







**WISDOM EXCERPTS
FROM
SWAMI KRISHNANANDAJI'S
“COMMENTARY ON THE
BHAGAVADGITA”**



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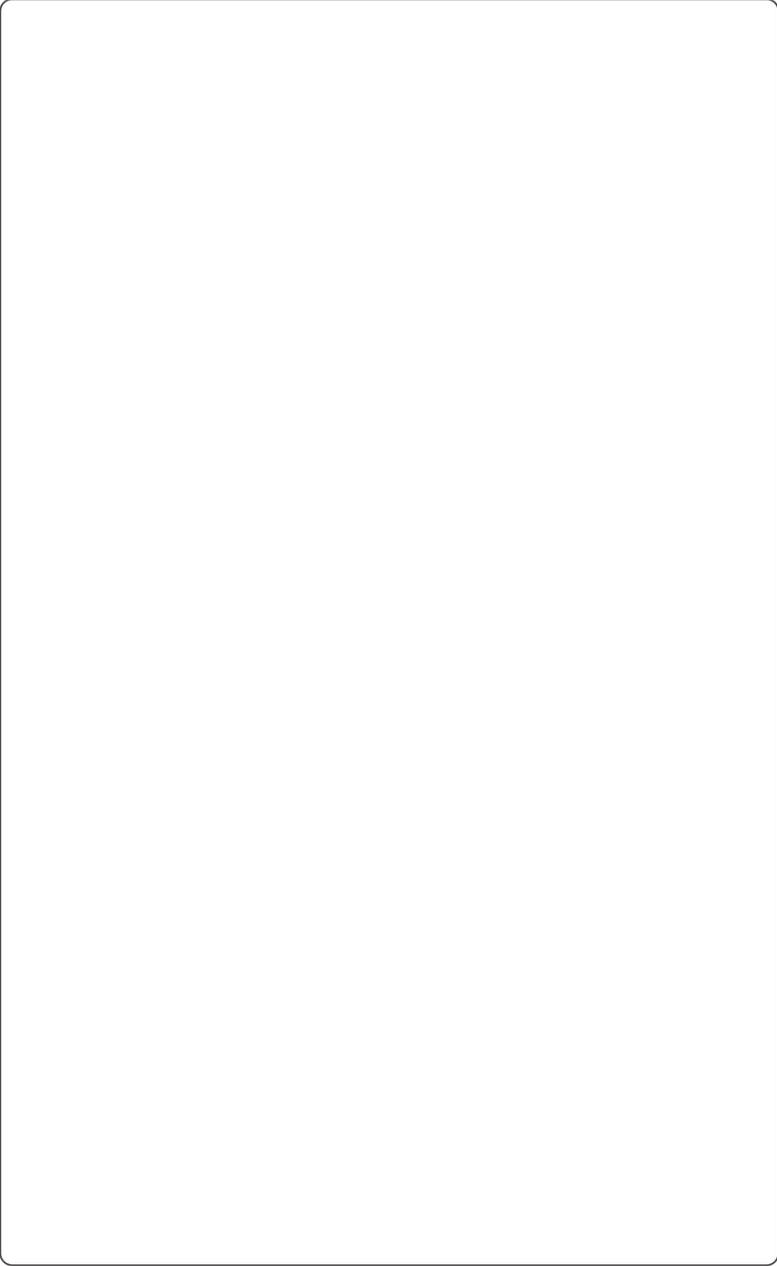
Om Namo Bhagavate Krishnanandaya

FOREWORD

I am fortunate in this life of mine to read many of the Divine Life Society books, and among them, a wonderful book that I happen to read is Swami Krishnanandaji's "COMMENTARY ON THE BHAGAVADGITA". It is one of the books that inspires and elevates the Sadak. I am forced by invisible power to read the voluminous 615 page book twice. Soon, I had a intuition to share some of the salient spiritual portions of it with innumerable devotees. Thus, I tried to cull some 162 excerpts from the book. (Swami Hamsanandaji was kind enough to bring out two small books by names, 1. Freedom Flights on Fridays, and 2. Seek the Supreme on Saturdays, each containing 54 excerpts out of the 162 excerpts.) In order to have a comprehensive idea on the original book, I presume that there is a necessity of a book containing all the 162 excerpts, and hence this endeavour. In these excerpts, the reader can find some latent spiritual aspects and some anecdotes with which he might have no acquaintance earlier prior to the reading of the book. The readers who could spare some time to read these excerpts would certainly be encouraged to read the original volume, which is my main wish in preparing the off-shoot like present book, by name, "Wisdom Excerpts from Swami Krishnanandaji's "COMMENTARY ON THE BHAGAVADGITA."

- Compiler.

Om
PREFACE



Om

**WISDOM EXCERPTS FROM
SWAMI KRISHNANANDAJI'S
“COMMENTARY ON THE
BHAGAVADGITA”**

1. How will we converse with God?

Krishnarjunasamvada is the conversation of the soul with the Absolute. The soul speaks to the Absolute. Arjuna's envisaging the mighty Krishna is symbolic of the soul envisaging the Cosmic Being in its daily life. Who can encounter the Absolute? Who can talk with God, unless we are flaming and blazing forth in the purity of our spirit as God Himself is? Unless we have transcended the limitations of flesh and bone and the limitations of the psyche which are conditioned socially, politically, etc., unless we are able to lift our consciousness above these limitations, how will we converse with God? Who can dare approach God, when there is no communicating medium between ourselves and God? The wavelength of our individuality and the wavelength of God are in such contrast that there is no mingling of these two factors. The radio station of God is sending messages. We are unable to receive any message from God because our receiving sets here have a very feeble wavelength and, therefore, no message is received. The Yoga Shastra, or the practice of yoga, is nothing but the tuning of the wavelength of our receiving sets to the wavelength of the message that comes from God's broadcasting station. This is Yoga Shastra; and the purpose of this is to contact God directly.



2. Such is the import of the final teaching of the Bhagavadgita.

It is necessary to confront God every day, if it is true that He is present in every atom, as they say. In every atom He is vibrating, as the sun is vibrating in the solar system. If that is the case, He is to be contacted just now. God is a here and a now, and not an afterwards or a somewhere or a someone. He is without these limitations of the concept of space and time. Contact with God is contact with timelessness, with eternity, with just-ness, now-ness and here-ness. Such is the import of the final teaching of the Bhagavadgita, where the soul communes with God in its realisation of the perfection that it has to achieve finally through the Yoga Shastra. The entry into God's existence every day is the living of the divine life, and we should not think that this is a very hard thing. That is possible for us, provided that we open the gates of our personality, open the windows to the sunshine of the Supreme Being that is illuminating us perpetually, and melt our egos, which affirm that "I also exist together with God". The Bhagavadgita is a Brahma-vidya, a Yoga Shastra, *Srikrishnarjunasamvada*. It is a theoretical understanding of the structure of the cosmos, the practice of yoga, and the daily contact with God in our practical affairs, which is true divine life.



3. The conflicts of human society are presented in the First Chapter of the Bhagavadgita.

The conflicts of human society are presented in the First Chapter of the Bhagavadgita; and the otherwise very adventurous and enthusiastic spiritual seeker is likely to suddenly find himself or herself in a predicament which would be ruled by the emotions and sentiment rather than reason. Arjuna asked Sri Krishna: "Please place my chariot between the two armies so that I may have a purview of what I am facing." Sri Krishna could have done this and kept quiet. But he would not keep quiet. He uttered a few words that stirred the emotions of Arjuna: "Look at the Kurus arrayed in front of you!" If at the proper moment I utter one word, it will go so deep into you that you will never forget it. At a proper time I should say that proper word, like pressing a button at the proper moment. The name Kuru refers to the ancestral family from where the Kauravas and the Pandavas both descended. To say, "Look at the Kurus," is to say, "Look at the field which is filled with your own kinsmen, as you have all descended from the Kurus." The blood of the Kurus flowed through the veins of the Pandavas and of the Kauravas. It was a family feud, and the name Kuru stimulated a biological sentiment of affection in Arjuna rather than the rational military spirit with which he wanted to enter the field.



4. There is nothing in us which is not in the outside world.

The Pandavas facing the Kauravas is like a spiritual seeker facing the whole world. The objective sentiments are represented by the Kauravas, and the subjective sentiments are represented by the Pandavas. It is difficult for the subject to face the object entirely on the assumption that it is an alien element that is outside, because the world is not an alien element. The blood of the subject flows through the very fibre of the objective world. The individual is a content of the world and, therefore, all the realities of the world are also seen in the realities of the physical personality. There is nothing in us which is not in the outside world. We will realise later on that when we fight this battle of life and want to overcome the temptations and the errors of perception in the world, we are actually heading towards a battle against our own self. We will discover that the forces that we have to face and overcome in the form of an assumed externality of the world are actually in us, because all the faces of reality, positive or negative, that one tries to visualise in the outside world are in a miniature form in our personality. The three *gunas* of *prakriti*—*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*—constitute everything in the world, and they also constitute our physical personality. Even our minds are conditioned by these three *gunas*.



5. We are essentially consciousness.

There is a philosophical doctrine called Sankhya, which counts the categories which constitute this world. It is derived from the word 'sankhya', which means computerising, counting, calculating and methodologically coming to a conclusion as to the number of principles that constitute this world. What is this building? We look at it, and it seems to be a mass indivisibly presented before us. But it is not an indivisible structure. It is made up of small constituents—brick and mortar, and steel and what not. The world is not as it appears to the eyes; it is a whitewash that we see, as the inside bricks and the cement are not visible to the outer perception. Sankhya goes deep into the categorisation of the principles of the universe, and starts its argument from the very consciousness that tries to make any investigation at all: Who is it that is trying to make an investigation into the nature of the world? Who is it that wants to know anything at all? It is me. Now, what kind of me is it? We may conclude that we are essentially consciousness. This consciousness is the *chaitanya shakti*, or the *chaitanya purusha*, which is indivisibly present, and not divisible under any circumstance. The Sankhya takes up the stand on the presence of an indivisible consciousness it calls *purusha* in its own terminology.



6. Consciousness never becomes an object.

Sankhya calls the objective character of perception as *prakriti*, and the subjective consciousness which perceives is called *purusha*. So the Sankhya divides reality into two phases, or blocks of power—consciousness and matter, subject and object, *purusha* and *prakriti*. Experience is supposed to be engendered by a *contact of consciousness with prakriti*. *Purusha* comes in contact with *prakriti*. It is very interesting to notice here that there can be contact between two dissimilar things. Consciousness is never an object; *prakriti* is never a subject. The contradiction between these two principles is obvious. How can we bring about a rapprochement between the subject and the object, which stand poles apart? How does the mind, or the individual consciousness, experience that such and such thing is there, or the world is there? The analogy of the Sankhya is well known. Consciousness never becomes an object. It never actually enters the object. It appears to perceive as if there is some object—such as, a crystal that is perfectly pure looks as if it is coloured when a coloured object is brought near it. Pure crystal is colourless. It is resplendent pure light, as it were; and if a red flower, for instance, is brought near it, it will appear as if the whole crystal is red. It looks as if the crystal has become red. This analogy from the Sankhya extends to the field of the explanation of human perception—how the world is seen as such by the individual consciousness.



