievement of the objective is defective. If the infinite urge within has to be satisfied, there should be an infinite means to fulfil it. We cannot have a finite means. The individual is finite, the senses are finite, the mind is finite, and the objects also are finite. How can we have infinite satisfaction from them? But that the desire within is infinite is not known to us. We are cleverly screened away from this knowledge by a trick of nature which keeps the world going on. Otherwise, we will immediately wake up to the problem on hand, and then defeat nature of all its purposes.

Nature is very clever and will never allow us to know what her tricks are—a great magician indeed. So we will not know what the magician is doing, and how things are coming up suddenly. We are placed in a very difficult context. We are always embarrassed and caught by both our ears, so that we cannot move either this way or that way. We cannot keep quiet and not attempt to fulfil the desires. That is one way we are caught. The other way is that we cannot be satisfied by any amount of satisfaction of desires. So we are caught the other way also. We cannot

keep quiet and we cannot do anything. This is a problem. How is yoga going to be the remedy for it?

Yoga is the remedy because it summons to the forefront, to the daylight of knowledge, the deep-seated urge which is causing this problem. The ringleader of the problem is called immediately to the court and accosted openly, and the problem is tackled directly in an open forum—it is not kept hidden inside. Our difficulties are caused by the presence of the infinite behind them which is the problem. It is not the finite objects that are the causes of the troubles. We are unnecessarily complaining that this is like this or that is like that. The world is not the cause of our problems. The world has been only a cat's paw that has been thrust forward by the infinite behind it, which is always kept in the background and never brought to the forefront. What is behind is something unseen, and what is in front of us is not the cause of the trouble. But we transfer the cause of the trouble to the seen objects, and then it is that we make complaints about things. The trouble arises from something which we have not seen with our eyes, and which cannot be seen. It is the cause of the outward movement of the mind and the senses.

When the cause is brought to the surface of consciousness, the problem is brought to the surface of consciousness and then we can deal with it directly in the manner required. This is what yoga does. In the great endeavour called concentration of mind, or *dharana*, we try to pull up to the surface of consciousness the infinitude of aspiration that is behind the desires of the mind which are limited in nature. If this is properly understood, we will know how and why the object of concentration should be

our *ishta*, because it is 'that' which can fulfil the infinite longings of this infinite background. It is, really speaking, a symbol of all-round perfection that we place before ourselves as the object of meditation. The object of meditation is symbolic of perfection; it should have no defects. It should be artistically beautiful, philosophically sound and spiritually solacing. That is the nature of the object of concentration, because if there is any defect—either from the point of view of the understanding of the intellect or the appreciation of the aesthetic sense, or in any other manner—the mind will not move towards this object. It should contain all the characteristics that are regarded as valuable in the world.

Thus, we have to superimpose, in the beginning, all those blessed qualities which we require to be satisfied in our mind, ordinarily speaking. This is a type of psychological analysis that we are making of the point on which the mind is to be fixed—the *desa*, as the *sutra* puts it, to which the mind has to be tied. The mind cannot be tied to a point like that easily, unless all this background, or its history, is properly known. From this analysis we also come to the understanding that this point is not merely a dot on the wall, as many people imagine. Rather, it is a symbolic focusing point, a metaphorical point—not a geometrical point—which allows all the infinite characteristics of our longings to converge upon one point. It is the point, really speaking, where we find the satisfaction of our desires. Though the desires of the mind are endless, how is it that the mind sometimes rushes forward towards a single object? How does it become possible for the mind to see all perfection in a single object at the time when it runs

towards the object? That is because at that particular moment of time, the given object manages to attract towards itself all the values which the mind seeks. That becomes the converging point of all our longings—for that particular time only. Afterwards, that object will withdraw itself and some other object will come to the forefront. So unless all our aspirations get focused at that particular point, it cannot become the point of concentration.

We now conclude that this point is not merely a physical point. It is more a type of conceptual point, or rather the centre of our affection, which cannot find a physical location anywhere. It cannot be seen in this world. Such is the intricacy that is involved in the choosing of the object of meditation itself. This difficulty is a little bit obviated by the assistance that we receive from a Guru at the time of initiation.

Chapter 84

THE NEED FOR CAUTION WHEN STIRRING INNER POTENCIES

The collecting of the thoughts at the time of the concentration of the mind was the theme that we were pursuing. We have to some extent observed what the difficulties are in collecting these thoughts for the purpose of bringing all of them together into a single focus. If you remember what I mentioned earlier, the mind is not made up of any single thought—it has many thoughts inside it. How is it possible to bring the mind to a single point of concentration when it is constituted of many thoughts, when it has many *vrittis*? This is the trouble that one has to face at the very outset. But it can be overcome by introducing a system into the *vrittis*, or the various thoughts. This system is called concentration, or *dharana*.

First of all, the predominant thoughts have to be screened out from the various muddle and hotchpotch of ideas that occur to the mind at different times. What are the predominant or dominating ideas that occur to the mind or occupy the mind, generally speaking? We can have a review of our thoughts for a single day or for a whole month to get an idea as to what are our principle ideas. What is the area in which the thoughts generally move? An engineer's way of thinking is a little different from an agriculturist's or a farmer's way of thinking, and so on. The way to which one gets accustomed has something to say about the way in which one thinks. Also, each one of us has been used to a certain type of living. That kind of living that we are

adopting has a great influence upon us, and we have to use that particular way of living itself as a tool or instrument in the channelising of the thoughts which are the predominant features of our mind.

To come to the point which we were discussing previously, there is an invisible pressure exerted on the mind by certain forces behind it, due to which we do things without our even knowing that we are doing them. What are these impulses but the pressures exerted upon the mind by forces other than those of which we have knowledge, over which we have control? At the spur of the moment—at the impulse of the occasion or the incitement of a particular urge—we take to some action, not necessarily as a consequence of deep deliberate thinking but on the push of the instinct, which is nothing but the course we adopt, or take, due to a compulsion that is felt from inside, the yielding to which is called pleasure. That is why the fulfilment of any instinct brings a kind of satisfaction, and is the reason why voluntary directing of the thought in any particular manner becomes difficult. The urges within are very vehement.

Again we come to the point of the necessity of bringing the deeper instinct to the level of the conscious mind—for which a tabulating of our instincts, to the extent they are knowable, would be necessary. Many of us have been accustomed to thinking along psychoanalytical lines due to training in that particular field, so it would be not very difficult to get a general idea of the ways in which we think and the predilections or the idiosyncrasies to which we are generally subject. It is these predilections, or tendencies in us—these inclinations—which come as compulsive

channels to divert our thought away from the object of meditation. Hence, it is necessary to have a correct grasp of our stand, or position, from which we can also have an idea as to our fitness for meditation. It is not that anyone and everyone can take to the path of yoga, or meditation. There should be a general minimum prerequisite, at least, obtained before one steps into this arduous practice. This minimum prerequisite can be gained only if there is a kind of satisfactory control over one's involuntary urges. We should not be involuntary always—that would be very undesirable. We should not be whimsical or fanciful people who can do anything at any time under the pressure of impulses.

Great intelligence has to be exercised, even before we actually take to the direct practice. When we focus the mind with any amount of force, there is a sympathetic stirring of energies in the entire system. The dormant forces in our body, and even the mind, get agitated, awakened, and set to action. Many of the forces in us are generally not working; a few of the forces alone are working. But when the concentration begins, these dormant energies get stirred up into action. Even unconscious urges will come to the surface of consciousness. It is only when we take to deep meditation that we will know what our desires are. Otherwise, we will think that there are no desires at all. When we live in a secluded place, absolutely alone for months and years, with no contact with people, with very few amenities for the normal satisfactions of life, we will see what desires are there. If we live in Gangotri for years together, we will have some idea of what the mind is. It will have silly desires which are very strong in nature, and

which get submerged on account of other activities in usual social atmospheres.

In the practice of concentration in a secluded atmosphere, certain energies get awakened to activity of their own accord. We dig up all the unearthed powers inside by exerting pressure on every part of the body and the mind. We do not deliberately exert any pressure, but these powers feel the pressure nevertheless because the mind is pulled in one direction by the will which concentrates and energises the object that is on hand. It is very difficult to describe in language what happens. We must take to the practice and see for ourselves what it is. We will feel, after a time, that the whole of our personality is pulled up, as it were, and there is no part of our personality which we will not become aware of. Everything will become an object of our awareness. It is not merely the mind, but even the body that will react, because we are not merely the mind and not merely the body—we are a composite of both. Thus, the whole organism gets awakened, and this awakening can result in anything.

This is the advantage, as well as the disadvantage, of meditation. When we awaken all people into action, we do not know what these people will do. They may do something very good, or they may do something very disastrous. What they will do depends upon the control that we have, and the understanding that we have, of these people. When the whole organism is awakened to action—what will happen? It will rush in the direction of the impulses that were already buried inside. If the dam of a river is broken, where will the water go? It will rush in the direction of the channel that is in front of it. It cannot go

somewhere else. The course of the river is already set, and the water has no other alternative than to move along the course already laid. So these submerged impulses, buried desires and unconscious urges become the dry beds of the river along which the waters of energy will flow when the mind is concentrated. Whether this result of concentration is advantageous or disadvantageous, whether it would be pleasurable or miserable, will be known from the course which it will take. It is like putting a sword in the hands of a person who can brandish it in any manner he likes. If he is a very intelligent, trained soldier in whose hands we have given this sword, he will use it for the appropriate purpose—in the battlefield. He will not use it anywhere else; it will be in the scabbard. But if the very same sword is put in the hands of a person whose mind is not under control, it can be used for any other purpose—used in a confused manner. It can be put to misuse. Similarly, this concentration of the mind is an impersonal energy that we rouse in ourselves, which can be put to use either this way or that way.

We again come to the point of the necessity of the *yamas* and *niyamas*, which are the beds of the river along which this energy will flow. How have we dug the beds and laid the lines of the movement of this energy? To stir up the *kundalini shakti*, or to awaken the energy inside, is not the only point to be considered. What will happen to us afterwards is equally important. We can be in a catastrophe if the energies are raised up like that, because they will simply burst like bombs; and they can burst anything—including ourselves—unless there is the intelligence to manoeuvre these energies. It is not enough if we have only

power; we must know how to use that power. A person who has power, but does not know how to use it, is a dangerous person. Likewise would be the condition of a person who takes to deep concentration and meditation without knowing how to conduct himself after the energies are roused up. When the concentration continues for a protracted period, if we take to this practice in right earnest and continue the practice for months and months, and years, then some energies are bound to be roused—and they will be roused in any person. But what are these energies that may be roused?

In the Tantra Shastra and certain other schools of teaching, we have been told that there are *chakras*. These are only some words for untutored people, as these *chakras* are nothing but certain knots of energy into which the mind has got tied up. It has to be uncoiled. There are whirls of energy inside our system which are nothing but psychic energies. They are not physical, material substances. They are whirling configurations of psychic energy which are supposed to be coiled up in various centres of the system. These *chakras* are affected the moment we concentrate the mind with great force. Generally, the lower *chakras* get stirred up first—the higher ones will not be affected. We can imagine what would be the state of our mind and the condition of our living, etc., if we get attuned to the manner of the working of these lower energies which begin to act when they are stirred up into action.

These *chakras*, called *muladhara*, *svadisthana*, *manipura*, etc., are potencies that are inside us. The capacity of our ability to act is enabled by the particular *chakra*, whatever that *chakra* be. We have various

potentialities inside us; we can do so many things. What are those things that we can do? The capacity in us to do certain things is in the particular *chakra* in which we are located. The particular *chakra* that will be stirred up would be that specific centre which corresponds to the level of existence in which we are living. If we are only in the physical world, only the physical centre will be stirred up. That means to say, if our consciousness is tied to the body too much—if we are intensely body-conscious and if our intelligent life or inward psychic life is very mild and not intense enough, if the physical consciousness is very intense and vital urges are very vehement, if these are the things which we are used to in our life and which we have put down due to force of will—they will be roused to action.

Generally most practitioners, even very advanced ones, cannot go beyond the first two *chakras*. They move around the *muladhara* and the *svadisthana*, and cannot go beyond that. The *muladhara* is stirred up in almost everyone, and when it gets stirred up we will not know what happens. We will be a little bit titillated, and feel a kind of satisfaction that some sort of an achievement is going to be effected early, and we will feel that something is happening. But when the *svadisthana* is stirred, we are in danger. This is what generally brings the yogi down to the level of an ordinary human being—sometimes even worse than a human being—because the *svadisthana* is the centre of desire. While the *muladhara* is the centre of gross physical living—we may call it the animal living of a *tamasic* character—the *svadisthana* is of a *rajasic* nature, and when it gets stirred up it will start blowing like a tempest. From all directions the winds will blow. If desires blow like winds

from all sides, what will happen to us? They will not blow like an ordinary breeze. They will come like a cyclone because they were sleeping and we have awakened them. They will come like a cyclone because they were sleeping and we have awakened them.

When we see a person who is sleeping deeply and we wake him up suddenly, he may do something which is most unexpected. This *svadisthana* is a dangerous point, more dangerous than the *muladhara*. As I mentioned, very few have gone beyond that level; they can be counted on our fingers. Most people get caught up in the desire level, called the *svadisthana*. Then it is that they get fired up with the desire for world uplift, the idea of bringing heaven on earth, and they become messiahs or incarnations; they begin to feel that they are ambassadors of God Himself, come to rectify all the defects of this world. This is a peculiar kind of ego that rises up into a heightened activity when the *svadisthana* gets stirred up. Or, sometimes, animal desires can get activated. They will start drinking very vehemently, thinking that it is a kind of *sadhana*; or something worse than that—anything can happen. We know what the desires of a human being are—these are things not unknown—and every one of them will be activated. The desires of a person who has stirred the *svadisthana* will be more intense, whatever the desire be, than the desire of an ordinary person. This is the dangerous point where one can simply go down into the pits if the proper measures have not been taken earlier for putting these energies into proper use and harnessing them for the purpose for which the yoga practice has been undertaken.

These are the types of conditions we have to face—circumstances we have to pass through—if we earnestly take to concentration of mind for a long time. Therefore, before one actually enters into the path of yoga, especially at the point of concentration and meditation, very earnestly and seriously one has to be very well guarded by having an insight into one's own psychological nature as to where one really stands in one's personal and social life.

Chapter 85

THE INTERRELATEDNESS OF ALL THINGS

There are three stages by which the mind attains communion with its object, which is the aim of meditation. The first stage is that it thinks deeply over the object, pays entire attention to it, and does not want to think anything else. So much is the longing for communion that the mind cannot think anything else at that time. The heart fixes itself in its thought, in its will, and in its emotion, upon the object. This is a very important factor to remember. It is not merely the thought that fixes itself—it is also the will, and also the emotion. This is important because we are generally under the impression that concentration is the settling of the thought on the form of the object. But, usually, the emotions are not there and, therefore, the will is also not there. There is a shallow concentration with a disturbed background. That is not the concentration that we are expecting here, at this stage of yoga. There is no need to repeat, again and again, that the subject which meditates is not the mind in its shallow conscious aspect. It is the very vitality and essence of the whole of the personality of the subject. It is the very breath of the personality that is drawn towards the object—the very *prana* is moving towards it. We are entirely, wholly, totally, moving towards the object.

What it is to be totally drawn towards an object is something difficult to imagine under normal conditions, because we are never totally drawn towards anything. Though we have an interest in many things of the world, it cannot be regarded as a whole or entire interest which

absorbs the completeness of our being. Such a thing is unknown to us—but that is what is required of us. It is only in deep sleep that the whole being sinks; at other times, the entire being does not operate. Very rarely, even on the conscious level, does the whole being operate, unless we are frightened out of our wits. If lions begin to attack us from all sides in the jungle, the whole being may start working in a particular manner because our intention is to escape, and every cell of the body will be active, cooperating with us for the escape. Intense fright, intense joy and deep sleep—these are the stages or states of mind that may manage to draw the attention of the whole personality. But, we are not in such a state of fright always, nor are we in such a state of joy, and we have no occasion to ponder over the implications of sleep, so that, in consequence, we have no idea of what it means to be totally attracted towards an object.

This is indicated in a *sutra* in the Samadhi Pada, in a mild form without a detailed commentary, where the great author told us, *tīvra saṁvegānām āsannaḥ* (I.21): The achievement becomes quickened if the ardour is intensified. The word used is ‘*samvega*’, a very peculiar term in yoga psychology which has no equivalent in any other language. One’s heart should throb at the very thought of the object. Can it do that? Then it is possible to concentrate. That throbbing of the heart at the very sight of the object due to the joy on its perception, and even the thought of it, is called *samvega*. Without that *samvega*, the concentration will not come. How can we think of an object which attracts us only in a lukewarm manner, in which we have only a stepmotherly interest, and which we do not like from the

bottom of our heart because we have other interests in the world? With this kind of attitude of the mind where it has side activities together with this so-called activity called yoga, success is far away. Yoga is not a hobby; it is not an experiment that we are making; it is not an activity; it is not a vocation; it is not a business; it is not a job. It is the sinking of our personality in the ideal that we have chosen. We are sunk in it totally, saturated and absorbed, and nothing else remains.

That is the stage where we become superhuman, at least in a very small measure. We become superhuman the moment we are able to draw the attention of the total personality in respect of anything. The difference between man and superman is that while the faculties of the ordinary man are dissipated, the faculties of the superman are integrated. We must have heard of the saying that Lord Krishna has sixteen *kalas*—which means to say, sixteen powers. These sixteen powers are nothing but the sixteen energies that are present in the individual. They are present in us also, not only in Lord Krishna. But what happens in our case is that they are diverted in sixteen different directions: the *pranas* which are five, the organs of action which are five, the senses of knowledge which are five, and the psychological principle—these are the sixteen forces. In us, all these are higgledy-piggledy. Everything goes anywhere it likes and there is no coordination among them. But in a superman they are total, whole, complete—integrated like a mass, and not isolated in their content. That is why when a thought originates in the mind of a superman, it immediately takes effect, whereas in ordinary

people it does not take effect because its energy has been diverted in some other way.

The implementation of a thought, or the materialisation of an idea, is nothing but the extent of the union which one feels with the object concerned; that is called the materialisation of the thought. The moment we think something, it happens—and it must happen if the mind is able to unite itself with the object wholly. And, the percentage of this union will also be the determining factor of the percentage of this success, or implementation of the thought. But if always there is the feeling that the object is totally outside the mind, and the mind has very little interest in the object, it has also, correspondingly, very little control over the object. So, where can there be implementation? Where can there be materialisation?

The communion that we are seeking—which is *samadhi*, the aim of yoga—is the total merger of the subject with its ideal of meditation. There it has total control over the object, whatever that object be. For this purpose it is that the mind is directed towards the object. The object does not necessarily mean any isolated little bit of matter, though that also can be taken as a prop for concentration in the earliest stages. But the intention is not merely to end there. If we have an ultimate aim of reaching the ocean, we may take the help of a little mountain stream to row our boat. Though we have used a stream, the intention is not merely to row on the stream or river, but to reach the ocean. Likewise, the little bit of material content, which is the object of our concentration in the initial stages, becomes the diverting medium of the mind towards the ocean of the Absolute. That is the ultimate aim.

Thus, the point that we have to emphasise is that in concentration it is not our mind thinking about something else, or something outside or external. It is not our mind—it is *we* that are thinking. We should not use the word ‘my mind’, as if we are behind the mind and we are only operating the mind, like a driver driving a vehicle. It is the subject in its completeness, in its compactness, in its totality, in its wholeness, that attends upon the object. This point cannot be forgotten; and if it is missed, there is no concentration. For this purpose it is necessary to understand how far it is possible for us to be totally integrated.

Can it be possible for us to unite our thought, will and emotion at one stroke? Whenever I think of a thing, my emotion also goes there. Is it possible? I may think of a table or a chair—can my emotion also be there? It is not possible. This is the weakness of the human mind: it cannot unite its various faculties. Where the heart is, there the will is not; where the will is, there thought is not, and where everything is—memory is gone. So, naturally, there is a failure—utter failure. All the faculties which we call the psychological organ should be gathered up into a single focus of energy. It is a terrible task. But, naturally, yoga is a terrible task. Who said it is simple? We have to sacrifice ourselves, and that is perhaps the greatest of sacrifices we can conceive. But afterwards we will see that it is a great joy. How can it be a pain to us to integrate our personality? Can we even imagine that it is a sorrow? Would we call it a joy to be dissipated? It is very strange, indeed, that we find joy in a life of dissipation, disintegration and dismemberment of

the faculties of the mind. It is very strange that people should live like this.

But a little bit of effort, continued for a sufficient length of time, will bear its fruit and we will amply be given the reward thereof. We will see what it is, and then we will not open our eyes to see anything else. Then we would not like to hear any sound, and we would not like to have any other contact. Once we visualise it, we will be stunned from the bottom of our hearts, and we will not have occasion to be attracted towards anything else afterwards. It will be all beauty, all grandeur, all magnificence, all power and all abundance in every respect.

Towards this objective, the mind has to move continuously. ‘Non-stop’ is the word that is used. “Like oil poured from one vessel to another” is the analogy that is usually given. When we pour oil from one vessel to another, it is a continuous stream of pouring oil; it does not break into bits or drops. ‘*Taila dharavatu*’ is the term used. *Taila dhara* is the flow of the oil from one vessel to another. A continuous stream is there, and such should be the stream of the flow of thought of the subject towards the object. That is called *dhyana*, or meditation. There is no interruption of thought; there is no breaking of the flow; there is no driplet or droplet of the mind. It is a continuous movement without any kind of intervention of any other thought. In the *dhyana*, or the meditation process, there is not even the attempt at the elimination of extraneous thought, because there is no extraneous thought—there is only one thought. When we are fondling our dearest of objectives, we cannot have the time to think of eliminating other thoughts. The other thoughts do not exist and,

therefore, the question of eliminating them does not arise. There is only that which we want, and our heart has gone for it; and it has drawn, together with it, all the accessories—the thought, the will, the memory, everything. That is *tatra pratyaya ekatānatā dhyānam* (III.2).

Tadeva arthamātranirbhāsaṁ svarūpaśūnyam iva samādhiḥ (III.3): The total absorption of the meditating consciousness on the form of the object, with such intensity as to forget its own existence, as it were, and to identify itself with the object with such force that it looks as if the object itself—not the subject—is meditating; that is called *samadhi*. These *sūtras* are very important. *Deśa bandhaḥ cittasya dhāraṇā* (III.1) is the definition of concentration. The fixing of the attention of the mind on a particular spot or objective is concentration. *Tatra pratyaya ekatānatā dhyānam* (III.2): ‘There itself’, that means to say, at the very point of concentration when the flow of the mind becomes continuous, without any kind of interruption—that is called meditation, or *dhyana*.

Tadeva arthamātranirbhāsaṁ iva (III.3): That meditation itself becomes *samadhi*. How? When it becomes *arthamatranirbhasam*—that is, the object only shines; the subject has vanished out of sight. We do not exist there any more. We have evaporated like burnt-up camphor, as it were, and our residuum is absent. There is nothing to call our own—our existence itself has lifted itself up to the level of the object. *Tadeva arthamātranirbhāsaṁ svarūpaśūnyam iva*. The *svarupa* is the self-consciousness of the subject, the individuality or the self-sense. That has become absent. There is a vanishing of personality; that is called *svarupasunyata*—that is called *samadhi*. The term

‘*samadhi*’ in Sanskrit means the balancing of consciousness. *Sama adhana*, the equilibrated condition of consciousness, where it establishes a total harmony in content and intensity between itself and its object, is called *samadhi*.

Generally, this kind of balance between the subject and the object is not maintained in ordinary perception. There is always a dichotomy, a gulf between the seer and the seen; therefore, there is no proper communication of the one with the other except by way of artificial contact by the senses. But in this deep absorption of consciousness, the contact of the subject with the object is not sensory. It is not at all contact in the ordinary sense. It is not one thing coming in contact with another thing. It is not a juxtaposition of one object with another. It is not the proximity of one thing with another. It is the commingling of one with the other—water mixing with water, milk with milk, so that one cannot know which is what; both have become one mass. This sort of experience, where there is an utter equilibration of consciousness with its object so that one does not know which is consciousness and which is the object, where they stand on equal footing in every respect—that condition is called *samadhi*. It is not merely the flowing of consciousness towards the object. The flowing stops. When there is water in two tanks which are beside each other on the same level of ground, there is no movement of water from one tank to another tank; we cannot see the movement at all. When the other tank is on a little inclination, there can be a movement. If the inclination is not there—there is a balance between the two on account of the same level that they maintain—the water

in both tanks will be connected without actually a flow or an activity of movement.

Something like that happens in this condition of the establishment of balance between the subject that meditates and the object that is meditated upon. In this balance there is a fusion of the content of the two. They become one in an extraordinary sense, and here it is that one gains insight into the nature of the object. This is called intuition. We begin to cognise, perceive and enter into the content of the object more clearly and in greater detail than we would have done by any sensory contact. We can see everything that is inside the object, without the operation of the senses. The mind enters the object and begins to pervade every part of its body, and begins to be aware of everything that is there. This is called insight; this is called intuition. This is what they call the third eye—other than the two eyes with which we see physical objects. But this is a very terrific job because whatever may be the effort we make in concentration of mind, the object will manage to wrench itself away from our grasp and remain outside us. This is the difficulty.

We have lived in a world of externality to such an extent that it is difficult to teach the mind the lesson of there being such a thing as internality of perception. How on earth will it be possible to conceive that there can be an internal relationship of the object with the subject? We have never known such a thing. We have never been taught such a thing anywhere. No school, no college will teach us all this, because these are all strange things which are unearthly, outside the syllabus of any study in any branch of learning. This is the secret of nature, which we are not

taught anywhere—neither by our parents, nor by our teachers, nor do our friends talk about this subject. Everything is kept a guarded secret. This secret has to be unearthed and brought to the surface of perception. Here is the benefit of yoga.

How long it will take for us to establish a proper communion with the object, as required in this technique of meditation, will be known only by ourselves, each for oneself, and another cannot make a judgement on this. It depends upon the absence of extraneous interest in the mind. If there is any kind of extra-curricular interest, if we would like to call it so, in the mind, there would be a diminution of the intensity of concentration. We should have only one interest. The difficulty is: how is it possible to have one interest? Such a thing is impossible for the mind. We have many interests. We want so many things. We want our dinner; we want our supper; we want our lunch; we have got friends to contact; we have got works in this world; we have got a business; we have got relationships of umpteen kinds. With this kind of distracted attention, where comes the question of the whole-souled attention of the mind on any object, even if it be yoga?

This difficulty, this doubt, arises because one does not know what the object of meditation is. We have a wrong notion that the object of meditation is one among the many objects of the world; therefore, a doubt arises as to how it is possible to take total interest in one of the objects while there are many others which are equally good. The point in our doubt is that the object of our meditation is not one of the objects of the world—it is the only object that exists. This is the thesis that has to be maintained. But how can

there be only one object before us? Is it possible? Have we seen anywhere only a single object existing, independent of relationship with any other thing? Here again, this doubt arises because of the impossibility to conceive an integrated object. We have never been taught what an integrated object is. An integrated object is that which maintains a vital relationship with every other thing in the world; that is the object of our concentration. Even if it be for the time being, let us take for granted that our object is one among the many. It has to be borne in mind that it maintains an internal relationship with other things of the world, so that at the time of concentration on this given object we are simultaneously attending upon everything else in the world also.

There is no need for us to think of other things, because this particular object maintains a necessary connection with everything else, so all the other things in which we are interested also will be included. This is not to be forgotten. When this focusing of the attention of the mind is done on a particular object, we are converging the forces of the universe on that object. So, all our business also will be there, and we need not be frightened. As a matter of fact, our business will improve, our relationships with the world will become friendlier, and success will be on hand, at the tip of our fingers, in any walk of life. There need not be any fear about this matter, provided we are able to comprehend the principle that the object of our meditation is the focusing point of the whole universe.

Chapter 86

THE HURDLE OF THE EGO IN YOGA PRACTICE

There is something which intervenes between the object of meditation and that which tries to unite itself with this object. It is this peculiar intermediary screen that is not easily recognised, though it is there as almost a kind of impenetrable wall through which the meditating consciousness is unable to penetrate into the object. It is not easy to discover as to what this thing is which stands between the consciousness that meditates and the object. The whole of yoga is nothing but the process of discovering this obstructing medium and eliminating it completely by some means or the other. The schools of thought and the systems of philosophy have been scratching their heads in trying to discover the relationship between mind and matter, consciousness and object, and so on. All these endeavours have borne various kinds of fruit, each one different from the other, without any kind of uniformity in their opinions.

That which stands between the meditating consciousness and the object is something inscrutable. It is because of this inscrutability that it cannot easily be overcome. On scrutiny, that principle will be realised to be a projection from the meditating consciousness itself. It is you yourself standing there as an obstacle to yourself. Ultimately you will realise that there is nobody else. You are yourself obstructing yourself, in some peculiar manner, by a double activity which you try to engage yourself in. On the one side, there is the practice of yoga, the effort of consciousness to pierce through the veil and to unite itself

with the object. But on the other hand, there is a pre-ju-what notice, a peculiar habit and a notion in the mind which prevents this unity that is endeavoured through the practice of yoga. The personality-consciousness, what is known as *asmita* in yoga parlance—called the ego-principle, usually—is what obstructs this unity. There is an intense affirmation of oneself which is so hard that it cannot be either understood or overcome. And, on the basis of this self-affirmation, there is all this practice—yoga and what not.

It is the most painful thing to conceive the abolition of the ego or the obliteration of one's personality. Even when we conceive of immortality, we always think of immortality of the ego, or the perpetuation of individuality. We would like to be the same Mr. or Mrs. even in the immortal condition, so that endlessly, for durationless eternity, we will maintain this particular personality. This is the idea of immortality we have, and this does not leave us merely because we are philosophically minded. This is more substantial than our philosophy; and that prejudice will persist even till the end of the day, even till the doom of the person. This sits on our head even at the time of meditation. There is a subtle affirmation of oneself which refuses to get identified with anything else in this world.

How can we identify ourselves with anything else when we have got such a self-conceited individuality which affirms itself as isolated from everything else? We have got a prestige and a status and a meaning of our own, due to which we always keep ourselves aloof from everybody else. We have a thought of our own; we have a feeling of our own; we have an opinion about things which is unique by

itself—all which are the expressions of this self-affirming principle. It is this peculiar thing, which refuses to be observed by even the most investigative of minds, that prevents any kind of success in this world. All success, whatever be the nature of this success—temporal or spiritual, secular or religious—is nothing but the unity of the endeavour with the objective on hand. If the objective is not achieved, how can we call it a success?

An achievement is nothing but the unity that we acquire with the aim that we have in our mind. If this unity cannot be achieved, there is no achievement at all. There is no such thing as success where the object of success stands outside us, refusing to come near us. Even the so-called unity of objectives that we achieve in this world and the successes that we speak of in the various walks of life, are really not successes. They are only apparent achievements of the objective, not real achievements, because they have an end. The object has not really come to our possession; it stood outside us always, merely because we did not allow it to come in. We have invited our guest, but when he comes, we close the door. This is what we are doing in meditation.

Meditation is the invitation of a guest: “Come, I want you. I want to embrace you.” But when the guest enters, we close the door, and there is no success. This door is the ego. It will close itself and prevent the entry of the object into itself—the subject, or prevent the entry of consciousness into the object. So, with all the hectic efforts of the meditating consciousness, the unity cannot be achieved as long as this personality asserts itself. The greatest obstacle before us is what yoga calls *asmita*. There is the form of the object, called the *rupa* in Sanskrit, and there is the

essentiality of the subject, called the *svarupa*. The *svarupa* is the quintessential form, the basic essence of the 'self', and the *rupa* is the form of the object. The *rupa* always manages to keep itself away from the *svarupa* of the meditating consciousness. We always perceive the object; we never unite ourselves with the object. Such a thing has not been done because the senses, working together with the mind, act as a screen. They sift all processes of perception and take only the impressions of perception, sensation, etc., but will not allow the unity of the substantiality of the subject with the object because if that could be achieved, there would be no function for the senses.

The senses have no work to perform if the unity between what is perceived and the perceiver is achieved. But the senses do not want to go without a job. They would be jobless if this could be done, so they vehemently prevent any such thing. If we perform our work very efficiently, and if all the work is completed, there will be no work for us to do; we will be jobless. So we do the work very slowly and very inefficiently, so that the work will be there forever, and we will be employed. That is a very good way of having work—never doing it completely. This is what the senses are doing. They will never allow this achievement called yoga because the moment it is achieved, they have no work. They will cease to exist. They will be put out immediately.

Thus, there is always a struggle and an effort on the part of the senses to maintain a distance between consciousness and the object. Whatever be the proximity of the object with the subject in meditation, a little distance is maintained. It is not a complete union. And, that little distance is equal to any distance. In an electrical operation,

if there is even the least distance between the contacting wire and the plug, though it may be only half a millimetre of distance, there will be no contact, really speaking. It is not physical distance that counts here, but distance as such. Whether I do not like you a little, or do not like you very much, anyhow I do not like you—that is all. It matters little whether it is much or little. The quality is what is important here, not merely the quantity. The quality of the distance maintains the isolation of the object from the subject.

But yoga aims at the abolition of this difference between the *rupa* of the object and the *svarupa* of the meditator. The object has to assume the *svarupa* of the consciousness. There should be no such distinction between *svarupa* and *rupa*. The form of the object and the nature of consciousness should stand together on par. This is called *samadhi*—the balancing of consciousness on par with the nature of the object, so that they stand on equal footing, on a single level. There is no inferiority or superiority between the two. The moment we regard something as an object, we regard it as inferior. It becomes a tool, a kind of instrument for the purpose of the subject. But here, in this balancing of consciousness with the nature of the object, they stand on the same level of reality and value. In this sameness of value and reality they converge, or merge together, so that there is no distance between the object that is meditated upon and the consciousness that meditates.

The distance is really a psychological distance, and that is of greater consequence than physical distance. Physical distance does not count much, but mental distance is very important. Distance that is mentally maintained here has always kept the object outside. To come to the point, there

is a subtle feeling that we exist as an independent entity, maintaining our own status as different from the nature and the status of the object. This idea will not leave us at all. How on earth can we ever imagine that we are the same as the object? No man with sense will ever think like that because the moment this idea of the sameness of oneself with the object arises, the attraction for the object ceases. This is a very peculiar thing.

All desire gets burnt up immediately the moment we assume the form of the object. No desire can function unless the object is outside us. If we have ourselves become the object, where is the question of desire? It is very strange—a psychological truth. We like something and we are bent upon brooding over that thing because of our liking for that thing. Day and night we contemplate that thing, but we do not want to become that thing because the moment we become that thing, our liking for it goes. So we are afraid that our love for it will vanish. How peculiar it is! What a peculiar trick of the mind it is that we do not want the intimate proximity of the object with ourselves, though we say that we like it so intensely. With all the force and vehemence of thought, the mind tries to push the object out of itself, even in meditation, so that it may maintain a distance. What prevents us from union with the object is nothing but this peculiar trick of the mind. There is nobody else obstructing us; it is our own mind that is preventing union. That very mind which is meditating on the object for the sake of communion is, at the same time, simultaneously, carrying on what they call a fifth-column activity without our knowing what is happening, and it will not allow us to achieve this purpose. Our own colleague

and lieutenant is working against us. This is what is happening in meditation. Our dearest and nearest friend, our secretary himself is against us; that we do not know. Therefore, the instrument which we are using for the purpose of the achievement of the success is itself standing against us in a peculiar manner, with a subterfuge, with an undercurrent of activity which is not visible at the surface.

This peculiar principle of 'I-ness' is a subterfuge. It cannot be visualised, because all visualisation proceeds from this affirmation of the ego. So it always remains as a background of the visualisation of even this effort of investigation into the nature of this ego. Who will investigate the ego? The ego itself has to do it. How is it possible for a policeman to catch himself? That is not possible. We always come a cropper and get defeated in this effort. Hence, nobody can attain *samadhi*—this is what it comes to. We cannot reach that state. Even *dhyana* is difficult, and what about *samadhi*? It is far off. We have to simply die first, before we attain *samadhi*. Who would like to die? We do not want to die, because life is the dearest of things. And what do we mean by 'life'? The maintenance of this ego—that is called life. The abolition of the ego is the real death for us.

We can imagine what it is to counterattack the wishes of the ego. Let anyone attack our ego—we will see what happens. Is it a pleasure, a joy? Will we feel very happy that the ego is attacked? There can be nothing worse than that. The attack of the ego is the worst of pains that one can endure. This is what we are trying to do in yoga. How is it possible? It cannot work because the ego is the citadel of our greatness in this world; that is the fortress that we have

built around ourselves for the values that we recognise in this world. That is what we ourselves are—and we want to abolish our own selves. Who can do that, and what can be worse than this very concept itself? But this is to be done. There is no other alternative. That which is almost impossible now has to be made possible.

That which is unthinkable has to become practicable. That which will appear as most horrible to do, that is the thing that we are expected to do now. The sword of knowledge has to sever the head of even the dearest of things. What is the dearest of things? Our own self. Who else is dearest? All the things of the world are dear to us because of our own dearness. We are very beautiful, we are very pleasurable, we are most wonderful, most valuable and most significant, and everything has to be subservient to us. That has to go. Oh, what a horror! But this is the thing. We have to behead ourselves psychologically. That is the real suicide, if we want to call it so in a psychological sense. Die to live. This is the great dictum of the master. If we have to live in the eternal, we have to die in the temporal. We cannot keep both at the same time. God and mammon do not sit together in the same seat; and the greatest mammon is the ego. So, in the hard effort of meditation for achieving success in the form of communion with the object, this tremendous impediment comes, and that is the hurdle which is difficult to conceive in the mind.

In all the Puranas and the Epics we are told that the ego comes in the end, as the final one to be slain is the devil who is the most powerful. He may be a Ravana, or a Hiranyakasipu, or a Sumbha; whatever he is, he comes in the end. He will not be there in the beginning. We cannot

face him like that, at one stroke, because he always sends a retinue. We have been facing the army, the regiment or the retinue of this great power called the ego, and we have been to some extent successful. That is *dharana*, that is *dhyana*—concentration, meditation. But when we meet this gentleman face to face, it is terrific. It was a terrific thing even for Rama to face Ravana; it was not an easy thing. It was with great hardship that Ravana could be slain, and he was the last man to be faced. However much we may try to slay this force, it will resume its activity. Ravana could not be attacked. There was another peculiar Ravana called Mahiravana. The more one attacked him, the more powerful he would be because when his head was severed, another head would come up. Oh, what is this peculiarity? He is cut and slain, reduced to pieces, and he reassembles his limbs and resurrects himself once again. How is it possible? In the Devi Mahatmya there is a peculiar personality called Raktabija, whose very drop of blood, if it falls on the ground, will generate thousands of similar demons. One cannot kill him because the moment one attacks him blood falls, and the blood that falls generates many like him instantaneously. So there is no question of attacking him. The moment we attack this ego, it has its own ramifications. It will undergo various shapes and forms like Mahishasura—now it is an elephant, now it is a buffalo, then it is a third thing, and then a fourth thing. If we attack it in the form of a buffalo, it is an elephant. If we attack the elephant, it is a lion. If we attack the lion, it is a fish. If we attack the fish, it is a jackal. How will we attack it?

The ego is a chameleon which takes any colour, any shape, according to the atmosphere in which it lives. It knows its tricks very well, much more than all the understanding can work. It is a chameleon in the sense that it can assume the colour of the atmosphere in which it lives, so that we cannot detect it or discover it. It is one with the atmosphere, so how will we discover it? It has taken the same shape, colour and value of the conditions under which it is living, so it cannot be attacked. Even when we try to resume the practice of meditation for the sake of communion, *samadhi*, this ego will subtly work from inside and maintain its distance from the object. Hence, persistent effort is necessary to be cautious of this subtle activity going on inside, which obstructs our attempt at communion. We have to psychologically analyse ourselves. What is the reason behind this distance that we maintain between ourselves and others? What is the harm if this distance is removed? We will find it will make a world of difference. If I do not maintain a distance between myself and you, what difference will it make to me in my life? Well, it will make all the difference. It will simply make my life impossible; that is what will happen. If there is no distance between me and others, there will be no life at all. What we call life will cease to be, if the distance does not exist. The panoramic drama or the colourful activity and enactment that we call this life—the pageantry of this phenomenal experience—will cease in an instant, the moment we commune ourselves with things.

There is a fear that joy will vanish and sorrow will come. The ego tells us, “Why are you attempting this?” Buddha was told: “My dear friend, what are you trying for?”

You are digging your own grave. You are a great man. You are a great hero,”—and likewise his ego was pampered by Mara. The thing that Buddha was trying for was the abolition of the ego, the nirvana of experience where he would cease to be and would become the All. And Mara came and said, “Why are you trying for this? This is something very undesirable. You have achieved great success. You are the lord of all the worlds. You have the greatest power conceivable. Get up and go!” This is what Mara was saying in the ear of Buddha: “You are a very great man.”

The idea that you are a very great man and a highly powerful meditator will come. “That is sufficient. I have meditated for years. Who can be equal to me?” This idea that you are a yogi is what prevents you from achieving success. The idea that you are a good person, a virtuous person, and better than others, will not allow you to achieve success. The idea that you are a child of God or you are a divine being and a spark of eternity—that itself is the ego. You always speak of being a spark of God, and all that. Do not speak like that—that is the ego again. Another form of ego is making you think that you are a spark of God: “How great I am!” Whatever thought that arises in the mind is the ego, whatever the thought. It may be a good thought or it may be a bad thought. It may be even a divine thought, from your point of view. That will subtly work a peculiar lever inside you, and then you will be propped up into a level which is exactly the thing which you wanted to avoid.

The lives of saints are our teachers. Theoretical discussions will not do here. We may think that we have understood the subject very clearly, but practice is quite

different from understanding theoretically. When we actually face the devil, we cannot really face it. We will find that we have to turn back because we have not seen it. Now we are going to face something which we have never seen in our life. If we have seen it once and we are used to it, that is a different matter. We are going to face something which we have never thought of, which we have never heard about, and which we cannot think about. Therefore, the caution should be very great. The lives of saints who have lived this life of yoga through these hurdles we are speaking of in the systems of yoga, they are the great teachers. What happened to others can happen to us also, and perhaps it will happen to everyone. No one can be exempted from this law of the universe. It is better to learn a lesson before it is taught to us with the rod of punishment. Honourable teaching, honourable learning is much better than harassment in jails and reformatories. The learning, the *viveka*, the company of saints, the *satsanga* that we do, and the investigation, self-analysis, etc. are only a way of avoiding the unnecessary pain that may come upon us by the lifted rod of nature if we will not follow her rules honourably.

Thus, we have now come to a very strange conclusion: of all the obstacles that yoga has spoken of, the ego is the most prominent, and it is the principal obstacle. Finally, there is no obstacle at all except the ego. All those other things—impediments, *kleshas* and what not—that the *sutras* have described up to this time are only rays emanating from this central phenomenal sun, which makes the whole world shine beautifully. That is the ego. There is no other impediment; this is the only impediment. Finally,

this is what we have to face. If something is stolen from our house, we run here and there, and run to the police and tell people, “Some thieves have come at night and stolen. . . .” We will find that our own treasurer has stolen the whole thing! We did not know that. The treasurer to whom we have entrusted everything—he is the thief. We are running about in search of the thief somewhere else, but he is sitting near us. He is speaking to us, and he himself went to the police to make a complaint. The man who has stolen—he himself went to the police.

The ego is trying to practise yoga. Oh, what a pity! The ego cannot practise yoga, because the ego is to be destroyed in yoga. So how can it practise yoga? Here we have a strange difficulty, and it has to be overcome with a strange technique; that is yoga itself. *Yogena yogo jñātavya yogo yogātpravartate* (Y.B. III.6), says the Yoga Bhashya. Yoga is achieved by yoga itself; there is no other means. This is what yoga tells us.

Chapter 87

ABSORBING SPACE AND TIME INTO CONSCIOUSNESS

We were considering the conditions which tend towards the communion of the self with the object of meditation, and also the factors which prevent this communion. On a deep probing into the matter, we concluded that there is nothing impeding the communion of consciousness with the object except a peculiar feature of its own self. It is consciousness itself tying itself into a knot, and standing before itself, as it were, as an obstacle preventing this communion which is called *samadhi*. This peculiar kink which arises in consciousness—this knot, this *granthi*—is the obstacle. This has been designated in the language of the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali as *asmita*. It is this *asmita*, which can be popularly translated as egoism, which acts as the obstacle. It is very difficult to translate this word ‘*asmita*’ because it is not simply egoism, as common language makes it appear. It is a peculiar sense of being, which does not allow the entry of consciousness into the nature of the object—which is precisely the point in *samadhi*. The object of meditation stands outside oneself usually—just as you all are outside me and I am outside you. You see me and I see you. And even if you think of me deeply, or when I think of you with great concentration, we remain outside each other. There is an exclusive, and not an inclusive, relationship between us. We always separate each other by a peculiar thing which is not cognisable even by the most analytic of minds. What is it that excludes one

from the other? The peculiar feature, we may call it, which separates me from you and separates you from me is not space, not time, not distance—neither spatial or temporal—but a consciousness. This is what we will begin to realise when we go deep into the subject.

The isolating or separating factor is nothing objective or external. It is something arising from one's own self. That which has germinated from your own consciousness becomes the obstacle or impediment in your identification of yourself with me. Previously we noted an interesting feature behind this peculiar activity of consciousness in obstructing its own endeavour in the communion of itself with the object. The whole purpose—the be-all and end-all of yoga—is nothing but communion. Technically, in Sanskrit, we call it *samadhi*. This communion is the aim of yoga. All this effort, right from *yama*, *niyama*, *asana*, etc., is a preparation for bringing about this communion. But when we come to the verge of this communion—when the bell rings, as it were, to announce that the communion is to be effected—we turn back and say, “No, goodbye” to the object. There is a peculiar fear, a suspicion and an adamant self-affirmative attitude which recoils upon itself and puts upside down, as it were, all the effort that has been put forth up to this time.

There are many good friends who go on talking with us as very intimate comrades, agreeing with every opinion that we express, and are amenable to us in every respect. But when we come to a very crucial point, they refuse to accept it. At the last moment they say “no”, so all this preparatory friendship is not of any avail when the crucial hour comes. “A friend in need is a friend indeed,” as the old adage goes.

What comes to our aid at the hour of doom is a real friend; and what idea strikes our mind at the crucial hour, that is our real idea; and what step we want to take at a moment when it looks that it is the last step that we take in life and nothing more remains, that will be a most considered step. Hence, there can be nothing more crucial than the entry of consciousness into the object of meditation, which is called *samadhi*.

When this hour comes, there is a complete reorientation of attitude and the ego stands adamant, as a very hard object, impenetrable and impregnable. The self-consciousness refuses to allow the entry of the characteristics of the object into its own consciousness. That means to say, “I want to maintain my own individuality, my status and my peculiar independence of attitude, even in ‘being’,” is asserted at the time when it has to be abolished. This is the point which Patanjali would like to bring to the forefront in his definition of *samadhi*: *tadeva arthamātranirbhāsaṁ svarūpaśūnyam iva samādhiḥ* (III.3). He has made it very clear that in this absorption of consciousness in the object, you cannot know whether you are meditating on the object, or the object is meditating on you, because there is a parallel movement of the two, on an equal footing; that that which appeared as the object does not any more appear as an object, as a concrete substance, but it becomes a feature of consciousness itself. Or we may say, to use the language of Vedantic epistemology, the *pramatra chaitanya* becomes one with the *vishaya chaitanya*, *prameya chaitanya*.

The *prameya*, or the *vishaya*, is the object—though there is a consciousness hidden behind it—and *pramatra* is

the subject. Normally, the undercurrent of consciousness that obtains between the subject and the object is not known, and a kind of difference is struck between the subject and the object in all types of perception. But when the subject that meditates sinks into itself, which is the purpose of this practice towards communion, it recognises at once the consubstantiality of its own nature with the nature of the object, just as if a wave in the ocean sinks to the bottom, it will recognise the common substratum that is connecting it with every other wave, even if it be a thousand miles away. But if this sinking is not done, every wave is different from every other wave. The wave that is dashing against the shores of New York is far, far away from the wave that is near Bombay; that is very clear. But this distance is maintained only if the wave looks at the other wave as a crest, distinguished from itself by spatial distance. But when it sinks down it becomes one with the wave which is thousands of miles away—just as distance is abolished in the organism of the body though there is a peculiar distance between the head and the toes. Though there is a distance of five feet or six feet, as the case may be, there is no distance for the organism itself. There is a continuity of feeling which at once abolishes the very sense of distance. Though mathematically and spatially there is a distance between the head and the toes, we do not feel the distance, as we are a complete organism.

Likewise, in this condition of spiritual communion which is the goal of *samadhi*, there is a sinking of oneself into the bottom of one's own being. This is what they call entering into the nature of the *atman*. And you will be surprised that the knowledge of the *atman* is the knowledge

of the universe. It will be surprising indeed how it is possible for you to know the whole cosmos when you merely sink into your own self. I have made it clear by an analogy. How is it possible for the waters of a particular wave near Bombay to recognise its identity with all things that lie between itself and the wave near New York? That distance has been abolished on account of the organic connection of the whole ocean, which connects the wave near Bombay with the wave near New York. Otherwise, there is a lot of distance—thousands of miles of distance. Hence, entering into one's own being is identical with entering into everybody's being. When I know myself, I know everybody. It is very strange indeed how such a thing is possible. Knowledge of the bottom of one's own being can be equated with the existence of everything else. That is the reason why it is said that the highest of philosophical endeavours is the knowledge of one's own self. *Atmanam viddhi* is the oriental dictum. "Know thyself" is the occidental one. Know thyself and be free.