7. There is no such thing as solid objects in this world.

The world is movement. It is a fluxation. It is a continuity of bits of force tending in some direction, and never does a single bit of matter rest in itself as an undivided something. *Prakriti* continuously changes its characteristics. It is a continuity that is a flow consisting of three strands—namely, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. Like a wheel that moves when the car moves, there is a cyclic movement of *prakriti* through the *gunas* of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, and it is not a solid object. There is no such thing as solid objects in this world; there is only fluxation. A person may appear on a screen, while the person is not really there. Thousands of small frames of film have moved with such rapidity that the movement could not be caught by the eye. The speed of the movement exceeds the capacity of the eye to perceive the individual frames, and so we see someone there, and not the individual frames that have passed at the rate of about sixteen pictures in one second. Likewise, we see that we are solid objects—the building is solid, the earth is solid, I am solid, you are solid—but the apparent solidity is just like the solidity of a person on the screen, while the person is not really there. It is a continuous rapid movement of frames that gives the illusion of a solid person standing there, the illusion arising on account of the incapacity of the eyes to catch the movement.



8. The permutation and combination of the three *gunas* are the very substance of *prakriti*.

Prakriti, which is the objectivity of the *purusha*, that is, consciousness, is constituted of three properties, called *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. *Tamas* is inertia, pure inactivity; *rajas* is dynamism, distraction and action; and *sattva* is balance and harmony. The permutation and combination of these three *gunas* are the very substance of *prakriti*. The redness of a flower is a quality of the flower, but the redness itself is not the flower, whereas the three strands of a rope are not the quality of the rope, the strands themselves are the rope. In the same way, the three *gunas* that are mentioned—*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*—are the very substance of *prakriti*, and they are the very essence of movement in this world. From the point of view of Vedanta terminology, there is a coming down of consciousness, which is Absolute, to the state of Ishvara, Hiranyagarbha and Virat, or in the language of Sankhya, *prakriti* becomes *mahat*, and *mahat* becomes *ahamkara*. Up to this level, from the top level to the Virat, or from the level of consciousness to *ahamkara*, there is a universal awareness. Virat is universally aware. Hiranyagarbha and Ishvara are universally aware. *Mahat* is universally aware. The *ahamkara* that is spoken of in Sankhya parlance is not the egoism of the human individual. It is the Self-consciousness of the cosmos itself.



9. Whatever is in the world outside is also within us.

The one indivisible *ahamkara*, or Virat, gets divided into a three-partite state, as it were—the object, the subject, and the connecting link between the object and the subject. These are known as the *adhibhuta*, *adhyatma* and *adhidaiva*. Thus, we see there is a world outside on account of the division that has taken place, and we are set aside as subjects perceiving the object outside, not being aware that there is a connecting link between the object and the subject, which is called the *adhidaiva*. Then there is a continuous solidification of this objectivity into *tanmatras*, called *sabda*, *sparsha*, *rupa*, *rasa*, *gandha*, and the five elements, called *prithvi*, *apa*, *teja*, *vayu*, *akasha*; and we have come down into the solidity which is this earth. The individual, who is the perceiver of this so-called external world, is also constituted only of the three *gunas*. The bricks out of which the world is made are the very bricks that also make our body. The mind is subtle matter and the physical body is gross matter, and this grossness and subtlety depend upon the extent of the rarefication of the *gunas* of *prakriti* that have gone into the composition of this body. Nevertheless, whatever is in the world outside is also within us. So there is an organic connection between the subject and the object, and therefore, our judgments about things will not be finally tenable if we do not take into consideration our own involvement in the process of judgment.



10. Nobody does any action, ultimately.

The movement of *prakriti* within itself in the form of the sense organs and the mind on the one hand, and the objects on the other hand, are taken by us as two different activities taking place. Actually, *prakriti* is cognising *prakriti—guna gunesu vartanta iti matva na sajjate* (3.28). One wave is dashing against another wave in the ocean, and two persons are not actually involved there. The structure of the sense organs and the mind is responsible for the kind of consciousness that is passing through that particular structure, and yet we should not forget that the sense organs and the mind are composed of the very same *gunas* of *prakriti—sattva, rajas* and *tamas*—and, in different permutations and combinations, the objects are constituted of the very same three *gunas*. So when something is known, when we cognise or perceive an object, it is *prakriti* that is colliding with *prakriti*. Therefore, we are not doing anything. But we think that we are isolated individuals, sitting and judging things. No judgment is possible, individually. Therefore, nobody does any action, ultimately. Sri Krishna's philosophy, finally, is that no individual action is possible. All action is cosmic action, as the very concept of individuality is ruled out in the light of this predicament of all perception being only a collision of the subjective side of *prakriti* with its objective side. Hence, who does anything in this world? It is *prakriti* doing within itself whatever it wants to do, as the rumbling within the bowels of the ocean may rise up as billowing waves on the surface, yet it is one activity taking place.



11. The whole universe is a dance of *prakriti*.

All perception—finally, all knowledge—is a conditioned observation of things through the mind and the sense organs on account of *prakriti* conditioning things subjectively on the one hand and objectively on the other hand. Thus, sensory perception cannot be regarded as correct perception. Even pure mental cogitation cannot be regarded as correct perception, because the externality characterising the object vitiates the validity of any perception. The error of perception of any kind is the introduction of space and time in the midst of the otherwise indivisible movement of *prakriti*—subjectively as *gunas*, and also objectively as *gunas*. Between two waves in the ocean there are gaps, but the gaps are filled with a basic fundament of the very same substance of the wave, and two waves which are different from each other are connected by a basic ocean. In a similar manner, individual perceptions in respect of objects outside are actually a dancing of the waves of the *gunas* of *prakriti* within themselves. The whole universe is a dance of *prakriti*. Neither you do anything, nor I do anything. The mind works in fractions. Therefore, the whole of perception is not given to the mind. We neither like the whole world nor hate the whole world. Thus, neither of these attitudes of ours can be regarded as finally tenable.



12. Indian philosophy never relies on induction. It relies on deduction.

All logic in India is deductive in the sense that it takes its stand on the Supreme Reality first, as Sankhya has taken. The essence of thinking is consciousness; it has to be indivisible and, therefore, it should be Universal. So, there is a distinction between the approach of Western philosophers and Indian philosophers. The empiricists, such as Bacon and others, count things: "The sun rises in the east. The sun rose in the east yesterday, the sun rose in the east today. Millions of times the sun has risen in the east and, therefore, it must always rise in the east." This kind of conclusion is called induction. From many particulars, we gather a generalisation. But it may not be a correct conclusion because even if the sun has been rising in the east for millions of years, one day it may not rise in the east. For some reason the whole thing may change, and it may rise in the west. Therefore, induction is not correct. Indian philosophy never relies on induction. It relies on deduction. The fundamental reality has to be ascertained first, and that is possible only by an investigation of the investigator himself. As Ramana Maharshi was fond of saying, "Whenever you put a question, tell me who is putting the question." Therefore, go deep into yourself. Sankhya is the knowledge of the structure of the world as it is really constituted, inclusive of the perceiving individual, on account of which fact there is no such thing as individual action at all. Therefore, there is no individual judgment either.



13. Human individual is a tabernacle of the deathless soul.

The Atman is involved in all things, warp and woof. The deathlessness or the indestructibility of the soul implies the timelessness of the soul because that which is involved in time cannot be deathless. Anything that is involved in the process of time cannot be immortal. Hence, the immortality of the soul also suggests the timelessness of the soul. And the timelessness of the soul implies the spacelessness of the soul because when time goes, space also goes. Thus, the whole world is subject to mutation, transition, and the conditions involved in the very existence of space and time. The Atman, or the soul of man, is not in space and time. The soul is not in space and time because it can know that there is space and time. The knower of an object is itself not the object. The consciousness in us, which is the Atman basically, is aware of the existence of such a thing as space and time; therefore, the knower, which is consciousness, cannot itself be involved in space and time. The knower of space is not in space. The knower of time is not in time. Hence, basically, essentially, the soul within is spaceless and timeless. This soul, which is deathless, is encased, as it were, in a perishable body. The human being is partly in the world of death and partly in the world of the immortals. Therefore, this psychophysical organism, which is the human individual, is itself subject to destruction, notwithstanding the fact that it is a tabernacle of this deathless soul.



14. The fear of death implies the futurity of the soul.

We do not want to die. Who is it, actually, who does not want to die? The body cannot aspire for deathlessness because it is involved in the very process of dying, which is time. And the mind, which is psychophysical, is also perishable on account of its transitory nature. So why do we fear death? Who fears death? Is it the body that fears death? The body is not even conscious; it is a physical substance. There is something in us which does not want to die. The fear of death implies the existence of such a thing as immortality. We cannot fear death unless we do not want to die, and the desire to not die cannot arise in the physical body or in anything in this world; it has to arise from something which is superior to all physical matter. That is to say, we have a root in eternity, which is the cause of our aspiration that takes us beyond all extension in space and duration in time. We would like to possess the whole world. We would like to become masters of the entire space, and we would like to live as long as time itself. This desire cannot arise in time. It cannot arise in space. It arises in something which is not in space, not in time, and which is not an object. The fear of death implies the futurity of the soul. We say that we must do good actions, we must be righteous, we must live moral and ethical lives. These injunctions cannot have any meaning unless the soul is deathless. That is, rebirth of the soul is implied in the very injunctions to be good in this world.



15. Death is not the extinction of individuality.

The rebirth of the soul is also very interesting. The soul perpetually takes these successive forms in the period of time on account of it being necessary, in the process of evolution, to advance further and further in the experience of life. It is necessary for us to die in order that we may learn better lessons in a newer form of existence. Death is not the extinction of individuality. Death is only the shedding of a condition imposed upon consciousness for a given period of time, a condition which is not necessary eternally. Just as a student rises from one class to another class, transcending the lower for the sake of attaining the higher by shedding the conditions of the lower class and entering into the conditions of the higher class, in a similar manner, consciousness within the soul is now conditioned in the physical body and in this physical world for the purpose of fulfilling certain desires which it entertained in previous births. When these conditions of desires are broken—that is to say, when they are fulfilled completely—the conditions necessary for the existence of this body in space and time are transcended automatically, and we enter into a new realm, a higher state of education, as it were, where a wider perception and a deeper insight of things is possible. This process of transmigration, metempsychosis, coming and going, will never cease as long as the soul does not learn the lesson that it is essentially eternal, and it becomes totally desireless.



16. Duty is nothing but the maintenance of harmony with the atmosphere.

We have no independent existence in ourselves. The physical stuff belongs to the physical universe, the mental stuff belongs to the *tanmatras*, and the sense organs cannot even think and perceive without the operation of the superintending divinities which control the workings of the sense organs. Inasmuch as there is such an involvement of the person in the divinities that superintend over the sense organs, and we also are subject to the conditions of material existence, which are the five elements. We have a duty of maintaining a harmony with these elements. Duty is nothing but the maintenance of harmony with the atmosphere. We should not be in a state of conflict with anybody. The atmosphere in which we are living may be a family atmosphere, a community atmosphere, a provincial atmosphere, a national atmosphere, an international atmosphere, or it may be the atmosphere of the whole of physical creation. We should concede the same rights to other people as we concede to our own selves. The privileges and rights that we expect in this world are also the privileges and rights expected by other people. The freedom that we can have in this world is a sort of sacrifice. Duty is the performance of that act which will maintain harmony in society and in the world. Absolute freedom is not possible because there is nothing that is absolute in this world.



17. Hatred is not the rule; love is the rule.

The whole cosmos is nothing but a balance of forces. We may say it is a big electromagnetic field which tries to maintain itself always and will not brook any intervention from others. The moment we intervene or touch this electromagnetic field of the cosmos with an external attitude, it gives a kick; that is what is called the nemesis of karma. The karma that we speak of is nothing but the reaction of the universal electromagnetic field with which we are interfering every day as outsiders, as it were, which it does not permit. Under these circumstances, it is necessary to perform one's duty both from the point of view of the individual and from the point of view of human society and the welfare of all beings. In India there is a great injunction called the *pancha-mahayajna*, the five great sacrifices which every householder has to observe. That is to say, this *pancha-mahayajna*, or the five great sacrifices enjoined upon every person, implies that we are in a world of divinity with life pervading everywhere and love ruling the cosmos. Hatred is not the rule; love is the rule. There is a power of attraction which is seen in every little atom and in every molecule, in every component of molecules, in every organism, and even in the whole solar system. The attraction that one exercises on others is physically known as gravitation. Biologically it is known as health, psychologically it is called sanity, rationally it is called logic, and spiritually it is called Universality.



18. Nobody can be without any kind of action.

All this is pervaded by the One Reality. Therefore, we should not be greedy. We should not try to possess things, because the idea of possession of property is also the idea of converting some part of the world into a tool for our purposes. We cannot exploit anything. If we perform action with this knowledge of God being present everywhere—that is, the principle of Universality ruling all things—we will be purified by our actions; karma becomes a purifying medium, and not a binding medium. Action is a must. This refers to the action that we generally speak of, which includes duty, the performance of obligatory works. This injunction on action is born of the very structure of *prakriti*, which never ceases from moving further; and, all *prakriti* is potential activity. Even if we keep quiet and do not do any work, that consciousness of our not doing any work is also a work. Hence, nobody can be without any kind of action. Total inactivity is not possible because every cell of the body is active. The mind is active, the growth which the body undergoes is an activity, and even death is an activity. There is continuous movement in the cosmos. It is like a train moving eternally on the rails. Finally, in the state of the ultimate *purusha*, there is no activity, because there is no contact with *prakriti* and there is no flux or natural reaction. But until that time, as long as the *purusha*, or the consciousness of the Atman, is involved in this body, there is a reciprocal action of the Atman and the body.



19. Duty is not a wage earner.

The Atman illumines the mind and enlivens the body, and the body limits the experience of consciousness by subjecting it to the laws of nature. The laws of nature rule this world. There is no gravitation for the soul; it is only for the physical body. The more we are subject to the laws of nature, and the more is the way karma will bind us and compel us to work for the sake of participation in the work of *prakriti*. When we cannot consciously and deliberately participate in the work of *prakriti*, we will be forced to this by the very nature of *prakriti*, which is working inside us. We ourselves are embodiments of the three gunas of *prakriti*. Our duty is to act in such a manner that action does not bind us. The consideration of the fruit of an action is contrary to the concept of duty. A person who expects something from the performance of duty has not performed duty. Duty is not a wage earner. A person does not perform duty because something comes out of it. It is a necessary obligation on our part to participate in the very structure of the cosmos. If our legs walk, they are performing their duty, but they do not get salary because they are walking. The limbs of the body work independently, and no limb asks for recompense or consideration from the other parts of the body. If the eyes show us the way to go and the legs walk, the eyes may tell us to give them something because they helped us by showing the direction. This does not happen because mutual cooperation is the essence of duty; and in mutual cooperation, no expectation of fruits is possible because the very fact of mutual cooperation brings all the fruits that are required.

**20. We should not think that
if we do something good today,
tomorrow we will get some fruit.**

Duty is also, automatically, a privilege. The gods in heaven know that we deserve whatever is necessary for our existence under the conditions of the duty that we have to perform. So there is no point in our working in this world, or doing anything, for that matter, under the impression that something will come. The futurity of the expectation of fruits of action is, again, a concept in time. We feel that if we do something, then some future fruit will follow. The idea of the future is, again, an involvement of our consciousness in time. We should not perform any action with a notion of our involvement in space and time. Our consideration should be a Universal principle present in all things, and not our involvement in space and time. So we should not think that if we do something good today, tomorrow we will get some fruit. The idea of tomorrow should not arise in us because the idea of tomorrow implies space and time and, again, it is a bondage. The meaning of duty is very difficult to conceive, and even great sages are bewildered in understanding what it actually is. *Kavya'pyatra mohitah* (4.16): "Even learned people, even masters with insight, are bewildered as to what action is, what karma is, and how it works.



21. Our soul is the centre of everything.

The gunas of prakriti—*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*—keep perpetually moving and never resting. Inasmuch as everybody—myself, yourself, and all things—is constituted of these essentials of *prakriti*, the mutation which *prakriti* perpetually undergoes has a direct impact upon our individual existence, and we also undergo the same mutation. Whether we want to or not, we are forced to act in a particular direction. The direction depends upon the mind and the reason of a particular individual conditioning the movement. *Prakriti* is like an engine which moves; but the direction in which it moves depends upon the intelligence of the driver. In the case of the individual, it is the reason or the understanding, the *viveka shakti*, that is responsible for the direction. Our activities, our works, our performances of any kind may take us away from ourselves more and more, or they may bring us nearer and nearer to our own selves. That is to say, our works and deeds in this world may be either integrating or disintegrating. The energy comes from the integrating faculty operating behind our action. Our soul is the centre of everything. The more is the force exerted by our soul, the greater is the integration that is taking place in our action; it is a cohesive, harmonious action in which we get involved. But if the soul is practically dead, as it is in most people, the sense organs take the upper hand, and instead of the soul motivating the direction of the action, the sense organs start controlling the movement, and they pull us out of ourselves.



22. God is not a cruel master.

Our duty is to act-- that is *karmanye vadhikaras*—but we have no right to expect any result or particular fruit to accrue from our action. From a cursory point of view, this looks like a very hard teaching, like a cruel employer telling a labourer to work hard without expecting any wages. But does God say that we should go on working and He will give us nothing? God is not a cruel master. The principle behind the obligatory duty incumbent upon every individual is the involvement of every individual in the structure of the universe. The whole universe is one single body, whose limbs are the modes of *prakriti*, and whose soul is the all-pervading *purusha*: *yena sarvam idam tatam* (2.17). Now, why is it that we should act? And why is it that we should not expect the fruits of action? This will be clear to us if we analyse the reason behind our action, and the reason why fruits will not accrue as we desire. Our actions are obligatory on our part on account of our involvement in this psycho-physical organism, which is controlled by the movement of the *gunas* of *prakriti*. Therefore, as long as *prakriti* moves, as long as the *gunas* rotate and revolve in this cosmical process of creation and evolution, we also will be involved in that action. Thus, our activity is a participation in the universal action of *prakriti*; we are not acting independently. Individually, we do not have any kind of prerogative because we are an organic part of the whole structure of *prakriti*, of which the ruling principle is the *purusha*.



23. Actions done either knowingly or unknowingly will produce some reaction.

Actions done either knowingly or unknowingly will produce some reaction. Many times we feel that we have made a mistake unknowingly and, therefore, we should be pardoned. The law does not seem to think exactly the same way. There was a king who had many cattle, and in that country there was a Brahmin who had a cow. One day it so happened that the Brahmin's cow strayed into the herd of cattle which belonged to the king. As was the custom of ancient rulers, charity of cattle and gold were given to people every day. One day the king gave some cattle in charity to a Brahmin, and it so happened that this stray cow was included. The Brahmin was leading this cow which was a gift from the king, and on the way the real owner came to know about it. The Brahmin went to the king and asked, "Why did you give my cow as a gift to somebody else?" The king said, "I did not know that it was your cow. I never knew that your cow had strayed. Don't get angry with me. I will give you one thousand cows." The Brahmin replied, "I do not want one thousand cows. I want only my cow." It became a great predicament because the Brahmin who got the gift would not give it back. He said, "King, you have given it to me. Are you going back on your word?" It is said that this peculiar moral crisis in which the king found himself made him a lizard in the next birth. What terrible punishment is this! This story is found in the Bhagavata. Sri Krishna touched the lizard, and it once again became the king.

24. This is Mandavya's rule.

There is the story of Mandavya, the great sage. He was sitting in a corner, meditating. One day there was a theft in the treasury of the king. The priests and the army started searching for the culprit, and the thieves who took the treasure ran helter-skelter. Finally, they became afraid of being caught so they threw away the stolen treasure, and it happened to land near the sage. The army found it, and concluded that the sage was the thief. They brought him before the king. The king said, "Impale him immediately." In those days the king was the only judge, and he could pass any sentence. They impaled the sage on a spear. Mandavya was hanging there, but because of the great power of his meditation he did not die. Finally his soul went to Yama, and he asked Yama, "For what wrong action of mine have you punished me with impalement? To my knowledge, I have never done any wrong action in my life. You have made some mistake!" Yama replied, "You cannot recollect. When you were a child, you took a little broomstick and pierced a fly. Therefore, you have been pierced." "When did I do it?" asked the sage. "You were about eleven years old," Yama replied. "Oh! You are punishing me for having done something without the knowledge that it was wrong. I was an innocent child. I did not know anything." "Innocent or not innocent, the law acts!" Then, it is said, Mandavya furiously cursed the law and changed it so that in future, from that day onwards, no punishment would be meted out to anybody for a mistake that they committed before the age of fourteen years. This is Mandavya's rule.