How can you be free when you know yourself? You will be putting this question to yourself. "I can know myself, and yet I can be bound," may be the doubt. You cannot be bound, because all the factors that can bind anyone become an embodiment of that being which is realised, in communion, when you enter into the bottom of your own being. According to the Sata Sloki of Acharya Shankara, we realise that we are one with all; that is the first experience. Then we realise that we are the All. There is a slight distinction, it appears, as the great Acharya mentions. What distinction it is, we cannot explain in language. Perhaps it is a feeling of the wave in the ocean, when it sinks down and

then suddenly becomes aware that it is the All. But this sinking is not possible, ordinarily speaking, inasmuch as after a particular stage we are prevented from going further. We may cross the first gate, second gate, third gate; some mystics say there are seven gates. When we touch the border of the last gate, we are told, “No! No entry!” This is the crucial point. The one who tells us “No entry” is ourself only—our own ego. Somehow, we cannot reconcile ourselves with the idea of getting united with everybody. This is a very peculiar thing in us. Theoretically, philosophically, metaphysically it may be very pleasant. “Why should I not become one with all? It is a wonderful thing!”

But that is not really what our heart wants, because in our daily life, in our activities, we proclaim the opposite of it. We maintain a status of our own, which will refute the status of other people. That is why there is conflict, warfare, dislike, and what not. If our real aspiration is a tendency towards communion with the All, that thing called warfare, or dislike, or animosity, or subtle irritation, or anger, will be unknown. Why is it that we come in conflict with everything, every day? It is because we do not like to become one with the All. Therefore, this prejudiced feeling, which is philosophically and intellectually or rationally suppressed by a kind of analysis, rises to the surface of consciousness and tells us lastly: “I am here. I am not going to leave you.” What is our essential nature, which rises at the last moment? During the earlier stages, we manage to suppress this feeling. We do a lot of *japa*, we loudly chant *kirtans* and *bhajans*; at that time our ego is suppressed. It is suppressed, but it is not abolished. Even during the more

advanced stages of *pranayama* and *pratyahara*, we may be able to subjugate the ego to a certain extent, put it down with the thumb of our force. But how long will we keep it down like this?

A time comes when we have to give a reply to it. It is a point which we reach, where a final settlement has to be made with this ego. Either we want it, or we do not want it. We cannot have a half-way deal with this ego. When we came to this point of requiring the ego to eliminate itself totally from the very root, we are facing our best friend. What can be a worse thing to conceive than to encounter and to face our own dearest friend? Up to this time we were going hand in hand, walking and speaking very pleasantly with him, and today we say, "My dear friend, I'll cut your throat." Our friend will say, "What has happened to you?" This is what happens lastly, and this is what we *cannot* do! The dearest object of our mind and emotions—that which we regard as most inseparable from us—will stand before us as the greatest impediment.

That which we love the most is our greatest enemy. This is what we will realise at the last moment, when we come face to face with the crucial point in yoga. It is very strange—our own beloved thing is the opposite of what we think it is. That which we love the most is our greatest enemy. How can we reconcile this idea? The very fact that we love it is the indication that it is going to stand against us, because no bondage can be greater than love. Though it is regarded by people as a very pleasant thing which liberates people from the thralldom of social tension, it is far from it. Love or affection is a bondage of consciousness in respect of an object which is other than itself. It is this

otherness of the object that we want to sever at the time of our communion with the object. And as long as this otherness is not maintained, love cannot be there; and, as long as this otherness is maintained, *samadhi* cannot be there. So, which do we want now? Here is, therefore, a great battle, a struggle—and it is an arduous struggle indeed. Patanjali does not go into the details of this psychological struggle which a seeker has to pass through.

This has to be known. These things have to be studied by recourse to the lives of saints. I would like you to read, if you have access to it, the life of Saint Theresa of Avila, a great mastermind who passed through the seven gates of mystic experience, as she calls it. She has written a book, *The Interior Castle*. The whole of mystical experience is compared to a castle which she had a vision of at one moment, and she compares the stages of the ascent as entry into the castle through seven gates. At each step we have some experience; we will start seeing varieties of things. It is only at the last moment that we can have a glimpse of God. It is only at the seventh gate that we can see the rays emanating from the Eternal. So, what I mean to say is, these are all very subtle things, difficult to explain, and more difficult to understand. But some inclination towards this can be aroused in our mind, and the difficulty about it can be mitigated to a large extent if we read the lives of saints who have led this path, who have trodden this way and had these experiences.

How can one explain everything in a book? It is difficult, just as we cannot explain the taste of a nice meal to a friend who asks us how the meal was. We can only reply, “You yourself have to have the lunch, and you will see what

the taste is.” Or, we cannot explain the tortures we underwent when there was a harrowing experience. We cannot explain it to others; they have to undergo it themselves. Extreme joy and extreme sorrow cannot be explained in any language. So also is this extreme difficulty we have to face, which cannot be explained through any language. Hence, the point that we come to is that our sense of being, or *asmita*, or egoism, or self-affirmative attitude is not such a simple thing as we may take it to be. It is a devil of the first water; and we ourselves are that, not somebody else. It is very strange. We will find that we have to face our own selves. Whom are we facing and encountering there? We are facing and encountering and fighting with our own selves. Therefore, it is an arduous struggle indeed. Who can sever one’s own throat and commit suicide, if at all we can call it suicide? It is a suicide of consciousness. It is a complete uprooting of the very bottom of the ego, which was there like a hard, concrete, substantial something, swallowing up all the realities of life, appropriating all value to itself, and appearing as the most important thing in all life. Such a thing is now regarded as nothing. That which once paraded itself as the most magnificent of things in life is now regarded as a worthless thing—the most worthless of things. So we can imagine, with the stretch of our analytical mind, what we are up against, and how it is hard for even a well-boiled, trained seeker to pass through this crucial gate of communion with the object of meditation.

Here, we have only one *sutra*. Patanjali, the author of the Yoga Sutras, does not give much detail. Though he gives details of certain other mental transformations which we have to undergo later on, he does not touch upon

further details about the actual difficulties of a seeker in entering into this state of communion. He simply says, *tadeva arthamātranirbhāsaṁ* (III.3). There the meditating consciousness does not exist at all; it has become the object of meditation. This is what he tells us. It is the object which is contemplating itself as being. Previously, the being was of consciousness of the mind, of oneself, of the subject that meditates. Now the being of consciousness is shifted to the object, and the object assumes the character of the subject, so that the object has become the subject. It is here that we have intuition of the object. Just as we have a direct knowledge of our own selves, much more than any knowledge that we can have of other people, we will have a direct knowledge of anything in this world, of any object, because the subjectivity that we appropriated to ourselves alone, exclusively, up to this time, and would never allow this subjectivity to anybody else, has now become a common property. Previously, we were the only subject; everybody was an object for us. Now the tables have turned; we are now so generous that we allow everyone else in the whole universe to also enjoy this prerogative of being a subject.

Hence, the universe is full of only subjects now; there are no objects. It is not merely a conception of the presence of subjectivity in others that we are speaking of, because here, in this advanced stage, there are no conceptions. There is no idea about something. It is a self-identical awareness, such as can be compared with the feeling of our own self, even when we close our senses. We close our eyes, close our ears, close all the gateways of sensory cognition, and yet we will feel a kind of self-identity of ourselves—‘I

am'. This consciousness of oneself being there is independent of any kind of sense activity. Such a kind of awareness will arise in us in respect of everything else in the world. We will not any more say 'you', 'he' or 'she', or 'it'—such a thing will not be there. 'I am' is the only experience. This 'I am-ness' is not an affirmation of our bodily individuality, as it had been the case earlier; it is a Universal 'I' asserting itself. There, everything that we once upon a time regarded as an object has become part and parcel of its own being. This is a very great problem indeed for the mind that is used to thinking in terms of the body and social relations. But this is the problem of yoga. If you properly understand the significance of the difficulty that I have placed before you at this point of meditation, you will also know how hard it is for a human being to practise yoga.

You first have to cease to be an ordinary human being. You have to be a little more than an ordinary human being to be able to fit yourself into this technique. I would say, rather, you must be a superhuman being. Otherwise, it is no use—you cannot go further than a mere attempt at the concentration of mind. The best and farthest reach of ordinary minds is only the point of concentration; beyond that you cannot go. But our aim is something more. It is always said, "God-realisation is the goal of life," and you can know what it is. Realisation means identity of being. It is not looking at something, or accosting someone, or speaking a language. It is an absorption of being into Being that is called Realisation. God-realisation would mean the absorption of your being into God-being, which implies, again, the cessation of your personality completely.

Otherwise, there is no absorption of being, which is what is meant by ‘communion’. All that contributes to the affirmation of individuality, anything that asserts the adamant existence of personality and all those things which are pleasant to the ego in one way or the other become impediments there. In the beginning we have to abolish all those things which are pleasant to the ego. What are the things that please us? They are the obstacles. Then, later on, the ego itself is the obstacle.

Thus, we conclude our analysis of this important *sutra* in the Vibhuti Pada of Patanjali: *tadeva arthamātranirbhāsam svarūpaśūnyam iva samādhiḥ* (III.3). He has very carefully introduced a peculiar term, ‘*svārūpaśūnyam iva*’: our *svārūpa* has ceased to be. Up to this time we had a *svārūpa* or a status of our own: “I am *something* physically, socially, psychologically, etc.” This ‘*something*’ that we regard ourselves to be, ceases completely. Whatever we regarded ourselves to be—socially, psychologically, rationally, intellectually, morally, physically, whatever it is—all this is not our essential nature. This *svārūpa*, which grew around us as a kind of fungus, is completely scrubbed out because it was only an accretion that grew over our personality. It was not our real nature and, therefore, it looks as if our *svārūpa*, or our personality itself, has gone.

When the individuality goes, the personality must go, because the personality is nothing but the outer contour of the inner stuff which is the individuality. And, we have found out what the core of this individuality is. It is the ego, the *asmīta*. So, when the root is plucked out, everything else goes—it withers and shivers and falls down.

‘Arthamātranirbhāsam’ and ‘svarūpaśūnyam iva’ are the two terms which define the character of *samadhi*. It is a consciousness of the object as the subject, which automatically implies the abolition of a separate subjectivity of the meditator, because there cannot be two subjects. The moment we begin to conceive two subjects, one of them becomes an object in respect of the other and so there is an identity of subjectivity. We may say, in this identity of subjectivity, that we assume a non-individual awareness. In this condition it is that we rise above the limitations which had up to this time restricted consciousness to certain feelings, in respect of itself.

Ultimately, the last restricting factor, namely space and time, also get absorbed into consciousness because they too stand as objects before consciousness. When subjectivity has entered into the object, it implies that this subjectivity has entered into space and time also, because that also is an object. When subjectivity enters into space, what happens? We cannot see anything in this world afterwards, because seeing anything, or experiencing anything as an outward object, is due to an externality of space—the objectivity of space. If space itself has become the subject, there is no externality at all. Hence, there is no seeing, and the senses cease to function. No seeing, no hearing, no touching, no tasting, nothing of the kind, because these operations of the senses are only in respect of the externality of objects. That was due to the presence of space and time—and that has become the subject now. So, there is immediately a flash of cosmicity arising in oneself. This is what they call God-realisation, or God-experience—*amrita anubhava* or entry

into the Absolute. It is this magnificent experience which is so hard to attain.

Chapter 88

SAMYAMA: THE UNION OF DHARANA, DHYANA AND SAMADHI

It was mentioned earlier that in the state of *nirvitarka samadhi*, the object alone shines before one's consciousness, and this is the result of the purification of the mind into the state of *sattva*. You have to bring to your memory here, in the context of the Vibhuti Pada, everything that you have learned in the Samadhi Pada, because the entire series of expositions in this section is a large commentary on the state of *samadhi*; therefore, no details are given once again in the Vibhuti Pada. Many of you may have forgotten the whole thing. But the details are very important, because the processes that lead to the absorption of consciousness are as important as the actual absorption itself.

Tadeva arthamātranirbhāsaṁ svarūpaśūnyam iva samādhiḥ (III.3). In this particular *sutra* that we were studying in the previous chapter, there is a specific mention of the essential feature of *samadhi*—namely, the obliteration of personal consciousness. There is, therefore, neither a need for comparison of the definition of the absorption of the mind in *nirvitarka*, mentioned in the Samadhi Pada, with a general definition of *samadhi* given in the Vibhuti Pada, nor is there any kind of contradiction between the two. The definition of spiritual communion that is given in this *sutra* is a common characteristic of any kind of absorption—whether it is *savitarka* or *nirvitarka*, or *savichara* or *nirvichara*, or whatever it is. Communion is of

various stages. In this *sutra*, the stages are not mentioned; it simply states what communion is. What sort of communion do we have to pass through? What are the experiences we have at the different levels of experience? They are mentioned in the Samadhi Pada. It is something like defining education. Education may be defined in one sentence, but we can imagine what vast implication there is behind this definition, because it is a single-sentence definition that implies years and years of hard effort of psychological training.

Likewise, this particular common definition of communion, or *samadhi*, given in this *sutra*, *tadeva arthamātranirbhāsaṁ svarūpaśūnyam iva samādhiḥ* (III.3), is a common denominator of every stage of communion. The stages are described in the Samadhi Pada: *savitarka*, *nirvitarka*, *savichara*, *nirvichara*, *sananda*, *sasmita*. The point that has been emphasised while defining the nature of communion is that there should be a movement of the mind towards identification of itself with its object. This identification takes place by degrees. It does not suddenly jump upon the object. This is not even possible, because of the various difficulties we considered previously. The mind is not really prepared for the communion in spite of the fact that it has been struggling hard for this very same aim and objective. This is an essential point to remember. That we are not prepared for it will be known at the last stage only, and not in the earlier stages. Every *sadhaka* is prepared for God-realisation; we can take it as a common feature of every seeker. But this is only preparedness at the lower levels. At the advanced stage, this requisition of one's being ready for this ultimate merger becomes lukewarm, and

finally it becomes a frightening something, so that there is a withdrawal of the mind.

There can be nothing worse for a mind to conceive than its own annihilation. This is a fear not merely of the last psychological condition, but of any individualistic entity. What can be worse for us to conceive than our own death? The worst pain is death. Nothing can be worse than that and, therefore, it is the last thing that one would be prepared for. This psychological death that the mind is working for is really something like a person preparing for days and months to commit suicide, and when the last moment comes, he will not do it. The preparation is one thing; the actual act is a different thing altogether. There is a great difference in quality. Similarly, the mind will think three times before it actually embarks upon this adventure of self-annihilation, which is the merger of the mind into the object. This fear of the mind is really baseless. It is a kind of stupid idiocy of the affirmative principle—namely, the ego—which somehow or other speaks in a language which goes at a tangent, having no connection at all with the objective that is before oneself.

In the identification of oneself with the object, there is no loss; it is only gain. But it looks as if it is a loss. The aspect of loss gets emphasised primarily, much more than the aspect of gain that is involved in it, because the mind automatically makes a comparison between the event that is to take place, namely, the communion, and the circumstances which follow from the maintenance of one's individuality—the pleasures thereof and the various sorts of relationships which have been regarded as vital and real for one's very existence. It becomes difficult to conceive that

existence gets enhanced rather than gets diminished in communion. The basis of the fear is this: the existence of a person—an individual or the ego, the mind or consciousness, or whatever it is—appears to get obliterated completely, wiped out from existence. So, instead of trying for a larger existence, we appear to be entering into an annihilation of existence. This is the reason why there is a lot of misgiving on the part of seekers, and this subtle fear always works inwardly like a disturbing factor. It goes on disturbing in as many ways as possible until it succeeds in preventing the mind from entering into this communion.

Suffice it to say that the being of the object naturally enlarges the dimension of the being of the subject; it does not annihilate it. There is no loss of any kind whatsoever. There is only an increase in the dimension of being. There is an enhancement of the value of one's life—an increase in every respect, in quantity as well as quality. The quantity increases on account of the addition of the value and the existence of the object in the subject. The quality increases on account of the entry of the mind into the subjectivity of the object. The highest quality is the subject, not the object. Therefore, to enter into the subjective being of the object would be the enhancement of the quality of experience, while the being of the object, when it is identified with the being of the subject, enhances the quantity. Either way one is a gainer, both in quantity as well as quality. So, what is the fear? The fear is baseless, just as a child cries when it is alone in the wilderness. It is not frightened about any existent thing; it is simply frightened because there is nothing around. Thus, one can be frightened merely because of the absence of objects. When we are alone, we

are in fear. Generally, we are afraid because we see something frightening. But when there is nothing to see, even then we are frightened. This is a child's fear, and this is the fear of any individual placed in unusual circumstances.

Therefore it is that the great teacher Gaudapada mentions in his Karikas that if yogis are frightened about it, what about others? We will be simply stunned even to imagine such a possibility of becoming something of which we have no idea. Great mystics have given rapturous exclamations of this condition. The language of mysticism is not English or Sanskrit or anything that is spoken through the tongue. It is the language of feeling and, therefore, it cannot be expressed except through image, comparison, metaphor and such images, which are the only means of communication. Epics, for example, are one of the means. Logically we cannot explain it, because this is an experience which is above logic; therefore, there is only story, image, metaphor, comparison, etc. When one enters into such experiences it looks frightening because of the maintenance of individuality. This is what happened to Arjuna in the earlier part of the great prayer he offers to the Virat Svarupa in the eleventh chapter of the Bhagavadgita. There is an expression of fear—awe. It is like the awe that we feel when we stand on the shore of the ocean. We are frightened to even see the ocean, and we know why we are frightened. It is very clear that we are frightened because of the largeness, the vastness and the magnitude that is before us. The magnitude and also the imagination as to what the ocean can do to us are what frightens. What can the ocean do to us? It can simply swallow us—that is all it can do; and

we are frightened of being swallowed. That is, again, the fear of self-annihilation.

Thus, in the beginning, in the earlier part of Arjuna's prayer, there is an expression of awe, fear and consternation. He is flabbergasted, and it is impossible for him to bear the sight of the Virat Svarupa because there is a retention of individuality in the earlier stage of communion. It is at this stage of the retention of individuality, simultaneous with the flash of Cosmic Insight, that there is a sense of fear and shaking up, because the Cosmic and the individual are incompatibles—they cannot go together—but there is a peculiar verge, or borderland, where one dashes against the other. The individual touches the Infinite, and the Infinite kicks the individual back. That condition is the condition of fear, awe, and impossibility of expression and feeling. This will not continue for a long time. How long it will continue varies from individual to individual, according to idiosyncrasies. In some cases it may last for days, months or years; and sometimes it may be for a few minutes only. The border of the entry of the mind into the nature of the object is the stage where there is a sudden reshuffling of the constituents of personality; and this reshuffling can take place in all the levels of one's being. Our bodily cells will change, and they can be charged with a new set-up of values. The vital energy will start to flow in different ways, so that we will feel a different kind of warmth in our system. The mind will be reoriented thoroughly, and our outlook of life will change. The logic of the intellect also will be completely different, and what we will be, we alone can know—nobody can explain it. So this is, if we would like to

call it, an all-inspiring picture of the great aim of life, the goal of yoga, which has been described almost in a mathematical language in the simple, precise, crisp *sutra* of Patanjali: *trayam ekatra saṁyamah* (III.4).

In future, we will not use the words ‘*dharana*’, ‘*dhyana*’ and ‘*samadhi*’, but only the word ‘*samyama*’, which is inclusive of all these three stages. The processes of concentration, meditation and *samadhi* have been defined in a single word by the author of the *sutras*—*samyama*. He does not use any other word hereafter. Only the word *samyama* is used, which is a figure to explain the union of the meditating consciousness with anything whatsoever. Whenever there is a union of the meditating principle with the object that is chosen, that condition is called *samyama*. Patanjali goes on speaking about *samyamas* of various types, by which he means the identity which one establishes with the various objects that are taken up for that purpose. We can do *samyama* on anything. We can do it on a watch, on a human being, on a mountain, on the sun, moon and stars—or on anything, for the matter of that. The consequence immediately following from *samyama* on anything is supposed to be a complete knowledge of the object on which we are doing *samyama*, and also a complete mastery over it; we control it thoroughly, root and branch, when the *samyama* is performed. If we do *samyama* on a person, that person is simply in our pocket forever, and that person can no longer exist independently. He is us, only existing in another form. Likewise, we can perform *samyama* on various objects. These are all wondrous results which Patanjali describes in the various aphorisms which he gives at the end of the Vibhuti Pada.

Trayam ekatra samyamah (III.4), says the *sutra*. All three put together—*dharana*, *dhyana* and *samadhi*: concentration, meditation and communion—are signified, all three together, in a single term called ‘*samyama*’. If *samyama* can be performed on anything, then one is a master of yoga. Until that stage is reached, one is still a preparatory student on the path of yoga. It is very difficult to do *samyama* on anything because, as it has been already pointed out, *samyama* is the union of oneself with that on which one is doing *samyama*. We have never become one with anything in this world at any time, up until now. We are always separate. We have always stood aside in respect of everything in the world.

Now we are trying to live a new kind of life. We are entering into a new realm altogether, and a new world is being opened before us. A world of *samyama* will be there instead of the world of isolated objects, of mere social contact and relationship. *Samyama* is the opposite of contact, the opposite of social relationship of any kind. In social relationship or external contact, there is only an apparent harmony between oneself and the other; there is no real harmony. There is a counterfeit harmony that is brought about by the adjustment of our outer personality with the outer personality of other things, persons, etc. But in *samyama* it is not like that. We are not trying to contact anything, nor are we going to establish any relationship with anything—we are going to *become* that thing. This is something horrifying for an ordinary psychologist to understand or conceive. To become a thing is *samyama*.

We can become even a pinhead, not merely a large object; and to the extent we are master over it, we have a

complete insight into it. We have an intuition, as they call it. *Samyama* is the intuition that we gain over the object of *samyama*—a power that we gain over the object of *samyama* to such an extent that the object of *samyama* ceases to be an outside object. It is only an appendage to our being. It is our own limb, as it were; it is we ourselves appearing outside. If this technique of *samyama* could be employed in respect of larger and larger groups of objects, what will happen to the meditating consciousness? It will become larger and larger in the quantity as well as the quality of its being. Slowly there will be a tendency of man to become superman. A superman is nothing but an individual who has transcended the limitations of ordinary human individuality. Instead of being located within the walls of this six-foot bodily individuality, which he has up to this time been regarding as the total reality of himself, he now exceeds the width of this individuality and then comprehends within his being the beings of other things which can be regarded as the environment—the objects, the space, the time, etc.

Man rises to the state of superman when he begins to practise *samyama* on the chosen ideal of yoga. What are the objects on which we do *samyama* is a matter of initiation. That is called initiation, actually speaking. We are introduced to the technique of meditating on a particular chosen ideal—that is initiation, *upadesa*, and that is the beginning of the true spiritual experience of a seeker. To come to the point, it is mentioned here that all the three processes are clubbed together into a single experience or act of the mind, or consciousness, upon the object chosen, which is called *samyama*.

Tajjayāt prajñālokaḥ (III.5). A light of a supernal nature will begin to flash before us, says Patanjali. It is not the sunlight or the torch light which we are used to. It is a new kind of light, identifiable with enlightenment, that will flash when *samyama* is practised. It is not an external light, but an internal light. It is not the light of the physical objects, which are merely vibrations of the particles of matter in a heightened intensity, but it is the consciousness itself revealing itself in greater and greater degrees and appearing before itself as an object of vision—that is the flash. The various levels of being will gradually reveal themselves to the meditating consciousness, and the insight that one gains into these various levels of being is the flash that is mentioned—that is the *prajna*. Patanjali has very carefully used the word ‘*prajnalokah*’. It is the light of consciousness. *Prajna* is consciousness, intelligence, understanding, illumination, enlightenment, whatever we may call it, and *aloka* is light. *Prajnalokah* is the light of inner illumination. That is what will follow when *samyama* is practised.

Tajjayāt prajñālokaḥ (III.5). We have to very carefully understand every word of this *sutra*. When we have mastery over the object, then we have illumination in respect of that object. They are simultaneous, one with the other. Mastery over the nature of the constituents of the object is identical with the insight into the object, and vice versa. A thorough knowledge of the inner structure of the object is insight, and that insight is identical with gaining mastery over the object. That was already mentioned. When there is *jaya* or conquest over the object by means of insight, which is effected through communion, or entry into the very nature of the object by *samyama*, there is then

a flash of enlightenment in respect of that object. That is the meaning of the *sutra*, *tajjayāt prajñālokaḥ*. These levels of being into which the consciousness of the meditator will gain entry have been described in the Samadhi Pada. What are the stages of *samadhi*—*savitarka*, etc.—mentioned there? They are, practically speaking, the levels of experience. There are an endless series of levels of experience. It is impossible to describe how many levels are there. But, for the purpose of exposition and practical convenience, Patanjali has mentioned that there are about six, seven, or eight stages. The *prajnalokaḥ* or the light of insight, mentioned in this *sutra* here in the Vibhuti Pada, is in respect of those levels through which one has to pass. First there will be insight into the physical nature of things, and we will gain mastery over the physical nature. Then there is a gradual rise into the subtler realms, the inner constituents—the *tanmatras*, the sense organs etc. Then we go higher and higher, about which we need not speak here.

Thus, the meaning of this *sutra*, *tajjayāt prajñālokaḥ* (III.5), is that there is an identity of knowledge and being in the experience called *samyama* on any object. If you recall to your memory what we discussed long ago, you will remember that real knowledge is identity with being. Any other knowledge is not real knowledge. Where the content of our knowledge lies outside our knowledge, it cannot be called real knowledge. By physical observation, through a telescope, we may know so many things about what is happening in the sun, but this cannot be called knowledge of the sun because the sun is outside the knowledge that we have got. Real knowledge of the sun would mean entry into the sun itself. That is called *samyama*.

Thus, this *sutra*, *tajjayāt prajñālokaḥ* (III.5), makes out the great significant revelation that the aim of yoga is knowledge that is one with the being of the object of knowledge. It is quite different from any other knowledge that we are acquainted with in this world. It is not learning. It is not ordinary education. It is something superb and transcendent to all that the mind can conceive in its relational life, in its phenomenal existence. This is precisely the essence of spirituality.

Chapter 89

THE LEVELS OF CONCENTRATION

The next *sutra*, which follows the descriptions given earlier, is *tasya bhūmiṣu viniyogaḥ* (III.6). The practice of absorption has to be applied to the different stages, or by different stages. The adjustment of thought in *samyama* is a total reconstitution of the mind, and it has to adapt itself in every way to the nature of the object of *samyama*. There should not be even the least tinge of personality or self-affirmativeness when this adjustment with the object is called for. We know very well that even to be a good friend, we have to do a lot of sacrifice. We cannot be an adamant egoist and then be a good friend of anybody, because friendship with anyone implies a capacity to adjust oneself with the living conditions of another person. If we stick to our own guns, we cannot have any friends.

Hence, this *samyama* is nothing but an entertainment of utter friendship with the object—and not merely friendship, but actual communion with the object. For this purpose, it is necessary to understand the nature of the object. If we do not know our friend, we cannot be a good friend to that person. The body, mind, soul and every type of environment of a person is to be understood very carefully, in every detail, in order that the friendship may be permanent. Likewise, the inner structure of the object—physical, subtle, as well as causal—has to be grasped very well before *samyama* is attempted on the object.

It has to be done by stages, says the *sutra*: *tasya bhūmiṣu viniyogaḥ* (III.6). The first stage, of course, is the grossest form of mental conception of the object. It is

essential that when we practise *samyama* on an object, we have to bear in mind every detail of the nature of the object. It is not a bare, featureless perception. When I look at you, I do not look at the details of your bodily personality. I have only a general idea of your features. I may be seeing you every day for months together, and yet I may not be able to recollect the features of your face if I have not observed you properly, because observation of the details of the features of a personality is different from merely being acquainted with a person, even if it be for years together.

Samyama is not mere general acquaintance with an object in the sense of an ordinary social friendship. It is a very deep and thoroughgoing analysis of every bit of the constitution of the object. Thus, yoga prescribes methods of very minute concentration on every detailed aspect of the object, whatever that object be. It may be a bare physical object, an inanimate something; it may be a human form; it may be the concept of a celestial deity. Whatever be that object which has been chosen for the purpose of *samyama*, its details have to be borne in mind with great care because if some of the details are missed, the mind cannot absorb itself into those aspects which it has missed in its observation. The adjustment of the mind in a completeness and thoroughness with the nature of the object is possible only if there is a thorough understanding of the structure of the object.

Therefore, it is necessary that a detailed observation process be practised in the beginning. We have to observe, with a minute eye, every bit of the different aspects of the form of the object, from head to foot, fix the mind on those aspects and not allow the mind to think of any other thing.

In the beginning it will not be possible for the mind to fix itself on any single aspect exclusively. So, the method prescribed is to allow the mind to move from one aspect to another aspect of the same object. If we meditate on Lord Krishna's form, we conceive of His form from head to foot in various manners, right from the diadem down to the toenails. We cannot conceive the form at once, in its completeness, because the mind is not used to such forms of conception, so we take it part by part—every aspect, every detail, every feature, colour and so on, of the object. We allow the mind to roll like this, from top to bottom and bottom to top, again and again, until we are able to conceive the object in its totality and the form of the object grips us with a force which will draw the attention of the mind *totally* towards it. It should be like a powerful magnet drawing the mind towards it entirely, and not only in parts. The object will not draw us entirely unless we have a clear concept of the entire object. Nothing in the world can draw us entirely, because we always have a partial and superficial observation of things. We never observe anything in detail. We are never used to such work. But here, a novelty is introduced in observation. A very methodical and acute observation is called for so that the mind is concentrated—so concentrated that it has become practically one with that which it is contemplating.

The stages, as the *sutra* tells us—the *bhumis*—are the degrees of the manifestation of the nature of the object. It is very difficult to explain to a novice what actually is the series of the stages of the development of an object. Any object, for the matter of that, is a very complex structure. It has deep details involved within its being which cannot

easily be observed with the naked eye. The implications go deeper and deeper as we begin to conceive the details of the object more and more, with greater and greater attention.

Before we try to touch upon what exactly is in the mind of the author of the *sutra* when he speaks of the *bhumis*, or the stages of meditation, I shall give you a gross commonplace example of how we can take the mind deeper and deeper into the nature of an object. Take a currency note. What do we see there? We see a great meaning. That is the first thing that we see in a currency note. We see a purchasing power, a value, a capacity, a treasure, something worthwhile and very commendable. This is all we can conceive when we cast our eyes on a government's currency note. It is, for the non-critical attention of the mind, a value and not a substance. This is the distinction, because its substance is something different from the value that we see in it. We always mix up two things when we see any object in this world. The substance gets buried under the value that we see. The substance of a child is different from the value that a mother sees in that child—and so on, with respect to any object.

The value of a currency note is different from the substance of the currency note. The substance is nothing but a piece of paper; the value is something different. The value is a concept, whereas the substance is physical. What we see in a currency note is a physical something, plus a conceptual meaning. So the value of the physical something is in the brain—the head or the mind of the person who conceives or perceives that object called the currency note. If we divest that currency note of the value that we have superimposed upon it, we will be entering into the

substance of that object. We remove the notion of meaning in it. Suppose there is an order of the government that these currency notes will not be valid from tomorrow. We know what will happen. The currency notes will have no meaning; they will lose all sense. We will see the substance from tomorrow onwards. The value has gone. They are no more currency notes—they are merely a quantity of physical substance. Their worth is only in pounds or kilograms of waste paper. All the meaning that we saw yesterday has gone overnight, merely because of an ordinance of the government that these notes will not be valid from such and such a date.

Now we see that the concept that we have about the object called the currency note is not to be identified with the substance of the note. This much is clear now. What is the currency note made of? It is not made up of the purchasing power, as we are thinking. It is made up of paper—that is all. The purchasing power is an investiture upon it, a kind of superimposition, which is a meaning that we have foisted upon it for various reasons. Now we have gone one step above in our analysis of the object. From the stage of calling it a currency note, we have come to the higher stage of calling it a piece of paper, which is the reality behind the currency note. It was paper even previously, but we did not want to call it paper, for reasons of our own. When I show you a thousand-rupee currency note, you will not say, “Here is a piece of paper.” You will say, “Here is a note.” We have a new name for it, coined for our practical convenience, notwithstanding the fact that it remains paper even today, as it will be one day after its value is negated by the government’s orders.

Thus, the capacity of the mind to lay itself upon the substance of the note, divested of the value that has been superimposed upon it, will be the next step—the next higher stage of contemplation. Now we begin to see the paper rather than the note. The idea of ‘note’ has gone. We call it paper. But is paper the real substance of what we see there? What is paper? It is a name that we give to a peculiar form that wooden pulp has taken. Paper is nothing but wooden pulp which has been made malleable and flattened by a mechanical process in the factory; and we have a coloured piece of wooden pulp before us, which we call paper. We remove the idea of paper from our minds because that is only a name that we have coined to designate a particular form taken by a wooden pulp. What is there? What is the substance of paper? It is pulp, made of wood. From the currency note we have gone to paper, from paper we have gone to wooden pulp. What is the wooden pulp made of?

Now we go deeper still. Is there such a thing as wooden pulp? It is nothing but a heap of chemical substances. The wooden pulp is nothing but a chemical value, assessable and measurable in a laboratory. Perhaps we will be able to manufacture, chemically, certain substances which are equivalent to wooden pulp. We can chemically manufacture paper without wood. The essence of the wooden pulp is nothing but a chemical substance—so much of carbon, so much of this, so much of that. They have been mixed in a particular proportion, in permutation and combination, and what we call the wooden pulp is nothing but a chemical substance. So we have gone from currency note to paper, from paper to wooden pulp, and

from wooden pulp we have gone to the chemical substance. What is the chemical substance made of?

We go deeper still. The physicist will see the chemical substance in a different way altogether. His angle of vision is different. The physicist's observation will reveal certain atomic forces which have been arranged in a particular manner to form that chemical substance called the wooden pulp. The velocity and the arrangement of the electrons around a nucleus determine the structure of the chemical substance. It may be hydrogen, it may be carbon, it may be nitrogen—whatever it is. These chemical substances are really not independent, indivisible physical matter. They are only certain arrangements of electrical particles to which everything is reducible, says the physicist.

See where we have gone now—from a currency note we have gone to the electric energy. This so-called currency note of so many dollars, pounds or rupees is nothing but electric energy which has been compounded into grosser substances, and we have given an appellation to each stage of the development of this object in its grossified forms. In the subtlest form we call it electrical energy; when it grossifies we call it chemical substance; when it grossifies further we call it wooden pulp; still grosser we call it paper; then further we invest it with some imaginary value called money. This is what has happened to all the objects in the world. The Yoga Sutras tell us that this is not the way of looking at things. We cannot have *samyama* on an object, we cannot enter into the nature of an object, we cannot commune with the object, we cannot become the object, unless we know what the object is. We have ultimately found out that the so-called currency note is something

quite different from what we are conceiving in our mind at the present moment. The stages, or the *bhumis*, which the *sutra* refers to here are the stages of the development of the manifestation of the object.

To refresh our memory, we can go back to one or two definitions of Patanjali given in the Samadhi Pada, which we studied long ago. The gross form of the object is a compound of several factors, says Patanjali: *tatra śabda artha jñāna vikalpaiḥ saṅkīrṇā savitarkā samāpattiḥ* (I.42). This was told to us in the Samadhi Pada. When we look at an object, we have three ideas jumbled together—the object as such, the name that we have given to it, and the idea that we have about it. These three go together. Our idea about the object is reinforced by the name that we have given to it. The idea and the name jointly prevent our proper evaluation of the nature of the object as it is. “It is my daughter.” This idea, ‘my daughter, my son’, prevents us from knowing the nature of that person independently. We know very well what is the difference between our son and somebody else’s son. There is a tremendous difference, though the substances behind these two persons are identical in every respect. The object that is the base of this concept called ‘son’ is of the same nature in either case, but a tremendous gulf is created by the mind in its definitions. The definitions have so much meaning.

What is a definition? It is nothing but a characterisation of an object in terms of our notion about that object. The moment we say, “It is my son,” there is so much meaning implied in that statement. If it is somebody else’s son, that is another thing altogether. Why has such a meaning been foisted upon the object? It is because the idea is connected

with the object, and the name is also there, together with it. We distinguish one of our sons from another of our sons by a name that we give. “He is Rama. That is Gopal.” They are only two words—empty sounds that we have uttered. They themselves have no meaning, but they assume a meaning on account of their getting identified with the object, so that the word ‘Rama’, or ‘Krishna’, or ‘Gopala’ etc., which are the names of our children, evoke in our minds certain feelings. The name generates or stirs certain ideas in the mind, and this name which stirs ideas in the mind will not allow us to have a correct concept of the object as it is. Our son is the most beautiful of all people. He is beautiful because he is our son.

There is an old story of a barber. He had a son who he thought was the most beautiful. The king of the country ordered the people to bring the most handsome of people. The barber brought his own son. He said, “I think this is the most charming boy.” The barber thought he was charming because he was his son—that is all. Otherwise what is the charm? He was an unattractive fellow! Anyhow, the idea is so predominant in the mind that it will not allow us to have an impersonal, dispassionate idea of the object. And *samyama* on the object is not possible as long as we do not have a dispassionate definition of the object in our mind. There should not be an emotional content in that definition. We should not say, “It is mine.” This is no good. It may be anybody’s—even then, it has a value.

The *sutra*, *tatra śabda artha jñāna vikalpaiḥ saṅkīrṇā savitarkā samāpattiḥ* (I.42), tells us that the gross form of *samyama* is in the form of the envisagement of the object as it is defined by a mix-up of the essential nature of the

object, together with the name and the idea of it. But when the name and the idea are withdrawn, the object stands in its pristine purity. When we can conceive the object independent of our idea about it and divested of the name that we have foisted upon it, we go to *nirvitarka*: *smṛtipariśuddhau svarūpaśūnye iva arthamātranirbhāsā nirvitarkā* (I.43). But nobody can reach that state, however much we may scratch our heads. We cannot go even one step above. We are always in the lowest because who can be free from the idea of the object and the name that is attached to the object? When we look at the tree, we have an idea of tree: “It is a tree.” We have attached some name to that particular substance which we call by this name or that name. The independent concept of an object, free from ideational evaluations, is difficult because we have been brought up in an atmosphere of prejudice. Yoga is against all prejudice. We must be thoroughly dispassionate and impersonal to the core if we want to know the nature of anything in this world.

That is what we are trying to achieve by *samyama*. *Tasya bhūmiṣu viniyogaḥ* (III.6). The *bhumis*, or the levels of concentration, which are suggested in this *sutra* are the levels mentioned in the Samadhi Pada where the various levels of *samadhis*, or *samapattis*, are described. The grossest form of the object as it is visible to the ordinary, conceptual mind is the first stage of concentration. We take the object as it is, in the manner we are able to conceive it, think of it, etc. Then, we try to free it from the associations that we have created in respect of it by thinking of it as lovable or not loveable, pleasurable or otherwise, liked or not liked, tall or short, etc. An object is neither tall nor

short—this also is a very important thing to remember. Tallness and shortness, thickness and thinness, etc., are relative terms. If I bring before you a shirt and ask you, “Is it a big shirt or a small shirt?” you cannot say it is big or small because it depends upon the person. If it is a small child, he will say it is too big; if it is for a big man, he will say it is too small. We cannot say anything about any object unless we compare it with something else. This comparison should be removed. We must take it as it is; and nothing can be more difficult than this task.

We cannot take anything as it is. We cannot take our own selves as we really are. Even we are invested with certain false values. We are really something different from what we appear. Everyone knows that. Likewise, everything else is different from what we think about it, so that there is a complete confusion in every kind of perception of the world. This is why we call it a world of relativities, where every characteristic hangs on something else. Independently, nothing is known. Hence the stages, or the *bhumis*, or the levels of the practice of *samyama* are the gradual characterisations of the object, going deeper and deeper, freeing it more and more from external association.

Ultimately, what is in the mind of Patanjali is that we have to meditate upon the various stages through which *prakriti* passes in the manifestation of this world, the grossest of them being the five elements—earth, water, fire, air and ether—of which every physical object is made. What he expects us to do is to resolve every object into the five elements. We do not see a son, a daughter, etc.; we see only the five elements, because they are resolvable into

these five elements. The body of that person, the body of this object, or whatever it is, is capable of reduction to the level of the five physical elements of which they are constituted.

Then Patanjali wants us to go above to the *tanmatras*, the subtle rudimentary principles out of which the physical elements are made. Then he wants us to go above to the cosmical principle of *ahamkara tattva*, the Universal ‘I’ which affirms the manifestation of this cosmos on one side as the physical universe, and on the other side as the individual perceivers—*jivas*. And so it goes up, stage by stage, until the supreme *purusha* is realised. That ultimate union is the aim of yoga; but for that we have to attain union by stages at lower levels. We have to attain this communion, or absorption, or *samyama*, at each level of practice. These different levels of absorption are called the *bhumis*.

Chapter 90

GENERATING THE MOOD FOR YOGA

The eight limbs of yoga, beginning with *yama* and ending with *samadhi*, have been classified by Patanjali into two groups—the external and the internal. The first five stages are regarded by him as external, and the last three as internal. The *sutra* goes thus: *trayam antaraṅgaṁ pūrvebhyaḥ* (III.7). *Yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara* are the external aspects of yoga, whereas *dharana, dhyana* and *samadhi* are the internal aspects of yoga. Or, we may say, the first five stages are preparations for the practice, while the last three are the actual practice. The *sutra, trayam antaraṅgaṁ pūrvebhyaḥ*, means that the three—namely, *dharana, dhyana* and *samadhi*—are the internal features of yoga compared to the five which are the external features.

Tadapi bahiraṅgaṁ nirbījasya (III.8), says the next *sutra*. Even these three, which are the internal aspects of yoga, are really external compared to the last stage of yoga, which is the absorption of the individual in the Universal, called the *nirbija* state. From the standpoint of *nirbija*, or the last point of experience, everything is external—even concentration, even meditation, even the attempt of the mind to absorb itself in the object in *samyama*. All these are processes or approaches to an experience which transcends all processes. The last experience cannot be regarded as a process. It is not a practice, it is not an effort, it is not anything that we do—it is that which we ‘are’. Everything else is of the nature of an effort or an endeavour in the

name of practice, or in the form of any other preparatory exercise or discipline. Compared to that, everything becomes external.

All the eight stages may be regarded as external from the point of view of the last thing, which is the final aim of yoga, because the disciplines, which are the stages of the practice, are intended to bring about a kind of experience in oneself. It does not mean that we will be putting forth effort forever. The effort has to cease one day, when the purpose of the effort is fulfilled. We work hard so that we may achieve something. When the achievement is there, the work is over. The effort does not any more continue. It is not required. Likewise, the external practices as well as the internal processes in all the eight stages—the entire practice which is called yoga—is the propelling medium of the individual soul to fix itself in the Infinite. Patanjali tells us that notwithstanding the fact that *dharana*, *dhyana* and *samadhi* are internal and very difficult processes in yoga compared to the other five which are preceding and preparatory, yet, in spite of that, even these three which are internal are external compared to the last spiritual experience.

Now we are told what happens to the mind when it actually enters into meditation, when it reaches the point when *samyama* is practised. When we are in right earnest with an object, and *samyama* on that particular object is going on, what is happening to the mind inside? Some changes must be taking place. What are those changes? There are certain transformations which the mind undergoes during the process of *samyama*. These transformations are called *parinamas* in the language of

Patanjali. There are various types of *parinama*, or transformation, all which tend towards the final goal which is the aim of yoga. The *sutrakara* tells us that there are various types of transformations, such as *nirodha parinama*, *samadhi parinama*, *ekagrata parinama*, *dharma parinama*, *lakshana parinama* and *avastha parinama*. These are the terms used by Patanjali to indicate the types or kinds of transformation which the mind passes through in its processes of concentration, meditation and *samadhi*—which is *samyama*.

When we fix our mind or the will—the entirety of our being—in the practice of *samyama*, there is a struggle going on in the mind. This struggle itself is a transformation. This struggle, or the peculiar activity that is going on in the mind, is a kind of modification which is brought about by the mind, within itself, by the reconstitution of its components. When milk becomes curd, there is a reconstitution of the content of milk. There is a rearrangement of the inner essences of the milk, so that the milk becomes curd. Some internal transformation takes place. It is not an external transformation. Nobody comes from outside and interferes with the milk—inwardly something happens. Likewise, here some transformation takes place inwardly.

The first that is mentioned is what is known as *nirodha parinama*, the transformation of the mind in respect of the inhibition of the *vruttis*, or the repression of all the psychoses or modifications in respect of the objects of sense. The first thing that the mind does when it practises *samyama* is to put down all the *vruttis* concerning the objects of sense. For this purpose it has to generate within

itself another *vritti*. That *vritti*, which has the power to subjugate the other *vrittis* in regard to objects of sense, undergoes a transformation within itself, and that particular condition of the mind where it is actively busy putting down all the other *vrittis* except the *vritti* of *samyama* is called *nirodha parinama*. Vyutthāna nirodha saṁskārayoḥ abhibhava prādurbhāvau nirodhakṣaṇa cittānvayaḥ nirodhapariṇāmaḥ (III.9) is an aphorism of Patanjali. It means, literally, just this: *vyutthana* is the rising of the *vrittis* in respect of objects, *nirodha* is the suppression of those *vrittis*, and the impressions produced in the mind during the process of this opposition of the two types of *vrittis* is the *samskara* mentioned in this *sutra*. *Nirodha* is also a *samskara*.

Vyutthāna nirodha saṁskārayoḥ abhibhava prādurbhāvau (III.9). *Abhibhava* is putting down, subjugating, controlling or repressing; *pradurbhāvau* is the rising, coming up to the surface of active consciousness. There is a repeated activity going on in the mind in the form of an opposition between these two types of *vrittis* in the mind. On one side there is an attempt by external or objective *vrittis* to enter the mind. On the other side there is an activity of the mind which tries to drive away all these *vrittis*. At that time, the mind identifies itself with a particular condition. That condition with which the mind identifies itself at that particular moment of internal transformation, when it puts down the *vrittis* in respect of the objects of sense, is called *nirodha parinama*. Or, to put it in more plain language, we may say the *rajasic* and the *tamasic vrittis* are put down, and the *sattvic vrittis* come to the surface.

The *vrittis* which try to prevent the entry of those *vrittis* connected with the objects outside are the *sattvic vrittis*. The *vrittis* which are trying to enter the mind and disturb this concentration are the *rajasic* and *tamasic vrittis*. There is a repeated opposition going on between these two kinds of *vrittis*. We are perpetually at war with a part of the mind; it is the mind itself which is at war within itself—between two aspects of itself. The concentrating aspect, or the *sattvic* aspect—the integrating aspect, the *samyama* aspect, or the yoga aspect—is one thing. The sensory aspect, the objective aspect, the external aspect, the contact aspect, the pleasure aspect—these are the other *vrittis*.

Thus, there is this conflict going on inside when we start yoga practice. And nobody will know what is happening; only we ourselves will know it. It is practically impossible for an ordinary mind to prevent the entry of external impressions in respect of objects because years and years have been lived in a way which is in harmony with the objects of sense; therefore, the impressions created by the past experiences in respect of objects repeat themselves again and again, and seek entry into the mind. In yoga, we try to do the opposite of it. The concentration aspect of the mind, which is *sattvic*, tries to gain an upper hand over the *rajasic* and *tamasic vrittis*. What feelings arise at that time, in the mind, are the contents of the experience of the yogi himself. There is oftentimes a feeling of pleasure or joy; at other times there is a feeling of depression and falling down. It depends upon which *vritti* is strong. If there is a duel between two wrestlers, we cannot say at the very beginning itself who is going to win because the duel will go on for a long time, for hours together—one falling down

and then getting up, and so on—so that we will be witnessing the duel without being able to make a judgement as to what is going to happen finally. Though it may look that someone is gaining, suddenly that one which appeared to be gaining will fall down, and that one which fell down will rise up, etc. This kind of thing will happen in the mind.

The sensuous *vrittis* may gain strength and put down the *vritti* of *samyama*, and then there is distraction, agitation—an impossibility to concentrate. Then, after a time, the sensuous *vrittis* will be put down and the concentration *vritti* may come, and there is a feeling of strength, a mood of elevation and buoyancy of spirit. Then, after some time, that may go down. This process will continue for a long time, according to the nature of the mind, the case on hand—therefore, the *sutra*: *vyutthāna nirodha saṁskārayoḥ abhibhava prādurbhāvau* (III.9). There is a coming in and going out of the different kinds of *vrittis* in the mind. Thus *samyama* is not, as one may imagine, a very happy, continuous, spontaneous process of a uniform fixing of the mind.

In the beginning there is a hard tussle. The moment we think of concentration, the mind will not go and sit there. It may appear as if it is going and alighting itself on the object, but there will be repulsion immediately, and it will come back. So we have to go once again and put it back upon the point. *Yato yato niścalati manaś cañcalam asthiram, tatas tato niyamyaitad ātmany eva vaśaṁ nayet* (B.G. VI.26). A corresponding *sloka* from the Bhagavadgita tells us almost the same thing: when the mind moves away from the centre of concentration and directs itself to the objects outside,

then and there, at that particular moment, gradually it has to be brought back to the point of concentration. This is exactly what the *sutra* of Patanjali also tells us in a different language: *nirodhākṣaṇa cittānvayaḥ nirodhaparīṇāmaḥ* (III.9). The involvement of the mind at the moment of the interception of the *vrittis*—at the time it gains an upper hand and puts down the *vrittis* of *rajas* and *tamas*—that moment of interception with which the mind identifies itself is called *nirodha parinama*.

Nirodha parinama is that *parinama*, or transformation, which is equivalent to the suppression of the *vrittis* which are distracting in nature. This requires continuous practice. It is not a question of a few days, because the mind of an ordinary person is not constituted of the concentration aspect, or the *sattvic* aspect. It is made up of the *rajasic* and the *tamasic* aspects. This can be seen by the nature of the experiences we usually pass through in life, the moods that arise in the mind, and the desires we have in ordinary external life. Do we ever have a mood of concentration at any time from morning to night? Never! Always the mind is agitated. Though we may be thinking of some particular object or a work on hand, or of a function to perform, it cannot be called concentration of mind in the yogic sense. It is a temporary movement of the mind to that particular function, work or duty, due to the compulsive effort exercised upon the mind by circumstances. Circumstantial pressure compels the mind to fix itself on a particular work, whether one likes it or not. That kind of thing is not concentration. We work hard in a jail. Can we call it concentration when we are forced to work against our will? And, every work that we do is mostly against our will. It is

not that we are happy about it. If possible, we would like to avoid it. But we cannot avoid it for reasons which are very peculiar in each individual case.

We are in a *rajasic* type of fixation of mind in certain activities, which should not be mistaken for a *sattvic* concentration of mind. The desire of the mind to withdraw itself into its original condition of sense contact is present even at the time of a function that we are performing in an apparent concentration of mind, whereas in yogic concentration, that is not the case. The desire to go back to the objects of sense is not allowed to rise. The purpose of yoga is quite different from the purposes of ordinary life. Quite different are the courses of the mind in the concentration of a mechanic in fitting a part of a machine, and the concentration of a yogi in *samyama*. They are two different things altogether. That other type, the phenomenal type of concentration, is a *rajasic* ambivalence of attitude, not a *sattvic* attention of the mind—whereas in yoga, it is a *sattvic* concentration.

The point made out in this *sutra* is that we have to put forth repeated effort to be able to bring the *sattvic* aspect of the mind to the surface again and again, until the *rajasic* and *tamasic vrittis* are sublimated completely. They are to be transformed by a kind of 'boiling'. They are hammered upon, again and again, by the *sattvic vrittis*. The substantiality and the concrete opposition, which the *rajasic* and *tamasic vrittis* present, will slowly vanish by the effort of the *sattvic vrittis*. The power of *sattva* is much more than the power of *rajas* and *tamas*. Thus, the *sutra* means to tell us that by continuous endeavour on the part of the mind to maintain a flow of that particular *vritti* alone

which is conducive to *samyama*, and eliminating all other *vrittis* in respect of externality of objects, one enters the mood of yoga.

In the Katha Upanishad also, we have a similar mention. The condition of yoga is not fixed; it is oscillating. Apramattas tadā bhavati yogo hi prabhavāpyayau (K.U. II.3.11). A careless person cannot be a yogi. Here 'care' or 'freedom from carelessness' means the strength of the mind required to practise yoga daily, for a protracted period, in spite of obstacles of every kind. The *hata*, or the obstinacy of the yogi, is supposed to be an example by itself. We cannot compare this obstinacy of a yogi to any other obstinacy. He is bent upon doing it, and he will do it, whatever obstacles may come. Otherwise, we have a hundred excuses not to do it, such as: It is so hot; who will meditate? It is so cold; who will meditate? It is raining; it is not possible. So, we cannot do it at any time.

These are the pleasant moods of the mind in respect of objects, which will not allow the mind to concentrate. Thus, we have to generate within ourselves a mood of yoga instead a mood of activity, of contact with people and things and a mood of restlessness. To generate a mood of yoga is very difficult. This is exactly the meaning of *nirodha parinama*. The transformation of the mind in respect of the inhibition of the restlessness, or the external *vrittis*, is the mood of yoga. We should be always in a tendency to meditate, just as there are people who are in a tendency to sleep. Wherever they sit, they are in a mood to sleep. Whether they are in the office, or in the kitchen, or in *satsanga*, they will be nodding their heads a little; that is a mood to sleep.

Likewise, we must be in a mood for yoga, always. At the very first opportunity provided to us, we should be in a mood of concentration, just as if we have a very delightful hobby or something which we like very much, we will resort to it immediately when the impediments to it are lifted. There are people who knit clothes—sweaters, etc. Wherever they go—whether it is a temple or it is a kitchen, it doesn't matter—they will be knitting. They will be knitting everywhere because that is the mood of the mind, and they like to do it. It is a hobby, and it gives satisfaction. We are not able to do it only when there is an impediment or obstacle. The moment the impediment is lifted, we go to the natural mood. What the yoga requires of us is that our natural mood should be of yoga. We should not bring the mood of yoga with great effort and compulsion; that is not yoga. Yoga is spontaneous. A yogi is one who is spontaneously a yogi, not compulsively a yogi. We are not forced to practise yoga by anybody; that will not be successful.

The *nirodha parinama* mentioned in this *sutra* is, really speaking, a mood of yoga that is generated within the mind by repeated practice—for days and months and years together. For this purpose we have to take very great care that we do not make mistakes, because even the least mistake that we make will be enough for the mind to find a loophole and see that the practice is not completed. The caution that one has to exercise mostly in this practice, if we want early success and real success, is that we should sit for yoga meditation every day. We should not miss it even for one day, because if we miss one day, the next day it will not come; the mood has gone. Also, if possible, we must sit at

the same time every day. We should not go on changing the time of sitting—not morning today, evening tomorrow, etc.—because the mood will not come at other times. Just as hunger comes at a particular time and is not there always, throughout the day, because there is a mood of the organism to generate the requisite enzymes for the purpose of digestion which is called hunger, likewise there is a peculiar mood of the mind which comes up at a particular time of the day due to repeated practice. So, keep up the practice daily at the same time, not changing the time; and if we can maintain the same place also, that is still better. But more than place, time is very important. And the same method of concentration should be adopted—this is also very important.

We should not go on changing the ways of thinking. We should not experiment with different types of concentration. Then, the little bit of concentration that we have gained yesterday, in respect of a particular type of concentration, will not come today, because we are trying a new method. It is something like trying to hit a nail on different place, instead of hitting it on the same place. The caution that is usually expected to be exercised for the purpose of success in yoga, to bring about a mood of yoga in one's mind always, perpetually, is to maintain regularity of practice, continuity of practice with intensity of will and ardour of feeling, maintaining the same mood for an equal length of time—not diminishing it or even extending it beyond certain limits—at the same place, and at the same hour, so that it becomes our regular profession and we have no other work. Even if we have some other profession, some other duty or work, it becomes secondary to our

practice. This becomes primary; all that we do throughout our life, throughout the day, from morning to evening, becomes a contributory factor to bring about this mood of yoga so that there is nothing impeding our progress. We can adjust and arrange our activities and the vocational habits of the day in such a manner that they will not seriously obstruct the mood of yoga that we are trying to generate, which is *nirodha parinama*. This is one of the important transformations that the mind deliberately undergoes in the practice of *samyama*. There are many others. We shall look to it later.

Chapter 91

THE INTEGRATING FORCE

Previously we were considering the three processes of mental transformation at the time of *samyama*, or absorption in the given object, to which Patanjali refers in his analysis of the mind. The three transformations, called *parinamas*, are discussed very precisely in three *sutras*. *Vyutthāna nirodha saṃskārayoḥ* (III.9) is how the *sutra* starts. We have studied something about it earlier. When the impressions, or the *vrittis*, connected with the objects of sense are put down by the power of concentration, there is an alternate activity taking place in the mind whereby there is a succession of incoming and outgoing *vrittis*—a group entering, and a group trying to get out. To give a gross example, an activity of this kind can be found in a beehive. Many bees come in and many bees go out for some purpose of their own. Likewise, bundles and bundles of mental impressions enter the mind, and others try to get out.

This also happens in the biological activity which takes place in the body when toxic matter enters the system. The moment there is something in the body which is unwanted, a war takes place, and as the anatomists and biologists will tell us, the white corpuscles of the blood start fighting the bacteria or germ and in that war many soldiers die. If there is a pinprick or a kind of thorn prick, or some kind of injury to the foot, we find that the body immediately attempts to reconstruct itself, and prepares itself for the occasion. In that process of the tussle between the two types of corpuscles of the blood, many cells around also get destroyed, resulting in pus coming out. The pus is nothing

but the killed soldiers who have been trying to protect the body against the onslaught of this toxic element. Likewise, in the psychological warfare that takes place at the time of concentration, many features are to be observed. Patanjali purposely and very pithily mentions three types of struggle that go on inside the mind at the time of its attempt to enter into the nature of the object in *samyama*.

There are various factors which will obstruct this attempt. These obstructing factors are the impressions of the mind, or rather impressions present in the mind in respect of those objects to which the mind was habituated earlier, to which it was accustomed, and to come in contact with which it was struggling hard throughout its life. In yoga, those *vrittis* are to be put down by the force of another type of *vritti* which arises in the mind. That impression produced in the mind by repeated concentration is called *nirodha samskara*. This is what we observed previously in the *sutra*: *vyutthāna nirodha saṁskārayoḥ abhibhava prādurbhāvau nirodhakṣaṇa cittānvayaḥ nirodhaparīṇāmaḥ* (III.9).

The *sutra* which follows tells us about a new aspect of this very same process that takes place in the mind: *sarvārthatā ekāgratayoḥ kṣaya udayau cittasya samādhiparīṇāmaḥ* (III.11). Just as there is a *parinama* called *nirodha*, there is another *parinama* called *samadhi*, and a third *parinama* by the name of *ekagrata* which will be mentioned in another *sutra*. As mentioned earlier, these are also called *dharma*, *lakshana* and *avastha parinama*. When the impressions or tendencies in the mind which project themselves repeatedly in respect of their corresponding objects come in conflict with the other *vrittis* in the mind

which try to focus the wholeness of being towards the object of meditation, there is what is called *samadhi parinama*. The transformation which is a preparation for total absorption is called *samadhi parinama*; and what happens is mentioned in this *sutra*.

Sarvarthata ekagrata are the two types of *vrittis*. *Sarvarthata* means that particular kind of mental activity which has many objects before it, whereas *ekagrata* is that particular activity of the mind which has only one object before it. These two activities take place simultaneously, and one tries to push out the other. The distracting activity, we may call it, which is the tendency of the mind to ramify itself in respect of its own objects, and the tendency of the mind in yoga which has been deliberately introduced by the force of concentration—these come and go. They rise and fall. The fall and the rise of these two types of mental *vrittis* are called *ksaya* and *udayau*. *Ksaya* is the diminution—the coming down, the falling down, the exhaustion. *Udayau* is the rise—the coming up to the surface of consciousness.

Hence, there will be, again, a succession of two types of thought in the mind when we meditate. There will be a sudden entry of thoughts connected with the mind's contact with objects. And because of the practice of yoga for a long time—meditation in which we have been engaged for a protracted period—there is also the other tendency of the mind which tries to overcome these *vrittis*. Thus there will be a flickering of the light of the mind and not a continuous glow of the flame, as ought to be there. The flickering is due to the fact that there are two kinds of energies projecting themselves forth in the mind with two

different aims: the one trying to go out, and the other trying to integrate.

The work of the mind is, therefore, twofold at this particular stage: to observe the various *vruttis* which are trying to connect themselves with the objects, and to observe simultaneously the extent to which mastery has been gained by the *ekagrata vrutti* over these distracting, or *sarvarthata, vruttis*. It is here, in this stage, that we will be able to understand ourselves a little more than when we are busy in human society. We are all alone to ourselves, observing only ourselves, entirely, with great focused attention, so that the subtle delicate tendencies which were up to this time buried due to other reasons will slowly come up—then we can observe our proclivities, our idiosyncrasies, our predilections and our natural tendencies.

As we have been mentioning, or studying again and again on different occasions, it is not possible for the mind to study its own self when it is busily engaged in activities other than the act of observation of itself because here, in this process of *samyama*, there is no other activity in the mind except self-observation. It studies itself, it probes into its own inner structure, and it decomposes its inner constituents. The composite character of the mind, which kept it in the form of a compact object, as it were, is attacked by the power of concentration, and the constituents are separated. These constituents are the *vruttis*.

What are the *vruttis*? They are not substances. They are not things to be seen with the eyes. They are only energies of the mind. They are the forces of the mind itself, or

rather, they are the desires of the mind; these are the *vrittis*. The various likes and dislikes in the mind are really the *vrittis*. And, what is this like and dislike, desire, etc? It is the urge that is felt inside the mind itself which propels it towards something outside, whether it is a physical object or a conceptual notion. This urge within is the disease of the mind. That is the obstacle. That is the impediment. There is an inner pressure felt by the mind itself, due to which it is obliged to move out of itself in respect of an object of sense. This is the *sarvarthata vritti*.

An *ekagrata vritti* is not normally present in the mind. It has to be brought about; it has to be introduced by effort. This is *samyama*; this is, precisely, *yoga*. The *ekagrata vritti* is the healthful tendency of the mind, the power with which it keeps the organism of the mind intact and prevents any kind of depletion of energy. The integrating force, which is the *ekagrata vritti*, will not allow the leaking out of mental energy in respect of objects outside. It blocks all the passages of sense and the tendency of the mind. But these tendencies are also powerful enough, so they try to break through the fortress which has been built by the *ekagrata vritti*, and then, somehow or other, try to get out, just as prisoners can run out of the jail in spite of the great guard that is kept around them. Somehow or other something happens, and they get out. This is what happens, says Patanjali: *sarvārthatā ekāgratayoḥ kṣaya udayau cittasya samādhipariṇāmaḥ* (III.11).

Therefore, we should not be under the impression that the moment we sit for meditation we are in a peaceful ocean of milk and honey. It is not like that. This is when the real war takes place. In the beginning it was only a

preparation for this great Armageddon. And, the war that takes place inside is more fearful and more difficult to face than any kind of warfare that we could have heard of. It is not like the political wars or the external tussles that we hear through the passage of history. This is more painful because it is connected with the subtler layers of being. Also, the subtler the level, the greater is the sensitivity felt; therefore, the pleasures and the pains—both—are more intense on the subtler levels than on the grosser levels. Hence, the joys of meditation as well as the pains that precede this experience of delight are both equally very intense.

Thus, there is a great competitive activity going on inside the mind between two aspects of it—the higher and the lower, as we may call them. There is, on the one side, the desire to ramify the mind into the various objects for the purpose of contact, and on the other, the effort to centre the mind. We usually lead a life of external relationship. This is withdrawn, and the rays of the mind are brought back to the centre by the *ekagrata vritti*. So on the one hand there is an attempt at the withdrawal of the rays of the mind to the centre, and on the other hand there is the tendency of the mind itself to allow the branching out towards objects.

We can observe in our own selves, many a time, that we have two tendencies. Sometimes we like to give vent to our own sentiments, and we feel great pleasure in it. We have some feelings which we may call weaknesses. They are the sentiments. There is no logic behind them. “I like it”; that is all we say. Why we like it, we do not know. We like to give ventilation to that particular sentiment, and we become happy. And at other times, we are more rational with our

mind. We begin to argue out: “Why should this sort of inclination, which is completely out of my control, arise in my mind?” Sometimes we are more judicious in our judgement over ourselves, whereas at other times we are stimulated to give a long rope to our feelings.

As we do in life on the outside, the same thing happens inside. Generally, the inclination of the mind is towards pleasure. It does not want pain of any kind. This is the simple truth of the whole matter. Inasmuch as there is a peculiar notion that contact of any kind with the desirable objects brings pleasure, one naturally tries one’s best to find some chance for coming in such contact. And, the withdrawal of that activity is painful. Anything that contravenes one’s attempt at the pursuit of pleasure is pain. Hence, even this yoga practice becomes a pain if it obstructs the natural tendency of the mind towards objects of sense, contact with which it has always regarded as a source of pleasure. But if we can remember the conclusion of all our studies of the earlier *sutras*, we can very well recollect that it is a foolish idea of the mind. There is great blunder involved in the notion that pleasures come by contact. There is great error of judgement which has to be set right by more intelligent ways of mental analysis. This, therefore, is the meaning of this *sutra*, *sarvārthatā ekāgratayoḥ kṣaya udayau cittasya samādhipariṇāmaḥ* (III.11), which tells us that the peculiar mental transformation called *samadhi parinama* is nothing but the rising and the falling, alternately or successively, of the tendencies of the mind towards various objects outside, and the tendency of the mind towards self-integration.

Tatāḥ punaḥ śānta uditau tulya pratyayau cittasya ekāgratāpariṇāmaḥ (III.12). This is a very advanced stage. Most people cannot reach this stage. Even the so-called advanced ones are only in the first stage, called *nirodha parinama*, where there is simply a struggle between two tendencies of the mind—namely, the tendency to go out and the tendency to concentrate. That is all. We cannot think of anything more than that. But this *sutra* tells us that we have to rise to a higher state. That particular state which is indicated in this third *sutra*, in connection with the *parinamas*, tells us that when we go higher, something strange takes place. We will see something very uncommon—most unexpected, we may say.

We have always been under the impression that there is an intrinsic difference between ourselves and the objects of sense. Or rather, to put it more plainly, there is a difference between you and me. It is this difference that makes you a 'you' and me a 'me'; otherwise, there is no such thing as 'you' and 'me'. There is a peculiar feature which characterises things and persons, due to which they stand apart from one another. To pinpoint the subject on hand, there is a gulf between the subject and the object. They cannot be identical. The 'you' cannot be the 'I'—that is the simple essence of the matter. The 'I' is the meditator; the 'you' is the object. And the 'you' is always a 'you'; the 'I' is always the 'I'. How can the two come together? They cannot come together because of the disparity of character. But, though this is the usual idea that we have about ourselves and of things outside us, this is not the truth about things.

It is not true that there are such distinguishing and separating features in objects as to isolate them completely, forever, from other things. It is not true that the inherent characters or structural features of an object are so vehement that they cannot unite themselves with the nature of the subject. The reason why there has been so much of struggle in the mind inside, in the form of *nirodha parinama*, *samadhi parinama*, etc., is that the mind is unable to get out of this prejudice that the object is the object and the subject is the subject; that they are two different things. We feel, “I like the object. Where is the point in liking the subject? I am the subject. And inasmuch as the object is completely dissimilar to me—it has characters which I would like to possess, which I do not possess at this moment—it would be my duty to grasp that object, absorb it into myself, and make use of it in the way I like.” This desire arises on account of the notion, the conviction, that the object is different from the subject. Otherwise, the desire for the object will not rise. It is very clear.

The *sutra* tells us that when we go deeper into the practice of *samyama*, this prejudice breaks down—the walls fall, the screen is lifted and we will see something strange before us. That strange feeling we will have when the screen is lifted between us and the object is what is called *ekagrata parinama*. What is this strange feeling, or experience? *Tulya pratyayau* is the simple phrase which explains the entire thing. The consciousness of the object, and the consciousness of the subject, create in us two different feelings. You can experiment with your own self, if you like. Close your eyes and think deeply of an object which you

love most. What do you feel at that time? Each one will know what it is. Close your eyes and think of your own self; don't think of anybody else. What feelings arise at that time? Compare the one with the other. They are poles apart. There is a peculiar sensation which you feel in the entire system of your body and mind when you think of a beloved object, quite different from the sensation that you have when you think of your own self.

Hence, the distinction that is between the two types of experience, subjective and objective, explains life phenomenal. But here, in this *ekagrata parinama*, these sensations will not be dissimilar in character. Whether we think of our own self or we think of a beloved object, the sensations will be same. There will be no two different sensations. This is something very difficult to understand. How is it possible? When we think of a mango, or when we think of a cobra, how will we have the same type of feelings? They are two different feelings altogether. But yoga tells us they are same. There is no difference, provided that we have reached a particular state of thinking. 'How is it possible?' is a doubt that can arise in the mind. How can a detestable object, when thought of, generate the same sensation and feeling as when we think of a beloved object? It is not understandable.

But the yoga psychology explains the reason. The detestable character of an object and the beloved character of an object are due to our peculiar reactions in respect of objects. And those reactions are because of the structural peculiarity of our own psychophysical organism. The child of a snake will not be afraid of its mother snake. It is humans who are afraid. The structural feature of the

organism of the child snake is not dissimilar to the mother snake. There is some uniformity, so they will not be afraid of one another. The 'like' that the mind evinces in respect of an object is due to that reason only. That is the reason why I may like one thing and you may not like that very thing. What I like, you may not like. What is the matter with you? How is it that the same object evokes two different feelings? It is because the different reactions that we set up in respect of that object depend upon the structural peculiarity of our own psychic and bodily constitution. Therefore, it is not the object that gives the pleasure, and it is also not the object that is the cause of pain; it is the inability of the mind to adjust itself, or rather the inability of the total organism to adjust itself with the location, structure, character and relationship of the object.

But in this *ekagrata parinama*, this difficulty is obviated. We enter into the deeper layers of the object, so that its external features, which stand outside us, are not there any more. The inner essence of the meditating consciousness and the inner essence of the object stand on par. Or rather, to give an old example which we repeat again and again, we begin to see the wood in the table as well as in the chair. We will no longer call this a chair. It is only a piece of wood. We will not call it a table. It is the same wood. There will be no difference in the feelings of the mind in respect of the table and the chair, inasmuch as it does not see the table and it does not see the chair. It sees only the wood. So how can there be a difference in feeling? Whether it sees the table or the chair, it sees the same thing. Whether we see the subject or the object, we are seeing the same thing. How can there be difference of feeling?

Thus, *tulya pratyaya* means the equanimity of feeling, or equality of perception. Identity, practically, of cognition is the result of the rise of the mind to that state which is called *ekagrata parinama*—tatāḥ punaḥ śānta uditau tulya pratyayau cittasya ekāgratāpariṇāmaḥ (III.12). This subject we shall continue in the next chapter.

Chapter 92

THE WORKING OF NATURE'S LAW

We are now at a stage of the understanding of the processes of yoga where it has become a very serious matter, and it is gripping us with its problems and is making it hard for us to understand it. Many seekers do not have a clear idea as to why they practise yoga at all. Most people have a curious notion about it and feel that if they meditate, they will have peace of mind. Most people say, "I will take to yoga because I have no peace of mind, and it shall bring me peace of mind." They do not know what exactly they mean. It is not merely a kind of silence of thoughts or the popular notion of peace of mind that comes to us through yoga. It is something more than that.

We cannot clearly understand what yoga is. It is not merely a mental process inwardly taking place, privately, inside the head of somebody. This is another mistaken notion of many seekers, even if they be very honest and sincere. The practice of yoga is many times regarded as an internal process of the mind. This is not the whole truth of it, though it is true that the mind is involved in the practice of yoga. It is not an internal process in the sense that it is taking place only inside our body. In that sense it is not internal. Also, it is not true that the practice of yoga is concerned only with our mind and it has no connection with anybody else. This is a wrong idea.

This real truth about yoga, about which very little mention was made up to this time, is now slowly being revealed by Patanjali, the author of the Yoga Sutras. We have to concentrate our attention very carefully on what is

being told to us in these lessons. The purpose of yoga, the practice of yoga, is not attainment of a mere composure of mind or tranquillity in the sense that we can sleep happily and we do not have any kind of disturbance, anxiety, fear, etc. If this state of mind is reached, we may think that we are in a state of yoga. It is not so. Yoga is not that. This is one point that has to be made clear.

Even if one is a very happy person, one need not be in a state of yoga. Even if one's mind is very calm and not disturbed by outside factors, for various reasons, that is not a state of yoga. What is yoga then? *Yoga is the revelation of the truth of things*; and if the mind is a part of the truth, well, it is also a revelation of the truth of the mind. But the mind alone is not the whole truth. There are other things than the mind in this vast panorama of creation. The mind is one of the elements in this vast mechanism of creation.

Inasmuch as the mind is involved in this mechanism, it cannot be regarded as a whole truth, though it is also a truth. The mind is involved in certain other things, and its proper adjustment with the other things also is a necessity in order that it can keep pace with the law of truth. The mind usually, from the point of view of psychology, we may say, is a receptacle for the impressions received by the senses from the objects outside. The mind acts as a photographic film, as it were, which receives the pictures of the objects outside through the apertures of the senses. The mind, therefore, cannot contain anything which is not in the objects outside, because it is like a film of the camera. It receives impressions and is conditioned by the structure of the senses. This is also to be remembered. Whatever the condition of the mind is at any given moment of time, it is

also based on certain other factors—namely, the operation of the senses and the existence of objects outside. The objects impress upon the mind through the senses and, corresponding to the nature of the impression produced by the objects, there is a transformation taking place in the mind. Therefore, the transformations of the mind, whatever they be, can be regarded as conditioned by the transformations of the objects outside.

Now we have to take a little step further in the understanding of the philosophy of yoga before we actually go deeper into its practice. What is all this about? What is yoga trying to aim at? What is its message to us? Its message is simple—namely, the return of consciousness to the Ultimate Truth. This is the message of yoga. And its practice consists in the adoption of those methods which are necessary for the return of consciousness to the Ultimate Truth, or Reality. What is the Ultimate Truth to which we have to return, which is the aim of yoga? This is the philosophy of yoga, which describes the nature of things ultimately. If we are not in harmony with the nature of things, we are supposed to be in *samsara*. If we are in harmony with the nature of things, we are supposed to be in the state of *moksha*—liberation. A person who abides by law is a free person. A person who infringes the law is a bound soul. He will be caught by the law.

A person who is caught in *samsara* is one who infringes the law of the cosmos, who interferes with it, violates it, and does not abide by it. A free soul is one who has attained *moksha*. The freedom here consists in the abidance of the law of the cosmos. When our way of thinking and living corresponds exactly to the nature of things as they are, we

are free; nobody can bind us. But if there is a variance of our thinking and our way of living with the existing order of things, this order of things will tell upon us and compel us to abide by that law. That is the force exerted upon us by the world outside, and that pressure which we feel in a painful manner is what is called *samsara*.

We are like captives in a jail who suffer because of their own mistakes. We have broken the principles of the law, and the law is taking hold of us by the neck. If we say, “I am in a sorrowful condition; I am being harassed”—well, who is harassing us? It is not somebody else that has caused this sorrow or pain to us. It is the reaction of the law that has taken its shape in the form of the experience that we are undergoing. Yoga tries to free us from bondage of every kind, from *samsara* as a whole. Bondage also means ultimate bondage of birth and death. That is the greatest of bondages. That we are forced to undergo the process of birth and death shows that we are compelled by certain forces over which we have no control.

Many of our sufferings seem to be brought upon us by causes of which we have no knowledge. We do not deliberately bring sorrow upon our own selves. Sometimes, by error of thought and judgement, we may create circumstances which may react upon us as pain. Purposely we will not jump into a pit, or embrace fire, knowing that it will cause us pain. Everybody has a pain of some kind or the other. There is no one who is really happy, ultimately. Everyone has some sorrow. But who has brought this sorrow to us? Ask any person: “You are unhappy. Who has caused this unhappiness in your life?” The cause will be attributed to factors outside oneself. Nobody will say, “I

have purchased sorrow and I am swallowing it.” We have not purchased the sorrow. Nobody wants it, of course. We try to get out of it, if possible. The sorrow has come upon us by certain events that take place outside us, as it were, though they are not really outside, and we have no say in this matter, it appears.

The world undergoes changes, transformations; and we have no say in this matter. Well, suppose there is an earthquake. What can we do about it? If there is a flood, we cannot do anything. If there is drought, we can say nothing. If the earth dashes against the sun, we have no say in the matter. If the wind blows violently and uproots our buildings and destroys things, we can do nothing. Hence, we can do nothing in certain important matters. It shows that there are things over which we are not masters, and these can cause us sorrow and suffering. It is not only that; the point that I mentioned, birth and death, is the greatest sorrow. “Why should we die?” is a question. Naturally we would not like to die, but we are forced to die. Now, who is forcing us to die? This has to be understood properly. Who is this gentleman that is punishing us like this with a rod of death? Even over death we have no say. We have to die; that is all.

This process of death takes place—as it is the case with the process of birth also, of course—by conditions which cannot even be seen with the eyes. They are invisible forces working, bringing about these phenomena called birth and death. And the experiences through which we pass in life are also beyond our control, ultimately. If we carefully analyse all our experiences in life, we will find that most of them are caused by factors over which we have no control,

of which we have no knowledge. This is a terrible state of affairs, really speaking. We are like puppets with no say in any matter whatsoever in the rule of this world, in the government of this world. The sun can rise, or it may not rise; we cannot order it to rise. It may rain; it may not rain. The earth may remain, or it may not remain. It may continue as it is, or it may break. Well, it can do anything it likes. And, more than that, someone seems to be compelling us to be born, and is also compelling us to die.

These are certain features of phenomena which seem to be precedent to the experiences of the individual. They are cosmic factors, and these cosmic factors, or powers, or forces of nature, as we may call them, seem to have some control over us, and they force us to yield to their dictates and requirements. We are born, we pass through various experiences, painful or otherwise, and then we die. Perhaps we will be reborn even without our asking for rebirth. We are not asked whether we would like to be reborn. Nobody is going to ask us anything. We are pressed into it.

This is a great, great question before the philosophy of yoga. Can we do something about these things, or are we entirely helpless? Yoga tells us that we are not helpless as we appear to be. We seem to be helpless because we have assumed a kind of false independence of ourselves. If we would like to use a word, we are too 'arrogant' in our behaviour with things. And we are too egoistic to admit that there are forces beyond us. There is always a feature which asserts itself in the mind and preponderates over the mind, proclaiming its supremacy over things. "Man is the maker of things," and various sayings are well known to us.

But what can man make when we say, “Man is the maker of things”? He can make nothing. He only undergoes sorrow.

This state of affairs has arisen on account of a lack of control over the causes of our experiences. Birth, death and the process of life are experiences we undergo by the pressure of forces which are outside us. Unless we handle these forces effectively and gain control over them, we will have to be in this condition only, for all time. Yoga tells us that it is possible to handle these forces properly by an understanding of the *modus operandi* of these forces. There is nothing ultimately impossible, says yoga. A great solace it gives to mankind. It is possible for the human being to do everything, provided the human individual follows the prevailing law of the cosmos. Therefore, we must first understand what the law of the cosmos is, because if the law of the cosmos is not known, we cannot abide by it. If we do not know what the law is, how can we follow it? So, first of all, we need to know the law that prevails in this universe which we are supposed to follow, and which we are apparently infringing. This is the philosophy behind yoga.

The cosmos is a single integrated being—this is what the yoga philosophy tells us. Or, for the matter of that, all final philosophies of the world tell this truth to us. There is one integrated being. We may call it an organism, if we like, in modern scientific language. There is only one reality. *Ekam sat viprā bahudhā vadanti* (R.V. I.164.46), says also the Rig Veda. Many varieties are seen, as it were, but *iva*—not really. The duality of perception and the multiplicity of objects is a peculiar phenomena, a set of phenomena, which present themselves before human perception. But these phenomena are not the reality. There is a reality behind

these phenomena. Why these phenomena appear at all is a question we may try to answer a little later.

The point on hand is that the universe, which rules over everything with its inexorable law, is a single government that is a compact organisation of forces with very subtle mechanisms of control over the least things in the world. No one can escape the operation of this law of the cosmos. There are mechanisms in every atom of creation that can detect the events taking place anywhere, not only inside the atom. Such is the regularity of nature, such is the clarity of the perception of nature, and such is the strictness of the operation of the law of nature. If this is the truth of things, and all things are organically related, then that 'ultimate substance' is the ruling force. If we would like to use the language of Samkhya, or Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, we can call this *prakriti*, or *pradhana*. The ultimate substance whose law operates everywhere—inside as well as outside—is called *prakriti*.

Every character, every process, every activity is a modification of certain aspects of *prakriti*. Therefore, inasmuch as *prakriti*, or the ultimate matrix of things—the supreme substance of the cosmos—is the basic residuum in which inhere all the properties of things that we see in a variegated manner, this *prakriti* is called *dharmi*. *Dharmi* is the substance in which *dharmas* inhere. That which has *dharmas* inherent in it is called *dharmi*, just as we say *guna* and *guni*. Where *gunas* inhere, we say there is *guni*. The object, or the substance in which *gunas* inhere, properties inhere, is called *guni*. This is also called *dharmi*, because *dharmas* inhere. All the properties which are sensible in any manner whatsoever—visible, audible, tangible, etc.—all

these properties are inherent ultimately in the supreme substance, which is *prakriti*. Therefore, the language used in respect of this *prakriti*, in this context, is *dharmi*; or if we do not want to use this word, we can call it 'substance'. The ultimate substance of the universe is *prakriti*.

Every variety that we see here is a modification of *prakriti*. We have to know, to some extent, the Samkhya theory of evolution—or we may call it the usual philosophic theory of evolution. This ultimate substance undergoes a modification inwardly, and presents itself as a so-called variety within itself. This is the beginning of creation. *Dharmas* appear in the *dharmi*; *gunas* appear in the *guni*; properties appear in the substance. Activities begin to emanate from this basic residuum of matter. What we are told is that the first forms, the initial forms of evolution into which *prakriti* enters, are known as the *gunas* of *prakriti*—*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. This is the first step *prakriti* takes in modifying itself; it becomes threefold instead of one being. This threefold manifestation of *prakriti* is not a tripartite separation of itself as three different substances, but a threefold manner of the operation of the same *prakriti*.

We know something about these three *gunas*—what is *sattva*; what is *rajas*; what is *tamas*. The stabilising activity of *prakriti* is called *tamoguna*, where there is fixity and attention. Where there is motion, distraction, isolation, separation, we call it *rajas*. And where there is clarity, transparency and intelligence manifest, we call it *sattva*. In these three forms, *prakriti* modifies itself; and everything in all this creation is reducible to these three qualities. Everything in this world, animate or inanimate, is either in

a state of *sattva*, *rajas* or *tamas*. It cannot be in any other form.

A peculiar feature of *rajas* is that it creates a gulf between things, making *sattva* impossible of operation. In the preponderance of *sattva*, there is that type of transparency due to which the organic character of *prakriti* is observable. In spite of the so-called divisions into which *prakriti* has entered, one can know that it is *prakriti* that has become this manifold universe. This state where one can be aware of this basic unity, in spite of the apparent variety, is called *sattva*. But where *rajas* is predominant, this knowledge is completely wiped out. If *rajas* begins to act with great force, *sattva* is put down immediately. It is submerged under the waves of *rajas*, which dash upon one another with tremendous velocity. When *rajas* preponderates, *sattva* is put down completely, and knowledge vanishes. We cannot know what has happened.

Because of the action of *rajas*, the parts of nature—whether they are animate or otherwise—have forgotten the basic organic connection of things and, therefore, there is no knowledge of there being an interconnectedness of objects. *Prakriti* is the ultimate ruling law, which is the principal substance, and everything is only a product, or evolute. That everything is in the form of a child of that original mother of things is a thing not known to anybody because of the vehemence of the *rajasic* aspect of *prakriti* that has now taken upper the hand. That is why everybody looks separate. I am somewhere; you are somewhere. We have no connection, one with the other. Even the world is somewhere and we are somewhere.

The law of *prakriti* rules everywhere with impartiality. It has no partiality. In the cosmos outside as well as in the individual, it works in a uniform manner. But the individual that has been subjected to the action of *rajas* has found it impossible to know what has happened on account of the merger of the quality of *sattva* and the rising to the surface of the quality of *rajas*. Hence, there is a false sense of independence felt in each individual, due to which the integrating law of *prakriti* is lost sight of completely. And when there is no knowledge of this law of the integrating *prakriti*, how can we abide by that law? Who can know what the law of *prakriti* is? We do not know what *prakriti* is; we have completely forgotten it. We are made to forget it on account of the action of *rajas*.

Therefore, the law of *prakriti* weighs heavily upon us. We have forgotten. Well, if we forget, what can we do? Ignorance of the law is no excuse. We do not know the law of *prakriti*; we pay for it through the nose. We are punished, as it were—punished merely because we do not know how *prakriti* works. Due to that, we are completely oblivious of the internal relationships existing between us and the other objects. The subject and the object are cast asunder; they are rent aside as two different things altogether, and one wants to grab the other. This attitude of grabbing, appropriating and self-assertiveness on the part of any individual is the ego that is working; and that is the beginning of this great sorrow that we call *samsara*. This is what actually has taken place.

The objects outside, which impinge upon the mind through the senses, are nothing but part of the mind itself in some way or the other. It is inscrutable to the mind

because the one cosmic *prakriti* has taken the form of the objects on one side and the individual subject on the other side. The Samkhya theory of evolution tells us clearly what has taken place. On the other side there are the *tanmatras* which are *shabda*, *sparsa*, *rupa*, *rasa* and *gandha*, meaning sound, touch, sight, taste and smell, and the *bhutas* which are *prithvi*, *apas*, *tejo*, *vayu* and *akasa*, meaning earth, water, fire, air and ether. We see earth, water, fire, air and ether spread out all over. That is all we see; there is nothing else except these five elements. We are sitting on the other side as the subject observing this vast nature—earth, water, fire, air and ether. We regard this world as an object because it is apparently outside our mind and our senses. That the objects—the physical elements and everything that is made up of the five elements—are all outside us, is an effect of the preponderance of *rajas* and the absence of *sattva*. If the *sattva* had come up to the surface, and if the rule of *sattva* had been the law operating in us, we would have seen through things to the interconnection among us. That vision, unfortunately, is not there due to the vehemence of the action of *rajas*.

Now yoga tells us, “My dear friends, this is what has happened to you. You are born, and you die, and you pass through various harrowing experiences in life because the law of the cosmos acts upon you as it ought to act. There is great justification, of course, in its actions. Why should it not act? Well, it is within its inherent nature. That you cannot understand the working of this law is the reason why you disobey the law every moment of your life, and then it reacts upon you and compels you to follow that law, which is the cause of your experiences, your *karma*, your

births and deaths—all which can be overcome if you enter into the substance of nature by understanding its laws, by becoming cosmic itself in essence.” Towards this end, yoga takes us.

Chapter 93

REMOVING THE EGO WITH THE PROCESS OF SAMYAMA

Continuing the subject we were discussing in the previous chapter, the Yoga Sutras introduce our minds to a new subject—namely, the control of nature and mastery over those conditions and circumstances which now appear to be ruling over us. At present we are, apparently, in a helpless condition, being controlled by laws, rules and regulations which seem to be operating above us, transcending us, which are outside us and are independent of us.

Is it possible for us to enter into these systems of legal operation of the universe and gain some sort of control over these systems which are governing everything everywhere? For this purpose it is that in yoga, *samyama* is practised on the essential things which constitute the universe as a whole. These essential things are most difficult to understand because many of them are not visible to the eyes; or, we may say, the principle factors are not cognisable even by the mind. But they have to be understood in order that they may be controlled, mastered and made our own. This is the purpose of *samyama*.

At present, our helpless condition and so-called impotency is due to there being outside us a vast world, a universe expanding to infinity, as it were, before which we look very small and with little power. This universe of objects, which is outside us, and these elements—earth, water, fire, air and ether—are the building bricks of

everything conceivable in this physical universe. And they seem to have a law and a system of their own in their workings, which we are compelled to follow and obey, so that they are the masters and we are the slaves or servants. This is the present state of affairs. Also, there are more difficult things to understand—laws and operations which are subtler than these physical laws, which seem to be pressing upon us the need for even the processes of transmigration, birth and death, and the consequent sorrows that follow from this subjection to transmigration.

All this is impossible to grasp by the ordinary mind because the mind is foolishly addicted to the notion that the physical objects are the only reality and there is nothing beyond. The senses perceive objects as if they are the only things existing and there is nothing beyond them. The only intention of the senses is to drag the mind towards the objects of sense as if there is nothing else in this world. All this is the drama of human experience as it apparently seems to be. But, the alternate analysis which we are in a position to make through the system of yoga will reveal a new kind of phenomenon that is different in character from the nature of the things as they are perceived by the senses.

Before we can understand the method of *samyama*—the practice of yoga proper for the solution of this mystery—an analysis is given in one or two *sutras* as to what this means. It is very precisely, and without any ceremony whatsoever, openly said in one *sutra*: *etena bhūtendriyeṣu dharma lakṣaṇa avasthā pariṇāmāḥ vyākhyātāḥ* (III.13). Here Patanjali says practically nothing except that the *dharmas*, *lakṣanas* and *avasthas* of things have already been explained when he explained to us the

three *parinamas* of the mind. He does not want to tell us anything more. But it is a very hard job to understand what he actually means. The implication of this *sutra* is that there is a corresponding law operating in the external universe, which is similar to the law that operates in the mind inside; and the process of the control of the mind and the process of the control of the objects outside are both similar. If we can know our own mind thoroughly, we can also know every other object in this world. If we can control our mind, we can control everything else also. This is what is intended in this *sutra*.

These three *parinamas*, or the transformations of the mind which we were speaking of earlier known as *nirodha parinama*, *samadhi parinama* and *ekagrata parinama*, are the systems which the whole universe follows. The law of the original substance, known as *prakriti*, is hidden in these three processes. The objects that we see with our eyes, and cognise with our mind, are a phenomenon presented by *prakriti*. It is a mischievous attempt, we may say, of the mother of things to tempt us, deceive us and trap us into an experience of something which is really not there, and to keep us completely in ignorance of what is really there.

This *prakriti*, the original substance, is the material of everything—of all objects. This material, or the cosmic substance, has a peculiar property inherent in it. This property is the capacity within itself to modify itself into a time-form. *Prakriti* itself is not in time; it is transcendent to time. The idea that a thing is in time arises later on. This space-time complex is an evolute of *prakriti*. Thus, the original form of things—of anything whatsoever, yourself, myself included—is non-temporal. Our real nature is not

temporal, or in time, but is non-temporal. It is beyond time. That is the state in which a thing exists in the original substance of *prakriti*. All the properties which follow subsequently, through space and time, inhere in this substance. Inasmuch as all these properties inhere in the substance which is *prakriti*, as we mentioned previously, this *prakriti* is called the *dharmi*, and the properties are called *dharmas*.

Dharma is a character, a quality, a capacity, an inherency, a property, etc., and that which contains this potency to modify itself into these complex forms is the substance. Ultimately the substance is *prakriti*, which is a name that we give to the universal original substance of all things. *Prakriti* is a peculiar Samkhya term; we may call it by any other name we like. The idea behind this terminology is that there is only one substance in the universe, not many substances. All things, whatever be their variety, colour, pageantry, shape and difference in character—all this difference matters not in the light of the great truth that all these things are reducible to a single substance. This is a great truth indeed, which is difficult to stomach for the ordinary mind, because we can never understand that the different objects—totally differing in character—are identical in substance. That is the truth; and if we are able to feel this truth, life will be something quite different from what it is now. But we cannot feel it; we cannot even understand it thoroughly. But this is the truth, say the Yoga Sutras.

The property which is inherent in the original substance is the cause for the variety of things which is visible to the senses. For the first time, this substance modifies itself into

the three *gunas*—*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*; and I mentioned to you what happens later on. Now, this particular *sutra* has something specific to tell us. *Dharma*, *lakṣana* and *avasthā* are the three terms used in this *sutra*: *etena bhūtendriyeṣu dharma lakṣaṇa avasthā pariṇāmāḥ vyākhyātāḥ* (III.13). These *dharmas*, or the properties of things in general, are present in the original substance just as, to give a more concrete example, a pot made of earth is inherent in the clay, which is only a heap of earth. A clod of earth has no shape whatsoever. But out of this shapeless mass of earth the potter manufactures a pot, and we have what is called a pot. The pot is a shape taken by the earth, the original clay matter. It is very strange, really speaking. If we try to understand what a pot is, we will not know what it is, because it is not the same as clay, and it is not different from clay. What do we see there except clay? Yet, can we call it simply clay? It has assumed a time-form. That is the peculiarity within this modification.

That the ‘potness’ of what we call the pot was inherent in the clay is something very strange indeed for the mind to understand. What was inherent in the clay? There is no easy answer to this question. We cannot say that the pot was inherent in the clay, because there was no such thing as the pot. There was no pot previously except the clay itself. The clay itself is the pot. We cannot even say that the clay has become the pot. When we say that the pot was inherent in the clay, what is it that is actually inherent there? Not the pot, because there is no pot; it is clay itself. So what is that, which we call the pot? This is a peculiar thing. It is a kind of phantasmagoria that is presented or projected before the mind. That is called the space-time complex, which

introduces itself into this peculiar modification process and makes one feel that the pot is different from the clay. We all know that the pot is not the same as the clay; there is something in it which is other than the clay, yet we cannot say what it is. That peculiar thing which we cannot say what it is but it is present there, is the 'potness'—not the pot itself. That is the character, the *dharma*, of the clay. And such kind of character is present in the original substance, *prakriti*, by which it modifies itself into the forms of objects of sense.

This tendency of a substance to maintain a particular pattern or shape is called *dharma*, and that is the property, the capacity, which is inherent in the substance. It can assume a particular pattern of form. This pattern is inherent in the substance and inseparable from the substance. This pattern is nothing but the identification of the capacity of *prakriti* in respect of a particular shape which it tries to modify itself into and maintain for a particular period of time. The capacity itself is the *dharma*. The changing of the *dharma* into a time-form, the pattern or the shape of the object, is called the *laksana*, or the character of the object. The character of the clay, when it has become something else in the time-form, is called the pot. The maintenance of this form for a particular duration is the *avastha*—the condition of the object. The condition does not prolong itself for an indefinite period of time. It has a specific rule by itself, just as every object maintains a particular state for a period of time.

The universe of forms—this vast thing that we see in front of us—is a particular pattern taken by *prakriti*, modified according to a plan, and is to continue for a

period of time, according to the necessity of the time. There are infinite potentialities in *prakṛiti*, just as infinite statues can be made out of a block of stone. We can carve any statue from a block of stone. Can you tell me how many statues are inside a block of stone? Infinite—no number—because anything can be carved out of it. Likewise, infinite capacities are present in the original substance—namely, *prakṛiti*. But the sculptor does not concentrate on the infinite capacity present in the block of stone. The sculptor has in mind a particular pattern. That is the time-form into which *prakṛiti* changes itself, and in regard to which it concentrates itself.

The sculptor has only a specific idea in his mind: “I will carve a lion, or a human form,” or some such thing, in spite of the fact that many other things also could have been made out of the very same stone. Likewise, it is not that *prakṛiti* can manifest itself only in this form of the universe. It can manifest itself in some other form also, so we should not think that this is the only thing that *prakṛiti* is capable of doing. This wondrous universe that is before us is one shape it has taken, and it can take millions and millions of shapes of a different kind altogether, which are unthinkable by any kind of mind. Thus, it is said in the Caitanya Caritāmṛta: *ananta-koṭi brahmāṇḍa* (C.C. XX.284). An endless number of universes do exist, just as an endless number of statues exist in a block of stone. Nobody can say how many universes are there. Hence, this particular universe, about which we are wonder-struck, is only one shape *prakṛiti* has taken out of the many that it is capable of. That one thing is troubling us so much.

This shape that *prakriti* has taken is inclusive of our bodies, our minds, our personalities; all these individuals are part of this drama of the *mulaprakriti*. As it was mentioned previously, it has modified itself into many forms—primarily into the object and the subject. We regard ourselves as subjects, the percipients, the seers, the cognisers, or the experiencers, and regard everything else as the object.

The problem of life is simple, and it can be stated in one sentence. The problem of life is the difficulty that one feels in adjusting oneself with the objects outside, with which one is always irreconcilable. The reason is that the *gunas* of *prakriti*, which are the primary constituents of all objects, are continuously changing, modifying themselves, and it is difficult to understand the patterns into which they cast themselves, the changes which they follow in their course. We cannot follow the course of *prakriti*, the speed with which the *gunas* move. Also, we cannot understand what will be the intention of the *gunas* even in the next moment, because of the fact that we have egoism in our personality.

We are not in harmony with the *gunas* of *prakriti*; we have got a personality. We have got a substance of our own, a kernel which asserts itself as absolutely independent. What this essence or kernel of personality does is that it cuts off any kind of information in regard to what is taking place outside. We cannot have ingress into the processes that are taking place outside in the universe because there is a vehement affirmation of the ego that its ideas, as they stand now, are all the reality for it, and nothing else exists. The ego cannot cope with the changes that take place outside because they are not in accordance with the notions

that it has. The *gunas* of *prakṛiti* are uniformly present everywhere, and they inexorably work impartially both in the subject as well as in the object. But the subject has an ego that prevents the knowledge of this impartial working of the *gunas*, and it is this that has to be tackled directly by the process of *samyama*. If this fortress of the ego can be broken, there can be immediate entry into the nature of the object, and then we flow with the current of things. Then nobody can control us, and nobody can harass us. Nobody can create a problem for us.

The way in which this obstruction in the form of the ego is removed is twofold—subjective as well as objective. The subjective method was described in the form of the three *parinamas* mentioned in the earlier *sutras*. Now the objective method is mentioned—namely, the way in which the mind can concentrate on an object as the form taken by the original substance, or the *mulaprakṛiti*—the concentration which can be practised by which the egoistic affirmation can be broken through.

The ego is broken either by internal self-analysis or by objective concentration. Both ways are equally applicable and effective. It is the ego that prevents us from concentrating ourselves on anything, because the ego has a notion of the variety of things, and a need for appropriating various diverse characters for its own satisfaction. And inasmuch as we are preventing this kind of contact and satisfaction, it resents all forms of concentration of mind. The three *gunas* work in the mind as well as the objects.