25. We are cosmically determined, and not individually motivated.

In the Bhagavadgita, yoga means action and *sankhya* means knowledge. All action should be based on knowledge. But, our actions are not based on the knowledge of the Sankhya. The knowledge of the *Sankhya* is the knowledge of our organic involvement in the whole of *prakriti*, in the entire creation. We should not forget this point. But what do we do, actually? When we start doing anything, we have some ulterior motive and an object in front of us. Whenever we think of an object, we have a desire to go near it and possess it: When we contemplate an object, we do not think of the Universal principle involved in the object. Very few can do that. We think mostly in the exteriorised fashion of the sense organs working in terms of an object outside. The moment we think of an object, the desire of the sense organs increases. They want to possess it. The desire to possess that particular object many a time comes in conflict with a similar desire that others may also have to possess it. There is a necessity, therefore, to maintain a balance in our attitude to things. There are two definitions of yoga in the Second Chapter: Balance of attitude is yoga; dexterity in the performance of action is yoga. We are cosmically determined, and not individually motivated. We never think in terms of universals; we think only in terms of particulars. The balance that is required in the practice of yoga arises automatically from the knowledge of our involvement in the cosmic structure of things; and then we become able, very dexterous and adroit in the performance of action.



26. That is a *sthitaprajna*.

That is a *sthitaprajna*, a person so established in yoga that he wants nothing because he has everything. This *sthitaprajna* is one whose consciousness is established in the Soul of the cosmos and, therefore, he wants nothing. The question of wanting does not arise on account of his soul being everywhere: To him, this whole world looks like a dark dream, as it were. Where we see values, he does not see values; and where he sees values, we do not see values. For us, this world is the only reality, and God is a possible conceptuality. For him, God is the only reality, and the world is only a conceptuality. *Ya nisa sarvabhutanam tasyam jagarti samyami, yasyam jagrati bhutani sa nisa pasyato muneh (2.69)*: This world is a dream for him, while for us it is a hard, waking reality. For him, the Ultimate Supreme Essence is the final waking, but not for us who, like owls in the daytime, know not that the sun is shining. In the bright light of the solar orb, the owl sees nothing but darkness; similarly, in this dazzle of the Supreme Being everywhere, in this pervasive action of the soul of all things perpetually, we are totally blind. The very existence of it is obliterated, as it were. The soul's existence is completely obliterated from our perception because our perception is sensory, whereas spiritual perception is an insight into the soul. The Kathopanishad says that God has cursed us, as it were; Brahma cast an **imprecation** on every one of us by piercing the sense organs in an outward direction.



27. *Duhkhalayam asasvatam.*

We are in a world of death and destruction. *Anityam asukham lokam* (9.33); *duhkhalayam asasvatam* (8.15). The world is not at all permanent, and we should not expect any permanent value in this world. It is engendered by sorrow from beginning to end. In a cloth shop, we can get cloth. In a cutlery shop, we can get cutlery. In a grocery shop, we can get groceries. But we cannot get what is not there. This world is the shop where there is sorrow—*duhkhalayam*—and, therefore, we will reap only sorrow if we are **tethered to** the demands of the sense organs. The whole of yoga is nothing but the restraining of the powers of the sense organs, which compel us to think in terms of the *anatman*, and centring it in the Atman. It is a movement from the centrifugality of the sensory activity to the centripetality of the soul's contemplation on itself. The Patanjali's sutras say: When you are established in your own Self, the *vriddhis* of the mind cease; but when you are not established in the Self, the mind operates in terms of the *vriddhis* and compels you to know the world as an outside object, and at the same time compels you to want it or not want it. Who will have peace in this world? Only that person can have peace into whom all desires conceivable in the world enter, like rivers enter into the ocean. Any number of rivers can touch the ocean, and the ocean is not tired of absorbing them. All the desires, together with the objects of desire, are melted down into this oceanic consciousness of the realisation of the *sthitaprajnata*. Most blessed is this state of being a realised soul.

28. Whoever has a mind or a body cannot totally abstain from action.

We are partly action bound on account of our psychophysical personality being constituted of the three *gunas* of *prakriti*. The mind is constituted of the *tanmatras*, and the physical body is constituted of the physical elements, so both the mind and the body are, in a way, tools in the intentions of *prakriti*, which is cosmic activity. Therefore, whoever has a mind or a body cannot totally abstain from action. It will be forced upon him because when the world moves, everybody in the world also moves. When the railway train moves, whoever is sitting in the railway train also moves. But yoga does not mean merely performance of action in a blind manner without understanding the rationale behind it. Reason is the philosophical aspect of action, and action is the implementation of reason. Both have to go together as complimentary aspects of a daily routine of our existence. We have to pursue the course of *prakriti*, which moves in a process of evolution from lower stages to higher stages with the intention of producing the best species possible. Modern biologists and anthropologists tell us that *prakriti*—or nature, as they call it—is experimenting to find the best species possible. Nature experimented with the earlier, rudimentary forms of species. There were amphibians, there were aquatic animals, there were wild beasts, there were mammoths, there were dinosaurs, and there were wild human beings. With none of these was nature satisfied. There is a gradual intention of *prakriti* to produce the best product which, at the present moment, seems to be the human individuality.



29. Yet, man has to become super-man.

It is generally accepted that man is the apex of creation and his intelligence represents the final point that one can reach in the understanding of things. Yet, man has to become super-man. The intention of *prakriti* is not to allow man to be only man forever. The super-human character implicit in human individuality has to be manifest through further processes of evolution—births and deaths; and in this work of *prakriti* of producing higher and higher forms of species, it is incumbent on us to participate. The Taittiriya and the Brihadarayana Upanishads tell us that the higher species of beings, which are invisible to our eyes, denizens of higher realms which are above the physical realm and, therefore, remain invisible—the Gandharvas, the Devas, Indra, Brihaspati—live in a larger dimension of consciousness. Their power is equally great, and their happiness is a millionfold greater than human happiness. Hence, participation in the work of *prakriti* is actually our participation in the work of educating ourselves in the direction of a larger knowledge that is available to us and which is our heritage, one day or the other. But, human individuals alone are capable of practising yoga. Subhuman species cannot understand Sankhya or yoga because there is a peculiar privilege, as it were, that is bestowed upon the human individual—namely, the worth of reason. There is a kind of mind instinctively operating in the lower animals also, but logic or reason is available only in the human being. That is, human reason can draw conclusions from existing premises, but animals, which are instinctive, cannot draw such conclusions.



30. There are nineteen principles operating in the body.

Prajapati, when he created human beings, made it necessary for us to be in a state of harmony with other people, with the things in the world, and also with the gods in heaven. The gods in heaven are actually a theological point that Sri Krishna introduces into the concept of sacrifice—that is, we will not be able to extend a servicing hand to others, nor will we be able to recognise the value in other persons and things, unless the gods in heaven permit us to have this consciousness. What are these gods in heaven? The Vedanta philosophy tells us that every limb of the body is controlled and directed by some god. There are nineteen principles operating in the body. There are the five organs of perception or knowledge: the eyes, ears, nose, taste and touch. There are also five organs of action such as the hands, feet, speech, etc. Then there are the five *pranas*—*prana*, *apana*, *vyana*, *udana* and *samana*—which are the fivefold various functions of the breath in us which function in various ways in the body. Then we have the psychological organs—*manas*, *buddhi*, *ahamkara* and *chitta*—which perform a fourfold function. *Manas* merely thinks, *chitta* remembers, *ahamkara* arrogates, and *buddhi* understands. These are the nineteen principles operating in the body. *Ekonavimsati-mukham* (Ma.U. 3) is the word that is used in the Mandukya Upanishad. This god that is operating through the individual has these nineteen mouths. It is with these mouths that we come in contact with things in the world. That is, the nineteen sense organs are the operating media conducted by higher divinities.



31. This is the principle of karma yoga finally.

The ordinance of Prajapati is that we have to consider the fact of our mutual involvement with not only people outside, not only with nature as *prakriti*, but also with the gods in heaven. The gods will bless us. The perception of an object through the eyes is not possible unless there is a super-intending conscious medium. The connecting link between me and you should be a conscious connection. There cannot be only a connection of space and time. There is something like space and time between us of course, but space and time are unconscious principles and, therefore, cannot become the media of your knowing that I am here. Even light is not a conscious element, so you cannot say that you know that I am here because of the light. None of these objects of your perception can be the media for your knowing that I am here. There is an unknown principle superintending all things, a permeating principle—*yena sarvam idam tatam* (2.17)—which pervades all things; it pervades you, it pervades me, and it also pervades that link between us. Thus, the gods whom we have to respect and worship every day, by way of the ritualistic worship that we perform either in our house or in a temple, are nothing but an inner recognition of there being a higher principle than ourselves, than others, than even the whole world. With this knowledge, we live in this world by mutual sacrifice, mutual understanding and mutual cooperation among the world, ourselves and God. This is the principle of karma yoga finally.



32. The activities that are seen among people are only the activities of the *gunas* of *prakriti*.

In all creation, whether it is in heaven or on earth or anywhere, the activities that are seen among people are only the activities of the *gunas* of *prakriti*. If two legs walk, it is an activity of two limbs of the body, though actually it is not an independent activity of the legs. It is an order issued by the entire organism of the body and the mind. The entire body is in action when the legs move. Whenever an individual works or does any action, even the least of action, a cosmic mutation in the form of the rotation of the *gunas* of *prakriti* determines his action. Therefore, the *tattvavit*, or the knower of Reality, is a cosmically aware individual. When anything takes place or an event occurs anywhere in the world, the *tattvavit* knows that it occurs everywhere. Modern physics tells us that events do not take place in space. If they do not take place in space, where else do they take place? They take place not in time, not in space. That means to say, an event that occurs historically in this world—so-called historically from our point of view—does not take place in one particular part of the world. It is an agitation taking place in the whole world but manifest only in some part, like an ulcer or a boil. It may be a volcano or an epidemic or a war taking place in some part of the world, but it is engendered by the agitation of the total organism of the world.



33. All actions are nothing but the collision of parts of *prakriti* with other parts of *prakriti*.

Physics has now gone to the extent of realising that there is a continuum which is the ultimate reality of the universe, and it is not physical or solid in its nature. Solids can be converted into liquids, liquids can be converted into gases, gases can be converted into pure energy, and energy is not located in any particular place. Energy is not a localised movement; it is a continuum that is non-spatial and non-temporal. This is a subject in modern physics which practically takes us to the conclusions of the Upanishads and the Bhagavadgita that all action is a cosmic action. Thus a *tattvavit*, a knower of this reality of the mutations of the *gunas* of *prakriti* in relation to the activities of an individual, knows that the *gunas* act on the *gunas*. All actions are nothing but the collision of parts of *prakriti* with other parts of *prakriti*. When the sense organs perceive an object, these *gunas*, as the sense organs, come in contact with the *gunas* as the object of *prakriti*. The forces of nature operate individually as well as externally. The sense organs are constituted of the *gunas* of *prakriti*, and are intelligently superintended by the divinities—the *adhidevatas*, which work in between the *adhyatma*, the individual, and the *adhibhuta*, the object. All this wonderful activity of the world, this great drama which is the history of mankind—natural or anthropological, or whatever we call it—is just a play of *prakriti*. It is not a particular event caused by any individual anywhere. We may say nature does everything, or we may even say God does everything.



34. The knower of Reality, or the *tattvavit*, is not attached to anything.

The knower of Reality, or the *tattvavit*, is not attached to anything. He does not even hold an opinion on anything, because to hold an opinion is to pass a judgment, which is nothing but a localised notion that we entertain in regard to something; and no wise person can pass a judgment on anything in this world because to judge a thing is to eliminate factors which are invisible and uncognisable, and yet contributory to the occurrence of a particular event. Judge not, lest you be judged. If you judge a thing, you will be judged in a similar manner by the forces of nature. Whatever you do to the world, that will be done to you. Do unto others as you would be done by. That which is not good for you should not be meted out to others either. This is an ethical consequence that we may draw from this scientific and philosophical conclusion that the *gunas* of *prakriti* alone operate in this world and they constitute all the solid objects—mountains and rivers and the solar system and all our bodies, and everything we can think of in heaven or on earth. Knowing this, the *Tattvavit* is not attached to anything. He remains unbiased, unconcerned. He is a witness of the drama, just as the audience in an enactment of a drama is not attached either to this actor or that actor, knowing very well that all the actors perform a mutually correlated activity to produce a definite effect. Just as the audience does not get attached to any performer in a drama, so is the case with the knower of Reality. He is not attached to anything—*iti matva na sajjate*. Totally unconcerned and wanting nothing does a knower of Reality live.

35. The teacher is sometimes called a spiritual midwife, in the language of Socrates.

Ignorant people who behave very foolishly and get attached to things—what is the attitude of *Tattvavit* towards them? Those who do not have an insight into the nature of *prakriti's* actions get attached to particular objects of sense; but we should not disturb their feeling or condemn their outlook of life. We should not tell them that their outlook is totally wrong and that their perception is erroneous. Condemnation is something unknown to the knower of Reality. The teacher in a school does not condemn the ignorant child, or the student. An efflorescence of the mind of the student is attempted by the teacher, who is a master of psychology. Sri Krishna is a master of psychology and he acts as the best of teachers before a student like Arjuna, and thus he expects every knower of Truth to also behave as a good teacher of mankind, and not a judge of mankind. The teacher does not judge the student as good or bad, but as someone who is in a particular state of evolution from which he has to effloresce and flower into a larger dimension of knowledge. The teacher is sometimes called a spiritual midwife, in the language of Socrates. The midwife does not create the child, but brings the child out. So is the case with the teacher. He does not thrust knowledge into the ignorant person. He does not interfere at all with the mind of the student, but enables the mind to undergo a transmutation by the dexterous psychological activity of the teacher, so that knowledge manifests itself automatically from the other-wise ignorant mind.



36. Kama and krodha are the worst of enemies.

Kama and *krodha* are the worst of enemies. They are hindrances in the spiritual advancement of the spirit because their main activity is to violate the very consciousness of universality through the sense organs that work on the basis of *kama* and *krodha*. How are we going to subdue these forces? In the manner of controlling these impulses of *kama* and *krodha*, we can go gradually from the lower level of restraint to the higher level, or we can touch the top and put the whole force down with one action. A person who is subject to intense passions and anger may do well to fast one day in a week. Or if he is more sincere and honest, he may miss a meal every day because then his impulses will know that if they start creating too much havoc, they will miss a meal, so they will be cautious in manifesting themselves. That is one method. The other method is, as far as possible, to try to avoid the company of atheists and materialists or opponents of any kind. Be alone to yourself. The third is the study of spiritual books such as the Bhagavata, the Bhagavadgita, the Upanishads, etc. This should be done every day, in the early morning, so that you start the day with the noble thoughts of Vyasa or Valmiki or Bhagavan Sri Krishna or Jesus Christ or whoever it is. The intense nobility and the profundity of these spiritual teachings which have gone into your mind due to your *svadhyaya* in the morning will, to some extent, restrain your behaviour throughout the day. Lastly, there is meditation and japa. As much time as possible must be devoted to meditation and japa. The sense organs are weakened by these methods.



37. There is a direct method of subjugating the sense organs.

There is a direct method of subjugating the sense organs, which is the rousing of the aspiration of the soul for establishing itself in Universal Consciousness. This is called the rousing of the *brahmakara vritti* in the mind. A *vritti* is a modification of the mind. A modification of the mind in terms of the objects of sense is called *visayakara vritti*, but the modification of the mind in terms of Universal Existence is called *brahmakara vritti*. This kind of meditation, which is your attempt to locate or fix your consciousness on a universal concept, will immediately put a check on the instinctive activities of the mind and, secondarily, on the impetuous activities of the sense organs. The *indriyas* are strong, no doubt, but the sense organs being strong does not mean that they are the only authorities in the world. The mind is stronger than the sense organs. The intellect, or the higher reason, is stronger than the instinctive mind. Higher than the reason is the strength of this Universal Spirit, which you really are. So try to root yourself gradually by the process of self-analysis, through which you realise the interconnection of all things, on account of which particular love and hatred cannot be sanctioned in this world. *Kama* and *krodha* can be subjugated in this way by a direct push that you give from the top, from the Atman that is universal. When the order from the universal Atman is communicated to the *buddhi*, it communicates that order into the mind, and the mind communicates the order to the sense organs, and puts a check on their activities.

38. There are no enemies in this world.

There is a perpetual guidance flowing from every part of the cosmos. The whole universe is composed of friends, well-wishers, who are eager to see that we are protected, that we are guarded and enabled to rise higher and higher, to more and more profound states of perfection. They are the directions of the heavens which are dominated and superintended by divinities called the *Ashtadiggajas*, the divinities of the four quarters, the gods who superintend over our sense organs and our mental psyche, the very *prakriti* itself whose *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* are in our own personality, and the supreme *purusha*, which is implanted in the recesses of our heart. These are the highest friendly forces. There are no enemies in this world. The highest possibility of help comes from a Universal intelligence which permeates through the entire material universe and all the fourteen *lokas*; and whenever there is disharmony among the parts of the cosmos, the power of God descends as an *avatara*. The incarnation of God is nothing but the cosmic intelligence operating through required media at a given time, in a given manner, for a given purpose. At every juncture of experience, whether created knowingly or unknowingly, God manifests Himself, just as healing forces in the body work perpetually when there is disease in the system. The entire body descends as an incarnation of power to set right the element that has entered as something totally alien to the bodily requirement.



39. The total intention of creation, taken in its completeness, is the intention of God.

Just as the intelligence maintaining the human body works continuously, without winking and without sleeping, in order to maintain this psychophysical organism, in the same way, God acts in this world through manifestations which are myriad in number. Thousands and thousands are the ways in which God can reveal Himself for the purpose of bringing about a rapprochement of conditions, a harmony among conflicts arising in any way whatsoever. God can reveal Himself positively in the form of an amelioration of all the conditions causing pain to people, or negatively by the amputation of a limb of a body if that becomes unavoidable, which God does only under extreme cases in the form of battle, war, epidemics, cyclones, earthquakes, floods and tornadoes. All these come as incarnations of God. He may come as the beautiful butter-stealing child Krishna—so tender, so attractive, so beautiful and so adorable— or He may also come as the terrific tooth-and-claw Narasimha. Hence, we should not expect Him to manifest Himself only in the manner we like. The manifestation of God is with an ultimate purpose. It is not with an individual, motivated, localised purpose. God does not descend for your sake or my sake, or for this country's sake or that country's sake. There is no such thing as 'mine' and 'his' for God. The total intention of creation, taken in its completeness, is the intention of God. He wants the health and the harmony of the entire creation in the same way as we want the health and the perfection of the entire body.

40. Just as we are one person, the whole universe is also one person.

It is the intention of God to see that His creation is in a state of harmony and well being. I ask you to remember that the universe is made in the same way as our bodies are made, so the universe works in the same way as our bodies work. As the anatomical and physiological functions protect this body in a requisite manner, there is a cosmic anatomy and physiology in the light of which the balance in the cosmos is maintained. For the sake of this there is the *avatara*, which is the coming of God for the sake of protecting dharma—that is, to establish the power of unity against the destroying and disturbing elements that go out of the centre. Whenever we feel some pain in the body, even in a finger or a toe, it means the whole body is sick, and immediately the healing forces start working. In order to illustrate the similarity of the cosmic structure and the human structure, the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Bhagavadgita tell us that the universe is one person. Just as we are one person, the whole universe is also one person. He is called Mahapurusha, Supreme Purusha, Purushottama. How many people are there in this world? There is only one person. Your head and my head, your eyes and my eyes, your legs and my legs are actually His heads and His eyes, through which He is speaking and working. But the ego of the individual, which is a part thereof, asserts its individuality and cuts itself off from the healing forces that come from the cosmos.



41. There is no such thing as private action in this universe.

God never breaks His promise. We may break our promises, but not God. Once God decides, it is decided forever. Like an eternally conscious invigilator, God-consciousness operates in this cosmos. God knows what we are speaking, what we are thinking, what we are feeling, what we are doing. Even the movement of a mouse in a corner of a house is known to that Centre of the cosmos. There is no such thing as private action in this universe. It has been beautifully said that we cannot touch a flower in the garden without disturbing the stars in heaven. Such is the organic connection. There seems to be a vast distance between the stars and the little flower in our garden, but the connection is such that the stars will know that a flower is being interfered with. There is no such thing in this world as individual, private activity. In the same way, there is no such thing as individual activity in our body. Whether we see with the eyes or hear with the ears, speak with the tongue or walk with the feet, etc., it is not individual action taking place. It is one total action manifesting itself through the different limbs. Similarly, all this world activity, the great mystery of mankind—the coming and going of things, the destroying of empires and the rising of empires, and so on—all the drama that is being played in the form of this creation is a single action taking place. The whole world is doing only one thing; it does not do many things. In the same way, our physical personality does one thing in the form of seeing, hearing, touching, digesting, speaking, walking, etc.