Na tad asti pṛithivyām vā divi deveṣu vā punaḥ, sattvaṁ prakṛitijair muktaṁ yad ebhiḥ syāt tribir guṇaiḥ (B.G. XVIII.40), says the Bhagavadgita. There is nothing in

all of earth and heaven which is free from these three *gunas*; not even the gods are free from this. All the objects outside, present in all the fourteen realms—all the *lokas*—and the mind itself, are this dramatic picturesque presentation of the three *gunas*. Thus, before mastery is gained over objects and *prakriti* itself through *samayama* in yoga, it is necessary to concentrate on the manner in which *prakriti* modifies itself into these formations.

Chapter 94

UNDERSTANDING THE STRUCTURE OF THINGS

The *sutra* we are studying, *etena bhūtendriyeṣu dharma lakṣaṇa avasthā pariṇāmāḥ vyākhyātāḥ* (III.13), tells us that the variety of things that we see in this world is the last shape that is taken by *prakṛiti* through the processes known as *dharma*, *lakṣana* and *avastha*. Every object of perception of the senses is a condition, or *avastha*, that is maintained by *prakṛiti*. The maintenance of this *avastha* condition in its form as an object of sense is internally regulated by a pattern, or *lakṣana*; the form of the object is a manifestation of this pattern. This *lakṣana* pattern, again, is due to a character called *dharma* that is inherent in the original substance, *prakṛiti*. In spite of the multitudinous variety that we see in the form of things in the world, all this variety is the last shape taken by *prakṛiti* and is reducible to a single substance by the reverse process of the return of the effects to the cause.

This is what is done in *samyama* on any particular object. It is this variety that troubles us and entangles us, confuses us, deludes us, and consequently makes us attached to variety, which is really not there. Thus, attachment of any kind is a kind of confusion of thought. It is a blunder that the mind commits due to not being able to gain entry into the basic substance which has taken this variety of shape in the form of these objects to which the mind is attached.

The relationship of the mind to the objects is a very important thing to be taken into consideration at the time of the practice of *samyama* because *samyama* gradually reduces the distance between the mind and the object, so that a stage will be reached when there will be no distance at all. The mind will be the object, and the object will be the mind; the thinker will be the 'thought of', and vice versa. But the mind will revolt against any such attempt, which is the reason why there is difficulty in concentration of mind. The refusal of the mind to concentrate on any given object is due to its inability to comprehend the relationship it maintains with the object, and the relationship of any object with other objects. The objects, which are the *bhutas*—or rather, the evolutes of the *bhutas*, the elements—are known to exist and operate on account of the action of the senses. The mind begins to be aware of the activity of the world outside through the senses, the *indriyas*. And, the transformation, which is the conditioning factor of the objects outside in the world, again gets conditioned through the senses when it reaches the mind, so that there is no direct knowledge of the nature of the transformation which the objects undergo.

It is not possible to have a correct insight into the nature of things directly by the mind, on account of there being an intervening activity called the senses or the *indriyas*. So there is a need for not only an adjustment of the internal processes of thought, but also there is a need for the regulation of the activity of the senses in order that there may be a harmony between the mental transformations inside and the outer transformations which are the conditioning factors of the objects outside.

We have, therefore, a final aim in yoga, which is the thorough harmonisation of the activities of the mind, the senses and the objects outside, without any kind of discrepancy or disharmony intervening in the middle.

Now, at the present moment, what happens is that the thoughts of the mind do not correspond to the nature of objects; therefore, the mind has no control over things. If the mind has to correspond to fact, it has to understand what the fact is. Inasmuch as the fact is not known, there is no such correspondence. The fact is nothing but the law that operates behind the existence of the objects—which operates behind the mind also, subjectively. But the mind is ignorant of this fact.

The ignorance present in the mind is due to the very old matter about which we were speaking—*asmita*, egoism. The mind and the egoism are united; they cannot be separated. The ego principle, which is the cohesive force that keeps the mind in a restricted position, prevents its connection with anything else other than that with which the ego is connected, so the mind is completely cut off from the world of objects outside. Inasmuch as the personal notions of the mind, as determined by the principle of the ego, cannot always correspond to the law of things in general, there is disharmony between the subject and the object. This disharmony between the subject and the object is the reason behind the subject having no knowledge of the object. Consequently, there is no control over anything. There is a total helplessness on the part of the subject and a compulsion which the subject feels in respect of everything, because the law of the world presses upon the subject so forcefully to yield to its dictates, in spite of whatever the

mind may be thinking according to its whims and fancies. Thus, the reason for the bondage of the *jiva*, or the subject, is the vehemence of the ego, or the *asmita tattva*, which will not sacrifice even a whit of its notions and opinions about things.

The yoga process here, in this great endeavour known as *samyama*, attempts to cut at the root of this problem by a direct focusing of the attention of the mind on the very same thing with which it cannot reconcile itself—namely, the object. The name ‘object’ is given to that with which we cannot reconcile ourselves; otherwise, it will not be an object. It will be like us only—it will be a subject. It is something different from us and, therefore, we call it an object. It stands outside us because we cannot cope with its ways of working and the manner of its relationship with other things of a similar nature.

The object that we see with the eyes, for instance, is therefore, on a deeper probe, revealed to be an index of a condition which is cosmical in nature. It is not isolated as it appears. The vast *prakriti*, being universal in its operations, focuses itself on a pinpoint in the form of an object of sense. And every object has the background of a universal pressure which *prakriti* exerts at any given moment of time. This pressure is exerted by *prakriti* on any object, whatever be the shape of that object. The different characters exhibited by different objects do not in any way mean a difference in the nature of the pressure exerted by *prakriti* on these objects. It has a uniform pressure communicated to everything and anything, and that pressure is the pattern which *prakriti* wants to maintain in the form of this manifested universe. That is called the *laksana*.

As it was mentioned previously, this universe is only one of the forms which *prakriti* can take. In every *kalpa*, or age-cycle, the form of the universe changes. *Kalpa* means a cycle of time beginning with the manifestation of the universe and ending with its dissolution, or *pralaya*. Between the *kalpas* is a condition of equipoise called *samyavastha* which contains the potentialities for creation of the next *kalpa*. In every *kalpa*, *prakriti* takes a particular time-form for the projection of a universe determined by the potentialities existing originally in the condition of equipoise called *samyavastha*. All schools of thought tell us that the nature of the universe manifested in any particular *kalpa* is equivalent to the requisite conditions necessary for the fulfilment of the unfulfilled desires of individuals who lay buried, unconscious, at the time of the dissolution of the world prior to this particular manifestation.

What we are told here is that any particular object—or any particular group of objects, for the matter of that—do not constitute a separate entity or a reality by itself, or by themselves. On the other hand, this particular object, or a group of objects, represents merely a condition of *prakriti*, even as the mind itself is such a condition in a more rarefied form. The subjective manifestation of *prakriti* is the mind, and its objective manifestation is the object, the *visaya*.

In *samyama*, or the practice of meditation in the form of total absorption, this point is borne in mind—namely, that the meditation is more on a situation or a condition rather than a compact substance. We are under the mistaken notion that there is a solid object in front of us which is completely different from other objects, with no

connection at all with other things, separated by space and time. This is not the truth of things.

The true state of affairs is that any particular form that is visible or tangible in any other manner to the senses is a representation of a particular condition, or *avastha*, of *prakriti*, which has as its background the *laksana*, or the pattern which is in its mind, or which is its motive—just as an artist has a particular pattern present in his mind before he paints a picture with ink on a canvas. The ink can take any shape. He can paint a cow, or a horse, or a human being with the same ink. The substance is the same. Three colours are given to a painter, and the painter can paint anything. Any shape can be taken by the same substance. Likewise, the painter is only *prakriti* who painted these pictures of varieties out of a basic substance which is common to all forms, and the mind is not to be deluded into the belief that this variety is really there. There are only three inks—*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*—out of which all this wonderful painting has been presented before the senses. The master genius, who is *prakriti*, is the artist.

Now we come to the point of practice of yoga, which is the intention in this *sutra*: *etena bhūtendriyeṣu dharmalakṣaṇa avasthā pariṇāmāḥ vyākhyātāḥ* (III.13). Just as there are the *parinamas*, or transformations, of the mind known as *nirodha parinama*, *samadhi parinama* and *ekagrata parinama*, there are the *dharmalakṣana* and *avastha parinamas* of everything. In fact, *dharmalakṣana* and *avastha* are only other names for these three *parinamas* mentioned already—namely, *nirodha*, *samadhi* and *ekagrata*.

Hence, we have to establish a connection between the mind and the object by means of understanding these *lakṣanas*, *avasthas*, etc., which are the powers operating behind the form. It was also said that these properties inhere in the substance, *prakṛiti*, and because of the inherence of these properties which are *dharma*s, they are called *dharmi*. What is *dharma* and what is *dharmi*? It is mentioned in the next *sūtra*: *śānta udita avyapadeśya dharma anupātī dharmī* (III.14). A *dharmi* is a substance in which *dharma*s inhere, exist. How do they exist? They exist in three ways: as the past, as the present and as the future. *Santa*, *udita* and *avyapadesa*, the three terms used in this *sūtra*, mean respectively, the past, the present and the future. A particular character of an object that is cognisable or perceptible is the present condition of that object; it is not the whole condition.

We are all present here as human beings with different personalities. We have a body; we have a mind; we have our own individuality. Each individuality of each person sitting here is a present condition assumed by the characters of a substance of which we are made. It is not the entirety of our nature that is manifest here, because we have a past, and we also have a future. The past has been submerged by the preponderance of the forces that have become present, and similarly, the characters that are going to be manifest in the future are also put down, for the time being, by the force of the characters that are manifest in the present. There are potentialities, latent powers, potencies present in each form—in you, in me, in everything—which have the peculiarity in them of releasing only certain particular features at a particular time, and pressing down, not

allowing to manifest, other features which are not required to manifest at that time. These features which are not manifest may be either past or future. This is a very strange thing, and is also something very terrible.

What the *sutra* intends to tell us is that it is stupid on the part of any person to imagine that he is this personality which is manifest now at the present moment. He or she, as appearing now at the present moment, is only one feature that is manifest by the potentialities that are inside. There are so many potentialities which are yet to be manifested in the future. We will become another person altogether after some time, and we will be thinking that we are another person—this person has gone. We were another person in the past, we are one thing now in the present, and we will be some third thing in the future. So, to which form are we going to be attached? Or, to put it more concretely, do we know what we were in our previous birth? Man, woman, king or beggar, rich or poor, tall or short, from the West or the East—what were we? Nobody can say anything. We were something quite different from what we are today. We have completely ignored that which we were in the past, and now we are clinging to that which we are at present. How is it that we have completely ignored what we were in the past? We were clinging to that, once upon a time, as our real personality. How is it that we have completely forgotten that and now we are fixing our attention on something which is present? And do we know what we will be in our future? Nobody knows. We will be something else, and afterwards we will cling to that, forgetting the present.

No one can be in a uniform condition always. There is no such thing as a fixed personality or eternal individuality. Such things do not exist. So it is really very surprising that the consciousness should be tied up, like a victim to a post, in the form of a given condition at a particular moment of time. The consciousness is aware only of the present; it is not aware of the past, and also it is not aware of the future. But that which modifies itself into these features—in the past, in the present and in the future—is uniformly present always. That is our basic nature. It is the nature of everything—inanimate, animate, etc. In all the realms of existence there is only one basic *dharmi*, or substance, which has cast itself into the moulds of various *dharmas* of forms and shapes, etc., and it can manifest itself so forcefully in the time-form that it can create the impression of that particular time-form as the only reality for the time being, as if the other features are not existent at all.

We are, for instance, not conscious of the existence of worlds other than this earth, or the physical plane. But scriptures tell us, and even science corroborates, that there can be many kinds of beings—perhaps infinite in number—all differing, one from the other. Also, the contents of the realms will not be similar, because they belong to different space-times. This is also a great revelation of the modern theory of relativity. There are infinite space-times, and each space-time has a peculiar conditioning feature which manifests itself as a particular world of perception or experience. This particular space-time is only one possibility among the many possibilities in the form of many other space-times—infinite in number. This is also mentioned to us in the stories of the Yoga Vasishtha.

Infinite space-times, infinite worlds are there, and one can be penetrating through the other, one not being aware of the existence of the other. Worlds interpenetrate one another at a given cross-section of time and space, and yet one will not be aware of the other on account of the difference of the frequency of consciousness which is connected to that particular order of space-time.

This present condition of experience, which is called *udita* in this particular *sutra*, is only one time-form taken by *prakriti*, and it has potentialities which were in the past that can manifest themselves once again in the future. There will be an occasion for us to study this in future, when Patanjali will tell us that there is no identical substance called 'individual' at all. There is no self-identical being. They are only different phases of the manifestation of *prakriti*, which is mistaken for a self-identical individuality, so that what is intended here is that the so-called *asmita*, which plays such havoc, is a phantasmagoria. It is not there at all!

It is very surprising how consciousness can assume such a shape—a shape which is really not there, and which is totally unsubstantial. This point Patanjali wants to drive into our minds so that *samyama* can be made easy, because as long as there are attachments present in the mind, no *samyama* is possible. Subconscious impulses will drag us in another direction altogether, so the very subconscious attachment should be snapped in the bud. This is possible only by a thorough analysis of the structure of things, the nature of the objects which are the causes of attachment, and the nature of *asmita*, the egoism, which is another

reason for the impossibility of the mind to concentrate on anything that is given.

These few *sutras* which we have been studying are very difficult ones—hard nuts to crack. But they are very important in the sense that an understanding of their import is necessary for the purpose of a whole-souled absorption in the object of meditation, the object of *samyama*, for the purpose of acquiring powers of mastery over nature. These powers are called *siddhis*—which are described in the further *sutras*.

Chapter 95

LIBERATION IS THE ONLY AIM OF YOGA

These *sutras* that we have been studying for some time purport to make out the connection that exists among the principal ingredients in the process of knowledge—namely, the object, the mind and the senses. These factors in perception or knowledge are mutually related, and in fact they form an organic whole. It is not true that any one is superior or inferior to the other in these three elements of knowledge. Therefore, it is also quite unintelligible as to how one can influence the other, control the other, inflict pain on another, or arouse joy in another. How does it happen that an object can stimulate pleasure and pain in the subject?

Considering the organic connection that has to be there between the mind and the objects, inasmuch as the mind and the object are both two aspects of the manifestation of a single substance—*prakriti*, which is the *dharmi* of which both the mind and the objects are *dharmas*—there is no question of one influencing the other, because both stand on an equal footing to some extent, like the right hand and the left hand. We cannot say which is superior to the other. There is no question of one causing an effect in the other. They work in parallel, and work for a higher purpose, transcending the operations of these two individually so that the mutual interaction of the mind and the objects is not intended to bring about any experience individually in the mind, or the subject, but is for the liberation of the spirit, as the *sutra* puts it: *bhogāpavargārtham drśyam* (II.18). This *bhoga*, this experience of the contact of the

subject with the object, is for the purpose of the liberation of the spirit, ultimately.

Thus, there is a transcendent purpose in this contact of the mind with the objects through the senses. If this purpose is mistaken, misconstrued, completely forgotten or kept out of sight, then there is bondage. If there is no transcendent purpose in the operation of the limbs of the body, there would be no harmony in the working of the limbs. There is a deeper motive behind every activity of the parts of an organism, and this motive is the liberation of the soul, though it is brought about by certain processes which are called experiences, or *bhoga*, in the language of Patanjali. *Bhogāpavargārtham dṛśyam* (II.18), says the *sutra*. The object, which is the *dṛśya*, is intended for the purpose of bringing about experiences in the subject with the intention of the liberation of the soul, ultimately.

Hence, anything that happens anywhere has a single purpose—whether it is a happy event or an unhappy one, pleasurable or otherwise. Whatever be the circumstance through which one passes in life, all this has a single aim, and that is the freedom of the soul. By kicks and blows and permutations, combinations and transfers, and the bringing about of transformations of various types, *prakṛiti* drags the whole cosmos towards the consummation which is the Self-realisation of the Absolute, which is the Spirit. For this purpose is this drama of *prakṛiti*. But the aim, which is so sublime even in the littlest of experiences, is completely kept out of the sight of the mind of the individual, and there is only a restricted vision provided so that the mind cognises only a little object in front of it, and develops individualised relationships which are contrary to the law

of nature. This is the reason why ordinarily there is no possibility of the mind concentrating on an object as an exclusive reality, because there are other objects upon which this object hangs, and by which it is influenced.

The mutual interaction of the mind and the objects through the senses is a complex process which has a connotation deeper than what appears on the surface outside and merely what is brought to the notice of the mind inside. Experiences are not intended to bring pleasure or pain. That is not the purpose of nature. That there is a sort of experience which goes by the name of 'pleasure' or 'pain' is a side issue. It is not the main objective of experience. Every experience is impersonal in nature. It has no other intention than bringing about a cosmical awakening in the spirit within.

The pleasures and the pains that hang upon this experience, incidentally, are the reactions of the mind in respect of this experience, from its own point of view. If the mind is not to react in a particular manner to the experience provided in this manner, there would be neither pleasure nor pain. It is a 'feeling' that is called pleasure or pain; it is not an existent something by itself. And a feeling is nothing but a reaction of the psychological organ. Why does it react in a particular manner? It reacts because of its restricted vision in respect of the experience through which it passes. If it has a vision of the motive or the purpose that is hidden behind the experience, this reaction will not be there.

The yoga process, by means of *samyama*, attempts to raise the mind from the status of an ordinary onlooker of the object and an individual subject, in order that it may

enter into the organic character of this experience which is between itself and the object outside. *Samyama* is an organic completeness of experience. We become a complete whole when we are practising yoga. We are not a partial being. We are raised to a fullness of substance and being, which creates in us a sense of delight, far transcending the pleasures of sense. The *samyama* process creates happiness. It is not an ordinary emotional reaction. It is not happiness in the ordinary sense. There is no term at all that is equivalent to the character of this experience. It is not delight; it is not happiness; it is not pleasure; it is nothing of the kind. It is something more than all this. What one feels when one is possessed of the soul is difficult to explain in language; and it is the soul that is gripped and grasped in *samyama*.

There is a partial experience of the soul in ordinary subjectivity. The soul is not located in our body alone. It is all-pervading Universal Being. That is the soul of things. And so when we wrongly locate that soul inside our limited body, we have only a fraction of the experience of the soul; therefore, in its reality, the soul does not rise to the surface of our consciousness in any of our actions or experiences. Hence, we cannot be really happy at any time, because real happiness is the rousing of the soul to the surface of consciousness. The being of the soul should become one with the consciousness that is experiencing any kind of event, for the matter of that. But the being of the soul gets submerged in the activity of the ego, or the *asmita*; therefore, there is the feeling of limitedness on the part of the mind, which is the centre of the subject. In *samyama*, or the deep absorption of the subject-consciousness in the

object, there is an occasion provided for the manifestation of the soul in its totality.

The impossibility of experiencing this soul arises on account of the perception of an object outside. This externality of perception has to be completely overcome by a technique of coming in union with the object. We have created a bifurcated experience in ourselves, on account of which there is a segment of the soul on the subject side, and another segment on the object side. The object side drags the soul from the subject; and the soul from the other side, which is also the subject, drags the object from its own point of view. So there is a mutual pull and push of the subject and the object. It is the Infinite that is actually the cause of the mutation of properties, or the transmutation of qualities—the changes in *prakriti*. The experiences, which are the *bhoga* mentioned in the *sutra* of Patanjali, are nothing but the processes of *prakriti* through which the soul passes for the sake of awakening itself to its total consciousness, which it is unable to experience on account of its limitation to a particular *guna* of *prakriti*—*sattva*, or *rajas*, or *tamas*. It is only in a condition which is above the three *gunas* that there can be an experience of the soul.

When this fact is grasped properly, which is the lesson that the *sutras* mentioned provide us with, there is an easy access into the process of *samyama*. We can fix ourselves on the object, not regarding it as an object any more but as a part of our own selves. This is exactly what is intended in the meaning of the *sutra* which we have already studied in connection with what is known as *ekagrata parinama*. *Tulya pratyayau* was the phrase used in that particular *sutra*. There is a *tulya pratyayau*, or an equanimity of

experience in respect of the subject as well as the object, at a stage when the total being is about to rise to the surface of consciousness.

In the beginning there is a tussle, and that is the experience known as *nirodha parinama*. Then, gradually, there is a rise to a more controlled condition of the mind, which is *samadhi parinama*. And, finally, we come to *ekagrata parinama*, where the object ceases to be an object and it assumes a character which is similar to the subject. That situation is called *tulya pratyayau*. There will then be no kind of friction between the subject and the object. There will be a flow of the current of thought from the subject to the object, and in this particular state we will not know which is the subject and which is the object. We will be placed in the position of the object—such is the intensity of concentration. As this is a difficult thing to conceive and practise, Patanjali gives us an analysis of the relationship of the mind with the objects by saying *etena bhūtendriyeṣu dharma lakṣaṇa avasthā pariṇāmāḥ vyākhyātāḥ* (III.13) and *śānta udiva avyapadeśya dharma anupātī dharmī* (III.14).

The very same truth is now revealed by another *sutra* where Patanjali says: *krama anyatvaṁ pariṇāma anyatve hetuḥ* (III.15). The modifications into which *prakṛiti* casts itself to appear as an object are really not objects of sense-experience. How *prakṛiti* modifies itself into an object, the senses cannot conceive. They cannot understand the process which *prakṛiti* adopts in becoming a particular object. But the *sutra* tells us how this happens. The object is nothing but a modification of *prakṛiti*; that is the *parinama*. *Parinama anyatva* means the difference that is observed

among the different objects of perception. One object is different from the other on account of a differentia, or a peculiar specific character, that is present in each particular object. This specification of a particular object, as distinguished from others, is caused by the succession of the *gunas*. That is what is known as *krama anyatvam*. 'Krama' is a succession, an order.

It will be very surprising to know that this *sutra* is telling us exactly what the quantum theory of modern physics says. Long before Max Planck, who was the father of the quantum theory, was born, Patanjali was describing the way in which objects are formed. Modern physical science tells us that the nature of an object is dependent on the succession, the velocity and the placement of the electrical particles within an atom. Patanjali does not use such words as 'electrical particles', etc. He uses the word '*gunas*'. But the process that these two people describe is identical. What Patanjali tells us in this *sutra* is that the solidity and the specific character of a particular object is dependent on the intensity, the velocity and the succession of the *gunas* of *prakriti*, which are only three. As the physicist tells us, a particular atom differs from another on account of the successive placement of the electrons around the nucleus, as they call it, together with the velocity which differs from one atom to another. It is only the number, the velocity and the pattern of these electrons that distinguishes one from the other.

This *sutra* is telling us same thing—that one object differs from the other object on account of the velocity of the *gunas* and the particular location of these *gunas* in the succession of their revolution. This means to say that the

particular degree of intensity of the three *gunas* in varying proportions in the formation of an object is the cause of the difference of one object from another object. All objects are made up of the same substance, just as science tells us that everything is made up of subatomic particles. Whether it is cow's milk or snake poison, it makes no difference—they are made up of the same thing. They appear to be different on account of this peculiar reason.

This *sutra*, *krama anyatvaṃ pariṇāma anyatve hetuḥ* (III.15), highlights the truth that it should not be difficult for the mind to absorb itself in *samyama* on an object, because of the fact that all objects are similar in their character; and because of the similarity of the structure of objects, there should be no distraction in the mind. What prevents the absorption of the mind in the object is the distraction that is behind it. The distraction is caused by the feeling of the reality of other objects, to which it gets attached. All this is due to the belief in the real diversity of things, which is not actually there, says the *sutra*.

The mind which contemplates, the senses which drag this mind to the object, and the object itself are all of a similar substance. They appear to be different on account of the intensity of the *gunas* in varying proportion, either on the subject-side or on the object-side. So, if we can actually go deep into the meaning of what these *sutras* tell us, we will be taken to a surprising conclusion: there is no such thing as a meditator. The meditator does not exist, because what meditates is already a part of that which is meditated upon.

This feeling of the unity of the meditating subject with the object will be the masterstroke in bringing about

samyama. All attachments will automatically cease. It is the universe itself meditating in the practice of *samyama*; it is neither you, nor I, nor any individual. The individual becomes only an occasion—rather, a symbol—for the manifestation of a universal power, which creates a universal situation; this is the practice of *samyama*. If this is practised effectively, one can know the past, the present and the future. This is what Patanjali concludes. We will not be oblivious of the past or ignorant of the future. *Pariñāmatraya saṁyamāt atīta anāgatajñānam* (III.16). We will become omniscience itself. If this meditation can be practised daily, we will be slowly taken up to a level of consciousness where we will begin to feel what is in the past and what is in the future—and, of course, what is in the present.

The past and the future are cut off from our present experience because of our weddedness to the body and a wrong feeling that the object is located in one place only. This feeling the author wants to remove from our minds by this critical analysis of the situation of the subject as well as the object. The mind will be lifted up into a Universal awareness. There will be a flow of events continually, from the past to the present, and the present to the future, so that there will be no past, no present and no future. There will be a continuity of experience because experience, here, becomes a total comprehensiveness of all the features of experience and is not limited only to the present.

Previously we studied, in connection with an earlier *sutra*, that we are aware only of the present and we are not aware of anything that is in the past or in the future because of the force with which all the *gunas* emphasise themselves

in a particular manner, to the exclusion of the emphasis they laid in the past and the emphasis that they are going to lay in the future. We have no control over these *gunas* and, therefore, we are subject to the emphasis that they lay at any given moment of time and we are aware only of that particular stress of the *gunas*. That stress is the present. The past has gone and the future has not come. But if we are lifted from this stress by the practice of *samyama*, this knot which has tied consciousness to a little location or space-point, which is the present notion of ours as subject-object relation, can be broken. Then we will enter into a vastness of feeling, a universality of experience; we will become as vast as space itself. We can imagine how terrible it is, what sort of *samyama* Patanjali actually had in his mind. We are really as vast as space even now, but that does not become a content of our awareness at present because of this hard-boiled ego, this *asmita*, which will not listen to any advice of anybody. “What I say is right”—that is its conviction, which is what is actually broken through in *samyama*. Hence, we are given a great, solacing message in the *sutra*: *pariṇāmatraya saṁyamāt atīta anāgatajñānam* (III.16). *Atīta anagata* means the past as well as that which is yet to come. We will be aware of this.

In the beginning it will not be Cosmic-consciousness suddenly, or God-consciousness. It will not come like that. It will be only an inclination, a hint, a sensing, a feeling, a tendency to feel what is going to happen. There are many people who can feel what is going to happen; they are not Cosmic-conscious, but they can have a sensation of something going to happen. That is because of their psychic relationship with the future event that is going to take

place. This is only possible by the loosening of the knot of *asmita*. The more hard the ego is, the less is the possibility of this experience. Therefore, day in and day out we have to struggle with meditation, and it will come to the point, later on, that we cannot do anything else in life except this, if only our objective is this.

Here, yoga takes a very serious turn and becomes the sole profession in one's life, and no other profession is permissible, because here is the masterstroke which deals a deathblow to all other problems of life and reveals the character of Truth in its nakedness. All the *sutras* that come after are only descriptions of the results that follow by various types of *samyama*. They are called *siddhis* in Sanskrit—the perfections or powers that we gain by various types of concentration. If we concentrate on an elephant, what will happen? If we concentrate on land, what will happen? If we concentrate on the sun, what will happen? If we concentrate on our head, what will happen? And so on, Patanjali gives various types of *samyama*—as specimens, of course. It is not that he exhausts the list. We can do *samyama* on anything, for the matter of that. But he gives certain chosen specified types of *samyama*, and tells us what consequences will follow.

These perfections, or *siddhis*, mentioned in the following *sutras* are of three kinds: perfections, or powers, which belong to the objective world, those which are concerned with the subject, and those that are concerned with the Absolute, the supreme *purusha*. Three types of powers accrue to a yogi by the practice of *samyama*. The teaching of the Yoga Shastra is that we should not engage ourselves too much in the acquisition of powers, or *siddhis*,

by concentrating either on the objective side or the subjective side, because the intention of yoga is not the acquisition of powers. Though powers may come on the way, of their own accord, we are not going to practise yoga for this purpose.

The aim of yoga is liberation, salvation, *kaivalya moksha*, and, therefore, *samyama* should be practised only in such a way as to bring about the salvation of the soul, or the attainment of *moksha*. We should not dabble in concentration on objects for the purpose of telepathic communication, or distant healing, or control to be exercised on other people, on other things, etc.—which we can do, but we should not do. A warning is given in one of the *sutras*: we should not exercise our power of concentration on other people or on other things if they are not going to be helpful in our salvation.

After a certain stage of meditation—say, after a few years of deep concentration and meditation of *samyama*—we will acquire some powers. Everyone will acquire some powers. And if we think very deeply, that may materialise. But we must be very cautious as to how we will direct our thoughts when such powers accrue to us, because we are likely to be tempted by the emotions and the sentiments of the mind which will carry us headlong into some illusion and completely cut us off from the path of salvation.

So when Patanjali tells us what are the powers that will accrue to us by deep *samyama* practised in different ways, he also warns us by saying that these methods should not be adopted unless they are conducive to the liberation of the soul. Such are the various wonders of yoga which will reveal themselves spontaneously to a yogi by regular practice.

Chapter 96

POWERS THAT ACCRUE IN THE PRACTICE OF SAMYAMA

The aphorisms of the Vibhuti Pada that follow, henceforward, pertain mainly to the powers that one acquires by the practice of *samyama*. These themes are of practically no help to a beginner or a novice in yoga because Patanjali is only describing the consequences of certain practices. The methodology of these different types of practices is also kept a great secret by the *sutra* itself, so that merely by a casual reading we cannot make sense out of it. Perhaps this secret has been kept in check deliberately by the author, so that people may not misconceive the meaning of the admonition given in the *sutras* and get into trouble. Very guarded words have been used, whose meanings will not be clear on a mere linguistic study or the making out of a grammatical meaning of the words. They are all connotative of deep essences of practice.

We need not go into the details of every one of these *sutras* because not only will they be of no help to anyone here who is attempting to practise yoga, but also it may stir up some kind of unnecessary enthusiasm in the minds of some people which may not be to their advantage, since it cannot be pursued under the existing conditions of these days. However, I shall try to give a general idea as to what is at the back of this system which the author of the *sutras* is trying to explain as a philosophical and psychological background.

As I mentioned previously, these powers are of three kinds, or categories: the objective, the subjective and the Absolute, or we may call it the Universal. Powers that one gains in respect of the objective world are of one kind; those pertaining to the subjective faculties are of a different kind; and those that are intended to bring about the salvation of the spirit, ultimately, are of a third kind altogether. The secret of this practice, or rather the technique behind this *samyama* in respect of any chosen object, is given in a *sutra* in the Samadhi Pada itself, which we studied long ago.

How is it that we come to acquire power at all? What is the secret behind it? Why is it that we do not simply have any power now, at this present moment? Why has this power come now? Where was it hidden up to this time? This has been made clear in a *sutra* in the Samadhi Pada which goes as follows: *kṣīṇavṛtteḥ abhijātasya iva maṇeḥ grahīṭṣu grahaṇa grāhyeṣu tatstha tadañjanatā samāpattiḥ* (I.41). This requires the meditating mind to become consubstantial with the object—the subject united with the object so that it gains insight into the nature of the object. Then it is that the gulf separating the mind from the object is bridged by the practice of *samyama*, and the powers inherent in the object flow into the subject. That is the secret. Whatever is your power becomes my power when I become one with you. This is to state the whole method in simple terms. That which is outside our capacity comes within our capacity when that in which this capacity is inherent comes under our control. And this control is not an ordinary type of authority that we exercise over an object, as a master exercises authority over a servant. It is not like that. It is a complete mastery where that which is to

be controlled does not stand outside the subject controlling it. It has become one, organically. This is the meaning of this *sutra* which has been given to us in the Samadhi Pada.

Now, applying this technique, Patanjali tells us that we can control anything, whether it is visible or invisible, material or otherwise. The objective side, which is known as *grahaya samapatti* in the language of yoga, is intended to control the elements. The five elements which constitute this vast world, or rather the entire universe of physical nature, are supposed to be under one's control, provided *samyama* is practised on them. Earth, water, fire, air and ether—these are the elements, and no one can have any control over them. They are the masters, as is well known. But they can be controlled, says the *sutra*, provided we establish a harmony with them and we become one with the law which operates them in the universe. This is called *bhūtajaya*—control of the elements.

As I mentioned, these *sutras* are very terse and convey no meaning at all on a casual, superficial reading. To give only an instance, I am mentioning this *sutra* which gives us the method of controlling the elements: *sthūla svarūpa sūkṣma aṅvaya arthavatva saṁyamāt bhūtajayaḥ* (III.45). Such a terrific thing Patanjali explains in one small *sutra*. All the five elements are controlled by a practice which is mentioned in this *sutra*: *sthūla svarūpa sūkṣma aṅvaya arthavatva saṁyamāt bhūtajayaḥ*. We have to practise *samyama* on the elements. How is it done? This is what he is telling us in this *sutra*; and from the meaning of it we can find out why it is useless for a beginner.

Patanjali says the five aspects of the elements have to be taken into consideration. These five aspects are mentioned

in this *sutra*. *Sthula* is the first aspect; *svarupa* is the second aspect; *sukshma* is the third aspect; *anvaya* is the fourth aspect; *arthavatva* is the fifth aspect. If we can understand what these words mean, then the meaning of the *sutra* is clear. Different interpreters give different meanings, because the *sutra* has no grammatical sense—the words have only a secret mystical meaning behind them. But as far as it has been understood by people, what the *sutra* tells here is that we have to gradually master the elements by rising from their grosser state to their subtler state—which is a method that can be adopted in respect of any other object also—for the practice of *samyama*.

The gross aspect is the first one, as the gross objects are visible to the senses. The way in which the senses grasp the elements is the character of the elements, which is called *sthula*. But the character, which is there from its own point of view, independent of the interpretation of it by the senses, is called *svarupa*. What is its status from its own point of view, independent of what we think or what we have been thinking about it—that situation of the element is called *svarupa*. Or rather, what you are, independent of what I think you are, is your *svarupa*. Thus, the gross form is that interpretation given to the elements by the senses, and the *svarupa* is the nature of the elements as they stand in themselves. That is a higher stage of understanding, where we rise above our interpretation to the situation as it is.

Sukshma is the third aspect, which is the subtle rudimentary character of the elements, known as *tanmatras*. They are made up of five forces called *shabda*, *sparsa*, *rupa*, *rasa* and *gandha*. They are vibrations,

ultimately; they are not simply solid objects. These vibrations, which are called *tanmatras*, are their third subtle aspect.

The fourth is *anvaya*, the immanence of the forces of *prakriti* as *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* in the elements. These elements are nothing but *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*; and their presence in all these forms is hidden. It is these three *gunas* that, by some peculiar modification of themselves, enter into a peculiar state of density, gradually, and become the five elements. There are no five elements; it is the three *gunas* appearing as the five. The five elements are nothing but the five gradations in the density of the development of the *mulaprakriti* herself. That is the immanent aspect of the elements, *anvaya*—the involvement of the elements in the three *gunas* of *prakriti*.

The last one is called *arthavatva*, the purpose for which they exist. Everything exists for the liberation of the spirit. That was pointed out in *sutras* we studied earlier. *Bhogāpavargārtham dṛśyam* (II.18): The whole universe has been manifest for the purpose of providing the field of experience for the individuals therein, in order that they may gain salvation, ultimately, through experiences of this kind. These are the five aspects of the five elements, and we concentrate and do *samyama* on them.

Then what happens? Patanjali says one gets eight *siddhis*: *anima*, *mahima*, *laghima*, *garima*, *prapti*, *prakamyā*, *istava* and *vasitva*. These are the eight powers that one gains by a control one acquires over the elements. If we hear what these eight *siddhis* are, we will leap in ecstasy. We can become small like a fibre of cotton, and we can become big like an iron hill—as heavy as we can

conceive, and as light as can be lifted up in the air—and have the capacity to manipulate anything in the world in any manner whatsoever. *Anima* is the power by which one becomes very small. *Mahima* is the power by which one becomes very big. *Laghima* is the power by which one becomes very light. *Garima* is the power by which one becomes very heavy. *Prapti* is the power by which one can contact anything anywhere, whatever be the distance of that object. *Prakamyā* is the capacity to fulfil any wish that is in the mind. *Isatva* is the capacity to bring anyone under one's subjection. And *vasitva* is the mastery over the whole universe. These are the powers, says Patanjali, that one can get by *samyama* on the five elements.

Do not try these methods. They are very dangerous and can lead to anything. You may end up in a mental hospital if you start these techniques without proper purification of the mind. It requires a Guru. Nobody may practise these *samyamas* without proper initiation under a competent master.

Thus, this *grahsya samapatti*, or the mastery one acquires over the object, brings such powers as these. Incidentally, it has a result on the body of the person also. There is a perfection that follows in respect of one's own body, which is described in another *sutra*: *rūpa lāvaṇya bala vajra saṁhananātvāni kāyasam̐pat* (III.47). It appears that one becomes very handsome in one's personality, beautiful in complexion, radiant in the skin, and so on; these are qualities described. Apart from that, great strength follows. One becomes *vajrasamhāna*—adamantine in one's energy so that one will become indefatigable and unapproachable by the forces of nature. These perfections

of the body are subsidiary consequences that follow the mastery one gains over the elements. The third result that follows, as the *sutra* tells us, is that the elements do not any more obstruct the person. We will not sink into water, or get burnt by fire, etc. These are the non-obstructing characters revealed by the elements. One can pierce through a wall and pass through it, by the entry of the subtle body through these apparently gross objects. The non-obstructive character of the elements in respect of the yogi is the third aspect.

These are, generally speaking, the objective powers that one gains. The subjective powers are mastery over the senses and the mind. Just as there are five aspects mentioned in connection with the control of the elements, five aspects are also mentioned in respect of the control of the senses. *Grahaṇa svarūpa asmitā anvaya arthavattva saṁyamāt indriyajayaḥ* (III.48). The senses can be controlled if we can understand their structure. Just as the five gradations of the manifestation of *prakṛiti* through the elements were mentioned, similar gradations are mentioned in respect of the senses.

The character of grasping an object is called *grahana*. The way in which the eyes see, the ears hear, etc.—that manner of the senses operating upon objects is called *grahana*. *Svarupa* is the senses themselves, independent of these functions. Apart from the functions that the senses perform, they have a nature of their own. That independent nature of the senses, apart from their activity, is called *svarupa*. *Asmita* is the I-principle that controls the operation of the five senses. It is the ego principle which organises the activities of the different senses and focuses

them on a particular object. That means to say, the higher controls the lower, and the higher includes the lower. Ultimately, it is the I-principle that is the reason behind the working of the senses. Thus, if we can grasp the meaning of this ego, the meaning of the senses also is clear. The fourth one is *anvaya*. That is similar to the fourth aspect in respect of the power of the five elements—namely, the operation of the *gunas*. The three *gunas*—*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* of *prakriti*—are the rudimentary principles behind the senses and also the *ahamkara tattva*, or I-principle. *Arthavattva* is the purpose of the activity of the senses—which is, again, to bring about experience for the purpose of the liberation of the spirit. With these connotations of the activities of the senses, one can concentrate, do *samyama* on the senses themselves, and the senses come under one’s control. *Grahaṇa svarūpa asmita anvaya arthavattva samyamata indriyajayaḥ* (III.48).

Then the *sutra*, *tataḥ manojavitvaṁ vikaraṇabhāvaḥ pradhānajayaḥ ca* (III.49), tells us that the mind becomes powerful and it can carry the body, like a rocket, to any place. That is called *manojavitvam*: one can fly as fast as the mind flies. *Vikranabhava* is another perfection that is said to follow. *Vikranabhava* means the capacity to reach any object, at any distance, and manipulate it in the manner required, according to the wish of the yogi. Again, this is another part of *grahsya samapatti*, or the power that one gains over the elements.

These powers, objective as well as subjective, are incidental to a greater or more noble purpose that is the very aim of the practice of yoga. The intention of the practice of yoga, says the *sutra*, is not to gain mastery over

anybody. These masteries follow as a matter of course. When we go to Rishikesh, which is our intention, on the way we will see so many things. We will see Yoga Niketan on the way; we will see Brahmananda Ashram; we see will Kailash Ashram. We may be seeing them, we may even be looking at them, we may be touching them, but our intention is something else: we want to go to Rishikesh. Likewise, when the aim is clear before one's mind, these powers which are incidental acquisitions come of their own accord, even without one's asking.

The powers are not really miracles as most people think. They are revelations of the forces of nature which are hidden, through which one passes when one rises from one realm to another realm. In each realm a particular law operates, just as different laws operate in different countries. When one gains entry into a particular realm, one becomes one with the law that operates in that realm; and to a lower realm, that upper law looks like a miracle. The aim of yoga is the liberation of the spirit. The highest perfections are not control of the elements, or bodily perfection, etc., as mentioned. The eight *siddhis* etc. are not the aim of yoga. Rather, they are obstacles if they are independently aimed at. The purpose is Cosmic-consciousness, which also is an incidental experience to the last stage which is called liberation, or *moksha*. Omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence are the last powers that come to a person. That is *Ishvara shakti*: entering into the mind of a yogi. That is the last perfection, and is connected with the Pure Spirit, or the *purusha*.

These perfections come in various ways: sometimes without one's knowing that they have come, or sometimes

they become objects of one's mental awareness. All people are not of the same kind. Every yogi is a specific character by himself or herself, so we cannot compare one with the other. Though many people may practise a similar technique of meditation, the experiences will not be uniform; they will vary because of the peculiarity or novelty of the physical and the mental strain of the individual concerned. These powers and experiences are the reactions set up in the personality of the yogi by the powers of nature as a whole, and inasmuch as the individualities of the yogis vary in the structure and the makeup of their organism, the reactions also vary in nature. Hence, experiences vary. Sometimes we may see light, sometimes we may not see light, and so on.

It is not the intention of the Yoga Shastra to describe what powers come to a yogi when he concentrates or practises *samyama*, as these are temptations and sidetracking issues. But anyhow, for the purpose of giving an idea of the greatness of the practice, and also to give some sort of an enthusiasm to the practitioners, the Yoga Sutra has gone into some detail as to the nature of these powers.

Our main point is *samyama*. There is no use merely counting the number of rich persons in the world and trying to find out the means by which they have become rich. Well, that may be a good science as a kind of theoretical pursuit, but what do we gain by knowing how many rich people are there in this world and how they have become rich? We will not become rich by knowing these methods, because it is a science by itself and not merely a historical study or a survey that we make statistically. The

science is a more important aspect of the matter than merely a statement of the consequences or results that follow by the pursuit of the science. What is the science? That is *samyama*, the subject that we have been studying all along. How are we able to concentrate the mind? For this purpose the author has taken great pains in some of the *sutras* to explain how the mind can be made to agree, wholeheartedly, with the pursuit of yoga, and how distractions can be eliminated. It is this that is the intention of the *sutras*, right from those which dealt with the *nirodha parinama*, etc., onwards.

The whole of yoga is summed up in one word: *samyama*. This is the entire system of Patanjali. How can we grasp the object in our consciousness? That is called meditation. This grasping of the object by consciousness is the gradual identification of consciousness with the object, and vice versa. How this can be done is the point on hand; and once this is understood, every other perfection will follow. We ourselves will be surprised at the powers that we gain. And as I mentioned, many times we will not even know that we have such powers. Only if we are rubbed hard will we know that the power is there.

There is an anecdote which is not mentioned in the Yoga Sutras. Aurangzeb heard that Tulsidas had great powers, that he was a *siddha*. He wanted to see what powers Tulsidas had, so he ordered Tulsidas to come to his court. By some means they brought the saint to the court of Aurangzeb, and the emperor said, "I want to see your powers. They say you are a person endowed with great occult forces." The saint said, "I don't know what you are talking about. I have no powers. I myself have not seen any,

and from where do these powers come?” “No, no, no,” Aurangzeb said, “I am not going to leave you like that. You must show me your powers.” Tulsidas said, “I do not have any powers. I have not exhibited any. Nor am I aware that I have any powers. So where comes this question of demonstrating before you? I myself do not know anything about them.” Aurangzeb said, “No! That is no good. I will not leave you. You must show them. If you are not going to show your powers, I will imprison you!” And Aurangzeb put Tulsidas behind bars. Well, that is all; Tulsidas was in the prison of Aurangzeb. Then and there a miracle took place. They say huge, giant-like monkeys—hundreds and thousands in number—started demolishing the entire city of Aurangzeb. They threatened everybody, and they destroyed many. It was a ravaging experience. They started attacking the palace of Aurangzeb himself. The guards ran away; it was all confusion, and they did not know what had happened. Nobody could come out of the house. Everywhere were giant-like monkeys, showing their teeth and attacking.

Aurangzeb did not know what was happening. People were crying and complaining about the ravage that had been effected in the whole city by unknown monsters coming as huge monkeys. Then someone told him, “We have made a mistake in imprisoning Tulsidas. Release him. He is a devotee of Rama, and so Rama’s army must have come.” Then Aurangzeb said, “Let him off. Let him off! Go, ask him to leave.” What this anecdote shows is, when we oppose a man of power, his power is seen. Otherwise, we cannot see the power. Even a lion’s power cannot be seen unless we oppose it. The lion will be sitting or lying down,

crouching on the ground as if it has no strength at all. If we want to see the strength of a lion, we must attack it, and then its power will be seen immediately. Similarly, often the powers of a *yogin* are not known, as they are hidden.

There were great yogis such as Suka and Jadabharata. Jadabharata's case was very marvellous. He never exhibited powers, and there is no indication anywhere that he was even aware that he had powers. He was like an idiot. Some dacoits caught hold of him and took him to Mother Kali to offer him as a victim in the worship, and he said nothing. He kept quiet and did not open his mouth. He did not behave like a yogi. When the *archaka* raised his sword to offer the victim to Mother Kali, a miracle took place. That image, which was apparently made of stone, assumed life, and suddenly a force emerged. The real Kali came out, and she simply laid waste the entire gang of the dacoits. They were offered as victims, not this old man.

We have stories and stories of this kind, where great masters lived hidden, unknown to the public eye, unseen—not only not known to the public eye, but sometimes not known even to themselves, inasmuch as they were absorbed in something else altogether. They had no time to think of their own powers and even their own needs. Janaka was one type of yogi, Sri Krishna was another type, Rama was a third type, Suka was another, and so on. There are various kinds of yogis who lived in different conditions and circumstances, all wielding the same powers—some exhibiting, some not exhibiting.

We, as little beginners in the practice of yoga, need not go into these miracles of the magnificent achievements of the great masters. We have to find out how they became

masters; that is what is more important. How did Suka become Suka? What was the secret behind it? What was the power of Vasishtha? He could simply stun all the celestial weapons of Visvamitra by a mere wooden stick that he had in front of him. Even the *brahmastra* would not work before that *yogadanda*. What is that secret? From where did he get that power? And Bharadvaja simply snapped his fingers and celestials dropped from the skies with golden plates of delicacies and served the millions and millions of soldiers of Bharata, who was in the forest in search of Rama. Merely a snap of the fingers would do, and celestials start dropping from the skies. From where is all this possible?

These are very interesting things to hear, of course, though it is very difficult to understand how it is possible. But if we know the science behind it, we can know the rationality behind it. And what is possible for one, what has been possible for one, should be possible for others, also, if the proper technique of meditation is practised.

Chapter 97

SUBLIMATION OF OBJECT-CONSCIOUSNESS

In about four *sutras* we are given the final touches of the practice of *samyama* for the liberation of the spirit. They are very concisely treated inasmuch as many of the details have already been furnished in the Samadhi Pada itself, and there is no need to reiterate all those various aspects that have been touched upon in the relevant *sutras* in the first *pada*.

The particular type of meditation that is directly responsible for the liberation of the soul is meditation on the *purusha*, as the *sutra* tells us. *Sattva puruṣayoḥ atyantāsankīrṇayoḥ pratyaya aviśeṣaḥ bhogaḥ parārthatvāt svārthasaṁyamāt puruṣajñānam* (III.36), says the *sutra*. The knowledge of the *purusha* is the knowledge of the Absolute. This comes by meditation on the *purusha* as the Ultimate Principle. No other kind of meditation can lead to liberation, though it can lead to various experiences, or powers. Also, it is the most difficult type of meditation because it requires qualifications not merely of the will or the thought, but also of the moral consciousness and the emotions. All these are known to us, as they have been described earlier.

There is a total disparity of character between the pure state of the *purusha* and the conditions of ordinary perception through the mind. In other words, there is a great difference between the status of consciousness in the state of the pure *purusha* and the condition of consciousness in ordinary world awareness. The present state of our mind is quite different and utterly opposed to

the state of consciousness expected in the state of the *purusha*, or the Ultimate Subject. It is difficult to conceive the nature of the two types of awareness and, therefore, we cannot understand what the difference is. Even the best of minds can fumble here on account of a subtle desire to transpose the characters of world perception to spiritual consciousness.

Spiritual consciousness is different from world perception, but many people do not understand this. They are, again and again, brought to the wrong conviction by the habits of the mind that, somehow or other, the conditions of world experience will persist even in God-consciousness. This is exactly what is denied in this *sutra*. World experience is different in character from spiritual experience, and those conditions which are necessary to rouse a spiritual experience in oneself are to be acquired before a meditation in this direction can be attempted.