42. Karma is the peculiar automatic reaction.

There is no such thing as karma sitting outside on a tree. It is not a thing whose existence we can visualise somewhere. Just as we consider diseases to be a peculiar maladjustment of the physical functioning of the body rather than a thing that is sitting outside the body and existing separately, so also the karma is not sitting outside, waiting to harass us. Karma is the peculiar automatic reaction set up by the cosmic forces in proportion to the action performed by an individual. The reaction will be exactly in proportion to the action that we perform. The world is supposed to be something like a mirror through which we see our own face. We see our contour in our relationships with the world. If we smile at the world, the world smiles at us; if we get angry with the world, it gets angry with us; and if we denounce it, it will denounce us also. It will treat us in the same way as our body treats us. We cannot know how the body acts and reacts in regard to our own individual existence. The body is not outside the soul. It is inseparably acting on our consciousness, which is our individual soul. Automatic action takes place through the body, and that experience of an automatic reaction set up by the body is the pleasure or the pain that we speak of. In a similar manner, there is a spontaneous action that is taking place in the cosmos when any activity, any action, takes place anywhere. The reaction is not created by somebody, such as God in heaven. God does not sit there and say, "So-and-so is doing something. I shall react in this manner." It is an automatic action of the cosmos. There is no third person who pushes the button.

43. Actually, the physical movements are not action.

There is an inveterate habit of the sense organs to compel us to feel that the world is totally outside, and God is very far away. Even the most learned in scriptures cannot escape this difficulty of suddenly feeling that the world is outside and God is away, and is not as near as their skin. This erroneous apprehension of the relation of oneself with the world and God is the cause of the reaction set up by what reality is in the form of the world or God, and this error itself is a karma. The wrong apprehension of our relation to the world and to God is the karma that we perform. Our consciousness is our action. Actually, the physical movements are not action. How we modulate our consciousness, how we direct our thoughts, and how we feel things around us—this is the action that we are performing day in and day out. Every moment we feel something, and think something, and understand something. This psychological activity perpetually taking place inside is the perpetual action in which we are engaged, and this is also the reason for the perpetual reaction that is being set up. Karma is supposed to get accumulated in our psyche. And if this impact goes on continuing again and again—if we persist in wrong thinking, wrong feeling, and wrong understanding—the cosmos persists in giving us a blow again and again, in the same way that if we persist in having a wrong diet and living a wrong life, nature will persist in tormenting us with varieties of illnesses.



44. Such a person is bound by karma.

Karmas loosen their grip upon the individual who does not act entirely according to the preponderance of the demands of the sense organs, but acts in the spirit of a *yajna*. The person who is totally detached, and free from attachments, and established in the wisdom of life, and who performs action as a sacrifice — for him every action melts as ice before the sun. No action will produce a reaction in the case of a person who acts as if in a *yajna*, or a sacrifice—i.e., as a participation in the cosmic purposes and not as an individual actor for the purpose of reaping an ulterior fruit. Expecting a fruit is a special characteristic of selfish action, and there is no expectation of fruit in an unselfish action. It is work for work's sake, duty for duty's sake, as they say. The moment there is an intention in the mind to reap a consequence, or a fruit, tomorrow or the day after or in the future, as the result of karma, or action, done today, that person is actually thinking in terms of the time process because the fruit of an action will accrue only after some time. The expectation of the fruit of an action, therefore, is tantamount to involvement in the process of time, and time is equal to death; and such a person is bound by karma. But one who performs actions as a *yajna*, as a duty, does not expect any fruit. Ulterior motive is totally absent in the case of unselfish action.



45. We treat the world and God as foreigners.

An individual must have performed great *punya*, great merit in the previous birth or in several births, to be able to appreciate this great truth of the identity of ourselves with the atmosphere in which we are stationed. Therefore, unselfish action is itself a fruit thereof. If we become healthy, do we ask what we get if we become healthy? Health itself is the fruit thereof. Similarly, unselfishness is nothing but a healthy relationship that we maintain with the world, and perhaps with God. And what we call selfish action is an unhealthy relationship that we maintain with the world and with God—an alien relationship, as it were. We treat the world and God as foreigners, as if we have no connection with them. If that is the case, they will also treat us as foreigners. This is a tit-for-tat action that nature does unto us. But we can be free from this predicament of getting kicks from nature and from God if our actions are motivated by a consciousness that we are an agent, an instrument, a medium of action of cosmic powers, and that we do not do anything. Shakespeare wrote all the plays with his pen, but we cannot say the pen wrote the plays. Though it is true that the pen actually wrote the plays, we do not say that the pen wrote them; we say that Shakespeare wrote the plays. This is the manner in which we have to understand our position in this world. We are like a fountain pen in the hand of God, an instrument in His hand. We are a tool, as it were: *nimitta matra*.



46. Sat becomes *chit*.

Knowledge means identity of consciousness with being. Even if a professor knows much about how the stars are formed, how the sun moves, how the solar system works, he cannot be said to have a true knowledge of these things, because true knowledge is identical with the being thereof. Having true knowledge of the sun would mean becoming the sun itself, and to know the stars would be to become the stars themselves. As no professor of knowledge has that acquisition of insight by which he can become one with that which he teaches, all professorial and academic learning keeps us away from the object of true knowledge. Here the knowledge that is referred to in the Bhagavad gita, wherein all actions are supposed to melt down, is not the ordinary learning of any kind of academician. It is not *panditya*, or scholarship, but it is the very being of the object getting identified with the knowledge of the object. *Sat* becomes *chit*. Existence becomes Awareness. Knowledge is identified with the being of the very object that we know. It is this kind of knowledge that is spoken of as a highly exalted achievement, wherein all actions melt and cease forever. All material offerings are inferior in comparison to the greatest of offerings of one's own consciousness into the very object of consciousness. *Jnana yajna* is higher than *dravya yajna* or any kind of *yajna* involving objects which are material in their nature. As a blazing fire reduces firewood into ashes, all karmas are reduced to ashes by this blazing fire of knowledge.



47. Intense activity is like no activity.

Intense motion sometimes looks like no motion. If we see an electric fan moving at high speed, it looks as if it is not moving at all. We do not see any motion, though it is at the greatest speed. If we put a finger into the fan to see whether or not it is moving, we will know the answer. Otherwise, from a distance it looks as if it is at a standstill. Hence, intense activity is like no activity; and so-called activity has its visible form when individuals are the medium of movement. The smaller, grosser and more limited the individual, the more visible is the action and the more limited is its effect. But the larger the dimension of the individuality from where the action is produced and proceeds, the less is the reaction, so that when the dimension of the individual reaches the cosmic level, action becomes no action. In the levels which are less than the ultimate cosmic level, there is movement, as it were, on account of a type of individuality maintained by everything that is at a level lower than the cosmic level. Therefore, we feel that something is happening, and something is moving, and somebody is doing something, on account of the limitedness of the personality that is supposed to be the agent of action. But if the agent of action is unlimited, there is unlimited action—and unlimited action is no action.



48. The highest knowledge is the highest action.

To have everything is to want nothing. All desires melt in the state where we have all things. *Ekam apy asthithah samyag ubhayor vindate phalam*: If we are established in the highest form of activity, we are also, at the same time, established in the highest form of knowledge. There were great sages in India. Bhagavan Sri Krishna was one, and there were many others such as Vasishtha, Vyasa, Suka Maharishi, Jada Bharata, Vamadeva, and Dattatreya. They were all established in the highest knowledge of the Universal Reality and yet looked like ordinary individuals doing nothing at all—though in fact, everything was done by them. A tremendous velocity is assumed by the personality of the person established in knowledge, and so the one who is established in the highest knowledge may appear to be doing nothing at all. Once somebody went to Ramana Maharishi and asked, “Why are you not doing some good work for people, instead of sitting here?” Ramana Maharshi replied, “How do you know that I am not working? The highest knowledge is the highest action; therefore, those who are established in the highest knowledge may appear to be doing nothing while they are engaged in the highest action.”



49. The greater is our insight into things, the greater is our power to renounce them.

The renunciation of the world implies a mastery over the world. A mastery over the world implies total desirelessness for anything in the world. Can we imagine what renunciation, *sannyasa* means? He has not abandoned anything that is real. The *sannyasin* has abandoned only the wrong notion that he had earlier entertained in respect of the world outside. Nobody can renounce the world unless he has renounced himself first, because we are inseparably connected with the structure of the world. It is not possible to renounce the world unless there is equally a great knowledge or insight. The greater is our insight into things, the greater is our power to renounce them. If we have an attraction to things, they will control us rather than us controlling them. Hence, *sannyasa* is, on the one hand, the process of renunciation of attachment to things that are apparently looking outside the consciousness; and, on the other hand, it means establishment in great knowledge—the highest kind of knowledge. If we are established in this kind of yoga where *jnana* is identical with action—*sannyasa*, or renunciation, is the same as activity—to be in the world is the same as being in God Himself, and we see no distinction between God and His creation. We see the world as God Himself would see the universe. How does God see the world? At that time, we will visualise the universe as the Creator Himself visualises it. Therefore, we have attained Brahman.



50. The defects of the human being are not to be attributed to God.

All processes in this universe—evolution, involution, activity of any kind—are said to be taking place on account of a peculiar propensity in the *gunas* of *prakriti*. Therefore, the Supreme Lord is not supposed to be directly responsible for either what we call creation or destruction, or for any kind of activity taking place. His participation in creation is secondary, just as the sun, the solar light, is responsible for everything—life and death in this world—and yet the sun is not directly connected. This is a very interesting verse in the Bhagavadgita: *na kartrtvam na karmani lokasya srijati prabhuh* (5.14). The Supreme Being, the Lord, does not directly bring about the relation of cause and effect, in the same way as the sun does not directly interfere with the activities of the world. Agency in action is *kartrva*. Action is karma. Neither agency in action nor the action itself are something that is created directly by God. That is to say, the defects of the human being are not to be attributed to God. Otherwise, the Supreme Reality, being inclusive of all the individuals in the universe, the total, would be a mass of ignorance, full of distractions. The total of all mankind would be nothing but a heap of distraction and incapacity to perceive correctly.



51. God is responsible for everything, and yet He is responsible for nothing.

Transcendent is God, though He is also immanent. Water pervades every fibre of a cloth that is dipped in it. When a cloth is dipped in a bucket of water, every fibre becomes wet. That is, the water pervades the whole cloth; it is immanent in the cloth. The water is almost inseparable from the cloth, because when we touch the cloth we can see the wetness and the dripping of water; yet, the water is not the cloth. There is no connection between the cloth and the water. The pervasion of God through the universe, through every little thing in the world, even the littlest atom, does not mean that God has involved Himself in the defects of life, the limitations of things, the locations of bodies, the ignorance characterising individuals. These are not part and parcel of the Supreme Being. The transcendence that is the real nature of God frees Him from every kind of defect that is otherwise seen in the effects which He pervades and in which He is immanent. That is why it is said here that agency in action—the consciousness of one's own individuality being responsible for work—is not created by God. It is due to the defect of the ego that one feels that one is doing some action. The action itself is a process that is engendered by the movement of the *gunas* of *prakriti* and, therefore, that also does not come from God. He is not responsible for anything whatsoever. God is responsible for everything, and yet He is responsible for nothing.