No one can reconstitute the structure of the mind in such a way as to prevent it from the affirmation of its own old conviction that world experience is real. Not only that—it feels that it is the only reality. Who among us here is not convinced about the reality of world experience? Who has the guts to believe that there is another sort of experience other than world experience? All that we see here with our eyes and sense with our senses is the only reality for us. That is why we cling to the things of the world so much. Neither can we believe that there are other grades of experience than the present one, nor can we believe that there is something wrong in the ways of sense perception as provided now, in this condition of the mind. Therefore, it is a herculean task, indeed, to bring the mind

round to a new type of conviction, which is what is called *viveka*—right appreciation and a perception of the character of Reality.

The *sutra* which I stated just now is a precise statement of the conditions of spiritual meditation. What the *sutra* literally means is: *sattva* and the *purusha*—namely, the mind and the ultimate consciousness, *purusha*—are opposed to each other in their characters. In what way are they opposed? That is not mentioned here. We have to understand what this difference is by studying the meaning of the implications provided in other *sutras*. The *purusha* is infinite, whereas the mind is externalised. This is the primary distinction. The mind cannot have infinite awareness. It is always projected outwardly through the senses, whereas the *purusha* is eternally aware of an infinitude of being. This is a great difference indeed.

Further, in certain other *sutras* we will be told as to what the differences are between *purusha*-consciousness and mind-consciousness, or object-consciousness, or world-consciousness, as we may call them. Externality and eternity cannot go together; they are different intrinsically. Eternity is not externality. Though linguistically we are able to understand what this difference is, the mind cannot comprehend the meaning of this. The externality that is the character of mind perception, or any kind of world perception, is involved in a time process, which is what is called duration—a passage or a movement of time—whereas there is no such passage or duration in eternity. It is an eternal ‘now’, a word with which we are familiar but which meaning is not clear to us.

There is no such thing as past, present and future for the *purusha*, but there is such a thing as past, present and future for the mind. Something happened yesterday; something is happening today; something will happen tomorrow. This is how we think, isn't it? But the *purusha* is not aware of this kind of distinction of past, present and future. There is a sudden awareness of a totality of existence and, therefore, there is an abolition of all duration and time-consciousness. There is an extinction of the difference created by the time process, as well as the difference created by the interference of space between objects. The mind cannot comprehend everything at one stroke.

For the mind there is successive perception but not simultaneous perception, whereas in the *purusha* there is simultaneous perception—an awareness which is the grasping of everything at one stroke. Therefore, the *purusha* and the mind are different. *Sattva puruṣayoḥ atyantāsamkīrṇayoḥ pratyaya aviśeṣaḥ bhogaḥ* (III.36). The inability to grasp the difference between these two is called *bhoga*—enjoyment, experience. All the processes which the mind undergoes are called *bhoga*. And we are all fond of *bhoga* only. That is why we cling to the world so much. There is a fear that when the mind is freed from conditions which bring about *bhoga*, there will be no joy. We identify contactual experience with pleasure; this is a habit of the mind. Therefore, it is not easy to wean the mind from this habit. It is difficult for the mind to believe that there can be pleasure in the *purusha*, because what pleasure can be there in a condition in which we are severed from all contacts?

This is what the mind will think, and what it does think. With great effort of intellectual understanding, sometimes we are convinced of the possibility of bliss even in the *purusha*. But the feelings revolt against such a kind of intellectual conviction, and when we actually come to the forefront of the task of this practice, the mind resents the practice because the very first thing that is required in this meditation is not to think of an object. And if we don't think of an object, what remains? There remains a blank, and a night of darkness. This is what the mind feels, and it does not get the *purusha*. The *purusha* is not an object of awareness to the mind when it is free from contact with objects. It is in a complete oblivion, a wiping out of all awareness.

Well, this may be one of the conditions through which the mind passes, or has to pass. As mystical language tells us, it is the dark night of the soul. When we cut off all connections with everything in the world, we have to pass through darkness; we will not enter into light immediately. There will be an interim period of darkness, oblivion and unawareness of everything, which is the frightened condition, a state of affairs where the mind is in fear as to what is happening. There, higher guidance is necessary—from a Guru, a spiritual master—because we will be cast into the winds of unawareness. The mind is afraid of this condition. The moment we withdraw the mind from objects, there is unhappiness because happiness is nothing but contemplation of objects, and the requisition of this meditation is the opposite of it. So it will mean, impliedly, that we are trying to cut at the roots of all the pleasures of

the mind by attempting this meditation. Therefore, the mind will not agree.

This sort of *bhoga*, or pleasurable experience, is the opposite of the requisite of spiritual salvation. Hence, yoga becomes difficult. The most difficult thing to undergo, and even conceive in the mind, is the abolition of all possible joys in this world. The mind is used to the joy of contact with objects, which is called *bhoga*. But, the *sutra* tells us that is an error, that it is a great mistake which has been committed due to an imaginary experience of happiness. It is not happiness at all. It is a kind of stirring of the organism by certain reactionary processes brought about by the contact—a fact which the mind cannot understand. It is a trick of nature by which it keeps the mind tied to ordinary experience. This *pratyaya avishesha* is *bhoga*. An absence of the consciousness of the distinction between the character of the mind and the nature of the *purusha* is called world experience. This has to be cut at the root by the methods of meditation mentioned in the Samadhi Pada.

Svārthasamyamāt puruṣajñānam (III.36). Here is the secret of yoga, or true meditation, from the spiritual point of view. *Puruṣa jnana*, or knowledge of the *purusha*, arises by *svārtha samyama*—*samyama* on *svārtha*, meditation on one's own essential nature, or the purpose of the spirit. This is the meditation prescribed. The purpose of the spirit, the character of the spirit, is the object of meditation. We cannot once again go into all the details of this subject, inasmuch as we have covered it in the Samadhi Pada. But suffice it to say that the contemplation of the nature of the spirit, or its purpose, is equivalent to a precondition of a grasp of the nature of the spirit by *viveka shakti*, or analytic

understanding. It is enough for the mind to understand and appreciate that the *purusha* is consciousness in nature. And consciousness has to be indivisible, by the very nature of it, which means that it is infinite, unconditioned by objects, space and time. Therefore, any experience in terms of space and time or objects is contrary to the nature of the *purusha*. Hence, there should be an effort exercised upon the mind to sublimate object awareness into spiritual awareness.

Spiritual contemplation is a process of sublimation of objectivity into universality. This kind of meditation is what is introduced in this *sutra*, and when this is practised, *purusha jnana* arises—knowledge of the *purusha* comes. But this is a hard task because the conception of the *purusha* is not provided to the mind usually, in ordinary world experience. The nature of the *purusha* does not mean the nature of the individual self. It is the nature of the Universal Self. *Purusha* is a name that we give to the Absolute itself—that which comprehends all things. Therefore, there is the need for the practice of those conditions mentioned in the Samadhi Pada, meaning the conditions which are designated as *vairagya* and *abhyasa*.

Dr̥ṣṭa ānuśravika viṣaya vitṛṣṇasya vaśīkārasamjñā vairāgyam (I.15). A complete absence of taste for things which are seen as well as unseen has been described as *vairagya*. This meditation cannot come to a person who has a taste for things which are outside. It is not merely an absence of sense-contact; it is an absence of taste itself. ‘*Vitrishnasya*’ is the term used. A dislike arisen on account of the non-cognition of value in things which are external—this is called *vairagya*. And a persistent practice of this condition, the maintenance of this awareness, called

vashikara samjna—that is called *abhyasa*. All these we have studied in the Samadhi Pada. This is the technique.

Patanjali mentions this to us once again, in the Vibhuti Pada, for the purpose of acquisition of the knowledge of the *purusha*. *Sattva puruṣa anyatā khyātimātrasya sarvabhāva adhiṣṭhātrtvaṃ sarvajñātrtvaṃ ca* (III.50). When there is an acquisition of this understanding and an establishment of oneself in this status of meditation, some extraordinary results follow, and they are mentioned as *sarva bhava adhisthatritva* and *sarva jnatritva*. One becomes the substratum of everything as a result of this meditation—that is *sarva bhava adhisthatritva*. As the substratum of all things, there is no need for this consciousness to move towards objects, because it is the substratum of even the object. As the result of this, again, there is *sarva jnatritva*—knowledge of everything. The substance of everything is also endowed with the knowledge of everything. It follows, because everything is a modification of the substance. One who has become the substance itself, as the substratum of all things, naturally gets endowed with this knowledge. This knowledge is called *taraka*—that which takes one across the ocean of sorrow.

Tāraḥ sarvaviṣayaṃ sarvathāviṣayaṃ akramaṃ ca iti vivekajam jñānam (III.55). This *taraka* knowledge is of such a nature that its object is everything, as different from the mental knowledge which is provided to us now, at present, which has only certain objects as its contents, and not all objects. A certain set of objects becomes the content of mental consciousness, empirically. But here, there is *sarva visayatva*—anything that is existent is a constant and perpetual content of this consciousness. It is not merely

sarva visaya, but is also *sarvatha visaya*—it is aware of everything in every condition, not only in one condition. For example, we are aware of objects in one condition only, not in all conditions. In the earlier *sutras* we have been told that every object undergoes various conditions—the *parinamas* mentioned. And we cannot be aware of all the *parinamas*, or all the transformations of the past, present and future at one stroke, because of the limited character of the mind in its capacity to know things. Only the present is known. The past is not known. The future is not known.

But here, there is knowledge of all conditions of the objects—even those conditions which the object has not undergone and are yet to come. They also will be known at one stroke—that is *sarvatha visaya*. *Sarvaviṣayaṁ sarvathāviṣayaṁ*—all knowledge, and knowledge of every condition of everything, every state through which one passed, through which one passes and through which one has to pass—all these will become contents of this awareness. How, in what manner, does it become a content of awareness? One after another, successively? No. *Akramam*. *Akramam* means not successive, but simultaneous. Instantaneous awareness of all conditions that are possible, at any period of time—this is called *viveka jnana*. *Tāraṁ sarvaviṣayaṁ sarvathāviṣayaṁ akramaṁ ca iti vivekajam jñānam* (III.55).

These are only stories to the mind which is sunk in the mire of world-consciousness. One cannot even dream of what this state of affairs is. What can be meant by ‘simultaneous awareness of all things’ and ‘simultaneous awareness of every condition of all things’? This is called *sarva jnatritva*; this is omniscience. And this is designated

by the term ‘*vivekajam jnanam*’, knowledge born of discriminative understanding, which is a peculiar term used in the yoga psychology. It is also called *taraka*, the saving knowledge. This information is given to us in these *sutras* to give us a comfort spiritually, that we are not merely entering into a lion’s den where we find nothing but death, but that we are entering into a new type of life altogether, where eternity embraces us with a new life which is durationless and, therefore, deathless. This contemplation is the only technique, the only method, the only means of the salvation of the soul.

Sattva puruṣayoḥ śuddhi sāmye kaivalyam iti (III.56). *Kaivalya*, or ultimate independence of the spirit, arises when there is equanimity of the structural character of *sattva* and the *purusha*. *Sattva* means the mind, or we may call it *prakriti*; *purusha* is the consciousness. When there is similarity established between the two, then the one does not remain as an object of the other, nor is one a subject in relation to the other. When the two become one on account of the intense purity of the experiencing consciousness, infinity enters into experience. This is *kaivalya*, this is *moksha*—*sattva puruṣayoḥ śuddhi sāmye kaivalyam iti* (III.56). These *sutras* have given us, in a concise manner, the principles of spiritual contemplation.

It has to be taken for granted that the conditions which are stated in earlier *sutras* as necessary for this practice are already acquired to an appreciable degree. In fact, everything that is of importance in the practice of yoga has been mentioned in the Samadhi Pada itself. That one *pada* is sufficient—it is a complete statement of the entire process of yoga practice. The other sections are like an elaborate

commentary on those instructions which are given in the Samadhi Pada. We have to recall to our minds, once again, what are these conditions. One of the main things mentioned in the Samadhi Pada were *vairagya* and *abhyasa*, and *tivra samvegatva*—intense ardour of the aspiring spirit is required in order that success may become imminent.

The ardour of the soul was stated to be a very essential condition for quick success. What is the ardour; what is the fervour; what is the aspiring spirit; what is its intensity? That will be the factor which will judge the quickness of the success. Of course, the other things that were mentioned in the Samadhi Pada are the different methods of practice. How the mind can be fixed on different objects initially so that later on it can be fixed on any object, for the matter of that, for the purpose of *samyama*, was mentioned in the Samadhi Pada. The world of objects becomes, finally, the object of meditation. The methods of Patanjali are really those stated to be what he calls *savitarka*, *savichara*, *sananda* and *sasmita samadhis*. These are the secrets of Patanjali's yoga, and everything else is an explanation thereof. We have studied this—what *savitarka* means, etc.

These stages are the gradual sublimations of world-consciousness, or object-consciousness, by diminishing the distance between the subject and the object of meditation, which takes place automatically and for which there is no need for any special effort. The distance that separates the experiencing consciousness from its object becomes less and less as one advances more and more, so that what is called *samyama* in the Vibhuti Pada is the abolition of this

distance itself. There is a complete transcendence of spatial awareness in *samyama*.

Thus, there is a very scientific methodology provided to us in these *sutras*, which have to be studied gradually, stage by stage, in their successive intensity and applicability. Many authors think that the *sutras* of Patanjali in respect of yoga are concluded with the Vibhuti Pada because in it he mentions that *kaivalya* is attained. What else is there to say, afterwards? Some people are of the opinion that there are only three sections of Patanjali, not four sections, but there are others who think that there should be four sections, not three, because each section is called a *pada*—Samadhi Pada, Sadhana Pada, Vibhuti Pada and Kaivalya Pada. A *pada* is a quarter, and we cannot have three quarters; quarters are always four. So, inasmuch as the word '*pada*' is used in respect of each section, it is the opinion of many that four sections must be there, not three. And the fourth section has a meaning of its own. Though it is not directly connected with practice, it furnishes certain details. Just as there are people who think that the Bhagavadgita ends with the eleventh chapter and the successive chapters are additions, as a kind of commentary, there are others who think that they are not simply additions; they have an organic connection with what has preceded.

So is the case with these *sutras*. The Kaivalya Pada is a metaphysical disquisition of Patanjali, where we find his philosophical peculiarities as distinct from other schools of thought, which of course have great relevance to the practice which he has described in the earlier *sutras*.

Chapter 98

THE TRANSFORMATION FROM HUMAN TO DIVINE

That one has to pass through various stages of self-communion before the great aim of yoga is reached is a point which has been emphasised, again and again, in various ways and at different places in the system of Patanjali. We do not suddenly jump to the skies in one stroke. There is a very slow process of growth inwardly, like the maturing of a large tree, stage by stage. And, every stage is supposed to be an occasion for a novel experience every time new experiences present themselves, inasmuch as every experience is one of communion. It is very important to remember that yoga is not a process of thinking through the mind, understanding through the intellect, or ratiocinating. Yoga is communion. This is the main feature of yoga which can miss one's attention, and one can be under the complacent mood that there is a progress gradually taking place while one is merely thinking—as one thinks of a cow, or a tree—an object which is totally outside oneself.

Every progress is a progress in communion. It is not a progress merely in thought and clarity of understanding—which are all very great things, no doubt, in the world, but they are nothing before yoga. We are not here for intensifying our analytic understanding or logical deductive knowledge of things, or for any kind of worldly genius. All that we regard as great in this world becomes nothing before this master technique of yoga, which is the precise

reason why some cannot grasp even the first stage of yoga properly, because the very first step itself is a complete turning upside-down of the way of thinking. It is not continuing our present way of thinking that is called yoga. It is a complete transformation, a right-about turn of the entire attitude. This has to be grasped at the very outset. We are not becoming better and better human beings in yoga; we are becoming transformed and transfigured into a newer quality of being. It is not that the human nature continues, the human valuation continues and the human assessment of things continues—nothing of the kind. There is a transfiguration of the human character altogether into a newer type of perception and experience. This is what is effected by communion.

Hence, the usual mistaken idea people may carry with them into the field of yoga—that what they achieve in the higher stages of yoga is only an expanded, or perhaps a more intensified form of worldly happiness, worldly authority, worldly power or worldly acquisition—is a great mistake, and nothing can be worse than that. We are not going to have enjoyments of a worldly kind in the progress of yoga, nor are we going to exercise power as we exercise it in the world of sense and ego. There is such a change as can be compared with the change from an animal to a human being, which cannot be regarded as merely a continuation of the animal species. When we rise from the animal kingdom of consciousness to the human level, we have not simply become better animals; that is not what has happened to us. We have become something quite different from animals. Are we only advanced animals just because we have evolved from the animal state? No. There is a

change in intrinsic character. There is a transformation of quality. The human is different from the animal in the intrinsic structure itself, and not merely in the extrinsic expansion of sensory perception or egoistic affirmation.

Likewise is the transformation from the human to the higher levels of yoga, which are the stages of the ascent to the divine. We are becoming—we are going to become—divine, in different stages. So, we may say that every stage is a new encounter with a qualitative transformation of the personality, a condition with which we cannot compare anything in this world. There is nothing here with which we can compare that state of experience.

If we start comparing, we will be speaking like the frog in the well which had a talk with the frog that came from the ocean. “The ocean is so big! Much bigger than the well,” said the frog from the ocean. The frog that was in the well, which had never seen anything wider than the well, asked, “How big is this ocean?” “Oh, very big!” “Is it so big?” asked the frog in the well, expanding its body, swelling it. “Is this how big the ocean is?” “Now, what is this that we are talking about? It is not like that,” said the ocean frog. “It is very big!” The well frog swelled still further. Stouter it became, expanded its muscles and said, “So big? The ocean is so big?” “No, no! It is not like that,” said the frog from the ocean. “It is much bigger than what we are thinking!” “Is it as big as this well, at least?” asked the well frog. “Oh, much bigger!” said the ocean frog. The well frog was confused and said, “What is this? What are we talking about? I cannot understand!” The frog in the well could not appreciate anything bigger than the well. What is the ocean? It could not imagine it.

Likewise is our puny understanding of the higher achievements of which yoga speaks. We have subtle peculiarities in our nature, and that particular weakness is what is to be subjugated and sublimated in yoga. This has been mentioned again and again in the *sutras* of Patanjali, in various manners, various ways, at different stages. Though there are many stages which each individual has to experience, each for oneself, adepts have classified them into certain groups. The language of the system of Patanjali tells us that there are four important conditions of utter transformation; and these are given specific names in the Yoga Shastras.

When one steps over the ordinary human level and places one's feet on the next higher level, that condition is called *prathama kalpita*. It is a peculiar term which implies an experience of a first form of enlightenment. The first enlightenment that comes through yoga is called *prathama kalpita*. The next stage of enlightenment is called *madhu bhumika*, which literally means 'very sweet, like honey'. Very exquisite is the experience, very delicious; that is what the word '*madhu*' actually means here—*madhu bhumika*. The third transformation is called *prajna jyotis*. There is a flash of the supernal light of the *purusha*, or the Absolute. We begin to enter into the daylight of the Eternal. And the last stage is supposed to be the borderland of the communion of the individual with the Absolute, the Universal. That is called *atikranta bhavaniya*, which surpasses all comprehension. No thought can understand or imagine what it is. Even the highest stretch of imagination cannot conceive what it is. Therefore, it is designated as *atikranta bhavaniya*.

Now, the teachers of yoga tell us that there are very great dangers which one has to face at certain stages of this ascent. These dangers come from the activity of the senses and the ego. Where do these dangers come from? They come from certain encounters of the meditative individual. What does it encounter? It encounters certain forces which present themselves as personalities, forms, shapes, objects, etc. These forms, which present themselves before one's experience, are the very counterparts of the desires of the senses and the ego. It is to be noted here that everything that is in our individual personality has a cosmical counterpart. Whether it is good or bad, whether it is of this nature or that nature, everything that is inside has a counterpart in the outer world. So, the pressure exerted by any particular aspect in the individual personality stirs up the corresponding counterpart in the outer world, and we encounter that. It is something like the operations of a puppet show. A person operating the movement of puppets with strings is the power that conditions these movements outside. The operator behind moves the fingers in a particular way and accordingly, correspondingly, there is the movement of the puppets outside.

The objects—whatever be their nature outside in the world—with which we come in contact, are what are invoked and evoked by our inner potentialities. We cannot see anything which we do not deserve, or which is not intended to be a teacher for us or a means of passing through experience. Here, in ordinary life, the life that we are living today, many of these tendencies are pressed down, repressed by the power of a particular form of desire which we are fulfilling in our daily life and a particular

form of ego-affirmation, which sets aside every other affirmation. Every time one particular aspect comes to the surface, it pushes the other aspects to the background, so that we appear to be only one thing at a time, and not two things. We do not have two moods at one moment; there is always one mood only, though these moods may go on changing every day, or even in the same day at different times. The different experiences we pass through and the different objects we face in life are the activities of these predominant aspects in our inner personality which work gradually, stage by stage, according to the convenience of the time or when circumstances become favourable.

But in yoga, something different happens. We are not pushing aside certain aspects of our personality and presenting only certain predominant features for the purpose of objective experience. The entire thing is stirred up into action, because the purpose of yoga is to liberate the soul from the total bondage to which it is subject in the form of phenomenal experience. Therefore, we have to face everything, every day, at one stroke. This happens, says the Yoga Shastra, at a particular stage—not in the very advanced stage of *prajna jyotis* or *atikranta bhavaniya*, where we have completely mastered everything and we know things very well, nor when nothing has happened and we are just at the rudimentary, beginning stage of practice. These difficulties start when we are about to transcend the first level—this is what the Yoga Shastra tells us. When we have entered the stage called *prathama kalpita* and we are about to rise to the next one, namely, the *madhu bhumika*, then there is this dramatic encounter of the meditating

consciousness with everything blessed on earth or in heaven.

What is it that we are going to encounter? It is not easy for anyone to detail these before they come. But, generally speaking, they are supposed to be the forms taken by one's own weaknesses. Every person has some weakness, which is smothered and stifled by the apparent personality that one puts forth in human society. But that weakness still persists. It is kept there in ambush, waiting for favourable conditions to manifest. These weaknesses are those which pertain to the senses and the ego. The senses vehemently assert the reality of an external object. This is the peculiar weakness of the senses, and whatever arguments we put forth before them, they are of no avail. And the ego has a peculiar feature of affirming itself as an isolated individual. It will oppose any attempt at communion, which is the thing that we want to achieve in yoga, because communion is losing of personality, which is what is very painful to the ego.

Thus, there are two oppositions to the progress in yoga—the one that comes from the ego, and the other that comes from the senses. All the obstacles or impediments that we may have to face in future are only these—the desires of the senses, and the affirmations of the ego. For this purpose Patanjali has been warning us, again and again, that a thorough grasp of the conditions for the practice are essential before the practice is commenced.

The two terms, *vairagya* and *abhyasa*, sum up the requisites for yoga practice. Is there a taste lingering in the senses and a subtle longing of the personality or the ego? No one can openly admit that there are lingering desires of

the senses; nor would the ego permit such an analysis, because any such analysis is the death of the ego and a frustration of the senses. So one cannot, for oneself, know where one stands, inasmuch as one always stands only on the level of a predominant manifested feature of one's personality, and not the total features. One cannot know oneself wholly, because the whole of the personality does not manifest in conscious life. That is the difficulty.

Thus, we cannot be prepared for things now itself, inasmuch as we do not know what it is that is there inside of us. But if we are persistent enough in our practice, these weaknesses will show their heads gradually, like snakes coming out from the hole. They will not come out if the practice is very mild. The practice has to be very intense, continuous, and for hours together—daily practice, without remission of effort. If this is not possible, the only other alternative is the knowledge that we have to gain of ourselves through our Guru, as our Guru is likely to know more about us than we know about ourselves because of his experience, and because of the insight that he has into human nature. But without these preparations, neither can we do anything for ourselves, nor will we accept the advice of others. If this is the situation, then danger is there, ahead.

Patanjali simply mentions, in a very precise statement: *sthānyupanimantraṇe saṅgasmayākaraṇaṁ punaraniṣṭa prasaṅgāt* (III.52). The *sūtra* tells that we will be invited as a guest by the realms of being when we advance in the stages of yoga. There are various realms of existence which we have to pierce and pass through. And, every realm is inhabited by certain denizens. Just as when we go to a new

country, the citizens there may welcome us as a friend “Come, dear friend, be seated,” and so on—the citizens, or the inhabitants of the different realms, says the Yoga Shastra, will welcome us, and we are likely to mistake this for an achievement of yoga—which it is not. We are likely to get caught up in the atmosphere of that particular realm, because that atmosphere is nothing but what the senses seek and what the ego would like. They become very intense in their presentations, according to the intensity of the practice. Therefore, the *sutra* tells us that we should not accept these invitations. Otherwise, we will be once again in the same trouble from which we wanted to escape through the practice of yoga. Whatever be the perceptions, whatever be the delights that may present themselves, they have to be ignored by the practicant.

Here, there is another interesting feature which one can notice. These experiences of encounter, or the presentations of delight or invitations, etc., which the *sutra* mentions, are not necessarily super-physical. They can also be physical. That is, even in this very physical world we may have such experiences, if our practice is intense enough. We will not be able to discover the secret behind the experiences in our life, and may like to pass them over as casual occurrences of the social life of a person. The experiences that we pass through in life—even in this physical life, in this very life itself—may be the reactions of our practice. The denizens which the *sutra* speaks of may press themselves forward through the physical counterparts of this very existence itself. They need not necessarily be ethereal beings as the Puranas speak of, such as Indra, etc.

These personalities which the Puranas speak of do not necessarily come when we jump from the physical level to the higher level. They can press themselves into action even in this very level, so that we may not go to the higher realm at all. As a result, there can be very convenient situations and comfortable experiences of the senses as well as the ego, whose essential nature cannot easily be discovered. We will not know what is happening to us. We will only take it as a common presentation or an unusual experience of life. There is nothing usual in this world; everything is very peculiar. Everything has a novel character. Even these so-called usual experiences of our life—even my sitting here and your listening to me—is a very strange coordination of factors which are universal in their nature. They are not simply to be taken for an ordinary, simple social experience of human beings.

There is nothing which is not universal in life. Everything is a universal expression. Even a leaf that moves in a tree has a universal background behind it. Even the littlest of our experiences and the smallest of the deeds that we perform—everything, for the matter of that—is a symbol or an index of a universal pressure that is exerted from behind, which is invisible to the senses and incomprehensible to the ego. The yoga philosophy and psychology opens up before our mind a new world of perception and a new interpretation of values—a system of an entirely new type of appreciation of things—so that we will be able to discover new meaning even in the common and ordinary experiences of life. Even if we see a dog on the road, it is not an ordinary experience that is happening; we will begin to see a new meaning behind it. A cat crossing in

front of us is not an ordinary experience. A wisp of breeze is not ordinary. Everything is extraordinary in this life. This meaning of an extraordinary significance present behind even ordinary experiences in life will be opened up only to a discriminative understanding.

This is a great blessing if it comes; and unless this understanding arises in us, we will not be able to progress in yoga. We should not be muffs when we begin to seek the fruits of yoga earnestly. We must understand that we are going to face problems of a cosmic character. They are not problems of our country, or problems of human nature, merely. They are problems of the universal situation on every level, for the matter of that. Everything will be stirred into action. And, as it was mentioned, the way in which it will be stirred, and the extent to which it will be stirred into action, will depend upon the intensity of our practice.

Thus, great caution is given by Patanjali himself that one who is not sufficiently equipped with the requisites of *vairagya* will not be able to go even one step in yoga. When we open the eyes of yogic perception—even as a student of yoga, and not necessarily as an adept—we will begin to see new meanings in things. When we talk to our friends, they will not be friends with whom we are talking. They will be some ‘significances’ which we are encountering and facing. We will begin to see the meaning within the forms of the world, which we missed in the forms commonly encountered by the senses in ordinary life. There are no such things as friends and enemies in this world. They do not exist. For yogic vision, there are no such things as humans, animals, trees, stones, etc. They do not exist. They are something extraordinary in this world. Even the things

that we see with our eyes, even just now, are extraordinary things. We miss their meaning due to a habituation of the mind through this gross perception of personalities.

The personalities are not personalities at all for yogic vision. They are not 'persons'. They are only configurations of a cosmical significance, which has to be grasped very well before we are able to face anything. We have to guard ourselves well in every respect. The beginning of yogic perception is the recognition of the fact that we are citizens of the universe, not citizens of India or America or any country—nothing of the kind. We are not even inhabitants of this earth; we are something more than that. We are denizens of the whole cosmos, and the laws of the universe will act upon us, and they will subject us to obedience. *They* are the forces that we are facing.

In yoga, we are not facing crows and cows and trees and persons. We are facing the whole cosmos in front of us. One has to be prepared for the consequences before one actually enters into this arduous enterprise; this is a great caution meted out to us by the Yoga Shastra. When this vision is kept up clearly, continuously, without break, we will be able to understand even the meaning of the oppositions and impediments that come before us. And when they are detected, they cease to be impediments—they become friends. The dismal look that may appear to be there at the beginning will put on a new face altogether, and a new contour. The darkness will be dispelled, and light will manifest itself. These are hard things for the mind to grasp.

At a stage where we are about to transfer ourselves from the first level to the second level, direct guidance of a competent master is necessary. This is the usual tradition of

the Yoga Shastra. When we are highly advanced and can grasp all the meanings for ourselves, we may be able to stand on our own feet; that is true. But there is a particular stage we reach when we have not been endowed with that perception of the meaning behind things, when we have lifted our feet from the ground of the earth and we have not yet reached the summits of the heavens. In the middle of the atmosphere where we are hanging, we will find ourselves helpless. There, the need of a Guru is necessary.

THE VIBHUTI PADA ENDS

THE KAIVALYA PADA

Chapter 99

THE ENTRY OF THE ETERNAL INTO THE INDIVIDUAL

We are now at the Kaivalya Pada, which deals with various subjects as a sort of explanation of some of the themes dealt with already in the earlier sections. The Vibhuti Pada concluded with an enunciation of the perfection which one attains through the practice of yoga. This subject is continued in the first *sutra* of the Kaivalya Pada where it is stated that perfections, though not absolute, can come by other means, and they remain only relative. There are various ways of disciplining oneself, and even a little discipline can bring a corresponding perfection. In the first *sutra* of the Kaivalya Pada it is said that there are five ways by which perfection can be attained. Though the supreme method is yoga *samadhi* itself, known as *samyama*, there are other methods which are of a simpler character and whose results are temporal.

Janma auṣadhi mantra tapaḥ samādhijāḥ siddhayaḥ (IV.1). *Siddhis* are perfections or attainments—achievements of powers. It is seen that certain created beings are born with certain perfections. This accompaniment of a perfection, or a *siddhi*, with one's birth is due to previous practice. Many a time it so happens that the result of even a protracted practice cannot be seen or visualised in one's life due to various obstacles in the form of impeding *prarabdhas*. This has been the case with many

seekers. But, when they give up their body without apparently having achieved any perfection or having had no achievement at all, they are reborn with the manifestation of the results of their earlier practice.

The celestials in the heavens are supposed to have perfections by birth itself, and every other being in the higher realms has a power peculiar to that particular birth. We have statements in the scriptures that above the level of the earth plane there are planes of the Gandharvas, the Pitris, the celestials, and so on. These are all beings who are superior to this human level, and they have certain capacities which humankind does not have. This has come to them by birth—*janma*. It does not mean that a person gets powers at the time of birth by freak or by chance; it is a result of hard practice in earlier lives. It is only a manner of speaking when it is said that perfection comes to some by birth. It does not mean that God is favourably disposed to any person. These capacities are only an indication of hard and strenuous effort in a previous existence.

Even here, in this world, we find people of various calibres. Some children are born with special endowments, with precocious capacities—genius seen at a very early age. It does not mean that all this happens by a fantastic freak of nature. They are the result of a very systematic development of causes and effects. The causes are unseen; only the effects are seen. But it does not follow thereby that the causes do not exist. In a similar manner, Patanjali tells us that in some cases it will appear as if the perfections manifest from the very time of birth itself. Also, there are cases where certain powers are acquired by the use of medicinal herbs which are spoken about in the yoga

scriptures. We have, in India especially, some Himalayan herbs known as Sanjivini, etc., which are supposed to enliven even a corpse. Other herbs create certain vibrations in the system and stimulate the nerves, and allow the concentration of the mind. This is a very peculiar way of stimulating energy in one's system, and is the most artificial of all methods, because these vibrations are artificial results that follow from artificial causes. They are outside oneself and, therefore, they have a beginning and an end. Therefore, they are useless. Anyhow, Patanjali tells us that these herbs are also one of the ways of stirring up certain energies in the system. The effects will be there as long as the causes are there. When the causes subside, the effects also subside.

But, greater means than this is the power of mantras. The continuous recitation of certain mantras, or spiritual formulae, may create internal vibrations which enable a person to exercise supernormal powers. And the effects that follow from this practice are more lasting than the use of medicinal herbs. If a mantra is recited continuously, for a very long period, with deep concentration of mind, it sets up certain vibrations which release energy from the body and the entire system. Then, what works in one's system is the mantra itself. The deity of the mantra begins to operate. Thus, the aphorism tells us that this also is one of the ways of acquiring powers by yoga.

Austerity, or *tapas*, of an intense character may also generate powers. The subjugation of the senses, beyond a certain degree, will set up a corresponding reaction from within, and that reaction comes in the form of powers. Any form of self-control should bring powers; it is a natural

consequence thereof. We are perpetually endowed with supernormal energy, but we look weak and incapacitated on account of indulgence of the senses. Our minds and senses are the channels for the loss of energy of the system, on account of which we appear to be divested of power. So when we block the channel by which energy is depleted, there is a rousing of the force with which we are perpetually associated. This force is not created from within. In fact, the achievements or powers we are speaking of are not generated, manufactured or invented—nothing of the kind. Only they are allowed to reveal themselves, while at other times their revelation is blocked by an obstructive activity of the mind and the senses—a fact which is mentioned in the next *sutra*.

Hence, a very important fact that comes out in this context is that there is no such thing as a new creation anywhere. It is only a manifestation of what is already there. The impotency of the human individual is not natural to the human individual. It is unnatural. The powers are natural. And so, austerities—*tapas* of the senses—are advised, by which what is intended is the restraining of the activities of the senses, the putting down of their indulgences and, consequently, the energising of the mind in a heightened form. This is called *tapas*. It also means 'heating'. The energy that is generated thereby heats up the system. It is not a heat like that of fire; it is another name for heightened energy, or capacity. The *sutra* tells us that the restraint of the senses and the mind, which is called *tapas* or austerity, also can bring about power.

But the most prominent of all these is *samyama*, which is the subject of the Vibhuti Pada. That is also referred to

here by the term ‘*samadhi*’. The communion of the individual with the object releases the total energy of the objects, and then it is that the meditating subject is invested with an enormous power which would have otherwise been completely isolated from it. The power of the world is outside us, and we seem to be little inhabitants of the world who cannot participate in the powers of nature. But by *samyama*, the powers of nature can be absorbed into our system.

How this happens is mentioned in the next *sutra*: *jātyantara pariṇāmaḥ prakṛtyāpūrāt* (IV.2). The powers of nature are permanently there in a uniform state. There is neither an increase nor a decrease in the powers of nature. As scientists tell us, there is what is known as the system or the principle of conservation of energy, which states that the energy—the total power or force of nature—is constant. It does not increase or decrease day by day by external factors. Factors outside nature do not exist. And so, what appears to be an increase of power or capacity is only an entry of certain forces of nature into the system of a human individual. Any kind of transformation in a positive degree is the flowing of the powers of nature into one’s system. ‘*Prakriti-apurat*’ is the term used in the *sutra*. The filling up by *prakriti* is what is known as *prakriti-apurat*.

When the system is emptied of all impeding factors, *prakriti* fills that vacuum that has been created thereby. We are not to struggle hard to draw energy from nature, just as we do not struggle to enjoy the light of the sun—provided, of course, we are ready to come out of our house and stand in the open. Likewise is the way in which nature operates. There is a uniform and equally distributed energy of nature

everywhere, in every level of manifestation, whether it is subhuman, human, or superhuman. For nature, there is no such thing as these levels. They appear to be there on account of the difference in the degree of the manifestation of the powers of nature. The difference in the degree of this manifestation is, again, due to other factors. These factors are to be removed. The whole of the practice of yoga is nothing but an elimination of the obstructing factors which prevent the entry of the powers of nature into one's system.

The *sutra* tells us that a transformation of oneself into a new state, *jatyantara parinama*, is brought about spontaneously by an increased amount of natural power entering into one's system due to the removal of the impediments. The impediments are our *prarabdha karma*, the *karmas* with which we are born, which determine the nature of our present existence in this bodily form. They have a particular direction of action, and due to the force with which the *prarabdha* works, the force of nature is set aside. When the *rajasic* and *tamasic prarabdha* gets diminished and *sattvic prarabdha* begins to operate, natural forces enter us.

Thus, by the increase of *sattva* in us, we allow the powers of nature to enter us. It is the *rajas* that is predominant in ourselves which cuts off nature from our individual lives. The principal function of *rajoguna* is separation—differentiating one from the other, not allowing in the cooperation of one with the other, and creating a dissimilarity of character and difference in function. Due to the intensity of the action of *rajas*, there is this division of properties and a separation of individualities, so that there has been the perception and

experience of a dividedness of life, while this is really not there. For nature, taken in its completeness, there is no division. It is one total, a comprehensive completeness in which there is no distinction of the subject on one side and the object on the other side. The distinction has been created by certain artificial factors, and these are the operations of the *gunas*. By diminishing the intensity of the action of *rajas* through intense concentration of mind, we become more and more approximate to the original condition of *prakriti*. The integrating powers of nature begin to act when *sattva* rises in us. On the other hand, if the *rajas* is to be predominant, the disintegrating factors start operating.

Thus, what is yoga? Yoga is nothing but an endeavour in the direction of the increase of *sattva* in oneself and a decrease of *rajas*. The methods have already been described in the earlier sections. The *sutra* merely tells us of a principle of how *prakriti* acts—namely, that it fills a vacancy wherever a vacancy is created. “Empty thyself, and I shall fill thee.” This great statement is similar to the principle of this *sutra*. When we empty ourselves of all those conditioning factors of our individuality, the universal forces will enter us. The universal is not outside us. It is, on account of its being universal by itself, everywhere. But it is not allowed to operate, just as we do not allow the sunlight to enter a house by closing the windows and doors. The vehemence or the force with which the ego-principle, or the I-principle, works in us prevents the entry of universal forces into us. Yoga is the technique of the diminution of the intensity of this I-principle.

Patanjali gives an example of how *prakṛiti* works. It works in a spontaneous manner, like the flow of water into the fields. *Nimmitaṁ aprayojakaṁ prakṛtīnāṁ varaṇabhedāḥ tu tataḥ kṣetrikavat* (IV.3) is the *sūtra*. We are not the creators of the powers of nature. In yoga we do not manifest or bring about something which was not already there. Just as the example given in this *sūtra* tells us, a farmer working in the fields allows water to flow into certain fields, not by creating new water, as the water is already there; he has only to open up a passage for the movement of the water and divert its course in the way required. The role that the farmer plays is incidental. He is not the material cause of the movement of the water. He becomes an agent in the sense that he provides conditions necessary for the flow of water in a particular direction. Likewise is this practice of yoga. It is not going to create new things which were not already there.

The powers, or the *siddhis*, which the Vibhuti Pada speaks about are not creations, inventions, etc., but are only spontaneous actions of *prakṛiti*—just as there is a spontaneous movement of water in the fields. What does yoga practice do? It does exactly what the farmer does in the fields. Instead of blocking the passage of water and not allowing it to flow into the field for the purpose of irrigation, the farmer opens up a stream, creates a channel, and allows the water to flow. This is what yoga does. At present the movement of energies, which flow of their own accord, are blocked. The movements are blocked due to there being no passage for the entry of the forces of nature. What is it that blocks the entry of these forces? There is only one thing which is the principal obstruction of the

operation of natural forces in us. That is the I-principle, the ego, the *asmita*, which has various other accompaniments—*raga*, *dvesa*, etc. *Raga*, *dvesa*, *abhinivesa*—all these things mentioned earlier are accompanying features of the single impediment which is *asmita*. We are so powerful in our ego that nothing from outside can enter it. It is hard like flint, and it is, therefore, incapable of allowing the entry of any force into itself, just as any amount of water poured on hard rock will not enter the rock.

Thus, the aspect which is emphasised here in this *sutra*, in the context of yoga practice, is the function that the practicant performs in his discipline called yoga. There is spontaneity manifest everywhere. Nature is spontaneity, in other words. Everything happens of its own accord. On the other hand, we may say that the pains that we experience in our lives are not part of nature, because pain is not a part of natural action. It is a peculiar situation that is created by not allowing the forces of nature to enter into one's own system. Ultimately, it is neither pleasure nor pain that is a characteristic of nature. Pleasures and pains are the emotional reactions of the mind. These two reactions cease, and something new altogether arises and comes into play when we become as natural as *prakriti* itself. Yoga practice is a process of becoming more and more natural in one's being, and eliminating those causes which have made us unnatural. What is it that is natural, and what is unnatural? Anything that cannot harmonise with the laws of *prakriti* should be regarded as unnatural; and anything that is in harmony with the laws of *prakriti* is natural. What are these laws of *prakriti*?

We have been told much about it in earlier *sutras*. But essentially, the law of *prakṛiti* is such that it has no internal distinction within itself. To create internal distinctions or differences of bodies, personalities, individualities, etc., would be a result of disharmony of some kind or the other. In the totality of nature, internal differences are unknown, just as the body, our individual bodily organism, has no feeling of internal differences. There is a principle which brings all these forces together and creates in us a sense of oneness. Likewise in nature, there is a principle which brings all the forces together. The more we approach this centre of unification of nature, the more are we natural, and the more we depart from it, the more are we unnatural. This is the meaning of this particular *sūtra*, *nimmitaṁ aprayojakaṁ prakṛtīnāṁ varaṇābhedaḥ tu tataḥ kṣetrikavat* (IV.3): The instrumental cause, which is the practice of yoga, is not actually the creator of the powers or *siddhis*, but only an agent which allows the operation of natural forces, in the same way as the farmer operates as an instrumental cause in the movements of waters in the fields. This is the literal meaning of this *sūtra*.

To sum up the teaching of these two *sūtras* cited just now, the present state of existence of a human individual is unnatural, and we should not make the mistake of thinking that we are living a normal life. Our present way of life is abnormal in the sense that it does not harmonise with what eternally exists. The temporal features that we are manifesting in our personal lives are the opposites of the eternal features of *prakṛiti*. Hence, yoga is an instrumental agent in bringing about conditions by which there is a spontaneity of entry of eternal laws into our personality.

And in this process of the entry of the eternal characters of *prakriti* into us, we develop various powers. Thus, the powers, or *siddhis*, are nothing but experiences which are incumbent upon our gradual proximity to the ultimate nature of *prakriti*. This is what the *sutra* tells us.

Chapter 100

THE EXHAUSTION OF ALL KARMAS

The subjects which are dealt with in the *sutras* of Patanjali that we are following are very peculiar, and cannot be understood by a theoretical student because they are not themes connected with anything that happens in this world. They are something quite supernatural, and therefore, they are different, in kind and nature, from any subject that we can think of in this world. Those items of reference Patanjali makes in the Kaivalya Pada are especially abstract, very theoretical from the point of view of a beginner in yoga, and highly metaphysical. Therefore they have no practical significance as far as a beginner in yoga is concerned. They have only, we may say, a curiosity value for a beginner who can understand nothing, neither head nor tail of these subjects, inasmuch as they are references which pertain to higher experiences and are completely practical, and are not thoroughly understood by analysis through the mind.

Such, for example, is the theme of the *sutra* which we are going to take up now, which may make some sense to people like us, but has a tremendous sense for a *yogin* who is highly advanced. This *sutra* that follows immediately is one which tells us that at a certain stage of spiritual experience or attainment in yoga, one can cognise the nature of the *karmas* which have given birth to this body. They can be visualised, and one can do something with them in the appropriate manner by undergoing experiences of them as quickly as possible. The law of *karma* is such that it cannot be expunged or skipped over. Every item of

this *karma* has to be experienced, and here, there is no question of exemption. Everyone has to pass through every item or aspect of the *karma* which has given birth to this particular body. But when there is an achievement of a sufficiently advanced stage, one can know how much *karma* is still remaining. At present, we cannot know it. We are completely in the dark as to how many years we are going to live in this world. That ignorance is due to the fact that we cannot know how much *karma* is still left to be experienced, or undergone, in this particular physical incarnation.

But a *yogin* can know how much *karma* is left. And, for the purpose of the effecting of a quick salvation, or *kaivalya*, which is the aim of yoga, he can put an end to these *karmas* by experiencing them—or undergoing them. Not, of course, destroying them, as that cannot be done, but exhausting them through experience. Suppose there is a group of *karmas* which may require additional incarnations. For example, certain types of *karmas* cannot be undergone through this body. They may require another type of vehicle altogether. Different sets of *karmas*, according to their intensity and peculiar character, demand a particular type of vehicle for expression, just as high tension wires may be required for strong forces of electricity, and so on. But if the *yogin* has a proper cognition of these various aspects of the *karmas* that have yet to be undergone before isolation, or *kaivalya*, is attained, he can exercise a supernormal power by *samyama*.

This is something which we cannot understand, as I mentioned already, but one can easily understand if one

reaches that state. The *yogin* creates artificial bodies, called *nirmana cittas*. Independent minds are projected out of the central mind of the *yogin*, which prepare for themselves different types of vehicles for the exhaustion of different kinds of *karma*. It is, as it were, that he is undergoing various births at one stroke. Generally there is succession or repetition of the cycle of birth and death, inasmuch as simultaneous experiences of all *karmas* is not possible through a single vehicle. But, if there are very many vehicles, we can carry the entire load in one stroke.

This creation of artificial vehicles, called *nirmana cittas*, is done by the *yogin* by *samyama* on the *mahat-tattva*. The *mahat-tattva* is the reservoir of all *cittas*, or minds. All individual minds are emanations of the *mahat-tattva*, or the Cosmic Mind. By drawing sustenance from the Cosmic Mind, one can act in a superhuman manner. That superhuman method which is adopted by the *yogin* in such a state is the peculiar *samyama* he practises, by which he can split himself into various personalities and undergo all the *karmas* simultaneously, so that there is an exhaustion of them by a quick experience. This *nirmana citta* is a term which signifies many aspects of this method adopted by the *yogin*.

There are references in our scriptures which make out that *yogins* can appear simultaneously in different places, not necessarily for the exhaustion of the *karmas*, but for other purposes. Here, this particular *sutra* seems to be pinpointing the aspect of exhaustion of *karma*, for the sake of which there is the manufacture of what is known as the *nirmana citta*. The body that is manufactured out of this *nirmana citta*, or mind, is called *nirmana kaya*. This has a

different meaning altogether in Buddhist psychology, and we should not mix up one with the other. Simply, literally, it means ‘the manufactured body’; that is *nirmana kaya*. And the manufactured mind is called *nirmana citta*. The *sutra* here explains the ways by which *karmas* by *yogins* can be exhausted. But, as I mentioned in passing, these *nirmana cittas* can be created by *yogins* for other purposes also, not merely the exhaustion of *karmas*.

For example, the forms which Lord Sri Krishna is supposed to have taken with his sixteen thousand consorts was not done for the exhaustion of any *karma*. It was a kind of *lila*, or a play. Krishna simultaneously appeared in all places. Also, he appears to have had lunch in two different places at the same time. It is mentioned in the Srimad Bhagavata that one devotee invited Krishna for lunch on a particular day, at a particular time, and at that particular time on that day, King Janaka also invited him for lunch. So Krishna split himself into two and had lunch in two places at the same time.

These are all yogic mysteries and powers which are effects of a high attainment. It is a different kind of yoga altogether from the ordinary concept that we have of it. For example, in the Bhagavadgita, Lord Krishna says, *paśya me yogam aiśvaram* (B.G. XI.8): “Behold My yoga.” Well, he does not mean that one should behold his practice of yoga in the sense of *asana*, *pranayama*, *pratyahara*, *dharana*, etc. It is the glory, the magnificence, the grandeur and the supreme power that is called ‘yoga’ here. The glory of God is what is designated by the term ‘yoga’. “Behold my greatness!”—that is what he is saying.

Now we come to the *sutra* again. The point in this *sutra*, *nirmāṇacittāni asmitāmātrāt* (IV.4), is that by the control exercised through the I-principle, or the *asmita tattva*, one can ramify into various shapes, just as there can be rays emanating from the sun. The *asmita*, which is the I-principle, or the central personality of the *yogin*, is the controlling force. It directs the operation of the other minds through the other vehicles that it has manufactured. *Pravṛtti bhede prayojakaṁ cittam ekaṁ anekeṣāṁ* (IV.5): There is only one mind, though it appears as if there are many minds. For the purpose of executing a function or different sets of functions simultaneously—at one time—these minds are projected by a central mind. The experiences will not be variegated in the sense of one being completely cut off from the other; there will be a simultaneous experience of everything, just as when winds blow from different directions we can feel their impact from the different directions simultaneously. We can have a headache; we can have a stomachache; we can have all sorts of things at the same time. All pains can come at the same time, and many pleasures can also come at the same time. We can experience all of them at the same time in different aspects of our feeling, through the same mind. Likewise, the *yogin* seems to undergo the various experiences of his *karmas* through the different instrumentalities of minds which he projects out of his central personality, which is *asmita*.