52. Neither does He take anything, nor does He give us anything.

The fruit of action that accrues through actions performed with a motive for fruit, this also is not done by God Himself. He is not thinking of giving us something. Neither does He take anything, nor does He give us anything. An automatic action takes place on account of the very structural pattern of the universe. Whether we go to heaven or to hell or we are reborn, we cannot say that God is thinking that we should be thrown somewhere or that we should be made to take rebirth. It is nothing of the kind. The divisions, the mutations, the limitations and the spatio-temporal conditioning which are the characteristics of the world cannot be attributed to God. In a sense, we may say there is nothing in the world which can be found in God; but in another sense, everything can be found in God because the values that we see in this world arise from a transcendence which is invisible to the eyes and uncognisable to the mind. It is like the analogy of the snake and the rope. The snake is not the rope and, therefore, we cannot say that the rope has become the snake; and yet, the snake would not be there if the rope was not there. The rope is responsible for the snake, yet the rope is not responsible for the snake. Yet without the rope, the snake would not have appeared in it. Likewise, God is not responsible for anything that is happening in the world, yet nothing can happen in the world without God's existence.



53. Is nobody punished for their sins?

God does not take our sin or our merit, because merits and sins are meaningful only in individualised existence where consciousness works through the body and sense organs; therefore, sin and merit cannot be attributed to consciousness that is not working through the sense organs and the individual apparatus of the mind. Universal Existence does not think through the mind and does not perceive through the sense organs. Hence, the characteristics which are of the mind and the senses cannot be attributed to God. Therefore, what happens to our meritorious karmas and our sins, and so on? Is nobody punished for their sins? People are punished by their sins. The sin itself punishes us; somebody else, like a judge sitting in the court, does not punish us for our sins. A sin is a peculiar dislocated, maladjusted situation that an individual occupies in this cosmos; this maladjustment itself is the sin. The sin itself punishes us, and there is nobody else from outside to strike a rod on our heads. That is, a self-complete organism occupies a self-complete situation in itself, and its health and disease depend entirely upon the manner in which the components of the organism work. There is no third reality, no extra-physical reality coming and interfering with the wrong actions or the right actions of a person. This is why it is said that the actions performed in the highest state of yoga cannot be called either merit or demerit.



54. The worst sin is to have consciousness lodged in the body itself.

Karmas are either black or white. But karmas are neither black nor white for the yogi. The blackness or the whiteness corresponds to the wrongness or the rightness of perception. What we call sin is nothing but the solidification, the condensation of wrong actions continuing for a long time; and *punya*, or merit, is the condensation of good actions that we have performed. To repeat once again what I said, a good action is that tendency in our consciousness which moves in the direction of larger and larger dimensions of itself, and a sin is a contraction of consciousness which moves more and more in the direction of the physical body; and the worst sin is to have consciousness lodged in the body itself, and think that one is only the body. Due to a cosmic ignorance, all individuals suffer. Their suffering or their pleasures are not products emanating from God. The transcendence of God precludes all connections with the mutations of *prakriti*, though without Him *prakriti* cannot move: One can attain to this state of utter perfection free from the goodness or the badness of things, or the qualities of *prakriti*, by intense concentration on the transcendence which is God. God is untarnished because of there being no change, no mutation, no difference, no physicality, and no externality in God. Meditation is to be conducted by the consciousness of the seeker on a universal transcendence of its own self, freed from the clutches of whatever the world may appear to be.



1. OUR ACTIVITIES SHOULD BE SPIRITUAL IN THEIR NATURE.

Our daily activity, our professions, our occupations, whatever we do, is a preparation for the establishment of ourselves in That. It does not mean that our daily routine is contrary to God-realisation. The activities of people, the daily routine of anybody, should be so conducted and so refined and harmonised that it stands perfectly in order in respect of that Supreme Being, Who is perfect order. It does not mean that when we move to God, we move from wrong to right. It is a movement from the lesser truth to the higher truth. Therefore, those people whose Atman, the Self, is pre-eminently established in the Supreme Self find that all their daily routine also is so immensely affected by this union that the otherwise distracting and dividing form of human activity becomes a manifold emanation from the Self that is at the back of all activity, in the same way as rays emanate from the sun. The rays of the sun may be said to be the activities of the sun in some way; but this activity of the sun in the form of the emanation of rays is not independent of the existence of the sun. Therefore, the light and the radiance of the sun are also to be seen in the rays. The action of the sun is identical with the existence of the sun. Similarly, our activities should be spiritual in their nature; they should be completely conditioned by the nature of consciousness. Or, every work is nothing but a movement of the Self; consciousness is moving in the form of activity. Thus, activity is not any more a bondage. It is our own Self that is moving in the direction of itself, partially inwardly, partially externally, as waves are activities of the ocean; and yet they are not activities of the ocean, as the activity itself becomes one with the ocean. That is establishment of oneself in that Supreme Being.

2. THE UNIVERSAL BRAHMAN IS IN THE ATMAN OF EVERY INDIVIDUAL.

When we are totally detached from connection with the objects of sense, when the senses do not see any meaning in the objects outside and, therefore, do not pull the consciousness out in the direction of objects, when consciousness does not defeat itself through perception in terms of the sense organs, the energy of the person increases, and the Self realises itself, whereas the Self loses itself in the perception and contact of external objects. In all perceptions there is an element of losing consciousness. To identify the consciousness with one's own self by freeing it from entanglement in sensory perception is equivalent to establishment in Brahman itself. The Universal Brahman is in the Atman of every individual. Space is universal; but the same universal space, when we see the space only inside the vessel, may appear to be limited to a little vessel. The space inside the vessel is called pot ether—*ghatakash*. The pot ether looks very small because it is limited by the walls of the pot, and the bigger space—which is *mahakasa*—seems to be larger than the little space inside the pot. Thus, there appears to be a difference between the universal *akasha*, or the universal ether, and the individual ether that is in the pot—but really there is no such difference. The space has not been divided into two parts, inside and outside the pot. The same consciousness is within us and also outside us. Thus the withinness of ours, the Selfhood that we enjoy, the bliss that comes out of the detachment of consciousness from objects of sense, is the same as the bliss of Brahman—the Universal Reality emanating, rising up from our so-called little self. The Universal Reality rises up into action the moment the so-called little self in us withdraws itself from contact with things and does not concern itself with anything that is external.

3. THE JOY, THEREFORE, HAS COME FROM WITHIN US.

Any joy that comes through the contact of one thing with another thing cannot be regarded as real joy. Even at the time of the enjoyment of a sense object we are under an illusion, and it is not a real joy that we are experiencing. Why do we feel happy when we come in contact with a mango or a cup of delicious *kheer* or any pleasant object? The reason is that when the mind is not in contact with any sense object, it is restless in itself, and it goes out in search of its own food in the form of objects. The mind that is not in contact with objects moves out in search of those objects which it finds pleasant to contact. When the mind moves in that way, the consciousness of the Atman, or the Self, also moves together with the mind—just as electricity flows through a wire. Wherever the wire is, there is also electricity. Wherever the mind is, the Atman also goes, as it were, due to the attachment between the mind and consciousness that is caused by karma; and when the contact takes place with the consciousness, the mind feels that there is no further necessity to move outside in search of an object, because the object has already come into possession. The mind ceases to move outside, and comes in contact with the Self inside. Immediately there is a joy. The joy, therefore, has come from within us. It has not come from the object, yet foolishly we think that the object is painted with bliss and we are the abodes of sorrow, which is not true. The reverse is the case. All those who run after the pleasures of sense will reap sorrow one day or the other, for anything that has a beginning will also have an end—*adyantavantah*. That which has a beginning will also have an end because our pleasures, which are contact born, begin with the contact itself. Therefore, they shall end when the contact ceases.

4. YOGA ASANAS ARE BETTER THAN ORDINARY PHYSICAL EXERCISE.

Yoga asanas are better than ordinary physical exercise because when we run while playing sports we perspire, energy goes out, we feel tired and breathe heavily, exhausting ourselves; but in yoga asana there is a calm and quiet bending of the *prana* inside. Even if we do the asanas for a long time, we do not feel exhausted, we do not perspire, and our breath does not heave as it does when we run or jump. It is an internalisation process taking place in the yoga asana. The externalisation of *prana* takes place in ordinary games. Hence, yoga asanas are superior to the Western type of physical exercises. The *pranas* and *apanas*—the breathing that is inside as well as outside—should be equalised in such a way that they will be conducive to the concentration of the mind. The breath and the mind are connected to each other. As each cog in the mechanism of a clock is connected with the hands which show the time, there is a connection between the mind and the *prana*. The *prana* is like the hands of the clock. It can be seen, but the mind is inside and cannot be seen. It is said that the *prana* can be restrained in two ways, just as there are two ways to stop a clock from working. One way is to hold the hands still; then the clock stops, but there is still the pressure of the wheels inside to make the hands move. Similarly, merely holding the breath when there are still desires in the mind is not conducive to stopping the *prana*. Rather, it is highly deleterious. Thus, the *prana* can be controlled by restraining the mind by freeing it from desires, just as a clock can be stopped by stopping the inner mechanism; or the *prana* can be stopped externally by holding the breath.

5. THIS IS THE CHARACTERISTIC OF AN UNDISCIPLINED MIND.

Our psychological apparatus is not aligned properly; it is mostly disarranged. The non-alignment of the psyche consists of various functions—understanding, feeling, willing, etc.—and their not being in a state of psychological mutual collaboration splits the personality into fractions. Therefore, a person who is not properly integrated in his psyche behaves differently in different conditions, and one cannot know which mood a person will put on at what time because of the possibility of putting on different contours of behaviour. This is because of the fact that people generally live a fractional life; they never live a whole life. They are either emotionally moody or disturbed in some other way, or they are arrogant due to their understanding and their academic qualification or wealth or power, etc. Under different conditions they behave in different ways, the emphasis being laid on one or another aspect of the mind. This is the characteristic of an undisciplined mind, a mind that has been dissected into little pieces of behaviour and conduct due to a non-aligned personality, a disturbed personality, an undecided personality, a changing personality, an unsettled personality and, finally, an unhappy personality. This has to be gradually overcome by a process of integrating the so-called fractions of the mind into a *gestalt*, as it is called in modern psychology, so that all thinking becomes a total thinking. Therefore, it is not possible for an ordinary split personality to receive knowledge of higher realities that are super-individual. So it becomes necessary to prepare oneself for the reception of this knowledge through graduated training in psychological integration; and the highest integration is achieved through *dhyana*, or meditation.