Hence, these two *sutras* tell essentially this much: that the artificial minds created by the *yogin*, known as *nirmana cittas*, are projections of the *asmita tattva* of the *yogin*, and they can appear in many forms, yet they are controlled by a

single experiencing principle. They are not different persons; it is one person only, though they appear manifold. This manifoldness of the mind is merely for the sake of the exhibition of the functions, and not to give the impression that they are individual personalities, one different from the other. One thousand Krishnas, or sixteen thousand; they are not really sixteen thousand Krishnas. It is only one person who appeared in various forms—a single consciousness operating behind all. A single experience was there behind all the Krishnas; a single power was controlling the operations of all these personalities.

To give a crude example, the five fingers are operated by a single hand. The fingers are not five different persons. One finger can be folded, another can be stretched, but it does not mean that they are two different things. The same force which is the arm can operate in five different ways, through the five fingers, on account of its capacity to project various aspects of its strength through the digits. Likewise is the *yogin's* function. It is a great mystery, as I mentioned; we cannot understand what it is. But the *sutra* tells us that it is possible to take various forms by *samyama* on the *mahat*, through which one has to establish contact first. We cannot multiply ourselves like that unless we are associated vitally with the *mahat*, or the cosmic principle. This is a very advanced stage of yoga, inconceivable to human minds, and yet possible, as we hear of in scriptures of yoga.

The mind which is cleansed of all *vrittis* by *dhyana*, or meditation, has not to take rebirth. This is made out by another *sutra*: *tatra dhyānājam anāśayam* (IV.6). *Ashaya* is an impression, or a *vasana*—a desire tendency which is the

cause of a future birth. This is absent in the case of a clean mind which is rid of the *rajasic* and the *tamasic* elements which cause this rebirth. Even in a high state of meditation the mind exists, as it is well known. But it can exist in such a transparent form that it would be the vestige, or the last shape it takes, until it exhausts itself in this high state of *samyama*. All the forms which the mind may take in the various practices mentioned in the first *sutra* of the Kaivalya Pada may become the causes of rebirth—but not the mind which is cleansed by *samadhi*.

Different commentators give different meanings for this *sutra* regarding what Patanjali actually intended to convey through this particular maxim to which he made reference. Some think it is a reference made to the minds of people whose powers are recounted in the first *sutra*, *janma auṣadhi mantra tapaḥ samādhijāḥ siddhayaḥ* (IV.1). But others think that the manufacture of artificial minds by *yogins*—*nirmana citta*—has reference to the immediately preceding *sutra*, namely, the mind that has been thus completely rid of all the dross in the form of *rajas* and *tamas* will not have any residuum of *vasanas* to take another birth. When the *karmas* are exhausted by this simultaneous experience through the various bodies which the *yogin* creates for himself, there is an end of phenomenal experience. *Karmas* cease by experience, and they can cease only by experience; by no other method can they be put an end to.

These *karmas*, when they are explained in terms of a *yogin's* experience, should be distinguished from the *karmas* of ordinary people. There is no such thing as good action or bad action for a *yogin*: *karma aśukla akṛṣṇam*

yoginaḥ (IV.7). *Asukla* means ‘not white’; *akrsna* means ‘not black’. The *karma* of a *yogin* is neither white nor black, which means to say, it has no ethical character which we attribute ordinarily, in the case of people. It is rid of these restrictions or classifications of this type or that type. The *karmas* of a *yogin* are not of any type at all—they do not belong to any category—while the *karmas* of people like us belong to the category of good or bad in the sense that they can set up reactions which are either pleasurable or otherwise. They can create conditions for us which bring us happiness or pain; there can be rebirth. But the *karmas* of a *yogin* are not of such a nature.

Karma aśukla akṛṣṇam yoginaḥ trividham itareṣām (IV.7). The *karmas* of an ordinary person can be good, bad or mixed; they can be of three types. If our *karmas* are predominantly good—a large measure, a greater percentage of our *karma* is made up of goodness, of virtue—then we will be reborn in a higher realm. It may be a celestial region or something even higher than that. But if the *karmas* are of an opposite character—predominantly bad, vicious and reactionary—they may hurl a person to a lower birth, lower than even the human. And if the *karmas* are mixed, then it is that we become human beings. We have mixed *karmas*—we are neither very good nor very bad—and, therefore, we are hanging here on this earth plane as human beings, with both types of experience. We are sometimes like brutes, and occasionally feel as if we are in hell. At other times we feel highly elevated and aspiring, and feel there is something great and noble that is ahead of us. Both the good and the bad that we have done—both—work with different emphasis and intensities in our personal lives.

The *karmas* of a *yogin* are totally distinguished from this type of experience. They are neither good, nor bad, nor mixed. These attributes cannot be applied to the *karmas* of a *yogin* because they are not *karmas* at all, really speaking. The word ‘*karma*’ should not be applied to the functions of a *yogin*’s mind. It is something like God’s mind itself—we cannot say that God’s actions are good or bad. This is not the way of describing it, because the ethical or casuistic definitions of *karma* are applicable only to individuals, but the *yogin* is not an individual—he has become super-individualistic. He has started working according to the law of nature itself.

We cannot say that nature’s actions are good or bad. They are impersonal. Likewise is the *karma* of a *yogin*. There is no reaction set up by the actions of a *yogin*. There will be no rebirth for him because his actions do not proceed from a particular ego. He has overcome his ego. He has no attachment to his personal body. He can operate through other media also, other than this particular body. We suffer the consequences of action because of the fact that we are under the false notion that the actions which proceed through the instrumentality of this body are really the belongings of this body only—that they have no reference to any other factor. It is not true that actions can emanate from a person, absolutely independent of other factors. In the case of a *yogin*, such a difficulty does not arise because he has a new concept of his personality altogether. Even the idea of one’s being a human being is overcome—he becomes an impersonal instrument in the hands of a wider realm of law. That is why Patanjali tells us here that the *karmas* of a *yogin* are neither good nor bad—

neither white nor black—while the *karmas* of other people can be either good, bad or mixed.

We have to reach this stage of impersonal action before we are liberated from the bondage of *samsara*. As long as we remain humans only, we have to take rebirth. It is not possible to remain as a human being—think as a human being and evaluate things as human beings do—and expect salvation. That is not possible. Salvation cannot be had unless we transcend the human consciousness, because ‘salvation’ is only a name that we give to universality of experience. How can that come, suddenly, unless there is a preceding condition of utter purification, which tends the human consciousness to universality? We can judge from our present ways of thinking, feeling and acting, how far we are fit for salvation. We are utterly and grossly human in the sense of a delimited personality, and we have utter prejudices which can be so hard that they may not die even at our death. And so, with such hard-boiled egoism and prejudice present in our minds, there is no hope of salvation.

But this limitation of the modes of thinking to certain preconceived modes of living can be overcome by hard effort of meditation in which, by gradual stages, we can become more and more super-individualistic. We cannot become that without effort; automatically, it cannot drop from the blue. The deeper layers of meditation are stages of greater universality of experience. The *samadhis*, or *samapattis*, mentioned in the Samadhi Pada of Patanjali—*vitarka*, *vichara*, *sananda*, *sasmita*, etc.—are stages of universality. And these stages can be reached if we are really aspiring for them. If we do not want them, they will not

come. Wanting them does not merely mean saying that we want them. Our hearts should yearn, and our feelings should open up towards a recognition of their value, independent of the other values that we consider to be all-in-all in this physical world.

These are some of the mysterious aspects of yoga practice, which are indicated in a few of the *sutras* of Patanjali.

Chapter 101

THE WHEEL OF KARMA

In a few *sutras* that follow, we are given some interesting information regarding the law of what is known as *karma*. Though we know something about what it means, here Patanjali, in a particular context, touches upon certain details of the way in which *karmas* work. Though they are so inscrutable, we can have some sort of an idea about their method of working if we can gain an insight into the causes which bring about these circumstances called *karmas*. In one *sutra* Patanjali tells us that what is known as *karma*, whether as a cause or as an effect, is a complex set of phases and not any particular object or even an isolated event. It is something which is made up of many aspects of what appears as a single force. *Karma* is not a thing which can be visualised with the eyes; it is not a sense object. It is not anything that is material, and yet it is something that exists. It is the manner of the operation of certain existent forces. Therefore, we need not assume an independent existence for something called *karma*. It is only a way of working of certain things that is known as *karma*.

In one *sutra*, four aspects of the causation of *karma* are mentioned: *hetu phala āśraya ālambanaiḥ* (IV.11). These are the four terms Patanjali uses to describe these four aspects. There is a cause which is called *hetu*, there is a consequence which is called *phala*, there is a basis or substratum which is called *asraya*, and there is a supporting agent which is called *alambana*. These four come together

and produce a situation that is what is called *karma*. The cause of this situation called *karma* is the ignorance of the ultimate nature of Reality, which is called *avidya* in Sanskrit. What ultimate truth is—that is not known. The absence of such a knowledge itself is the cause of the circumstances which create this so-called *karma*.

If we can recollect the philosophical background of the psychology of yoga, we have already been told that ignorance of the nature of truth does not mean merely an oblivion or a darkness that is present before the mind. It is a positive error which is committed, and is not merely an absence or a negation of light as is the case with deep sleep, for instance. When we are in a state of ignorance, we are not sleeping. We are positively committing a mistake; that is what is called *avidya*. Though the world is so construed that it appears to have a negative connotation—*avidya*, non-knowledge—it is really something positive. It has a distracting character and forces the commission of a positive error in the form of the perception of something which is really not there. The absence of the perception of what is really there is simultaneous, almost, with the perception of what is not there.

This is a very peculiar dual action of what is called *avidya*. It screens away truth and presents untruth before us. It does not merely screen untruth and keep quiet. It does something more mischievous, and that is the way in which the mind gets sidetracked into a course of action which is totally contrary to the true nature of things. This peculiar thing called *avidya* is the *hetu*, or the cause. If this had not been there, no other trouble would be there. The essential nature, or the ultimate nature of things, is

somehow or other obscured from the vision of consciousness, and there is the presentation of a picture in the form of what we call the world or the universe, which is mistaken for the ultimate truth. It has to be taken for the ultimate truth because nothing else is seen. We cannot believe in something which we have never seen or conceived of. The only thing that is visible to the senses and conceivable to the mind is this world. And so there is immediately an action of the mind in respect of what is seen based on an urge towards this action.

Thus, there is a very interesting threefold error which simultaneously takes effect: the obliteration of the consciousness of the ultimate nature of things and the perception of an external atmosphere in the form of the space-time-cause relation, an urge to deal with this external atmosphere in a particular manner, and an action directed towards the fulfilment of this urge. This complex is called *avidya-kama-karma*. These three go together. *Karma* is the action that we perform, the effort that we make, the thing that we do to fulfil a particular urge from within us which has arisen on account of a particular notion that we have got in respect of things outside. The notion is the *avidya*, and it causes an urge in us to deal with that perceived object in a particular manner; and our actual execution of the deed is the *karma*. This is the cause. So we can imagine how complex is the cause itself. It is an intertwined knot of *avidya-kama-karma* which has the support of the ego-sense, or the *asmita tattva*, the principle of self-affirmation, and the support that is received by the senses from their respective objects.

The objects of sense play an important part in the generation of what is called *karma*. If the objects had not been what they are, the senses would have acted in a different manner. Fortunately or unfortunately for us, what we call the objects before us are the exact stimulants of the senses. If they had been dead things without any capacity to stir the senses into activity, that would have been a different thing altogether. But the objects are not such inert, faultless, innocuous things. They are themselves capable of stimulating the senses into action in a particular manner. Each object has a particular capacity of its own, so the senses will react in a corresponding manner to the respective objects outside. This activity is made worse by the peculiar notions that are already present in the mind in respect of the entire atmosphere in which the individual lives. The mind's action in respect of the objects, and the influence of the objects in respect of the mind, are correlated. We cannot say which is first and which is second. Whether the mind is influenced by the objects and thinks in terms of the objects, or whether the objects are first evaluated by the mind and then consequences follow—we cannot say how this happens. There is a reciprocal action between the mind and the objects which takes place through the medium of the senses.

This is a very interesting picture which the *sutra* presents before us—interesting in the sense that it is very complicated and we cannot actually know what to do with it. The very fact that we cannot actually understand the nature of this complex is the strength of this complex. Anything that we cannot understand has sway over us. The moment we try to understand it and know it very well, the

strength it has upon us is weakened. But here, it is something which cannot be understood, because the person, or the individual, who tries to understand is himself a part in this complex. There is a reciprocal action of the subjective side as well as the objective side, which makes the whole thing very difficult to understand. Therefore, an indeterminable, unforeseen effect follows which is entirely out of control. We cannot determine the nature of the effect that is produced by an action because we cannot properly visualise the various aspects of this process that is called action. We have a very limited notion of the way in which the *karma* works. The various sides of this process are not visible to us. As a matter of fact, this peculiar action which is engendered in respect of the individual is many-sided.

Thus, causes are contributed bit by bit, as it were, from different quarters or corners of this wide atmosphere in which the individual is placed. *Hetu phala āśraya ālambanaiḥ saṅgrhītavāt* (IV.11), says the *sutra*. The complex, or the *samgrihita* of this psychophysical organism, is an involvement in these factors called *hetu*, *phala*, *asraya* and *alambana*. We have to remember these words, once again, because they have a great significance: the objects on one side, the mind on the other side, the ego as the basis of the action of the mind which itself is based on *avidya* or ignorance—the nature of which we have discussed just now—and the mysterious result that follows. *Karma* is not merely the action that we do. It is also not merely a fruit that we reap in the form of experience. It is many things put together. It is not the dictionary meaning of *karma* that is signified by this definition. If we look into a dictionary we will find that *karma* means action. This

definition is not complete. We have to explain what action is.

There are various meanings for this process which is called action. It is some event that is released into the atmosphere of space-time due to the operation of causes which are outside the purview of the individual consciousness. Therefore, it is impossible for any individual to understand all the factors that are contributory to the production of a particular result as the fruit of action. This *phala*, or the fruit of action that is mentioned here, is also threefold, which has been referred to in an earlier *sutra*: *jāti āyuh bhogāḥ* (II.13). These are the three consequences that follow from the action. What is this *jati*, *ayuh*, *bhoga*?

We have studied these terms in the context of an earlier *sutra*. The kind of birth that we take into this world is called *jati*—whether we are to be born as a human being or as something else. What is the kind of species into which we are to be incarnated? That which determines the nature of the birth that we have to take in this world is the *jati*. The basis for our very activity itself is laid down by the selection of the particular species into which we are to be born. And the duration of time which we have to live in that particular species, the lifespan of a particular individual, is called *ayuh*. How long are we to live in this world? It is already determined by that very factor which has brought us into birth in this species.

Why should we be born? There is a reason behind it, and that reason will tell us how long we have to live. We are compelled by circumstances, we may say, to take birth of a particular kind for the purpose of fulfilling, or exhibiting, or implementing, or undergoing the forces generated by

previous action. The intensity, the quantity, etc. of these forces which have to be worked out in a particular life will determine the duration of that life, the length of that life, or the span of that life. That is called *ayuh*. *Bhoga* is the experiences we pass through. We have lived for so many years in this world. We must be aware as to what sort of experiences we have undergone in life. These experiences are nothing but the fructification of what we have done in the past. They are the efflorescence of the hidden potentialities in the form of previous deeds. Now, what is the meaning of ‘previous deeds’?

This has also been explained in this very context by the *sutras* of Patanjali. The previous life need not necessarily mean the one that is immediately precedent to the present one. It is not that we have taken only one birth. There has been an almost endless series of incarnations through which an individual has passed, and in each life there is provision made for undergoing experiences through the senses and the mind in respect of objects outside. Each experience produces an impression in the mind; that is called a *samskara*. This impression becomes the cause of a repetition of a particular experience which has been the cause of that *samskara*. It forms a groove in the mind. So when a person has passed through many lives, there have been, naturally, circumstances which have created endless impressions in the mind. We cannot count them.

Every perception produces an impression, and we cannot count how many perceptions are there in a particular day. How many things do we see with our eyes? Anything that we see will produce an impression in the mind. It will not leave us like that. These countless

perceptions throughout a particular life create corresponding *samskaras*, or impressions, in the mind, which are going to be dangerous friends one day or the other. We should not think that our looking at an object is a very harmless action that we are performing. It is a danger to us, if we actually know what is happening inside.

The looking at an object with the mind attached to this perception is really the process of receiving impressions from that object, and we are going to be bound by that very act of perception because this impression that has been formed in the mind by this particular perception will be a cause for repeating that sort of experience at a future date. But, on account of unfavourable conditions, that repetition may not take place immediately. Yet the possibility is kept inside and our name is registered, as it were, to be taken up one day or the other. It may be after many lives—not necessarily the next life itself.

This kind of registering of a future possibility takes place with every kind of perception, so we can imagine how many times this registration is being done. And every registration is a permanent record which will not be wiped out in the *akashic* records. Then what happens? When the forces which have caused the birth of this particular body lose their momentum and become exhausted, they lose control over this vehicle called the body and separate from it. This is called death.

These forces, which are able to hold the limbs of the physical body together as an organism, lose their hold over it on account of the fact that they have nothing to do with that instrument afterwards—just as a carpenter when he finishes his work throws the tools down because his work is

finished. Likewise, this carpenter inside has used this body as a tool for executing a particular purpose. When that purpose is fulfilled, the tool has no purpose to serve and it is cast away. That is what we call decease, or the death of the body. But, these forces which have brought about the birth of this body have many purposes to fulfil. Though a particular set of purposes has already been fulfilled through this particular instrument of this body, what about the other sets? They have also to be fulfilled.

There is a pressure exerted by these unfulfilled forces to materialise themselves into form once again. This formation of a material body freshly, once again, on account of the pressure exerted by these potencies inside, is rebirth. Therefore birth, death and rebirth are all caused by forces which are behind, or at the back of, this conscious level of our life which we mistakenly take to be the entire life. The controllers of our deeds and of our experiences here lie behind us, and we seem to be running about like puppets, like marionettes pulled by strings of forces which are invisible to the eyes and inconceivable to the mind. What sort of birth a person will take at a particular time, no individual can know, because every individual is only a showpiece that is projected by these forces at a particular time, keeping aside every other possibility of such formations out of the view of this particular individual.

These forces will not allow us to know what other things are being kept for us. We are completely kept in the dark about our future. Another reason why we are kept in the dark about the future is the power with which these forces manifest themselves in a particular body. Suppose some person is pushing us from behind with tremendous

force; we will be moving forwards with such velocity that we will have no time to think this way or that way, because of the force that is behind us. Likewise, the force with which these latent potencies manifest themselves is such that we are allowed to work only with blinkers, and we cannot know what is either ahead of us or what is past. The logic behind this action of the forces of *karma*, which brings about various types of birth and compels an individual to pass through various experiences, is cosmical and not individual. This is made out by Patanjali in a very few expressions. *Karma* is a cosmic force; it is not an individual force. It is a necessity of nature as a whole which obliges each individual to act in a particular way, to conform to a particular principle, and to undergo certain sets of experiences.

Before we study the other *sutras* in connection with this subject, we may once again remember the four aspects acting as the causative factors of *karma*: *hetu*, *phala*, *asraya* and *alambana*. The cause of all this trouble is our ignorance of Truth. I am repeating what I said already. What is ultimate Truth, no one knows. We have been placed in a fool's paradise by this circumstance of oblivion, darkness, in respect of the ultimate nature of things. This 'fool's paradise' is the world that we are seeing in front of us which we mistake for the only reality. This paradise in which we are living attracts us, compels us, obliges us to act in a particular way. This attraction that we feel is the *kama*, and the work that we do on the basis of it is *karma*. These objects attract us and also act on us; they produce impressions upon the mind with a reciprocal action that causes the mind to think of them more and more.

Then there is the unfortunate consequence that follows from all this—*jāti āyuh bhogāḥ* (II.13)—the birth into a particular species, life in that species for a length of time, and the undergoing of all sorts of pleasurable or painful experiences according to the nature of the *karma* in that particular span of life. This is a concise picture that is presented by Patanjali in connection with the explanation of this particular feature of what is known as *karma*—namely, *hetu phala āśraya ālambanaiḥ* (IV.11).

Chapter 102

AVOIDING KARMA THAT HAS NOT YET GERMINATED

It was said already that apart from these actions of a *yogin*, every action is of a specific character—good, bad or mixed, as the case may be. But in the case of a *yogin*, the actions are neither good, nor bad, nor mixed. This was the point made out in the *sutra*. Why the *yogin*'s actions are not binding and cannot be categorised as either good or bad would be very clear from the very nature of things, because a *yogin* does not act with a sense of agency from the point of view of his personality or ego. It is not he or she that acts; it is a spontaneity of nature that manifests itself through the apparent personality of a *yogin*. But in the case of others, action is specifically generated by a sense of agency. Every agent of action feels, "I do the action." When there is this 'I-ness' in respect of the doership of an action at the background, the result of the action also should come to the agent, and this explains why all individualised action should bear an individualised result.

Every action produces a result in this manner. The result is produced because nature tries to maintain a balance at all times. Every individualised action, or action proceeding from a sense of egoistic agency, may be said to be a kind of disturbance created in the harmony of nature. In nature there is no such thing as ego and, therefore, there is no personality; hence, there cannot be any isolated actor or agent of action. Thus, it may be said that every sense of agency attributed to an individual event or to any action is

contrary to the law of nature. Therefore, retribution follows—what they call the nemesis of action. It is disobedience to law. It is very strange, indeed, that every action that we perform seems to be a violation of the law of nature. Therefore, we are punished by the law, by the reaction that is set up. Every action is a kind of disharmony expressed through the personality of the individual. This is something which the ordinary mind cannot grasp, because no human being can ever imagine what impersonality is, as such a thing does not exist in this world. And it is impersonality that is the remedy for all the ills of life. The ills are caused by the personalities themselves, and the solution is the abolition of the personality.

The sense of agency in action arises on account of the *asmita*, in the language of Patanjali. These results of action follow from a peculiar complex whose details we observed previously. Every result that is produced by an action becomes an occasion for experience by the individual concerned, and it is this that is the cause of rebirth. This is the cause of experience through a phenomenal universe. The various incarnations, or births and deaths, undergone by an individual as a process are the punitive processes which perforce have to be undergone as an expiation, as it were, for the error committed by the individual through the wrong notion of agency in action.

Rebirth cannot be stopped as long as the potency of *karmas* exist. It is futile to imagine that one can escape the vicious circle of the law of *karma* by adding to it in the form of further actions. No action can rectify action. It will only accentuate it, and add an attribute to it, whether pleasant or unpleasant, but it cannot nullify the action

because even the action that we perform with an intention to nullify an action proceeds from the sense of agency in us and, therefore, it cannot have the power to nullify the action. The difficulty arises on account of the sense of agency behind the action, and it cannot be solved by another action proceeding from the same sense of agency. Thus it is that *karma* cannot destroy *karma*. It can make readjustments, but it cannot completely abolish the root of *karma*, for obvious reasons.

Another *sutra* tells us that only ripe *vasanas*—that is, impressions of actions which are ready for manifestation—become visible in conscious experience. The others get buried and do not become a content of one’s consciousness or experience. *Tataḥ tadvipāka anuguṇānām eva abhivyaktiḥ vāsanānām* (IV.8) is the *sutra*. Only those *vasanas* which have become ready for manifestation will manifest themselves in the form of experience. As it was pointed out previously, which potency, which *karma*, which result becomes manifest at what time no one can say, unless one is omniscient. Short of omniscience, nothing can reveal the mystery of *karma*. There is a *karma vipaka*, the ripening of the results of *karma*, the fructification of the deeds of the past in a particular manner, at a particular time, under given circumstances. And then it is they germinate into experience. The germination into experience of these potencies is rebirth. It was already mentioned that they carry with them these rules and regulations concerning the kind of birth one would take, the span of life for which one would live, and the type of experiences which one would undergo. All these will be determined by the nature of the seed that has been sown—

just as we can see by inference what sort of fruit a tree will yield by noting the kind of seed that we have sown.

The seed potentially contains, in a latent form, the fruit that will be yielded by the tree that will grow out of that seed. Likewise, from the nature of our actions, we can have an idea of the kind of experience that will follow in future. We cannot experience something quite the opposite of what we are sowing today. There is an old saying in Sanskrit, the meaning of which is that nobody would like to reap the fruit of sin, because it is painful. But yet, people deliberately commit sin. They expect the fruit of good deeds, but nobody wants to do good deeds. We only want the fruit of good deeds, without doing the good deeds. And we want to avoid the consequence of sin, but we deliberately commit it.

These peculiar characters of the law of *karma* will give us an idea of how far we are removed from the solution of the problem. A careful scrutiny of one's own motives, feelings and intentions may be able to reveal the type of evolution which one has reached and the distance that one maintains at present from the goal that is beyond. The practice of yoga is, therefore, not a kind of *karma* that we perform. It is the solution for the bond of *karma* by setting at naught the causes and the other factors mentioned previously—*hetu*, *phala*, *asraya* and *alambana*. Yoga sets at naught the very root of the problem by detecting where the problem lies. We cannot answer a question unless we understand the question. We cannot solve a problem unless we know what the problem is, and then we must know where the problem lies. The problems of human nature lie in human nature itself; they do not come from outside.

They are certain results that automatically follow from the very nature of humankind. The way in which we think and feel is behind the way in which we act; and, inasmuch as the act has to produce or reap the consequence, it follows that the consequence is actually caused by our feelings, our thoughts, our notions—our total outlook of life itself.

Therefore, unless the outlook of life is changed, the bondage of *karma* cannot be severed. There should be a complete reorientation of the mode of life of the individual in such a manner that it sets itself in harmony with the way in which nature would like him to think and act. That is, one has to become super-individualistic—transcendent to individuality. Until that time, *karma* will bind. Wherever one is, whatever one be, whatever be the distance in time between one birth and another birth, the forces of *karma* will pursue a person: *jāti deśa kāla vyavahitānām api ānantaryaṁ smṛti saṁskārayoḥ ekarūpatvāt* (IV.9). “Just as a small child of a cow finds its mother in the herd of cows by wriggling through the crowd, hither and thither, so will the result of your *karma* find you wherever you are,” goes an old saying. We may run away to a distance of thousands of miles, or we may go to the distant galaxies, but the *karma* will pursue us wherever we are. Even if there is a gap of thousands of years, or even millions of years, between the time when we performed an action and the time when it fructifies, the *karma* will not leave us.

Time and space are not obstacles to the operation of *karma*. It will pursue the individual wherever he is or she is, and whatever be the circumstances under which the individual is. *Karma* is like a tax collector who will not listen to our woes of family, etc. He says, “You pay the tax.”

We cannot cry, "I have got a sick child and an old mother. I cannot pay the tax." There is no use telling him that. He will say, "You must pay the tax." Similarly, there is no use crying before the law of *karma*, "I made a mistake, I'm very sorry." Well, if we made a mistake, we pay through the nose, that's all. The law of *karma* will not leave us.

The species into which one is born is the *jati*. The place where one is born is the *desa*. The time when one is born is the *kala*. They may be variegated from one circumstance to another. At different times, at different places and in different kinds of species one may take birth, but *karma* will be uniformly operating under all these conditions and it cannot be set at naught by the difference of space, time and species.

There is a causal connection between the source of action and the fruit of action. That is called *anantarya*. There is a continuity of process between cause and effect. There is no gulf between cause and effect. There is a connection, and this connection is universal, cosmical in nature. The fruit of the particular *karma* can be born at any place and at any time when it is ready for manifestation. Throughout the universe it operates—and we cannot go outside the universe. We are inside the universe wherever we are. We may go to any realm or plane of existence, yet all these planes of existence are within the cosmos. We may go from one district to another district, or from one province to another province, but the law of the government uniformly operates in all places. And if we are culprits, we will be caught by the law, and we cannot escape merely because we have jumped from one district to another district or from one province to another province.

Likewise is this law. We may take birth in another plane of existence, and yet the law of *karma* will be operating there because there is a single government for the whole cosmos and the law will work wherever we are. The point is, there is no escape from the law of *karma*. We have, perforce, to enjoy or suffer the consequence of the deeds that we perform because we did them and, therefore, we have to bear the fruit. If we have done the deed, who else will bear the fruit thereof? Thus, there is a causal connection, says the *sutra*.

This causal connection is maintained by the capacity of the mind of the individual to contain within itself everything, any blessed thing, in a very, very subtle form. The mind is like a seed. It may look very small, almost invisible, but it can contain potentially, or latently, the possibility of the spreading of a vast banyan tree of future experience, notwithstanding that it looks so small. We see how big the banyan tree is. How can it be contained in that seed which is so negligibly small? Yet it is there. Very surprising! Such a minute seed—to see it we have to observe it with great care, with focused eyes—can contain within itself such a mighty expanse of a banyan tree! Likewise, a cosmic expanse of future experience can be contained in a very fine, subtle form in the little seed of the mind, which is the individual that performs the action. The reason why this continuity of cause and effect is maintained is the mind itself. The mind is the cause, and it also contains the potential of the effect. And it manifests itself from itself only; it does not come from somewhere outside. Whatever the birth one takes, one cannot jump out of one's own skin. In all the various births, or incarnations, into

which one passes, one cannot abandon one's own mind. It is the mind that really incarnates, it is the mind that performs the action, and it is the mind that contains the seed of future experience as the result of the action.

We are the cause, and we also contain within ourselves the effect. We carry with us the effect because we are the cause. The effect proceeds only from the cause, and inasmuch as we are the cause, naturally the effect is there hiddenly present in us. Hence, it should be very clear as to why the effect should be produced wherever we are—at any place, at any time, in any plane of existence. That is the significance of this *sutra*: *jāti deśa kāla vyavahitānām api ānantaryaṁ smṛti saṁskārayoḥ ekarūpatvāt* (IV.9). The *samskaras* of action—that is, the impressions produced by a particular action—become the cause of the reproduction of the corresponding effect in the very same agent which performs the action.

Tāsām anādītvam ca āśiṣaḥ nityatvāt (IV.10), says another *sutra*. This circle, or cycle of *karma*, is beginningless and endless, inasmuch as desire is eternal, almost. We cannot say when desire began and how it will end. There is no limitation of time to this law of *karma*, because it is not limited by the movement of time and the distance of space. When did desire begin? Nobody can say. When individuality began, desire also began, as they are identical. When did our individuality begin? God only knows. No one can say when it began. And, simultaneously, desire arose. As I mentioned previously, *avidya* and *kama* go together, and immediately they produce *karma*, or action. But, says the Yoga Shastra, there is a solution for this problem. All this looks very forbidding and formidable

indeed when we look upon it as an observer from outside. The solution does not lie in observing this as an outside onlooker, but by getting into its very structure—which is the practice of yoga.

Atīta anāgatam svarūpataḥ asti adhvabhedāt dharmāṇām (IV.12): The *dharmas*, which are the characteristics of *karma*, have a past, a present and a future. The future is what causes bondage. The past is already experienced, so we cannot do anything with it. It is over. The present is being undergone. We are in it completely, so we cannot do anything with the present either. But we can do something with the future and see that it does not come upon us like a nemesis. Heyaṁ duḥkham anāgatam (II.16), says an earlier *sūtra*. The pain that has not yet come can be avoided with the adoption of certain means. The pain which has already come cannot be avoided, because it is there as a part of our present life. But the future, which is now hiddenly existent in what is known as the present, can be burnt up by the adoption of the proper means. And what is the means? It is yoga.

By the practice of yoga it is possible to see that the future does not manifest itself, because the future has not yet taken action. It has not become part of our conscious life. It is still hiddenly present, and it can be burnt up inside before it germinates into action. Once it germinates, it becomes a *prarabdha* which is the total complex of a present experience, including the body, the mind, etc. Once it manifests itself, we cannot get out of it. But there are certain reservoirs inside us in the form of future possibility. Sometimes they are called *sanchita karmas*, which have not

yet become *prarabdha*. They can be dealt with effectively by yoga. What is this yoga?

This is what we have been explaining all along, from the Samadhi Pada onwards. Yoga is a gradual, effective effort at the abolition of the distinction between the object of experience and the subject thereof, by the practice of *samyama*. That is the solution to the problem. As long as there is object-consciousness, *citta*-consciousness, ego-consciousness, personality-consciousness, *karma* cannot be avoided. The power of yoga is such that it can fry up the seeds inside that are yet ungerminated. If the force exerted by the practice of yoga is sufficiently strong, every *karma* can be destroyed: *sarvaṁ karmākhilam pāṛtha jñāne parisamāpyate* (B.G. IV.33).

The *sutras* that follow in the Kaivalya Pada will not go into details of the practice of yoga, because the details have already been stated in the earlier *sutras*. Now we are given only the psychology behind the law of *karma*, and the *sutra* points out that, though ordinarily *karma* cannot be escaped and no one can be free from the operation of the law of *karma*, there is one solution by which the future pains can be avoided and rebirth abolished completely by the supernal means which is provided by the system of yoga.

Chapter 103

PUTTING AN END TO REBIRTH

The attainment of liberation is equivalent to the cessation of the bondage of *karma*. It is the effect of *karma* that prevents the knowledge and experience of the Ultimate Spirit. Hence, the causes of *karma* should be discovered and their effects destroyed, so that there may be no obstruction to the spirit beholding the Spirit. Hetu phala āśraya ālambanaiḥ saṅgrhītatvāt eṣām abhāve tad abhāvaḥ (IV.11). The effects of the *vasanas*—the impressions of *karma*—will cease of their own accord when the circumstances that have brought about these *vasanas* cease. What are these circumstances? These circumstances have been mentioned already. They are a set of various phases of impact coming from various sides: from the objects, from the mind, from the ultimate ignorance itself which is the cause of *asmita*, or individual perception, and the consequence thereof—*jati*, *ayuh*, *bhoga*, which are the birth that we have taken and the time we spend undergoing experiences of various types in the birth that we have taken. We cannot cut short the span of life except by exhaustion of *karma*. It is *karma* that pushes itself forward as experience. That fact is not known to the mind because it is involved in the force with which the *karma* acts.

The causes of the effects of *karma* are not known to the mind. Perhaps no one can know them, because each aspect of that cause is influenced by every other aspect, so we cannot say that any one is the entire cause. The cessation of these factors is the cessation of the *vasanas*, says the *sutra*. The perception of an object is one of the causes. Yoga

psychology regards every perception as a bondage because it creates impressions in the mind. Perception is caused by likes and dislikes in various intensities. It is not merely a bare, indeterminate, featureless perception of an object, but it is something which is motivated by the feelings of the mind and, therefore, judgements are passed together with the perception of an object. We do not merely perceive things; we pass judgements on things, and it is the judgements that are the cause of our attachment or aversion in respect of objects, and vice versa.

We have no insight into the causes of the perception of an object. We have been seeing the surface of the process of perception and, therefore, neither we know the nature of the object which is perceived, nor do we know the mind itself which is influenced in a particular manner by a perception. The reason for getting stuck to the object is the misconception in the mind in regard to the object. This is made out in a subsequent *sutra*. The mind that cognises an object does not understand what it is that is actually cognised. It has a wrong notion about the content of the cognition. What is this that is seen before us? We have a very common definition: "It is an object, a substance, some solid presentation." That is all we can say, if we can say anything at all about that which is cognised by the mind. It makes no difference whether it is animate or inanimate—it has a similar character of cognisability and perceptibility. But this is not the essence of the object. There is something else behind it which causes in the mind a sense of attraction and repulsion which the mind itself cannot understand, because if it understands that, the very meaning of the cognition will cease at once.

The powers that operate a particular form as an object are invisible to the senses and unthinkable by the mind. These powers themselves are not objects. They are transcendent features which are far, far removed from the ken of mental perception. And, if we can remember a *sutra* that we studied earlier, we have already been told that everything is a modification of *prakṛiti* in some way or the other. *Te vyakta sūkṣmāḥ guṇātmānaḥ* (IV.13). Whether an object is visible or invisible, manifest or unmanifest, it is a product of the *gunas*—*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. These *gunas*, by various mixtures of their own permutation and combination, present themselves as forms or shapes before the mind and the senses: *pariṇāma ekatvāt vastutattvam* (IV.14). The substantiality of an object is an illusion, ultimately speaking. It is not substance that we are cognising or contacting through the senses. It is a kind of reaction that is produced by the *gunas* subjectively through the mind and objectively in the form that they have taken as the object that is cognised. It is mentioned in this *sutra* that the reason why there is cognition of substantiality in the object is due to the uniqueness of the transformation of the *gunas*.

There is a peculiar uniqueness, novelty, in every formation of the *gunas*, and when they tally in some respect with the vibrations of the mind, or the *vrittis* of the mind, then there is a correspondence between the mind and that particular shape which the *gunas* have taken. If there is no such correspondence, there would be no cognition. We do not perceive things which are in the heavens, for instance. The things which are subatomic also cannot be cognised by the mind. We cannot also see things which are constituted

of vibrations which are superior or inferior to the level of mental vibrations.

The *vrittis* of the mind are vibrations of the mind, really speaking. They must correspond in the rate of their motion to the rate of the motion of the *gunas* in a particular form, which the mind calls the object. Thus, it is only a certain set of formations which tally with the vibration of the mind that can be cognised by the mind, and not all. It does not mean that the mind is able to cognise everything everywhere. There are many more things which the senses cannot grasp and the mind cannot understand. The reason is that there is no correspondence between the vibration of the mind—the *vrittis* of the mind—and the velocity with which the *gunas* move in respect of other formations.

Thus, there is a great mistake on the part of the mind in imagining that any particular object is a substance by itself, and in passing a judgement in respect of that object as a desirable thing or an undesirable thing. Also, when there is thus a correspondence established between the mind and the object, there is a further process which takes the mind deeper and deeper into bondage. The mere perception of an object is not the end of the matter; it is only the beginning of the trouble. When there is this correspondence of the mind with the object, for the reason mentioned, the mind begins to act upon the object; consequently, the object begins to influence the mind. Then there is the readiness of the mind to exploit the object, to utilise it for its purposes, to fulfil its desires, because it regards the object as desirable. Then there is action projected by the mind in respect of that fulfilment which it wants; then there is experience, and the experience produces, once again, an impression in the

mind for a repetition of that experience, inasmuch as there has been a false notion in the mind that this is the object which is required.

The *gunas* are never stable in their nature; they vary. The very essence of the *gunas* is mutation, and there is a transformation perpetually going on throughout *prakriti*, on account of which the objects also change their nature. When the object changes its nature, it ceases to be that object which it was earlier. Then the mind does not see the same meaning in that object which it saw earlier, and then there is a different attitude of the mind in respect of the object.

The transformation of an object can be internal or external. When it is internal, the external form may be maintained, but the internal attitude changes. Let's take a person, for instance. We may have one attitude towards a person one particular day, but though the person is the same—the shape, form, etc. are the same—the mind may change tomorrow and then the attitude may not be identical. Hence, the internal change may bring about a change in the attitude of the mind towards the object. Also, the external form may change as well; that is called the death of the body. Then the object does not exist there. That is what we call bereavement, and the mind feels that it has lost its object.

The mind has not lost anything. Things have assumed their original form, and the purpose of *prakriti* is being fulfilled by the various mutations it undergoes for various reasons which are cosmical in their nature. It is not that the whole universe exists only for one individual and that everything should take place according to that individual's

wishes. It is not so. There are infinite purposes hidden in the bosom of *prakriti* for the purpose of bringing about umpteen uncounted experiences in all the individuals that exist throughout the cosmos. Thus, the particular unique character of an object, which is the *gunas* assuming a particular shape or a form at a given moment of time, is not the explanation of the whole subject. It is only a phenomenon that is presented before the mind, and merely because the mind corresponds to the character of the object for the time being, it mistakes it for the total reality.

Really speaking, there is no such thing as an individual object. Isolated objects do not exist in this world because of the fact that every object is constituted of the same *gunas*—*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*—which also are the constituents of every other object in this world. If every object is made up of the same substance, namely the *gunas*, what is the reason behind the perception of variety in objects? If variety does not exist, the world will cease to be. The whole drama of existence continues because of the belief in the diversity of things. And diversity is illusory, merely on the ground that the shapes which are the causes of the perception of variety are presented by the mutation of the *gunas*, and these *gunas* will not rest in that shape for all time. Therefore, there is a continuous transformation going on of the individual and the outside universe—internally and externally—so that any kind of permanent attitude that we may have towards an object, or sets of objects, would be a false notion.

This analysis of the nature of the object and its relationship with the mind that cognises it would help greatly in the breaking of the bond of *karma*, which has been strengthened very much by the attachment of the

mind to the object on account of this false notion. The bond of *karma* has to be snapped. Only then there will be liberation, not otherwise. And the *karma* cannot end as long as the causes of *karma* persist. What are the causes? One of them is the object. What is the object? The object is nothing but the presentation of the three *gunas*; and we are mistaking it for a particular object, a solid thing, independent absolutely, quite different from anything else. Thus, we have a special evaluation of that particular object, due to which there is the impression formed in the mind by the object; and we know what happens further. There is a repetition of this action by the mind continuously, even in recurring births.

With this attitude of the mind, with this knowledge that is gained about the nature of the object in its essentiality, one should detach oneself from judging things individually and hanging one's life on the form of that particular object. Also, there is a need for the reformation of the mind because that is another factor which is the cause of the production of *karma*. The *vrittis* of the mind should be checked. Otherwise, they will modify themselves repeatedly into any number of shapes, and the result would be that they would go on establishing relationships with varieties of objects. As there are infinite objects in the world, there would be no end for the objects for the mind. When the *citta vrittis*—the modifications of the mind, the *vrittis* of the mind—change themselves in the process of evolution, so also they will find different types of objects suiting them. What we liked in the last birth will not be what we like in this birth. They are different things altogether, notwithstanding the fact that all these things that we like or

dislike are products of the same *gunas* of *prakriti*. The like and dislike arise because of the inability of the mind to grasp the truth behind these formations of the *gunas*. Therefore, the checking of the *vrittis* in respect of objects is necessary, in the same way as it is necessary to understand the nature of the object.

The third factor is *phala*, which is the experiences that we undergo in this life—which are called *jati*, *ayuh*, *bhoga*. This can be worked out only by the exhaustion of *karma*. We cannot do anything about it. When we have been born, naturally we have been bound to the circumstances of the birth. So until the *karmas* which have brought about the birth of this body are exhausted by experience, nothing can be done. The *prarabdha* cannot be overcome; it has to be worked out. By working out the *karma* in a particular life, it is exhausted. But we must see that we are not reborn by the operation of the other *karmas* which are there unfructified, lying in a latent form.

The very purpose of the practice of yoga is to see that there is no rebirth. And rebirth cannot be stopped as long as we allow the unfructified *karmas* to manifest themselves of their own accord. But we have no control over them merely because we have no knowledge about them. Also, there is no understanding of the mind; it is caught up in a whirl of circumstances which have been created by these visible as well as invisible forms of *karma*. Ultimately, the greatest cause of bondage is *avidya* itself—*hetu*. That is the original source. That is the mother of all problems: the ignorance of the Ultimate Reality, which is the cause for all this dramatic activity of the mind in this world of phenomena. What is the ultimate nature of Truth? It is

indivisible consciousness, *purusha tattva*, which is the aim of yoga. The realisation of the *purusha* is *kaivalya moksha*, for which so much struggle is there in all forms of life. Therefore the *purusha* should be awakened to consciousness. There should be resting of the consciousness in itself. *Tadā draṣṭuḥ svarūpe avasthānaṃ* (I.3), says the *sutra*. For this purpose it is that we practise yoga. This *sutra* is only a small symbolic presentation of the problem of *karma* and the way in which it can be stopped for the purpose of the liberation of the spirit: *hetu phala āśraya ālambanaiḥ samgrhītavād eṣāṃ abhāve tad abhāvaḥ* (IV.11).

Parīṇāma ekatvāt vastutattvam (IV.14). This reaction of the mind in respect of objects, producing the potency of *karma*, has a past, a present and a future, as we observed previously in connection with the *sutra*: *atīta anāgataṃ svarūpataḥ asti adhvabhedād dharmāṇām* (IV.12). The past, the present and the future also are illusions, just as the form of an object is an illusion. It is the inability of the mind to comprehend every circumstance at one stroke that is the reason for the belief in past, present and future. There is no such thing as that. Who has made this compartment of past, present and future? There are no such compartments. They are only notions of the mind in respect of certain kinds of experience. There is a pattern, which the mind then compartmentalises due to the notion of the objects which are in space and time. Space, time and motion, we may say, are the causes of this idea in the mind of past, present and future. It is really not true that time has such compartments; it is a continuous duration. Yet the past is kept outside the sight of the mind, and the future is

also unknown because of the intense attachment of the mind to a particular group of *karmas* which are called the 'present'.

The force of the *karma* is the cause of this generalisation of the mind—namely, the experiences of the past, the present and the future. It is not enough if we tackle the present merely, as the problems are not created by present factors only. The past has left an impression which is causing trouble even in the present, and as a potency, it will produce further trouble in the future. For *karma*, there is no past, present and future; it is only for us that it exists. For this universal law of *karma*, there is no such thing as time limitation. It can work at any time, in any way, when circumstances are favourable.

Hence, the checking of the forces of *karma* implies the checking of its very roots, whether they are past, present or future. Also, we should not be complacent under the notion that what we are thinking today is the total thought of our mind and that we have to deal only with these thoughts. What we are thinking today is very little, because we cannot remember what we thought yesterday and what we experienced a few years before. Also, we have no idea of what is stored for us in the future. This is a very great difficulty before the mind that it mistakes only the present circumstances for the total reality.

In one place in the Bhagavadgita it has been mentioned that this kind of knowledge is the worst kind of knowledge, where the limited present alone is regarded as the total reality, and the past and the future are ignored totally so that anything that is outside—not inside—the location of the present circumstances is regarded as unreal. *Yat tu*

kr̥tsnavad ekasmin kārye saktam ahaitukam; atattvārthavad alpaṁ ca tad tāmasam udāhṛtam (B.G. XVIII.22): *Tamasic* knowledge, the lowest kind of knowledge, is that which concentrates itself on a particular object only and hangs upon it as if it is the total reality, ignoring every other thing, every other cause or factor which is responsible even for the existence of this object.

Thus, the power of *karma* is universal; it is not only in one place. It is in the past, it is in the present and it is in the future. This way in which *karma* works in a universal manner can be checked only by application of a universal method. An individual puny creature cannot tackle this *karma*. We have to raise ourselves to the status of that capacity to deal with this universal feature which is called the *karmic* force. Rather, we have to become universal persons before we can face this universal problem. It is not a question to be solved by one individual. And when we are able to face it, we are not any more individuals—we are something more than that. Therefore it is that the yoga system again and again emphasises the need for the individual to raise itself to the status of that particular level of experience with which yoga deals. When we are merely small individuals, we cannot deal with a cosmic problem. We deal only with problems which are commensurate with our present level, and then we go step by step. These are the stages of yoga—the eight limbs of *yama*, *niyama*, *asana*, *pranayama*, *dharana*, *dhyana* and *samadhi*—which are only stages of the confronting of the problem at different levels of experience.

The tackling of the problem of *karma* is almost the last thing that we can do when we become universally capable

of dealing with every difficulty by proper adjustment of ourselves with that circumstance it has created at that particular level. It again amounts to saying that we have to raise ourselves to an impersonal state gradually; and yoga is nothing but that. Ultimately, we have to become the most impersonal of things—that is *purusha*. *Purusha* is not a man. It is the impersonal Reality, and that is the goal of yoga; and we are moving towards it, we are approximating towards it, we are tending towards it, we are aspiring for it, and our aim is only that. Therefore, every step in our effort is a purification of ourselves towards this higher impersonality—though it comes gradually. This *sutra*—*atīta anāgataṁ svarūpataḥ asti adhvabhedād dharmāṇām* (IV.12)—tells us that there is a need to deal with *karma* in all its aspects.

Also, we have noted that *karma* is not an object; it is the way in which things act. The action and reaction among things is called *karma*. Our standing outside this action-reaction process is the reason why we get caught up in it. The world has been regarded by us as an external object and, therefore, the law of *karma* acts upon us and binds us. When we become more and more harmonious with the world, which is what is intended in *samyama*, ultimately, we become more and more harmonious with the object. Ultimately, there is utter harmony, equality of status—a merger of one with the other.

When this harmony gets established, gradually, in greater and greater degrees, the force of *karma* diminishes in intensity. This is because there is no such thing as *karma* except *prakṛiti* itself acting, the world itself operating—that is called *karma*. Because we stand outside it as helpless

creatures, it is acting upon us forcefully, as if we are subjected to it. Yoga is that technique by which we are raised, gradually, to a greater form of approximation to this world law, which is the law of *karma*, so that it will not act upon us because we become harmonious with it. For this attainment is the practice of *samyama* which has been mentioned in various ways in the earlier *sutras*.

Chapter 104

THE DOUBLE ACTIVITY IN MENTAL COGNITION

The nature of an object is being discussed here in a few *sutras*. The philosophical status of an object has much to do with the practice of *samyama* in yoga, because yoga *samyama* is nothing but the resolution of the factors of relation between the subject and the object. The philosophy of yoga has a unique concept of the nature of the object, on the basis of which its psychology is directed and its practice is conducted.

What is an object? We have studied something about its nature previously, where it was said: *pariṇāma ekatvāt vastutattvam* (IV.14). The local presence of an object—the position of an object in space, the isolated existence of the object—is regarded as a kind of temporary presentation before the senses of a form taken by the cosmic *prakṛiti* in its manifold movement of the *gunas*: *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. A kind of concretion, we may say, a concentration of the three *gunas* in a particular manner, at a particular point in space and time, is the object. The outcome of this analysis is that every object has a cosmic significance. It is not something cut off entirely from other things.

Therefore, it is possible, through the *samyama* practised on any object, to enter into the heart of any other object also. This is a very great point that is made out here by this philosophical analysis of the nature of the object, because otherwise it would be difficult to understand how cosmic knowledge or omniscience can be the outcome of

meditation on a single object, as there would be no relation between the two. The point made here is that the relation does exist. One can enter the ocean through any river in this world, because all rivers meet the same ocean. Likewise, one can enter the cosmic through any object, even if it is only a pencil or even a pin. It does not matter what it is, because this little thing called the pencil or the pin looks so small only from the point of view of our empirical sensory perception. But even this little pinhead has a cosmic background behind it, and it is only a projection of the forces of *prakṛiti*—called *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. This subject was studied earlier in some detail.

Now, the question arises: how does an object become known? How are we aware that there is an object? It is stated in the subsequent *sūtra*, *vastusāmye cittabhedāt tayoh vibhaktaḥ panthāḥ* (IV.15), that varieties in perception of a single object depend upon the varieties of the constitution of minds. The various stresses through which the minds of individuals pass determine the variety in cognition and perception of objects. Though the object may be one and the same in respect of the perception of it by many others, its reception by the different minds may be variegated on account of the variety in the nature of the minds themselves. This means to say, the impression formed by the object upon minds is not always uniform, because though the force of the impress by the object upon the minds of perceivers may be uniform, the way in which this impress is received by the minds may be variegated on account of the different receptive capacities of the perceiving minds. I will give a crude example to illustrate this point. The same sunlight falling upon different kinds of

mirrors may appear differently. A broken mirror, a coloured mirror, a dusty mirror, a mirror that is painted with pitch, etc.—these may allow the light of the sun to pass through them in different ways.

The moods of the mind—the *vrittis* of the *manas*—have something to do with the reaction which they set up in respect of the impress that the object makes upon them, so that even if the object is the same, the perceptions and cognitions may be variegated. This is a little point that is brought out here in connection with the psychology of perception. Objects are structurally different on account of the various constitutions of the *gunas* in different ways; that is one aspect or one side of the matter. The other side is that the same object can create different impressions on different minds, on account of the difference in their make-up. Not only that, even on the same mind the object can make different impressions during different moods or different stages of the manifestation of the *vrittis* of that particular mind.

Patanjali tells us that it does not mean that the mind which is aware of an object creates the object. The object is not manufactured or produced by the mind; it is only aware of the presence of the object in a particular manner, and the manner has been described. What is the manner in which the object makes an impression upon the mind? Here is a great point in philosophy—namely, the relationship of the object to the mind, and vice versa. Entire schools of philosophical thought may be said to be labouring on the solution of this one question: what is the relation of the mind to the object, or the relation of the object to the mind? Who is the determining factor of what? Does the mind

passively receive any impression that is made upon it by the object, and the mind has nothing to contribute to the nature of the object? Is it only a featureless and passive receiver of the impressions made upon it by the object? Is it the case? Or is it true that the mind has something to contribute to the nature of the object, so that we may be right in holding that in the perception of an object, the character of the mind influences the object, and the object as it is in itself is never cognised?

These two theories, technically called the theories of realism and idealism in philosophy, are opposite schools of thought. One holds the independent existence of the objects outside, making the mind only subservient as a percipient; the other holds that the objects are subservient and the mind is the superior controller and determiner. We cannot take any of these two sides, because they are only partial expressions of a transcendent position which the objects and the minds occupy in the structure of nature. It is not true that the mind entirely and wholly determines the character of the object, so that the object is whatever the mind thinks. Nor is it true that the mind is a passive receiver of the impressions from the object. The mind has something to do with the object in the nature of cognition, and that is the reason why minds have different feelings and reactions in respect of the same object. But if, on the other hand, the objects were entirely determined by the mind, we would be the manufacturers of various objects, and whatever we think would crop up in our presence.

The difficulty is that which subsists between the relation of the individual to the cosmic. What is the connection between the individual and the universal? This question, if

it is answered, will also answer the question of the relation between the mind and the object. Here we have a judgement passed on the quarrel between the realistic doctrines and the idealistic theories. The whole problem arises on account of an inability of the individual minds to comprehend the cosmic relationship that seems to be there behind them, notwithstanding that they are individual perceivers. The relationship between the mind and the object is twofold. It is empirical as well as transcendental, and we should not mix up one with the other. The difficulty arises on account of a mixing up of these two levels of perception. The object, as well as the mind that cognises the object, has an empirical feature, or a form and a relation, and also a transcendental location. It is the transcendental status that the minds and the objects occupy in the scheme of things that sometimes makes it appear that the objects are idealistically located and determined by the percipients. But there is also an empirical realm, the realm of ordinary perception where the objects do not seem to be entirely under the control of the minds. They stand outside the minds and, therefore, it is not possible to deduce that they are entirely determined in the process of cognition.

In every mental cognition there is a twofold activity that takes place simultaneously. In India, in the schools of Vedanta, for example, this subject has been thrashed out threadbare, and such Vedantic works as the Panchadasi, for instance, have devoted an entire chapter to the discussion of this subject. It has been concluded by these teachers of philosophy that every object is transcendently ideal and empirically real. It has a real character as well as an ideal character. Empirically it is real, but transcendently it is

ideal. The point is that every object is contained both in the cosmic set-up of things as well as in the empirical realm. Or we may say, the heads of people are in heaven and their feet are planted on the earth, so that we belong to both realms—heaven as well as earth. The perception of an object, both in its psychological character as well as its philosophical nature, is difficult to explain, and this is the entire problem of philosophy.

There is no philosophy except this point: how do we know things at all? The knowledge of a thing or an object is the recognition of the presence of something, as conditioned by the process to which the perceiving mind is subject. There is the necessity for the existence of something, and without that existence the mind would not be cognising anything, because it cannot perceive an airy nothing. The existence of something prior to the operation of the mental activity in perception should be there, and yet the mind cannot cognise that something as it is in itself. The mind cannot cognise an object as it is in itself because the mind is conditioned by space, time and causal connections. It can know an object only as it is determined by this threefold network of space, time and cause. An object cannot be known in any other manner. This is conditioned perception. The object is modified in perception by the structure into which the object has been cast, so that when we are presented with an object of perception, it is already cast in the mould of space, time and cause. It is the shape that it has taken in space, time and cause relation that is presented before the mind. We do not see the object as it is in itself. Not only that—even the mind is cast in this mould. The mind cannot think anything

which is not in space, which is not in time, and which is not causally connected. There is a restriction imposed on the mind by these conditions of perception. Space, time and cause: these are the conditions. They operate objectively as well as subjectively. They are universally present, so their world is phenomenal. We call this world phenomenal because it is conditioned. Conditioned by whom? By this thing called space, time and cause. Minus these things, objects cannot be known. And yet, there is something which presents itself as an object.

What is that 'something'? That something which is cast in the mould of space, time and cause is the real object. Some philosophers call it the thing-in-itself—the thing as it is in itself, which is impossible of cognition by the minds of individuals merely because they are cast in the mould of space, time and cause. While there is a necessity to logically admit the existence of something which is non-conditioned by space, time and cause, because of the fact that even conditioning would not be possible unless the objects exist in some status of their own, yet it is true that they cannot be known. Thus, the object as it is in itself would be a kind of inference rather than a perception. What is perceived is a process which has been introduced into this relationship between the mind and the object by the fact of space, time and cause.

What is the outcome of this analysis? The outcome is that the objects have a status of their own. As I mentioned, in our Indian technical Vedanta phraseology this existence of the object in its own status is referred to as what is called *Ishvara sristhi*—God's creation. God creates the world, and the world that is created by God, or *Ishvara*, is the real

nature of the world. But the way in which it is presented to the minds is a little different. That manner in which the object of the world, *Ishvara srithi*, is presented to the minds of individuals is called *jiva srithi*, or the individual's creation. It is not that we perceive the world in the same way as God perceives things. I perceive a table, and God also perceives it. But there is a difference in the conception and the perception on account of the position of the perceiver. The Supreme Perceiver, who is God, is cosmical and, therefore, his reaction to things is quite different from the individualistic reactions of persons like us, who are placed outside the realm of the objects.

The existence of an object is to be distinguished from the value that is attached to it. What is called *Ishvara srithi* is the existence of the object, and the value that is recognised is the *jiva srithi*. Gold—a lump of gold, for instance—is *Ishvara srithi*, we may say. It exists by itself. But that it has a value—the value that we attach to gold, the meaning that is seen or significance that is there—is a manufacture, or product, of the individual's mind. Every other relationship is of that nature. A human being, as he or she is there independently, may be said to be *Ishvara srithi*. But the way in which there is reaction among individuals, and the relationship that is there as an outcome of this individual reaction, is *jiva srithi*.

Thus, there is a confused perception of an object when the mind starts operating in respect of an object. Neither is it a perception in a vacuum based on nothing, so that we can say the mind is simply imagining something there, nor is it true that the object is as it is perceived. We are in a very difficult situation. We do not know what we are seeing. We

are seeing something, and by the perception thereof we recognise, or anticipate, or infer the existence of something behind this perception. Yoga, in *samyama*, wants to break through this complex which is there between the perceiving subject and the object as it is. This complex, when it is broken, results in identity. That identity is the object of the practice of *samyama*.

Now we come back to the *sutra* of Patanjali where he makes out that the object is not created by the mind. It has a status of its own, and what status it has, we have already tried to see. Again he repeats, in the subsequent *sutra*, that the impression made by the object upon the mind is the cause of the mental cognition of the object. And, inasmuch as the mind is not able to function independent of the *vrittis* or its psychoses, it cannot have a uniform perception of objects. The perception is always variegated. The mind is a subject of perception from the point of view of all individuals, but it is also an object from the point of view of a higher level of vision.

Sadā jñātaḥ cittavṛttayaḥ tatprabhoḥ puruṣasya aparīṇāmitvāt (IV.18). The *purusha*, who is supreme and absolute, is the knower of even the *vrittis* of the mind; therefore, the *purusha* is all-knowing, while the minds of the individuals are not all-knowing. The minds are limited to the particular *vrittis* which they are undergoing at different times and, therefore, they have only conditioned knowledge of things limited to the capacity of their own *vrittis*. But the *purusha* has omniscience because the *purusha* is unconditioned. The *purusha's* knowledge is not a knowledge through the *vrittis* or psychoses of the mind. There is no mind in the *purusha*. The difference between

the individual *jiva*, or the ordinary mind that cognises things, and the *purusha* who is aware of all things is that while the *purusha* is a transcendent being, independent of mental operation, the minds require the help of the *purusha* in being aware of objects. The light of the *purusha* is reflected through the minds of individuals, and the reason behind their perception of an object—what we call the illumination of the object in cognition—is the *purusha*, or we may say the *atman*, as the Vedanta would put it. But the limitation which is concomitant with the perception of an object, and the absence of omniscience in mental cognition, is due to the character of the mind itself.

Thus, two things happen in the cognition of an object by the mind: there is a limitation imposed upon the cognition, and there is a light that illumines the object. The light comes from the *purusha* who is supreme but is unknown to the mind—unknown to the mind because it is the background of the mind. The *purusha* is transcendent in the sense that the mind, which is projected extrovertly, cannot turn back and cognise the presence of the *purusha*. The *purusha* is a name that we give to the Universal Subject—very important to remember. The *purusha* is universal and also subject. The mind cannot cognise the presence of the *purusha*, who is universal, because the subject cannot be known by the mind, the reason being that the mind is conditioned by the activity of the senses which always try to drag it towards objects outside in space and time. The mind is not really a subject in the ultimate sense; it stands in the position of an object when it is thoroughly investigated into. It is an object because it is also capable of being known, so that we may know what is happening in

our minds. We can think the faculties. We can have an idea of the moods in the mind and the notions occurring in the mind. The movement of the *vrittis* of the mind is known to us. In the light of this fact that the *vrittis* of the mind can become objects of cognition, they are objects. In deep contemplation, which is of the nature of an abstraction, the mind can be observed as if it is an object. We can stand outside our mind and visualise its movements; this happens in high states of meditation.

The mind usurps the status of a perceiver, or a knower of an object, by the egoism to which it is attached, due to the *asmita* from which it is inseparable. And then, for all practical purposes, it appears that the mind is the cogniser of the object and the mind is the knower of things. "I am the knower of an object," is the statement that generally is made. When we say, "I know the object", we are mixing up various factors. The 'I' is the individual perceiver, and the individuality of the perceiver is due to the interference of the mind in the act of perception, whereas the knowledge aspect of the perception is the *purusha* present. So there is a double activity in mental cognition: the light of the *purusha* passing through the mind, and the conditioning of the perception of the object due to the limitations imposed upon the mind itself by the factors of space, time and cause.

This is an interesting analysis coming from a study of a few of the *sutras* which try to show the true character of an object in its relation to the perceiving minds.

Chapter 105

ABSORPTION INTO UNIVERSAL SUBJECTIVITY

While the mind is a very valuable instrument in the acquisition of knowledge of things, and thus it stands in the position of a subject in respect of all other things which are its objects, it is not usually known that under certain special conditions of investigation, the mind also will be observed to be an object. It is not an ultimate subject, though it has a tentative function to perform as a subject of empirical knowledge. Ordinary psychology deals with the mind as if it is the ultimate subject, and this has come about on account of the inability of ordinary investigation to go deeper into a level removed from the operational field of the mind. Yoga takes us beyond the mind, and does not end merely with the mind, as is the case with other branches of learning.

A *sutra* of Patanjali tells us that the mind is not self-luminous. It appears to be luminous, but it is not really so, as is the case with a mirror or a glass which cannot shine of its own accord, though it may look as if the mirror is shining. The glass is transparent and, therefore, is illumining in its nature. The illuminating character of the mind, or the cognitive function of the mind, is only a temporary assumption of power which it has taken on for purposes which are transcendent to its own nature. The mind is something like a 'clearing nut', as they call it, which allows the dross or dirt in water to settle down, and then finally settles down itself. Likewise, the mind performs the functions of investigation objectively, but when it comes to a matter of investigation into its own nature, it dwindles

into nothing and it becomes ultimately a mere tentative tool, employed like an 'x' in an algebraic equation, which has no meaning in itself but has tremendous meaning in bringing about results by means of calculation.

The mind is ordinarily a subject of knowledge, and it is the mind that knows the things outside, the objects of the world. But, that the mind is not self-luminous and is not capable of knowing things independently is a fact which cannot come to relief ordinarily. In advanced contemplation and heightened forms of knowledge, this fact is revealed that the mind is as much an object as are the other things of the world. In fact, the Samkhya cosmology maintains that the mind is one of the evolutes of *prakriti*. And inasmuch as *prakriti* cannot be a subject, the mind also cannot be a subject. The mind is only a rarefied form of matter, like clean glass, but it is nevertheless matter; it is not intelligent. The intelligence of the mind is an apparent assumption which has come about on account of its reflecting the true illumining factor, which is what is known as the *purusha*, the principle of consciousness. That which is at the back of the mind—the illuminer of the mind itself—is unknown to the mind because the mind cannot decondition itself from the limitations into which it has been born—space, time and cause, etc.—as we observed previously. Unless the mind is freed from these limitations, it cannot recollect or recognise the presence of something whose illumining character it borrows and only passes on to the objects outside.

The *sutra* is: na tat svābhāsaṁ dṛśyatvāt (IV.19). Because of its being an object, it is not self-luminous. The mind does not function under certain conditions, and yet

existence is not abolished. In deep sleep, for instance, we cannot observe the function of the mind, and yet we can infer the existence of a consciousness independent of the operations of the mind. The presence of something which is absolutely independent and transcendent to the mind has to be accepted on account of it being impossible to explain the fact of knowledge without such a position. We cannot regard the mind as the ultimate cogniser of things, on account of itself being cognisable under certain states of deep contemplation and meditation. The faculties of the mind, the *vrittis* or the psychoses, can be observed analytically, and it is possible to change their modes of movement by the application of a new power which is different from the power of the mind.

But, there are certain quibbles in logistic philosophy which sometimes make out that though the mind is not self-luminous and, therefore, cannot be regarded as an ultimate subject, there is no need to assume the presence of a *purusha* or a transcendent subject, as yoga makes out. The quibble points out that this is because it is possible that this mind, which is assumed to be an object, may be cognised by another subtler form of the mind itself. There may be another mind inside the objective mind. And, why do we call it the *purusha*? It may be another subtler form of itself, as sometimes it is said that the higher mind observes the lower mind, and so on. This theory is refuted by the *sutra*, which tells us that the assumption of a mind behind the mind may lead to infinite regress, because the acceptance of the doctrine that the first mind is capable of being observed by a second mind may imply that the second mind may have to be observed by a third mind, and the third by a

fourth, and so on, endlessly, which is an illogical position. This is called infinite regress—a fallacy in argument, where we go on *anavastha*, or regressing ad infinitum, as they call it; therefore, the *sutra* refutes this doctrine of the possibility of there being minds behind minds, inasmuch as it may lead to chaos in the process of perception. Firstly, there will be the confusion of *anavastha*. We go on counting minds behind minds until we come to a tiresome endless process, which is not a conclusion at all. Secondly, there will be confusion of memory. We cannot remember anything, because which mind will remember what? As there are links behind links, the conflict of the functions of the different minds may end in a chaotic mess so that there cannot be memory of any kind of experience or perception.

This is the meaning made out by the *sutra*:
 cittāntaradr̥ṣye buddhibuddheḥ atiprasaṅgaḥ
 smṛtisāṅkaraḥ ca (IV.21). *Atiprasanga* is regress ad infinitum, and *smṛiti sankara* is a confusion of memory. This is a kind of mere childish doctrine which is sometimes advocated in certain aspects of logical argument. But this is not an argument. It is only a kind of avoiding of the problem, and it is refuted vehemently by this *sutra*, which makes out that this is impossible. In order that there is stability of perception and fixity of knowledge, it has to be accepted that there is a permanent background of consciousness which is independent of the fickle *vr̥ttis* of the mind. The mind is fickle; it is oscillating; it has got various movements in the *vr̥ttis*. Therefore, if these *vr̥ttis*, which are undulatory in their character, are the ultimate stuff of which knowledge is made, there would be uncertain

perception and merely a movement without a standing base behind this movement. As it is impossible to accept the doctrine of minds behind minds, it follows that there is a *purusha*, a supreme illuminating principle, whose fixity, eternity, infinity and stability is the cause of a stable knowledge—a permanent cognisability of things, a certainty and an indubitability in all forms of understanding. We have a certainty that we have a knowledge of something. We do not merely oscillate from one function of the mind to another function of the mind.

Also it is said, in another *sutra*, that the mind cannot perform two functions at the same time: *ekasamaye ca ubhaya anavadhāraṇam* (IV.20). Though it may look like we can concentrate our minds on several facts and can understand many things at one and the same time, the psychology of the mind will reveal that the continuity, or the simultaneity of the perceptions or cognitions of the mind, is something like the continuity of pictures in a cinema. It is not really continuous. There are discrete links in the chain of movement, and the mind jumps, flits from one function to another with such a velocity that it looks as if there is a continuity of cognition. It cannot think two things at the same time, but it rapidly moves from one perception to another. The velocity of the movement of the mind is such that we are likely to mistake its jumping for a continuity of movement.

Also, the other meaning of this *sutra*, as some commentators make out, is that the mind cannot be both a subject and an object. Either it is a subject, or it is an object. Now it has been proved that the mind is an object—it is not a subject—and, therefore, it has to be dealt with in the

manner we deal with the objects outside. It has to be dispensed with, ultimately, because objects are ultimately not reconcilable with the character of the Supreme Subject. The great doctrine of the Samkhya is that the object gets reconciled with the subject by an artificial contact, and there is no possibility of a real union of the character of objectivity with pure subjectivity. But, this fact cannot be known. Usually we are unaware of the fact that the mind is an object and that there is a transcendent subject which enables the mind to look like a subject under specific conditions.

It is impossible to have knowledge of the subject. All knowledge that we have is objective. Even the intellectual and ratiocinative knowledge that we have is objective because of the fact that the individual is the base of this ratiocination, and the individual cannot be regarded as a subject, as the definition of a subject is something quite different from what it appears to be based on usual lines of reasoning. A pure subject is non-existent in this world. Whatever we have in this world is only object, including the empirical subject. We, as empirical subjects, cannot be regarded as real subjects, because we are able to cognise our own selves. And, inasmuch as there is self-recollection and reflective consciousness in our own minds, we stand in the position of objects. Also, we have all the characters of objects—namely, transience, mutability and movement from one condition to another. We are subject to transition and processes of various kinds—physical, biological, social, psychological and whatnot. Inasmuch as we are subject to processes, which is another name for saying that we are perpetually dying to one condition and entering into

another condition, we cannot be called real subjects. The individual is, therefore, not a subject. It is an object, merely because it has the character of objectivity, being located in space and time, and it is transient in character. It is moving, as a process. But, how can we have knowledge of the subject? Is there a possibility?

What is yoga? Yoga is nothing but the endeavour supreme to turn back consciousness into its pure subjectivity and know the subject as it is in itself, independent of all instruments of knowledge. The aim of yoga is realisation of the subject, which has got involved in objectivity, unfortunately. The realisation of the subject is impossible as long as there is a belief that the mind is the subject. We cannot assume independence, ultimately, as long as our knowledge is a procession of ideas transmitted through the mind in respect of the objects of sense.

The yoga process is a very hard job because it is difficult to get over the limitations of the mind. All effort that we usually put forth is psychological. It is mental. Inasmuch as the efforts are mental, and it is the mind that we are trying to get over, it really looks like jumping over one's own skin, or climbing over one's own shoulders. We cannot control the mind because the mind itself is the controller. The very effort at control of the mind is motivated and initiated by the mind itself. So it is a very great juggler's trick, as it were, a magician's performance—yet, it is so. The practice of yoga is terrific when we actually enter into it. It is terrific because we are not going to deal with any object. We are going to catch the very centre of the problem, which has been up to this time escaping our notice and making us fools in this world of so-called wisdom.

The difficulty of the practice of yoga arises when we tackle the mind itself, and not before. As long as we are able to concentrate ourselves on sense objects, and we are busy only with the acquisition of knowledge in respect of outside objects, we may appear to be very great geniuses and great masters of knowledge. But our mettle is tested when we turn back upon the mind itself and try to catch it. This is like catching our own shadow—a very hard job. But this is the thing that is to be done. In a very simple manner, the yoga *sutra* of Patanjali tells us that the subject can be known when it returns to itself. When the consciousness, which is involved in the process of the *vrittis* of the mind, withdraws itself from the process and asserts its independence, it knows itself. This is very easily said but it cannot be practised, because the subject cannot be withdrawn from the mind inasmuch as it has identified itself with the mind to such an extent that even if we tell it, “You are independent,” it will not believe.

We are told in fables, comparable to the fables of Aesop, that a lion cub was living in a herd of sheep. It started bleating like a sheep inasmuch as it was living with the sheep for years together, and it never knew that it was a lion cub. It could not roar like a lion; it only bleated like a lamb. This went on for years together, and one day it so happened, it seems, a lion saw its own kin moving in the midst of sheep, bleating like a lamb. It couldn't understand what had happened to this lion that it was bleating like a lamb. So it called the cub aside and said, “What is the matter? You are not roaring like me. Who are you?” The cub said, “I am a lamb.” The lion said, “You are not a lamb. You are a lion.” “Oh, is it so?” the cub said, because it could

not see its own face. How can a lion see its own face? It thought that it was a sheep because it was brought up in the midst of sheep, so it could only make a sound like a lamb. It could not roar like a lion. The lion said, "You are not a sheep. Look at the sheep. Do you see the sheep?" "Yes, I see the sheep, and I am also like that," said the cub. "No, you are not like that. You are like me," insisted the lion. "I am like you?" the cub said. "How can I be like you? You have a very terrific face." "But you are like that," the lion said. "No. How can I know that?" asked the cub. The lion replied, "Come." He took the cub to a pond of water and said, "Do you see my face reflected?" "Yes, I see," said the cub. "Do you see your face?" asked the lion. "Yes," the cub said, "I am also like you." "Now roar!" urged the lion. The lion roared and said, "You also roar as I roar!" "I see. Very good," the cub said. Then it started roaring. It had forgotten that it was lion, and now it was shown that it was a lion because it could see its own face in the water, as pointed out by its master.

We require a Guru like that. We all think we are human beings, just as the lion cub thought it was a sheep. The very same rule applies to us. We require a lion to come and tell us, "My dear friends, you are not human beings." But we will say, "We are human beings only; what else are we?" If somebody tells us, "You are a superhuman supreme power," we will not believe it. We will say, "This is all nonsense. I am a human being; I can see it. I am like anybody else." So we require a leonine master, a great Guru, to come and enlighten us into our true nature.

The yoga practice is terrific in the sense that when we deal with the so-called subject of knowledge which is the

mind, we find that we are killing ourselves, as it were. It is like a suicide committed by the so-called empirical subject. And the worst thing that one can conceive of is suicide—death of one's own self. Here, the return of the reflected reality in the form of the individual to its original source—an absorption of the objective character of knowledge into its universal subjectivity—is the so-called death of its empirical existence. Well, it is true. When we become healthy, sickness is destroyed. It is a suicide of illness. There is a destruction of disease when we are to recover health. But it is worthwhile; we cannot say it is suicide. Can we say that the disease is committing suicide? Well, it is so, in one sense. But yet it is a recovery of the original status of the organism—that is called health.

Thus is the necessity by the practice of yoga to recover one's spiritual health, which is universality of nature and pure subjectivity of existence. *Citeḥ apratisaṁkramāyāḥ tadākārāpattau svabuddhisamvedanam* (IV.22). This is the *sutra* in this context. *Citeḥ* is consciousness. When the consciousness ceases getting involved in a procession of ideas, as it used to earlier, as it appears to be in ordinary knowledge and experience, and when it assumes its own nature just as the lion's cub would realise its own leonine character, then there is Self-consciousness, not object-consciousness. This is the knowledge of the true Self, by the Self. The whole difficulty here is that there is no means of knowing the Self. While there are instruments of cognition and means of acquiring knowledge in respect of outside things, we have no possible way of knowing the Self by a means which is communicable.

How can we know the Self? What is the means of knowing? Not by the senses, not by the mind—then what is there? Nothing! It is an immediate knowledge, as they call it, non-mediate—without any kind of mediation or instrumentation in the sense of anything that is external to the object that is to be known. The instrument of knowledge is generally different from the object of knowledge. But here, the instrument and the object are identical. So we can imagine the difficulty. The worst form of difficulty is where the object that is to be known is inseparable from the process of knowing, and it is the same thing as the subject that knows. The matter becomes still worse when we contemplate the possibility of the knower of the object being the same as the object, and identical even with the process of knowing.

This is the aim of yoga, and this is the realisation of the Pure Subject. This Pure Subject is not the individual subject, because the individual subject is set in opposition to an object outside, whereas here, this Subject that we are speaking of, referring to and aiming at is not set in opposition to anything else. It is inclusive of everything that is there really. So it is that this Subject is comprehensive enough to include within its gamut everything that is existent anywhere. Such is the ultimate purpose of yoga, which is an inclusive awareness of Universal Subjectivity, and ordinary efforts are inadmissible, inapplicable and insufficient.

For this a novel method has to be adopted, and that novel method is the very same one that was adopted by the cub in knowing its own self. We require a very experienced master to turn our mind back upon itself, and to allow us to

perform that circus trick, as it were, of returning to the background of our own knowledge, and absorbing all objectivity into the Universal Subjectivity.

Chapter 106

THE DUAL PULL OF PURUSHA AND OBJECTS

The awareness of the mind in any given condition is constituted of two phases—namely, the object side and the subject side. It is like a buffer standing between the object on one side and the *atman*, or the *purusha*, on the other side. Therefore, it has intimation from two different directions, and it combines the messages received from the *purusha* and the objects at one and the same time. This point is elucidated in one *sutra* of Patanjali which says: *draṣṭṛ drīśya uparaktam cittam sarvārtham* (IV.23). *Draṣṭṛ* and *drīśya* mean the subject and the object. *Uparaktam cittam*: the mind is influenced by both these. It is standing in between the true subject, which is the *purusha*, and the object. Thus, it has a character of the object, and also a character of the subject, so that the combination of these two factors makes it a very enigmatic something. We cannot say whether it is something belonging to the world of objects, or something which is transcendent—namely, spiritual in nature.

The mind cannot be easily studied because it has the character of materiality as well as spirituality both combined. The spiritual impact which it receives from the *purusha* makes it appear intelligent and assume the character of the subject itself, while the impact that it receives from the objects makes it coloured in respect of the objects, and it takes the shape of the objects. *Sarvartham* means objectively conscious in variegated manners. The mind has various objects presented before it on account of

its peculiar position between the absolute object and the absolute subject. The absolute object is the material that is presented before the mind. The absolute subject is the *purusha*, or the transcendent consciousness. Hence, we are pulled from two different directions as minds in our individual capacities. We have an urge from the *purusha* side, and also an urge from the object side. So we can imagine our status in this world.

We are influenced by two contrary sides, or realms, at one and the same time. Thus it is that we entertain desires for objects and get contaminated by the various modifications of objects. There is a tremendous impress made upon the mind by the transformations which the objects undergo in the world outside. But, at the same time, there is also a higher aspiration present in us. We are mortals with an immortal aspiration. This peculiar characteristic in us is due to this juncture at which the mind is placed, by which it is mortal and immortal at the same time—immortal because it has the vision of what is behind it, from where it receives intimations of immortal contents transcending its present existence. But on the other side it is mortal, caught up in the meshes of objective experience and desiring the varieties of satisfaction which constitute this world of phenomenality.

It is a very peculiar situation in which the mind is placed. We are pulled from the earth side as well as from side of the heavens, from the objective side and from the subjective side, from the material side and from the spiritual side, from the external side and from the internal side, and so on—in umpteen different manifold ways.

This mind is constituted of many *vasanas*, or impressions of past experience, as we studied in one of the earlier *sutras*. The mind is not a compact, single, indivisible substance. It is a picturesque complex in whose bosom we can find infinite varieties of impressions which have been accumulated there on account of the experiences it has passed through in the various lives, or incarnations, since aeons. *Tat asaṅkhyeya vāsanābhiḥ citram api parātham saṁhatyakāritvāt* (IV.24): It is picturesque and variegated on account of containing an infinite number of impressions of past experience, which become the causative factors of future experience of a similar kind. Yet, with all this infinite content of *vasanas*, or impressions, within itself, the mind is not absolutely independent. *Parartham*: It is dependent. It is dependent because its very function is directed by the energy of something which is different from itself. The energy for the function of the mind comes from the *purusha*, the Supreme Transcendent Being.

Samhatyakaritvat: The mind is an assemblage of *vasanas*. An assemblage, or a group of varieties of contents, cannot be regarded as a permanent, solid entity because anything that is made up of parts is subject to disintegration and dismemberment. The inner constituents of the mind are subject to modification of pattern, and this change in the pattern of the variety of contents inside the mind is the cause of the change of personality, or individuality—or in other words, we may say the cause of what we call rebirth. A complete reconstitution of the inner contents of the mind requires a corresponding vehicle, materially, for the purpose of expressing the urges of this reconstituted mind; and this new vehicle that is

manufactured, or brought into being, by the requirements of this newly constituted pattern—that is the new birth of the body.

Thus, the mind that is made up of many *vasanas*, or impressions, that is variegated in its nature and multifarious in the various levels of its constitution is not independent by itself. Its functions are for another purpose altogether—the purpose being transcendent to its own existence. What is the purpose? The purpose of the mind is the purpose of the universe itself. What is the purpose of the universe? Why is there evolution? Why is there change? Why is there activity? Why is there effort? The answer to these questions is also the answer to the other question: why is the mind functioning at all in the direction of objects with the energy that it receives from the *purusha*?

The purpose of the functions of the mind is the evolution of the individual for the attainment of perfection, which is called *kaivalya* or *moksha*. It does not act unnecessarily. It is not an aimless activity in which the mind is engaged. Even the so-called erroneous meanderings of the mind in the desert of *samsara* are with a purpose. The purpose is the search for that which it has lost—namely, the noumenon, the supreme *purusha*, the Absolute.

Every activity of every individual in any manner whatsoever, under any condition, is a movement towards the Absolute, whether it is consciously directed or otherwise. When the meaning of these movements is not consciously clear and we are helplessly, as it were, driven forward by forces of which we have no consciousness, then it becomes a blind activity, a kind of determinism reigning

supreme over our heads. Many a time we are under the impression that we are unaware, pushed forward by the forces of nature. That we are unaware of the intentions of the movements of nature is a different matter altogether, but unawareness does not rule out the meaning that is hidden in these movements. The total movement of nature towards Self-realisation is inclusive of all the activities of the mind also, because the mind is a part of the universal nature in its rarefied form. Thus, the movement of the mind towards objects is a blind activity it engages itself in for the purpose of the recognition of a perfection which it has lost—not knowing, at the same time, that its movements are not compatible with the conscious intentions of the integration of being, which is its ultimate purpose.

Externally and internally, the mind moves at different times according to the intensity of the pressure it receives either from the *purusha* or from the objects. As it was stated in the *sutra*, the mind is influenced by the objects on one side and the *purusha* on the other side. If the pressure from the *purusha* is more, we are religiously inclined, spiritually motivated and aspiring in noble directions. But if the pressure from the objects is more intense, then we are sensually inclined and we run after the enjoyments of the world of objects.

Hence, there is this double activity of the mind. Nevertheless, in all this that has been said about the mind, the *sutra* makes out that the mind is material; it is dependent—non-independent—an assemblage of groups of *vasanas* which are likely to be transformed at any time, which are subject to modification and are, therefore, not

permanent. The mind is entirely intended for the purpose of the evolution of the individual towards the realisation of perfection in the *purusha*. Viśeṣadarśinaḥ ātmabhāva bhāvanānivṛttiḥ (IV.25) is the *sūtra* which follows. The consciousness of individual self, and even the consciousness of effort of any kind, ceases when there is an awareness of the *purusha* as distinct from *prakṛiti*. This is a literal rendering of this *sūtra*.

There is a perpetual feeling in us about our own selves, which lies at the background of even altruistic activities. Even our movements in the direction of social work and humanitarian activity is rooted in a peculiar self-sense, and this is what is called *atmabhava bhavana*. We are never rid of this consciousness of ourselves at any time. Sometimes we are faintly aware of ourselves being there as individuals. Sometimes we are intensely aware; but we are never totally unaware. The identification of consciousness with this self-sense, or individuality, is a part of our empirical existence, and it is second nature to us. It is 'we' ourselves, and everything starts from this seed of the affirmation of the self-sense.

We have to exist first as something, as constituted of a certain character, a meaning, or a significance. From this existence of ours as an individual associated with certain attributes arises various other types of meaning. This self-sense, which is the root of this activity in this world—whatever be the nature of that activity—does not cease even in different reincarnations. Even if we take many births, the self-sense will not cease, because it is that self-sense which is the cause of the reincarnations, or rebirths, and it is that

which undergoes this process of transformation in the form of reincarnation.

Thus, there is no abolition of personality, at any time, throughout the processes or series of births and deaths of the individual. But it ceases only at one time—when time itself ceases to exist. In the timeless awareness of the *purusha*, the self-sense ceases to exist. It expires in the experience of the *purusha*; it overcomes itself in a larger recognition of a higher self, where this lower self gets absorbed and consumed with no residuum whatsoever. As camphor burns and exhausts itself with no residuum, this self-sense, or individuality, gets consumed in the fire of the flame of the *purusha*-consciousness and it does not exist any more. There is only one self, which is the Self of the *purusha*, and not the many selves, or individuals.

When the individual self-sense recognises the existence of this *purusha*, it at once directs itself towards the *purusha*. *Visesa darsi*, a peculiar term used in this *sutra*, means one who has the awareness of the difference between the true subject and the object. The true subject is the *purusha* who appears to be involved in world perception through the mind, which is the cause of bondage; and when the knowledge arises in oneself as to the true nature of the ultimate subject, which is infinite in nature and not empirical, then all empiricity or objectivity gets resolved into its original cause. Then this self-sense, or *atmabhava bhavana*—‘I exist’ consciousness—ceases, and there is an utter annihilation of every experience that follows from the existence of the self-sense, namely, bondage of every kind. Then what happens?

When the mind is directed in this way towards the annihilation of self in the realisation of the *purusha*, there is an inclination towards *moksha*. It is almost the same thing; the inclination towards *purusha* and the inclination towards *moksha* mean the same thing, because *purusha* is *moksha* and *moksha* is *purusha*. Therefore, the two *sutras*, which go together, almost convey the same meaning. *Viśeṣadarśinaḥ ātmabhāva bhāvanānivṛttiḥ* (IV.25) and *tadā vivekanimnaṁ kaivalya prāgbhāraṁ cittam* (IV.26). These two *sutras* have an almost identical meaning, making out that when the mind is inclined towards the discrimination between *purusha* and *prakṛiti*, when there is the rise of right understanding in respect of things, the mind gravitates towards liberation.

Kaivalya prāgbhāraṁ cittam is a very significant term which means the mind is laden heavy with the consciousness of liberation. It is inclined towards liberation, while now it is inclined towards objects of sense due to the gravitation or the force exerted by objects towards the mind. When this gravitational pull ceases or is diminished in its intensity, the mind is able to move in the other direction and feel the pull of the *purusha*. *Vivekanimnam*—inclined towards understanding. The understanding that is spoken of here is not the understanding we have in this world. In a sense, we can all be said to be endowed with a sort of understanding. Everyone has some understanding. But here, we speak of a different type of understanding which is a superior knowledge of the higher nature of the individual, which is different from the understanding which is associated with the lower nature connected with objects. The inclination of

the *citta*, or the mind, towards right understanding means the inwardisation of consciousness, an introversion of the spirit towards its own self, and an awakening which follows, compelling the mind to incline towards the *purusha*.

All this is hard stuff for us to understand, because we cannot understand what it means—how the mind can incline towards the *purusha* when it is now inclined towards the objects. We are not aware, even now, that the mind is gravitating towards objects, because we have become one with the objects. We have become object-consciousness so forcefully that we cannot even be conscious that there is something other than the object world. Hence we cannot grasp, at the present moment, what it means when the mind traverses this realm of object-consciousness and goes to a different realm of a different gravitation altogether.

When the *purusha* begins to pull the mind, there is a pull received from every direction while, when the object pulls, we are pulled only from one direction. There is a great difference in this gravitation. Every object does not pull us at the same time. It is only one object that pulls us at one time. Sometimes one or two objects may join together and pull us for a particular purpose. But the pull of the *purusha*, or the gravitational force exerted by the *purusha*, is universal in character. It will call us from every nook and corner. It is a summons that is received from every quarter of the universe because the *purusha* is everywhere, while the objects are not everywhere. The object cannot call us from all directions because it is in one place only. Thus, we are inclined sensorily in one direction when the object calls

us, and there is an attachment of the mind towards one object.

When the *purusha* calls, there is an efflorescence of the mind—an opening of the bud of the flower of the mind, as it were—wherein it becomes aware of the call it receives from the whole universe. The call of the *purusha* is the call of the universe. The universe is the face of the *purusha*. It is the expression of the *purusha* in the sense that the *purusha* is manifest through the things of the universe. We will feel a kind of sensation in respect of anything and everything around us as if they are friendly, as if they are one with us, as if we are living in a family that is spread out around us, wherever we are placed in this world. This is a rare and novel experience in a higher state of spiritual aspiration and experience, and it cannot be understood in the beginning stages. We will be friendly and at home at any place in the world, in any circumstance. Even in a dustbin we will find heaven, if this call comes. But until this call comes, we cannot appreciate or understand the meaning of the way in which the mind is gravitated towards the *purusha*.

Well, this is a very high and lofty state of experience which the *sutra* refers to, and it is a question of practice. When we actually enter into the practice of yoga, we will pass through all these stages. We will pass through stages of various kinds of pull exerted in many ways, by various things, so that at the different levels through which we pass, different things will look real and satisfying. But, it is only in the last stage, where we can perceive the dawn of the consciousness of the *purusha*, that the meaning of this pull can be properly grasped. Until that time, there will be movement from one side or the other side, and there will be

an experiment made by the mind in respect of one object or two objects, or groups of objects. Actually, it is the *purusha* that is searched for in the objects of sense. We do not want objects; we want the *purusha* only. Even in this wretched condition, it is the *purusha* that we are asking for, not anything else. But the blinkers of the mind, which prevent its perception of the universal that is present in particulars, has become the cause of an intensification or attachment in respect of groups of objects.

Thus, there are very great difficulties on the way towards getting over the pulls of even one level. At each level there is a great force exerted upon us by the laws of that particular realm, so that when we are on the earth, the earth plane pulls us so forcefully, so powerfully, that we cannot have even the idea that there is another realm existing. When we are liberated from the clutches of this force of the earth-consciousness, we will find ourselves in another realm, and there the laws of that level will have an impression upon us and exert pressure upon us. There, again, we will have a new consciousness of a new world of new experience, and that realm will be regarded as the only reality. At every stage of experience, in every level or realm, that particular realm only will be regarded as the whole reality so that neither the past will be known, nor will we be aware of the future.

All these stages have to be passed through, and many births may have to be taken to become fit to receive the conscious call of the *purusha*. *Manuṣyāṅāṁ sahasreṣu kaścīd yadati siddhaye, yatatām api siddhānām kaścīn mām vetti tattvataḥ* (B.G. VII.3). After thousands and thousands of births in various species of beings, we come to

the level of this consciousness of there being something transcendent and spiritual. And even among those who are so conscious, a few only will succeed, says this famous verse of the Bhagavadgita.

Chapter 107

THE BESTOWAL OF A DIVINE GIFT

A very important aphorism now comes before us which points out that even at an advanced stage, one cannot be too confident that obstacles may not recur. This is the meaning of the *sutra*, *tat cchidreṣu pratyayāntarāṇi saṁskārebhyaḥ* (IV.27), which is a very small statement with a very large significance and meaning. The movement on the path of yoga is not a smooth and unobstructed, unimpeded progress. Sometimes there are retrogressions, and even in highly advanced conditions of yoga the previously existent *samskaras* in the mind may come up to the surface and prevent the continuous flow of consciousness. This is the reason why we find, many a time, in the lives of saints, sages and yogis, that novel features and behaviours manifest themselves which cannot be understood by the public eye. It is not that they have turned back from the path of yoga; it is because they have to face that which was already inside but had been kept controlled by hard thinking and strenuous meditation.

Very powerful acts of concentration of mind keep the *vrittis* in respect of objects under subjection. If the practice is continuous, done daily without any break, and the meditation becomes a habit with us, these *vrittis* in respect of objects of sense will never be allowed to come to the surface, so that it may appear that there is a continuous flow of consciousness in the direction of the aim of yoga. That may be so for a time—for such time as opportunities do not arise for those subjected *vrittis* to rise to the surface. It is impossible for even a Hercules in yoga to keep up this

continuity of consciousness in meditation, because it is a labour and an effort of the mind which has to be exerted against the normal tendencies in respect of physical objects.

When we do it for years, naturally it has a fatiguing effect upon the mind. The power of the will may overcome this fatigue, due to which the meditation may be kept up for years together, even towards the fag end of one's life if the power of the will is strong enough. But even Homer nods, as they say. The will, which has been exerting such a pressure upon the *vruttis* of the mind, may have to take a little leisurely rest due to the exhaustion caused by the effort which it has been putting forth for years together. And a little *chidra*, as the *sutra* puts it, a little hole that has been made, is enough for the *vruttis* to come up. A moment's cessation of the vigilance of the will is enough for the hornets of *vruttis* to come up, buzzing and violent, and they will dart upon the very object from which they have been weaned by the force of the will.

This is something which cannot be avoided, because no man is omniscient; no man is omnipotent; no man can be called God. And so, it is impossible to avoid these encounters entirely. One day or the other they have to come, and they may come in various forms, various degrees, at different times in one's life. When such a thing happens, what is to be done? When we face the enemy in front of us, what do we do? That is the very same thing that we have to do with these *vruttis*. Hānam eṣāṃ kleśavat uktam (IV.28) is the recipe for this problem. Just as we deal with the *klesas* which were described in the earlier *sutra*, so we deal with these encounters. How do we deal with them?

The process of recession of the effect into the cause is one of the methods prescribed in the earlier *sutras*. It is a discriminative analysis of the causes of the activity of these *vruttis* which have come to the surface of consciousness at the present moment, and is a very difficult thing to practice because we cannot find out the causes when they are actually operating. Nevertheless, this is one of the methods prescribed in the *sutra*. When we are overwhelmed from all sides by the *vruttis*, we will not be allowed even to think of the causes which have given rise to this circumstance. But this overwhelming will not continue for a long time. There is an ebb and a flow of these *vruttis*; they are not always in the same condition. The force of the *samskaras*, the impressions of past experience which have been held in check for a long time by the practice of yoga, gains entry into the realm of consciousness and acts in respect of its own desired object.

The exhaustion of a *karma* is effected by various ways, and these *samskaras* or *vruttis* that come up confronting the *yogin* are nothing but the powers of *karma*, forces of *karma*—the potencies, or *apurvas*, of previous *karmas* which have not yet been undergone by experience. Some of the *karmas* have to be undergone by direct experience, as they cannot be opposed. It is not that everything must be opposed; that cannot succeed. Certain things have to be undergone by direct experience, whether they are pleasurable or miserable. They can be either way. When they are very powerful there is no other go than to bear the brunt of the onslaught, and then they diminish in their intensity. It is at that time that we have to practise this method of the recession of the effect into the cause—not

when the flood is upon the head. Only when it subsides can we can try to exercise our discrimination as to what has happened.

The bringing of the effect into the cause means the diverting of the mind from the gross to the subtler phases of this situation that has arisen in the form of the *vrittis* coming up to the consciousness. It is ultimately a lack of grasp of the idea of the goal of yoga that brings about this unfortunate circumstance. One cannot keep this grasp always, because who can be in a meditative mood all twenty-four hours? No human being can. That which will save us at the times when we are not meditating is the impression created in the mind by the power of the meditation which we have been practising at other times. If the meditation has been strong, protracted, practised for a long period, the atmosphere that this practice creates in the mind will ward off, to a large extent, the invasion of these *vrittis* in terms of their satisfaction. Otherwise, who will help us when we are not in a state of meditation? Nobody can guard us all twenty-four hours. How can we keep the police with us wherever we go? Such a thing is impossible. And it is at that time when we are unguarded, which is of course common in anyone's life, that these *samskaras* will come up.

They come up because they have not been given their needs. We have simply told them 'no' for anything that they said. In the beginning, it worked very well because our will was so strong and we were bent upon seeing that they were put down. We did it and we succeeded by the power that we exerted upon them, as a boss would do in respect of a subordinate. But how long will this be tolerated? We have

not sublimated them. They cannot be melted. They are sitting there, not dead. They may look like corpses, but they are not corpses; they have life. They are defeated, frustrated and unhappy *vruttis* which have been struck down by the will of the meditative consciousness.

When there is a *chidra*, or a little loophole in the meditative effort—which means when we are not meditating—these *vruttis* will come up. “Now we are ready,” they will say. “You have forgotten us, so we are up.” And nobody can do anything at that time, because the starved emotions and the frustrated desires have a strength of their own. They are not weaklings. To avoid this problem of having to confront unforeseen *vruttis* at a later stage, the Yoga Shastras prescribe very graduated ascents, even in the earlier stages of yoga. We are not supposed to jump up in great enthusiasm, as if we are going to catch God in a few days. It is this kind of enthusiasm that leads to such problems.

We have to move gradually, with a tremendous caution with regard to our strengths and weaknesses. It is something like striking a balance sheet. The profit and loss account is struck with great care, and we know where we stand financially at the end of any particular year. Likewise, it is necessary to strike a psychological balance sheet of our life almost every day, towards the end of the day, we may say, and find out where we stand in spiritual life. It is no use imagining that we are seekers and *yogins*—everyone can imagine that. Our actual condition will be known only to us. Many a time there are very difficult situations inwardly which cannot be explained, nor can they be observed by other people; only we can know. But, due to being busy in

extraneous activities, and sometimes due to an incorrect idea of one's own strength, which may not be a real strength—a kind of wrong estimation of oneself—one may be led into erroneous corners and slacken the effort at concentration.

Apart from the prescription of the recession of the effect into the cause, the great method prescribed by Patanjali as the remedy for this problem of the *vrittis* is the *sutra*: *dhyānaheyāḥ tadvṛttayaḥ* (II.11). We cannot do anything with them, except do meditation once again. Meditation is the only remedy for the difficulty that has arisen due to lack of meditation. There is no other remedy. Then we have to set ourselves up once again and gird up our loins, and know where we stand without any complacency in respect of our achievements. It is not possible to face the powers of nature. Always it is wisdom on the part of every individual to be friendly with nature and never oppose the forces of nature. Even in the name of God, we should not directly face and confront the powers of nature. That is no use because, after all, nature is the face of God. The forces of nature are the laws of God operating in a particular manner.

Thus, it would be appropriate on the part of everyone to move harmoniously with the requirements of the forces of nature, which is a great judicious act, no doubt, and it requires guidance from inside as well as outside—inwardly from our own conscience, outwardly from the Guru. Otherwise, there will be tremendous opposition, and we may have to cut off all our practices. We may be bedridden by the psychological onslaughts of those little children

whom we ignored earlier when we were very young, and they will come up when we are old.

The *sadhanas* which are prescribed in the different schools of yoga always give a warning that no stage or step in the progress should be ignored. We should not try to have a double promotion at any time. We must always see that we have passed through every stage. Otherwise, that particular step which we have not taken and jumped over will be a problem one day or the other. These are all cautions and private problems rather than social ones. Each problem is individualistic. This is a general statement of the difficulty that may arise in the case of students or seekers, but how they will come, in what manner, is peculiar to each individual and cannot be explained generally. My problem will be different from yours, and so on, according to the nature of the *vruttis* and the type of emotion which is prevalent or predominant in the mind of a person. That is the statement of warning in this *sutra*, *tat cchidreṣu pratyayāntarāṇi saṃskārebhyaḥ* (IV.27). *Hānam eṣāṃ kleśavat uktam* (IV.28): As we have dealt with the *vruttis*—*avidya*, *asmita*, *raga*, *dvesa*, *abhinivesa*—we deal with them. That is the way we have to face them and sublimate them.

When we succeed in this noble attempt, we will be led to the higher realm of yoga. The lives of saints, when they are read with a critical, observant eye, provide ample food for thought in respect of the various tense situations one has to pass through in the practices. There will be onward and backward movements, and we will not know where we are; and we have to meet these situations. But when they are known and overcome, the clouds disperse.

The last stroke dealt by these *vruttis*—we may call it the stroke of Satan or of Mara, or whatever it is—is the strongest stroke. The last blow is the most powerful blow that we are dealt, and that is the time when our backs will break if we are not cautious. There, everything will be decided once and for all. In the beginning the strokes are very mild—not very powerful. But when everything fails, when it appears that we are not going to listen to any advice which is given by these *vruttis* or emotions, when they are sure that whatever they ask is going to be denied when we are adamant in respect of their demands, then they revolt in all their might and main.

At that time it is that we have to keep up the strength of our will, which is impossible on the face of the earth. Nobody has kept up that strength of will because nobody imagines that such a thing will happen. This is the whole difficulty. Everybody thinks, “I have passed through it; it is over. Now I am face to face with God.” This is not true. We have got many things to pass through before we have even an inkling of the presence of that Almighty. The seven gates, and many other gates of the fortress of mystical experience which great masters have spoken of, are nothing but these hurdles we have to pass through in the practice of yoga. They are all epic descriptions of these obstacles we have to face and the difficulties we have to overcome.

When everything is done, and we are in the hall of the divine Absolute, then the glory dawns, which is the experience designated in the *sutra* of Patanjali as *dharmamegha samadhi*. This is a grand experience, very majestic. Once we reach that state, there is no fear. We are real masters. *Prasamkhyāne api akusīdasya sarvathā*

vivekakhyāteḥ dharmameghaḥ samādhiḥ (IV.29). We do not know why he has given this name to it. It is a peculiar novelty of Patanjali. Many people interpret it in many ways. What is ‘*dharma*’, and what is ‘*megha*’? If we look at the dictionary, we will see that a very simple meaning is given. *Dharma* is virtue, righteousness; *megha* is cloud. So what does *dharma-megha*—the cloud of righteousness, the cloud of virtue—mean?

The meaning of this epithet in respect of this spiritual experience seems to be that there will be a shower of virtue—not a virtue that we deliberately practise as a *sadhana*, but a spontaneous rain of divine grace which will come like a flood of showers from all sides. The virtues which we practise as a *sadhana* are different from the virtues which automatically proceed as a spontaneous character of one’s enlightened being. In the beginning they are efforts, but in the later stages they become our own nature. We need not put on a switch to have the light; the light is there, as is the case with the self-luminous sun. The *dharma-megha* is, therefore, an indication that we are in the vicinity of the great goal. Though it has not been reached yet, we have inklings of its presence. There are indications that we are approaching it. Prasamkhyāne api akusīdasya sarvathā vivekakhyāteḥ dharmameghaḥ samādhiḥ (IV.29) is the condition that precedes this experience of *dharma-megha*.

We should not have a desire even for such enlightenments as all-knowingness. “Let me be all-knowing, all-powerful”—even such desires should not be there. Only then, this *dharma-megha* comes. We are asked not to allow even the finest and subtlest form of the ego to

work even in this high or lofty plane because the ego, when it starts working, can take a very fine ethereal shape. The desire to know all things has a subtle background of the presence of one's individuality, though it is a far, far advanced form of individuality. And the power which follows, which is called omnipotence, is also of a similar character. Of course, we do not know what actually happens when there is omniscience or omnipotence. We have to have it, and only then can we know what it is. But before it comes, it looks like a possession or an endowment which would exalt a person to a lofty degree of status in the universe; and all ideas of status must be shut down.

Even the enlightenment in respect of objects such as insight—the *siddhis* mentioned in the Vibhuti Pada, the powers of different types, and the insights and intuitions which may flash forth in respect of the different things of the universe—should not enchant the mind even in the least, even in the minimum, because as we go higher and higher, the delights are also subtler and subtler. The joys that we have in this world are gross and crude, but even they are enough to catch us and entangle us. But when we go higher, the joys are subtler. They can catch us more powerfully than the joys of this earth, which are crude and impeded by the physical tabernacle.

There are no physical obstacles in the higher realms. The obstacle in the physical world is the physical body. That is the object and, therefore, we cannot enjoy it properly. The presence of the physical body obstructs the union that we seek with the object, which is the reason for this search for enjoyment through the senses. But there are no physical bodies in the higher realms; therefore, the

temptations are more powerful, and it is a greater difficulty there than here on earth. It is possible that one can get stuck in the higher realms more easily than on earth. All these have to be watched with great care, and the *sutra* tells us: “What to talk of these enjoyments; you have to be free even from the desire to have omniscience, and you should ask for pure Being-consciousness only.” *Sarvatha vivekakhyaateh*—it is not knowledge of things that we are asking for; it is knowledge as such, which is knowledge of being alone. This is the *purusha*. Then comes *dharma-megha samadhi*. At that time, what happens?

Nobody can say what happens. No one can go there and see what happens. *Dharma-megha samadhi* is only a term which is defined in various ways, but it is said to be a divine gift which is bestowed upon the seeker by the powers that be—the divine forces that guard the cosmos. Rapturous descriptions of this condition can be found in such scriptures as the Yoga Vasishtha where we are told that even the divine beings, the guardians of the cosmos, become our servants. “The guardians of the cosmos become the servants of this man.” Such things are told in the Yoga Vasishtha and other scriptures of that kind.

We will become the master. There is the shadowy persistence of the ego which has taken a cosmic form, a kind of *vriddhi* which sometimes is called, in the language of the Vedanta, as *brahmakara-vriddhi*. It is only a theoretical description of the forms that the mind has taken, and is really not a *vriddhi* at all. Merely because it has to subside afterwards, we also call it a *vriddhi*. It is a *vriddhi* which the mind puts on with a single object in front of it that is called *brahmakara-vriddhi*. The other *vriddhis*, which are called

vishayakara-vrittis, are those which have many objects in front of them—the usual *vrittis* of the mind which are in respect of various objects of sense, as is the case with people like us at present.

We have many things in front of us. The mind thinks of many objects; that is *vishayakara-vritti*. But in the *brahmakara-vritti*, there is only one object in front of the mind, and that is the Cosmic Being. It has no other *vritti*. There is a total awakening of the mind into the content of the whole universe, and the total universe becomes its object. There is no multitude or variety of content in the *vritti*. It is a single universal content. When the mind assumes that form, it is called the *brahmakara-vritti*. Such sort of experience is perhaps comparable with what the *sutra* calls *dharma-megha samadhi*.

Chapter 108

INFINITY COMING BACK TO ITSELF

We are now about to conclude our study of the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali; and the Kaivalya Pada, which is the last section, is about to end with a description of the liberation of the spirit. In our previous study of the *sutra*, mention was made of a state of spiritual experience known as dharmameghaḥ samādhiḥ (IV.29). This unique description of that condition appeared first in the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali and was mentioned later on in certain other textbooks of yoga.

It is indicative of the new outlook of the *yogin* at this heightened stage of experience when virtue seems to be the only thing prevalent everywhere and anywhere. There is no such thing as vice or evil. It is goodness and positivity that rains upon him like a shower of nectar, because divinity reveals itself in its fullest glory. All negative elements get absorbed into the supreme positivity of eternity. This is to give an outline of what is likely to happen in this condition of *dharmamegha samadhi*. *Dharma* is virtue, but it means many other things also. In Buddhist psychology and in certain other systems of thought, *dharmas* are indicative of properties not merely ethical, but also physical, psychical and metaphysical. The *gunas* of *prakriti* also may be considered to be *dharmas* of *prakriti*. The word '*dharmas*' was also used earlier in the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali in a different sense from the meaning of virtue.

The qualities of *prakriti* assume a new character in this condition. They do not any more remain as binding chains,

but as pointers to the liberation of the spirit. The knots into which the *gunas* of *prakriti* tied themselves for the purpose of bringing about individualistic experience get loosened, and there is a dispersion of the *gunas* into their original resources. There is no meeting of the *gunas* for the purpose of bringing about any concrescence in the form of objects or bondage of any kind. There is, on the other hand, a return of the *gunas* to their primeval status of equilibrium, called *samyavastha*.

These *gunas* of *prakriti* cause bondage when they group themselves into forms and create the appearances of objects which become the content of the experience of the individuals. But when they withdraw themselves into their causes, the constituents of the objects naturally get dispersed and the objects themselves cease to exist—just as when we pull out every brick of a building, the building itself ceases to be. The *gunas* of *prakriti* are the building bricks of all the forms appearing anywhere in the cosmos. Thus, the *gunas* have no function to perform any more. They become *kritārtha*; they have performed their duty in respect of the individual concerned. And then, what happens to them? They do not any more remain as forces tending towards names and forms in space and time. *Parinama krama samāpti* of the *gunas* takes place.

Tataḥ kṛtārthānām pariṇāmakrama samāptiḥ guṇānām (IV.32): Because of the fulfilment of the purpose of the *gunas*, they return to their sources. What is the fulfilment of the purpose? The purpose of the *gunas* was to create experience for the individual, and this experience was intended as a kind of training towards the liberation of the spirit. When that has been executed properly and the

function fulfilled, these constituents are withdrawn back. There is at once the cessation of *klesas* and *karmas*, says the *sutra*: *tataḥ kleśa karma nivṛttiḥ* (IV.30). There is a sudden cessation of every trouble from every corner, like the rise of the bright sun in the clear sky after a heavy downpour with dark clouds and wind from all sides. It will look like a new life has come, as if a person who has been suffering with a chronic illness for years together has suddenly become healthy. A new taste will appear in the tongue, and a kind of buoyancy of spirit will be felt within oneself. It will look as if the whole world is made up of light, energy and positivity, while when there was illness, it looked that everything was dark and gloomy, melancholic and meaningless.

It is difficult to explain what the cessation of *klesas* and *karmas* actually means. *Klesas* and *karmas* are almost identical. The *klesas* are *avidya*, *asmita*, *raga*, *dvesa* and *abhinivesa*. We have already studied them. The *karmas*, which are the outcome of the operation of these *klesas*, also cease because the *karmas* are the way in which the *gunas* act upon the individual for the purpose of bondage and individual experience. Thus the return of the *gunas* to their sources, and the cessation of *klesa* and *karma*, mean one and the same thing. They take place at the same time. The root of illness has been dug out, and it has been eradicated thoroughly. Therefore, every effect that followed from the original illness also has ceased.

What sort of knowledge arises in a person is mentioned in a following *sutra*. Generally, knowledge means the awareness of an object. Unless there is an object, we cannot call it knowledge. Every kind of knowledge should have a

content, so the extent of knowledge can be determined by the extent of the content of knowledge. What is the content of knowledge? From that we can know the value of that knowledge, or the quality of that knowledge. The larger is the content, the deeper is the knowledge and the more valuable is the information received. This is how we generally gauge the depth of knowledge ordinarily in this world. But the knowledge that one acquires here, in this condition of spiritual awakening, is of a different type altogether. It is not knowledge of a content, because the content which is outside the process of knowing cannot be regarded as an object of insight.

What is called insight is the entry of the process of knowing into the structure of the object. Such a thing is not possible in ordinary experience. We cannot have such insight. It is also called intuition. What we have is only information about the objects of the world. We do not have insight into the nature of things. But here, the soul enters the object. Or rather, the soul of the knower enters the soul of the object. The being of the subject enters the being of the object. *Tadā sarva āvaraṇa malāpetasya jñānasya ānaṅtyāt jñeyam alpam* (IV.31) is what the *sūtra* tells us. The *jneya*, or the object of knowledge, becomes insignificant in the light of the infinitude of knowledge that arises here. This is something very peculiar. How does the object of knowledge become insignificant when the knowledge becomes infinite? If we carefully analyse what knowledge is, we can understand what the *sūtra* implies.

When the object of knowledge lies outside knowledge, it limits knowledge. Anything that is outside us is a limitation upon us; it restricts us. The existence of another

person near us is a limitation upon our existence. And so is the case of the existence of anything in this world. Therefore, the knowledge of an object would be of a limited nature if the object of knowledge is outside knowledge—which means to say, if the knowledge is merely informative, as is the case with earthly or worldly knowledge. The extent of the object, or the range of the object, will also tell us the range of the limitation of the knowledge. The larger is the object, the greater is the limitation upon knowledge because if the object itself occupies all the area that is available, there would be very little space left for knowledge to operate. When the area of the object, or the jurisdiction of the existence of the object, gets restricted, the extent of knowledge is correspondingly expanded, so that if knowledge is infinite there is no place for the object to exist. It is the finitude of knowledge that perceives the finitude of the object, and it is the finitude of the object that causes the finitude of the knowledge that knows it. Thus, it is the finite that knows the finite. But when the knower is the Infinite, there cannot be any possibility of an extraneous content for that knowledge. In other words, the object of knowledge cannot exist outside knowledge, and this is the reason why the knower here has complete control over the object.

When it is said that the object ceases to be, it does not mean that it has vanished into the air, because anything that is real cannot vanish. What has happened is not merely the vanishing, as if there was no object earlier, but the absorption of the object-content into the content of knowledge. Earlier, the content existed outside knowledge, but now, the object has ceased to be in the sense that it has become part of the existence of knowledge itself. Thus, here

knowledge is not merely a function of the mind; it is not an operation of the psychological organ, but it is something so heavily laden with content that its value is enhanced to much more than what it was earlier when the content was outside it. In ordinary informative knowledge, knowledge remains abstract, featureless, contentless. It remains merely like an illuminating factor—the object illuminated being something different. It is something like abstract mathematics where we have only the principle of calculation and the object upon which it is applied is something quite different. Here, the object becomes one with the principle.

The existence of the object cannot stand independent of the existence of the process of knowledge. This was the meaning of a *sutra* which we studied long ago in the Samadhi Pada, where it was said that in the condition of communion, or deep *samadhi*, there is a commingling of the features, characters and beings of the knower, the knowing process and the object that is known. Kṣīṇavṛtteḥ abhijātasya iva maṇeḥ grahīṭṛ grahaṇa grāhyeṣu tatstha tadañjanatā samāpattiḥ (I.41). The same thing is applied here. There is a mutual reflection of one upon the other, as it were. The object and the subject do not stand apart as the content and the knowing process. Therefore, knowledge becomes the only reality—the content getting absorbed into it, the reality of the object becoming part and parcel of the reality of knowledge so that there is a gradual withdrawal of the content of the object into the process of knowing, and the process of knowing gets absorbed into the existence of the knower. What remains finally is the knower—*purusha*. The *purusha* reverts to himself. Tadā draṣṭṛḥ svarūpe

avasthānam (I.3) was a *sutra* mentioned very early, near the beginning of the text. Now we are coming to the very same point: the *purusha* returns to himself. When the *purusha* returns to himself, there is no object before the *purusha* because the consciousness of an object is possible only when there is an operation of the *vriddhis* of the mind. And yoga is nothing but the inhibition of the modifications of the mind, which are the *vriddhis*—*yogaḥ cittavṛtti nirodhaḥ* (I.2). It is only when the *nirodha*, or the restriction or inhibition of the *vriddhis* of the mind, is effected that the *purusha* can return to himself—so immediately follows: *tadā draṣṭuḥ svarūpe avasthānam* (I.3).

This state is described here: *tadā sarva āvaraṇa malāpetasya jñānasya ānaṅtyāt jñeyam alpam* (IV.31). All covering, or the veil over consciousness, is torn and lifted on account of all the dross or impurity being eliminated thoroughly. *Avarana* and *mala* are removed. *Avarana* is the veil. *Mala* is the dirt, the impurity. The *avarana* is the ignorance, or *avidya*. The dirt is *kama*, *krodha*, *lobha* and other *vriddhis* of the mind. All these get eliminated automatically on account of the rising of knowledge to its original primeval status. These experiences follow simultaneously, as it were, in such a rapid succession that one cannot know what are the stages one has passed through. In the earlier stages we can keep an eye upon the various steps that we proceed through, but in the later stages the movement is very rapid.

In the earlier stages, the movement is very slow on account of the heaviness of the obstacles. But later on, the obstacles become rarefied, and then the impediments lose their grip over the consciousness. Then it moves with great

velocity, much more intensely than it could do earlier when the impediments were opaque, or laden with *tamas* and *rajas*. The impediments are *tamasic*, *rajasic* and *sattvic*. When they are *tamasic*, they do not allow the operation of the mind at all. There is a complete dross and a lethargic attitude. There is a sleepy condition, a torpid attitude, as it were, and one cannot concentrate the mind. The impediments that come in the form of *tamas* are totally obstructive to any attempt in the line of yoga. The *rajasic* impediments are subtler, but they are very distracting and compel the mind to oscillate from one object to another. So, there also, it is not possible to concentrate the mind on the given object.

It is the *sattvic* impediments that prevent communion and yet allow an insight into the possibility of such a communion. It is only when we reach the later stages of meditation that the *sattvic* impediments present themselves. They are impediments, no doubt—the golden chains—and yet they can allow a reflection of Truth, as if there is a clean pane of glass through which light passes. We can see the brilliance of the light through the pane of glass; yet, it obstructs. We cannot proceed through, inasmuch as the glass is there, obstructing our movement. It is there, obstructing, and yet it can allow the reflection of the light. Likewise is the *sattvic* condition of *prakriti*, which does not allow complete union, and yet there is an illumination at the same time.

Here, the *gunas* of *prakriti* reorganise themselves into their original condition. That is the meaning of the *sutra*: *tataḥ kṛtārthānām pariṇāmakrama samāptiḥ guṇānām* (IV.32). The succession, or the modifying process, of the

gunas—*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*—of *prakriti* come to an end; that is *parinama-krama samapti*. The reason is *kritarthanam*. The reason why the *gunas* join together into a formation is the force of the desire of the individual which pulls the atoms of matter around itself and compels them to gravitate round its centre or nucleus, so that the individual becomes something like an atom with electrons of material constituents revolving round the nucleus of the desiring principle. But when this force of gravity that has pulled these particles of matter is dislodged and its purpose is fulfilled, there is a dispersal of the content. The constituents return to their sources. *Prakriti* becomes *samya*; it becomes equilibrated.

When there is an equilibrium of this original condition, there is a union ultimate, which is the precondition of the liberation of the *purusha*. It is the disturbance caused in the equilibrium of *prakriti*, and the movement of the *gunas* of *prakriti* on account of this disturbance of equilibrium, that causes the bondage of the *purusha* and the attachment of consciousness to the forms into which the *gunas* cast themselves. But when there is the cessation of this activity of the *gunas*, there are no forms presented before the consciousness. Therefore, there is a universal void, as it were, if we would like to call it so, so that the objects become nil. There is no object in front of consciousness. *Prakriti* has withdrawn herself, and consciousness stands in its own pristine purity. The return of consciousness to itself is the process of *dharma-megha samadhi*. It is, as it were, our energies come back to us, like prodigal sons who have left us and are now returning home.

All our energies had got out, into the hands of the objects formed by the *gunas*. We had sold ourselves little by little, like slaves, to the various forces of *prakriti*, so that we look like very little, impotent, insignificant nothings. But when these forms withdraw themselves on account of their exhaustion of the purpose, the energies that have been dissipated—those characters of our consciousness which had gone to the objects, in love and hatred and what not—come back to us. The return process, which means the coming back of the energies of consciousness once again to the source, looks like a rain falling upon us. How happy we feel when we are healthy, after a high fever for days together! What has happened to us? Why do we suddenly feel happy when the temperature comes down and we are normal? The reason is that our energies have subsumed, once again, into the original condition, while previously they were fighting with the toxic matter that caused the illness in the body.

We have become restless on account of our concern with the objects of sense, and so much army force has to be employed in confronting these encounters from objects that we have exhausted all our resources. The economy of the country can become nil if there is a perpetual war taking place, and we will become very poor in a very short time if the entire activity of a nation is only war. Similarly, we may become paupers in energy and content if our entire activity is about confronting objects of sense. This process of confronting objects has been going on since ages, aeons, through the various lives through which we have passed, and so we have become very poor in every respect—

physically, mentally, intellectually and spiritually—looking like nothings.

But this process ends by a miracle, as it were. We must call it a miracle, because nobody knows how it takes place. It may be through the effort of ours, by the practice of yoga; or it may be by the grace of God, or by some mystery. Ultimately, it is a kind of mystery. Nobody knows how it happens. Then, immediately, there is a sudden scudding of all the clouds and we feel as if we have come back to ourselves. That is Infinity coming back to itself. Nobody can explain what that experience is, because language is very inadequate. We suddenly feel filled up with an infinite content in ourselves. That apparent process of one's coming back to one's own Self is really the *dharma-megha samadhi* which looks like a nectarine shower poured upon oneself. This is the penultimate condition of *kaivalya*, or *moksha*. When this condition settles down in itself, there is not even a shower of rain afterwards. Everything is calm, quiet, and is eternally substantiating in its own pristine original condition. Then the *purusha* has nothing to do with anything outside it. There is no other extraneous activity through the *vrittis* of the mind because the mind has ceased to be.

This existence of the *purusha* in itself, independently, absolutely, is called *kaivalya moksha*. *Kaivalya* means oneness. In Sanskrit, *kevala* means absolutely independent, absolutely one—single; and *kaivalya* is the condition of being alone. *Moksha* is liberation, or freedom. The freedom that is attained by oneself being absolutely alone, in one's own universal nature—that is called *kaivalya moksha*. It is

towards this end that the consciousness is driven by the experience of *dharmamegha samadhi*.

Chapter 109

THE CONDITION PRIOR TO FINAL ABSORPTION

It is said in the *sutra*, *tataḥ kṛtārthānām pariṇāma-krama samāptiḥ guṇānām* (IV.32), that on the fulfilment of the purpose of the *gunas* of *prakṛiti*, there is a recession of the effects into their causes and the modifications of *prakṛiti* come to an end, which is the background of the liberation of the spirit. This fulfilment of the purpose of the *gunas*, and the return process, is often described by teachers as a complicated process. It does not seem to take place in a trice because, in some way, at least, we may say that the return of the *gunas* to their original source has something to do with the practice of yoga.

We are studying a great scripture on yoga—the methodology of practice—and it is this practice that is supposed to lead us to the liberation which the text describes in such great detail. We have to understand by this description that the *gunas* resolve themselves into their causes by certain techniques, by certain processes, due to something that has happened to them on account of the meditations, or *samyamas*, which the *yogin* practises. Therefore, the evolution of *prakṛiti* into the forms, and the resolution of the forms into the original condition of *prakṛiti*, has something to do with the method of practice, because the practice of yoga is only a corresponding ascent of consciousness, stage by stage, in accordance with the levels of *prakṛiti*—by which it has come to the level of the forms and by which also it will go back to the original

source. There is a great philosophical history behind this system of practice which is called yoga. Both schools of thought—Yoga as well as Vedanta—have opined differently in respect of the processes through which the *yogin* has to pass before the ultimate liberation is attained. How does it come about that the *gunas* go back to their sources merely because there is the practise of yoga by an individual? How does an individual attain salvation and compel the *gunas* to resolve themselves into their sources? Is it possible? Of course it appears to be possible; otherwise, there would not be such a long effort made in describing this process at all. But how does it come about?

That *prakriti* is cosmic in its nature and is not the stuff of merely a single individual, and the *gunas* are not the property of any one person so that he can order them to go back to their original sources, that there is a universal significance in the activity of *prakriti*, that the *gunas* are commonly active everywhere in the whole of creation and not merely in any particular individual would be enough indication as to the methods the *yogin* has to adopt in the practice. This background of the description—namely, the character which is cosmical, attributed to *prakriti*—would compel the individual *yogin* to conform to the laws of that cosmical *prakriti*. The liberation of the soul does not mean a violation of the law of *prakriti*. That is not what is intended. It is a fulfilment of the law of *prakriti* rather than a violation of it, and this fulfilment has to take place through the practice of yoga. How does it happen?

We have studied so much about this practice, but when the last point is reached—the question of liberation is raised—masters and teachers give us various descriptions of

the return process. There is a feeling in the mind of everyone that the world is more powerful than himself or herself—and not even a *yogin* can escape this feeling. The universe is larger than the individual. A subtle discomfiture of feeling would introduce itself to everyone's mind, and this is the reason why doubts arise in the practice of yoga. Patanjali has mentioned in one of his earlier *sutras* that doubt comes as one of the obstacles in the practice. One of the serious doubts that may come even in an advanced stage is: "How am I going to confront this vast universe, this terrific thing that is before me? How can I master *prakriti*? Is it possible?" The *prakriti* that we are speaking of is the universe as a whole. Is an individual going to master it? A *yogin*, whatever be his power and force of will—can he control the whole universe? What is the connection between the individual *yogin* and the cosmical *prakriti*, without conforming to whose laws and without mastering whom, liberation is not possible? What is the meaning of the return of the *gunas* to the original sources when there is a fulfilment—as the *sutra* tells us, as the scriptures tell us—of the purpose of the *gunas*, which have a relevance to the practice of yoga? That is very important. We are not describing merely some kind of fanciful tale; it is a consequence of the practice of yoga, which has a great connection with the attitude of *prakriti* as a whole towards this individual that is practising yoga.

This difficulty has created certain doctrines in philosophy—namely, that the return process is not a sudden jump of the individual to the Absolute, because the Absolute, or the *purusha*, whatever we may call it, is something transcendent to *prakriti*, far beyond the very

notion of the mind of any individual. The whole process of creation seems to be of such a nature that there have been, perhaps, evolutionary processes that have taken place earlier than the manufacture of the human individual. It does not mean that suddenly a human being cropped up from the Absolute. It does not appear to be like that. Whatever we understand from the scriptures, whatever is the description of the theory of creation according to the different schools of thought, all of these seem to make out that there is a gradual descent of *prakriti* from the cosmos in a descending order of density, and we are told that at a particular stage there is a bifurcation into the objective universe and the subjective individual. Here, the Vedanta, the Yoga and the Samkhya all agree. There is no conflict among them. At a particular level—whatever be the name they give to these levels in their own way—the items in the process of this descent seem to be almost the same. At a particular stage there seems to be a split of the cosmic indivisibility of *prakriti* into the objective, perceptible world and the subjective individual.

Now here is the crux of the entire matter. When the individual is thus cut off by a peculiar act of *prakriti*, it does not appear to have been with the permission of the individual. By a fiat of its cosmic will, *prakriti* has simply willed that it should be so, whatever be the reason behind it. This event of the split of *prakriti* into the individual, with the counterpart of the external world, seems to have taken place due to some power which cannot be said to be under the control of any individual. Otherwise, the individual would not create the individual himself, by his own will. This theoretical background of the history of the process of

creation has forced certain teachers of thought to feel that the return process also should be along the same lines as the line of descent from the top. There is, therefore, a necessity for the individual to go to the cosmic. This is a very difficult thing. We cannot suddenly absorb our individuality into the Absolute, or annul our personality. We cannot abolish the individuality, because *prakriti* seems to have tied itself into several knots before it became what the human individual is. And every knot has to be untied, one after the other.

There is a theory projected in the Aittariya Upanishad, for instance, which corresponds exactly to the theory of the Samkhya, which is followed by the Yoga also. The creation process is described. The universal *purusha* is said to have willed to become many. And in this will of the cosmic, what happened was that there was a gradual intensification of the density of the will—a concretisation of the substance of consciousness—until there was so much weight in that density that it split itself into the object and the subject. Here, the Aittareya Upanishad particularly, and certain other Upanishads also, tell us that the individual that is so isolated, before whom the world is set as an object, is not a qualitatively equal part of the original Cosmic Being, so we cannot say that we as individuals are little ‘Gods’; it does not mean that. Otherwise, if all of us think together, it will be like God thinking. That is not so. Even if all the individuals put together think together, it will not be like God thinking. That means there is a qualitative downfall taking place at the time of the splitting of this Cosmic Being into the object and the subject. It is not merely a quantitative difference, but also a qualitative fall. This is the

reason, perhaps, that we are told that there is a reflection taking place at the same time, together with the limitation by means of bifurcation. The cutting off of the individual from the cosmic is the limitation, which would mean we are little, small, minute parts of the cosmic, qualitatively the same as the cosmic. But that does not appear to be so. We do not think like God thinks. We have got a different way of thinking altogether.

Therefore, it is said that together with this limitation there is a kind of twisting, distorting, and topsy-turvy process which takes place. This is very beautifully described in the Aittariya Upanishad—how everything becomes topsy-turvy. The cart is put before the horse, as it were. The cause becomes the effect, and the individual, instead of being merely a quantitative limitation of the cosmic, becomes something worse, and falls down to a level of qualitative inferiority by which it cannot think as the cosmic thinks. This sort of description of the process of descent would make us hesitate to believe that there is a sudden jump of the individual to the cosmic. The qualitative fall of the individual would require the return of the individual to the original quality before it rises to the supreme substance of which it has become a part.

Thus, there are doctrines and doctrines in Vedanta and Yoga, which make out that there is a gradual progressive evolution of the soul from the present condition of reflection and limitation to the cosmic originality. There are people who believe that we cannot go to the Absolute unless we pass through the Cosmic Being; we have to go to *Ishvara*, or whatever it is. This is one school of thought. But there are others who think that it is a trick of the mind

which makes us think like this, and it is not really so. The cosmic substance has become the individual, no doubt, and it may look, for all practical purposes, that we are inferior, even qualitatively. We cannot gainsay that. It is so. But in spite of this fact of the individual appearing as qualitatively inferior, there is something peculiar in the individual which can set itself right in an instant, if it wants to, and contact the Absolute directly. Also, there is no such thing as a gradual rising. The progressive *krama srishti* is not a compulsive process, though it is also a possible process. There are other processes, such as the *sadyo mukti*, as it is called—not the *krama mukti* which the evolutionary process would require us to undergo. There is such a thing called *sadyo mukti*—an instantaneous liberation. This also seems to have some point in it, though it is difficult for us to understand what actually is implied here.

While the individual in *samyama* withdraws itself into its pure subjectivity and identifies itself with the object, there seems to take place some peculiar transformation. The whole secret is there, which we cannot theoretically explain or intellectually understand at the present moment. The whole difficulty seems to lie at that particular point where *samyama* is practised and the object is unified with the subject. Perhaps, a mystery or a miracle takes place at this point, and that mystery is the solution of this problem. When there is intense identification of the object and the subject in *samyama*, this question of the qualitative inferiority of the individual seems to be overcome, and there is a sudden turn taken by the individual in the direction of the cosmic. Maybe it has followed the law of *prakriti*. It is quite possible that the rule prescribed in the

Aittariya Upanishad and other scriptures is followed even there, but it is followed in such a majestic manner and in such a dexterous way that it seems to take place in a second. Maybe that is another miracle of the process of salvation.

All this wondrous dramatic activity of *prakriti*, which appears to have taken aeons to come down to the level of this gross material substance, is seen to be set right in one second. This is another miracle. It does not take years to counteract the action of *prakriti*. This happens in *samyama*. This is a very interesting outcome as a conclusion of the dictum of Patanjali that when the *gunas* fulfil their purpose, there is a return of them into their causes, thereby dissolving their forms. This means to say there will be a cessation of the object as well as the subject, and the consciousness stands in its pristine purity; *purusha* has no form before it to compel it to perceive or get attached. That is the beautiful history that is hidden behind this *sutra*: *tataḥ kṛtārthānām pariṇāmakrama samāptiḥ guṇānām* (IV.32). When the purpose of the *gunas* is fulfilled, their transformations cease.

Now, another *sutra* tells us that the condition of liberation is in the transcending of time, or time-consciousness. It is time-consciousness that binds us to this earth experience. Time-space are together; they cannot be separated. We are somehow or the other made to believe that there is such a thing called time, and we are forced to obey the laws of time. We cannot understand what time is, whatever be our explanation of it, because we are caught in it. So how can we understand it?

In one *sutra*, a sort of indication is given as to how we can overcome the clutches of time for the purpose of the

liberation of the spirit. Kṣaṇa pratiyogī pariṇāma aparānta nirgrāhyaḥ kramaḥ (IV.33) is the *sutra*—a very small statement which seems to solve, or at least tries to solve, a great question of time itself. In this *sutra*, the author tells us that time is a state of mind; it is not something that exists outside, though it appears to be outside. We do not seem to believe that time is a condition of the mind. We always take it as an objective substance. “Time has passed.” When we make such statements, we mean that something objective, external, real and physical has taken place. But the *sutra* tells us that it is not so. The time that we are speaking of is a peculiar correspondence of the mental processes with the processes of the three *gunas* of *prakṛiti* outside. This is the meaning of this *sutra*. A counterpart of a moment is called *ksana pratiyogi*. And what is the counterpart of the moment?

A moment is a part of time, and the counterpart of it is the time taken (again, we have to use the very same word, because nothing else is available) for a particular modification of *prakṛiti* to shift itself from one mode to another mode. It is said to be the minutest type of modification, which cannot be further subdivided. When there is a minute transformation of the *gunas* of *prakṛiti*, and there is a shift from one state to another state—that means to say, when one state undergoes transformation or modification into another state, in its minutest, non-subdivisible form—the mind gets connected with it in its cognition, and the cognition of the mind in respect of this minutest modification of the *gunas* of *prakṛiti*, from one state to another state, is a moment of time, says the *sutra*. Thus, a moment of time is defined here as the perception

by the mind of the minutest modifications of the *gunas* of *prakriti*, from one condition to another condition.

Hence, it appears that there is a connection between the outer transformations and the inner cognitions. Here again, we are in a difficulty. Is time objective or subjective? The *sutra* puts us in this difficulty by making such a statement. It is difficult to believe that the individual mind is the creator of time, though the individual mind has something to say about it and something to do with it. Because the individual mind is connected with the cosmical mind in a mysterious manner, it is connected with everything in the cosmos. The cognition of the mind in respect of a modification of the *gunas* of *prakriti* implies this connection. This connection is intrinsic, not merely artificially created. Therefore, the apparent subjection of the individual to the process of time seems to be due to the feeling of the individual as something of the nature of an effect rather than of the nature of a cause, attributing causality to the *gunas* of *prakriti*, and the character of the effect to one's own self. We have been habituated to think like this on account of our being controlled by the modifications of the world outside.

The *sutra*'s intention is to tell us how we can get over the control that seems to be exerted over us by the time process, in order that we may attain liberation. For this, there was the earlier *sutra* in the Vibhuti Pada which told us that by concentration on the moments of time, time-consciousness can be conquered. We can have eternity-consciousness by concentration on the moments of time—which means to say, we refuse to think in terms of the succession that takes place outside in the world and fix our

attention on one particular moment of time only, or one particular form of modification.

This is another form of deep concentration of mind on a given concept. Patanjali tells us in a different language, in a different manner, that the mind has to be concentrated on a single *vritti* only, and it should not be allowed to shift itself to another *vritti*. We have only one *vritti* in the mind, and do not allow that *vritti* to change into another *vritti*, because the moment one *vritti* changes into another *vritti* there will be time-consciousness, and there will be consciousness of the succession of events, and perhaps consciousness of different objects also. This is to be prevented by a forced fixing of the attention on a particular concept that has arisen, because a concept and a *vritti* are the same.

All this complicated description of the time process, etc., seems to amount to saying, finally, that we are supposed to practise *samyama* on a given concept and should not allow the concept to change into another concept. Then, there would be the breaking of the structure of the mind. The mind, which has been habituated to think in terms of the succession of events, and was always subjected to the modifications of its own *vrittis* and was shifting its attention from one to another—that mind will now be habituated to thinking in a constant fashion. That means to say, to allow it to think only of one *vritti* is *samyama*.

What is *samyama*? *Samyama* is nothing but the attention of consciousness on a single modification of the mind, and not allowing the mind to undergo another modification. When this succeeds—that means to say, if we

can concentrate our attention on a single modification of the mind, which is another way of concentrating on a single form of object—there would be a prevention of the mind from getting into the succession of the time process and the modifications of the *gunas*. And this will, again, work a miracle—the miracle being the bursting of the bubble of the mind—and time will enter into eternity. This is a sort of condition that the *sutra* lays before us prior to the description of the final absorption of the mind into the cosmic *purusha*.

THE KAIVALYA PADA ENDS

Chapter 110

RECAPITULATION AND CONCLUSION

Now we conclude our study of the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, which has taken a long course of circuitous movements through various processes of description and practice, right from the enunciation that the principle of yoga is the inhibition of the modifications of the stuff of the mind.

SAMADHI PADA

The Samadhi Pada, which we covered in Volume One of this book, was how the *sutras* begin their long statement of the whole practice. At the very beginning itself, in two succinct *sutras*, we are given the essence of the whole matter: *yogaḥ cittavṛtti nirodhaḥ* (I.2) and *tadā draṣṭuḥ svarūpe avasthānam* (I.3). These two *sutras* are the whole of yoga, really speaking: what is to be done, and what happens if it is done. These two things are mentioned in these two short statements: yoga is the control of the mind, and then there is the establishment of the *purusha* in his own nature. This is yoga. But though it is such a short statement of a great problem, the methods to be adopted in the achievement of this purpose have to be explained in greater detail.

Therefore, the analysis of the mind has to be made in order that we may know how the mind can be controlled. We say that the control of the mind is yoga; but, what is 'mind'? How does it function, and what are the modifications which we are trying to control through the process of yoga? The nomenclature of the various *vrittis*, or

the modifications of the mind, is given subsequently so that we may have an idea as to what are those *vruttis* which we have to tackle or grapple with—the *klishta klesas* and the *aklishta klesas*, as Patanjali puts it—that is, the transformation of the mind in respect of an object, which causes pain and sometimes does not cause pain. Both these are *vruttis*; both these are modifications which have to be stopped in order that there can be a reflection of the *purusha*-consciousness in the mind. How can this be achieved? How are we going to tackle the mind? How do we subdue the modifications?

We are told that there are two principal methods, *vairagya* and *abhyasa*: *abhyāsa vairāgyābhyāṁ tannirodhaḥ* (I.12). The masterstroke of Patanjali's method may be said to be what is called the double attack on the mind, namely, *vairagya* and *abhyasa*, the detachment of the mind from objects of sense—not only objects of sense, but even conceptual objects—and the habituation of the mind to a steady practice on a given concept of the nature of Reality. Then Patanjali explains what the practice is.

Patanjali proceeds very systematically, giving us a detailed account of the practice which follows—the immediate withdrawal of the mind from the objects by means of the practice of *vairagya*. We are given the methods of meditation, the *samadhis* or the *samapattis*, as they are called—*savitarka*, *nirvitarka*, *savichara*, *nirvichara*, *sananda* and *sasmita*—the processes by which the mind rises gradually, stage by stage, from the grosser to the subtler levels in its communion, in its meditations. But, one should not imagine that this is an easy process. The author immediately mentions to us that there are serious obstacles;

nine obstacles are mentioned, which are also accentuated by certain other subsidiary obstacles.

One has to be cautious, therefore, in spite of the fact that there is a great energy put forth towards the direction of yoga, because these obstacles are very strong. Hence, a detailed statement is made of what these obstacles are and how they can be overcome. Methods are prescribed, subsequently, by giving certain techniques of lower forms of meditation on lesser degrees of reality, so that there is not a direct attack upon the mind but a gradual control effected through stages, so that one does not feel the pain of the restrictions that are imposed upon one's own self—the mind. Then, a conclusion is brought about towards the end of the Samadhi Pada by describing the higher states of the communion of the mind with Reality—the *samapattis*, or *samadhis*, rising from what they call the *sabija*, or the *samprajnata samadhi*, to the higher state of absolute *samadhi*—*nirbija*. This is the content, essentially, of the Samadhi Pada, and we are told that the teachings given in this section are meant for the highest type of aspirant, not for beginners.

SADHANA PADA

In the Sadhana Pada details are given in a more diffused form for beginners, where a further analysis is made on the nature of the painful modifications of the mind—the afflictions which cause agony to the whole system: *avidya*, *asmita*, *raga*, *dvesa* and *abhinivesa*. It is these afflictions, these modifications which cause pain, that are the causes of *karma*. There is a description of the nature of *karma* and how *karma* binds—how the impressions formed in the

process of the experience of objects cause bondage by creating in the mind certain grooves which compel the manifestation of similar experience in the future, and so on. The *karmas* have to be broken through by a discipline, and those disciplines are described through the eight stages of *yama*, *niyama*, *asana*, *pranayama*, *pratyahara*, *dharana*, *dhyana* and *samadhi*, of which the stages up to *pratyahara* are dealt with in the Sadhana Pada.

VIBHUTI PADA

The stages up to *pratyahara* are designated as the outer court of yoga, the inner court beginning with the Vibhuti Pada—*dharana*, *dhyana* and *samadhi*. A definition is given of what these techniques of concentration, meditation and *samadhi* are, and how *samyama* can be practised. That is, direct communion can be effected by the application of these methods mentioned earlier. What happens to the mind in the process of communion, what modifications it undergoes, is also described through the transformations, or *parinamas* as Patanjali puts it—*nirodha parinama*, *samadhi parinama* and *ekagrata parinama*. Consequently, and conversely, we are also told that there is a similar process of transformation taking place in the objects and the whole universe—the *bhutas*, or the elements, and the *indriyas*, or the senses—by such names which are given in the *sutra* as *dharma*, *laksana*, *avastha*, etc.

Then we are told that the practice of *samyama* can lead to great powers, and these powers are classified as the objective, the subjective and the absolute. The objective powers are those that are experienced by the control of the elements—earth, water, fire, air and ether—by a

communion with them in deep meditation and the entry of the mind into the structure of the elements internally, by which the mind gains control over the constituents of the whole of *prakriti*, namely, the grosser forms which are controlled earlier, and later on the subtler ones come into manifestation. It is mentioned that such mastery is effected through the control of the five elements, and that things become possible for the *yogin* which are usually impossible for the ordinary human being.

Then it is said that, subsequently, there is also a perfection of the body. The perfection that one gains due to the concentration of the mind on the elements brings about a simultaneous effect upon the body also, because the body is made up of the five elements. Then there is a tremendous control gained over the mind, which enables the *yogin* to materialise his thoughts and to bring about such transformations in the outer world which correspond to the thoughts of the mind of the *yogin*.

While various other perfections of this kind have been enumerated, the last perfection is said to be the absolution of the spirit—namely, the liberation of the soul—for which greater effort is needed than the efforts put forth for the purpose of the control of the elements, the perfection of the body and the restriction of the senses. This is because, in the last few *sutras* towards the end of the Vibhuti Pada where we are given an idea as to the process of the liberation of the spirit, we are also told that it is a question of increase in knowledge—width as well as depth—and not merely a possession of objects.

We are clearly told that liberation is not a possession of an object, but it is an enlightenment and an awakening of

consciousness into its true nature, whereby it comprehends all things in its perfection in such a manner that the objects become part and parcel of its own being. This is something very peculiar. That is, we are told with sufficient emphasis that what we call the objects of the world, which are presented before the senses and over which we usually try to gain control or mastery, are part and parcel of this knowledge which is gained at the time of the liberation of the soul, so that knowledge is not a process of information. It is not a gathering of learning in the sense of academic knowledge that we gain in universities, but a grasp of insight into the nature of things—an entry into the constitution of the object, so that the object becomes part and parcel of the being of the subject—and then knowledge becomes infinite. Thus is the conclusion of the Vibhuti Pada of Patanjali.

KAIVALYA PADA

In the Kaivalya Pada we are given some further detail as to the nature of the relation that exists between the mind and the object, together with certain descriptions of the processes of the nemesis of *karma* which follow as a consequence of the perceptions of objects through the mind. In a sense, we may say that the Kaivalya Pada is metaphysical and psychological, as well as ethical. The philosophical parts of the Kaivalya Pada, which deal particularly with the nature of the mind in greater detail than is done in earlier *padas*, can be said to be intended for clarifying the subject of *samyama*, because the practice of meditation is a grappling with the contents of the mind. It is a question of restraining one's own self over the emotions

of one's own self in order that there can be a harmony between the concepts of the mind and the process of objects outside.

It is pointed out, by implication, through these *sutras* in the Kaivalya Pada, that *samyama*, or the ultimate practice in yoga, is a bringing about of harmony between the processes of thought and the objects outside. It is told to us that the objects transform themselves constantly, and they influence the mind to such an extent that the form of the object is conceived by the mind in a negative manner, by means of a reception and of impress from the object. The mind only reproduces the form that is cast in the mould of its own body on account of the cognition of objects, so that, in a sense, it looks like the objects control the mind. This is what usually happens in our public world—the world controls the individual. But, a reverse process takes place in yoga—the individual controls the world. That is effected by a rising from the individual mind to the Cosmic Mind, which is very subtly pointed out in some of the *sutras*.

We had some occasion to dilate upon this theme particularly—that the individual mind cannot control the world because the world is vaster. What is required in the practice of yoga is to overcome the limitations of the individual mind and remove all those veils and obstructions, or obscurations, or impurities which make the mind appear as if it is individual, located in space and in time, and make it commensurate with the universal substance. Then what happens is, the Cosmic Mind takes possession of the individual mind. The individual rises to the Cosmic. There are no such things as individual mind and Cosmic Mind, ultimately—they are one and the same

thing. But on account of a particular stress that is laid on certain points in the Cosmic Mind, there arises what is called the individual. This has to be set right by the practice of *samyama*.

The concentration of the mind on the object, as prescribed in the system of yoga, is the secret of the turning of the individual to the Cosmic. Whenever the object is presented outside, there is a subjugation of the mind by the powers of nature. This is set right by the communion that is effected in *samyama*. The mind concentrates upon the object in such a way that the objectivity of the object ceases and it becomes a part of the subject. Then it is that the secret takes place—a miracle works. The miracle is that the peculiar features or factors which appeared to control the mind, and those features which put the mind under subjection, are completely eliminated by that miracle that is worked in the process of *samyama*, or communion.

CONCLUSION

Now, we are at the last *sutra*: *puruṣārtha śūnyānām guṇānām pratiprasavaḥ kaivalyaṁ svarūpapraṭiṣṭhā vā citiśaktiḥ iti* (IV.34). This is the last *sutra* of Patanjali. He gives a double definition of *moksha*, or salvation. It is, on the one side, a return of the *gunas* of *prakriti* to their original source and the dissolution of the forms which were constituted by the concrescence of the *gunas* due to the preponderance of certain of their forms—either *sattva*, *rajas* or *tamas*. When the purpose of these *gunas* is fulfilled through the experiences that the *purusha* has been provided with, there is no further work to be done for the *gunas* and the workmen retire to their home, as it were. They go back

because the work has been completed, and there is a cessation of the forms which once controlled the mind, affected the mind and put it under bondage. So, in one sense, the return of the *gunas* to their sources, or a setting up of an equilibrium of the Cosmos, can be said to be liberation. On the other side, *svarūpapraṭiṣṭhā vā citiśaktiḥ iti*: the establishment of consciousness in its own nature is salvation. This is a positive definition.

The consciousness should rest in itself. That is called freedom. And when the consciousness moves towards an object, that is called bondage. Here is a very succinct definition of bondage and liberation. Whenever the mind moves towards an object, it is caught by the appearance of the object and it transforms itself into the form of the object as if it has no status of its own. This predicament has to be obviated by the practice of meditation. When that is effected, the modifications of the mind cease. The modifications cease, the *vrittis* cease, because the forms do not any more attract the mind. There is no impression created upon the mind by the objects outside and, therefore, there is the return of the mind to its own nature. And when the mind returns to consciousness, it ceases to be, like a drop dissolving in the ocean.

When consciousness rests in itself, what happens? There is an immediate experience of the rain, as it were—as the *sutra* puts it, *dharma-megha*—of all power, all knowledge and all perfection, showering from every direction. The perfection, the power, and the knowledge that the individual has lost are brought back on account of the return of consciousness to its own self. The weakness of the individual is due to the movement of consciousness

towards objects, and the strength depends upon the reverse process. The more is the intensity with which consciousness returns from the objects to itself, the greater is the strength of the individual. And so, the highest strength, the greatest knowledge and the deepest bliss or happiness are experienced when all the ramifications of consciousness, or rays of consciousness, are brought back to itself and there is a resting of the Infinite in Itself.

With this, we conclude with obeisance to the Great Master Patanjali and the System of Yoga as described by him.

Hari om tat sat.

Ōm pūrṇam adah, pūrṇam idam,

pūrṇāt pūrṇam udacyate;

pūrṇasya pūrṇam ādāya

pūrṇam evāvasisyate.

Ōm Śāntih! Śāntih! Śāntih!

Ōm Tat Sat Brahmārpanamastu.

God bless you!