6. EXTERNAL DISSOCIATION DOES NOT MEAN INTERNAL ILLUMINATION.

A Sannyasi is not necessarily a person who does not do any work and keeps quiet, nor is a Sannyasi a person who does not perform the rituals of a householder. External dissociation does not mean internal illumination. Yoga and Sannyasa are internally connected. Sannyasa and yoga finally mean one and the same thing in the sense that a person who has not totally withdrawn himself from attachments of every kind cannot unite himself with the cosmic spirit. The union that we attempt with the cosmic spirit is yoga, but this cannot be attempted unless there is a total detachment of the consciousness of the individual from involvement in external objects. Whatever is called Sannyasa is also called yoga, and whatever is yoga is also Sannyasa. A person who is united with the cosmic reality is automatically detached from every kind of sense contact; and conversely, a person whose consciousness is totally detached from contact with objects is also a yogi because he enters into a wider dimension of experience due to the withdrawal of consciousness from sense contact. A Sannyasin has another quality: he does not will that something has to be done. He has no volition in any particular direction. He does not decide that something should be 'like this', and he does not decide that it should not be 'like this'. He has no *sankalpa*. *Sankalpa* means a kind of desire-filled determination of the will. The Sannyasin, having withdrawn his self from contact with sense objects, cannot have a desire to decide matters in favour of certain things or against certain other things. A person who has not freed himself from this desire-filled willing in terms of achievements in the world—such a person who has not attained this freedom cannot become a yogi.

7. “BECAUSE YOU WANT NOTHING, YOU SHALL HAVE EVERYTHING.”

(An anecdote about Vidyaranya)

Vidyaranya, who wrote the Panchadasi and other works, was known as Madhava in his pre-Sannyasa days. He was a very learned person. His brother, called Sayana, wrote a commentary on all the four Vedas. They must have been geniuses. We cannot imagine such great wisdom. Madhava did Gayatri *purashcharana* for attaining *siddhi*, and a voice said, “You shall not have a vision of me in this life.” He got disgusted that after having done so much, nothing had come. He took Sannyasa. When he took Sannyasa, immediately the divinity appeared and asked, “Why are you doing so much *purashcharana*? What do you want from me?” To that Madhava said, “You said that you will not appear before me in this birth.” “But this is a second birth,” the voice said. “You have taken another birth. Therefore, I came.” “I want nothing now,” said Vidyaranya. “I was a poor man. As the householder Madhava, I would have certainly asked for wealth and riches, and anything that would make me prosperous. But I have taken to renunciation, the path of Sannyasa. Now I cannot ask for anything. So I am very sorry, great divinity. You have come too late, and now I cannot ask anything from you.” But the divinity said, “I cannot go without giving something. When I appear, I must give something before going.” “But I cannot ask for anything” said Vidyaranya. “You must ask for something” the divinity said. “But I want nothing.” said Vidyaranya. Then the divinity said, “Because you want nothing, you shall have everything,” and it vanished. And Vidyaranya became omniscient.

8. ACTUALLY, THERE IS NO SEPARATE GOD SITTING SOMEWHERE IN THE COSMOS.

The more we are attached to the objects of sense, the more are we inimical to our own Self. The lesser our desires and greater the capacity of our consciousness to establish itself in itself, the more are we friendly with our own Self. Actually, there is no separate God sitting somewhere in the cosmos. It is the largest dimension of our own Self that is called Brahman. The miniature of that Brahman is the Atman. That itself, expanding to the widest dimension, is Brahman. Hence, there is no God outside us. There is an immanence of that Universal Being in our own selves. Therefore, if our so-called self is inimical to the regulations of the highest realm, it is acting against the requirements of the highest Self, and there will be a reaction from the cosmic forces in the form of *karma phala*, or nemesis. This is the way in which God works if we disobey God's law. Thus, obedience to the law that is operating in the cosmos is the way in which we can accommodate the highest reality into our own self—which is to be a friend of the highest Self, and which is equal to being a friend of one's own self also. To be a friend of the highest Self is equal to being a friend of one's own self, because we are the highest Self. Otherwise, the lower self will take an upper hand, the instincts will take revenge, and the sense organs will set up a revolt; and in that case, we will become a friend of the lower self, which is the enemy of the higher Self—which is another way of saying that we are an enemy of our own Self.

**9. THE MORE WE ARE DEPENDENT ON THE INNER FORCES
THAT ARE COMMENSURATE WITH THE COSMIC FORCES,
THE MORE ARE WE FEARLESS.**

Yoga is the attempt at assuming a tremendous security of oneself in the world of cosmic rulers. In the Yoga Vasishtha, it is clearly mentioned that an ardent student of yoga who is sincerely attempting to achieve perfection will be guarded by the rulers of the cosmos. The divinities that superintend over the powers of nature will open their eyes and befriend us and, therefore, we need not be in a state of agony or insecurity. The more are we dependent on people outside, the more are we insecure. The more we are dependent on the inner forces that are commensurate with the cosmic forces, the more are we fearless. But many a time doubts arise in the mind, and these doubts cause a diminution of the level in the state of meditation. Then we may suddenly come down from the level in which we are protected by the cosmic forces, and we may feel disturbed, as if some tremendous trouble is going to take place. These fears come in a tremendously ferocious form, and are highly disturbing. It is impossible to describe what kind of fears can come upon us. These temptations and troubles—the devils attacking us from all sides—may be a phenomenon that everybody has to face one day or the other, because what one person has experienced may be the experience of everyone else also. Because there is only one road to God, whatever we see on the way has been seen by others, and future meditators will also see the same thing. Therefore, we must be fearless by establishing ourselves in ourselves and having confidence in ourselves.

10. THUS WE SHOULD BE SEATED FOR THIS HIGHEST FORM OF CONCENTRATION AND MEDITATION.

Completely restraining the sense organs from disturbing the energy of the body and the mind is called Brahmacharya. Brahmacharya does not mean a physical dissociation from contact with things. Physical dissociation is not Brahmacharya, because the mind will be brooding. What our body is doing is not actually our action. What the mind is doing is our action. Therefore, there should be a withdrawal of the desire to see through the eyes, and a withdrawal of the energy that makes the ears hear. There should also be a withdrawal of all the powers of the ten sense organs—the five organs of perception and the five organs of action. All these must be restrained. There must be no inclination to move at all. We are seated in stability. That condition is the filling of our entire personality with the total energy that we consist of, and no energy should leak out through any organ of sense. Then we become indomitably strong, physically as well as mentally, and we develop a sharp memory that will not forget things. United with our own Self, integrated in our psyche, fearless in our behaviour and vision of life, depending entirely on the grace of God for His mercy and His coming to us quickly, thus we should be seated for this highest form of concentration and meditation. We should do this practice continuously, every day. It may be for a few minutes in the beginning, and later on for half an hour, one hour, etc.; nevertheless, this practice should be carried on daily, continuously, and without remission. One who has restrained oneself perfectly attains a peace which is a reflection of Ultimate Bliss. Nirvana itself is reflected in our personality, and heaven throbs in our mind, as it were. We will automatically feel such bliss inside, and will not know from where that happiness comes.

11. THE CONCEPTUALISATION OF THE *ISHTA DEVATA* SHOULD BE AS A SPECIMEN OF GOD ALMIGHTY HIMSELF.

In meditation the choice of the *ishta devata* is very important. We should be clear that we have chosen the best, and there cannot be anything better than that. If we have not chosen the *ishta devata* properly, the mind says that there are other things which are also equally good, and so it runs here and there during concentration. We consider the *ishta devata* as an all-pervading essence concretised in one form, like the sun manifesting one ray. But, one ray is not all rays, and one form is not all forms. Nevertheless, through this one form we can reach all forms because the quality of the *ishta devata* is something like the quality of the rays of the sun, and one ray is equal to any other ray in its quality. We must foist all the characteristics of the best of things on our object of meditation. We must think that it is alive, and not dead. We should feel that the *ishta devata* is an ambassador of God Almighty, and that it has all the powers of the government which has brought it and employed it here, and we can speak to it. It is true that our *ishta devata* can speak to us. The lives of saints like Purandaradas, Tukaram, Ekanath, Namdev and such people have illustrated this before us—as Vitthala danced with the devotees. Though for us it is only a stone image, it broke into action. The image of Kali broke into action and became alive, as it were, to protect Jada Bharata when dacoits wanted to finish him off. Did not Narasimha come from a brick pillar? Therefore, the idea that our object is an image or a picture or that it is not going to bring us that which we expected should be removed from the mind. The conceptualisation of the *ishta devata* should be as a specimen of God Almighty Himself.

12. THE NECESSITY TO WORSHIP AN *ISHTA DEVATA*.

In the beginning, the *ishta devata* will look like somebody standing before us. Later on, in the advanced stage of meditation, we should be able to recognise that this particular god is present everywhere, as if the *ishta devata* is filling all space. The next stage of meditation may be an attempt on the part of our mind to feel the presence of the *ishta devata* as filling all space so that, as some devotees sing in their poetry, *jidhar dekhta hun, udhar tu hi tu*: “Wherever I look, I see only you, God.” It appears that Ravana saw Rama everywhere at the last moment; and at one moment in the war, Duryodhana saw Sri Krishna everywhere. This kind of expansion of the location of our *ishta devata* is an advanced stage of meditation. There is an even higher stage, where there is only the *ishta devata* everywhere, and there is nothing else. It is not many Krishnas or many Devis or many Narayanas that we are seeing. It is only one Narayana, just as when we do not see many waves but see only one ocean. This stage which I am describing is something like *savikalpa samadhi*, where we see the light everywhere—but we see the light. This is the penultimate stage of an experience. When we perceive the light as being everywhere, it is a great thing indeed. It is a great experience. It is the highest form of experience that we can imagine; but we still maintain an individuality of ourselves as a worshipper, an adorer, an onlooker, etc. When we enter into it, that stage becomes *nirvikalpa samadhi*, the highest union that one attains in meditation. So from the internality of the Atman, we conceived the universality of the very same Atman as being present in all individuals; and also we felt the necessity to worship an *ishta devata* through *mantra japa*, the glorification that we are singing by these mantras, and *nama japa*. .

13. THERE IS NOTHING IN THE WORLD WHICH CANNOT SPEAK.

Internal meditation in the light of the Atman being within us may give way to a larger conceptualisation of the Atman being everywhere. This is the philosophical, Vedantic method of meditation. In the devotional, *bhakti* method, the *ishta devata* concept is prescribed; and there also, the *ishta devata* is a transcendent reality, and not merely an externally existing object. The god who is the *ishta devata* is not an outside something; it is that which is pervading all things, including ourselves. Therefore, it is able to give us light; and it can also receive light and speak to us. There is nothing in the world which cannot speak. Even a stone, even a leaf in the tree, has a Selfhood of itself; and when our self pervades all things, things assume their Selfhood in themselves, and they react by way of a conscious response. Even the trees responded to the call of Vyasa when he summoned Suka, his son. "Oh my son, where are you?" "I am here, my dear father," was the response that came from every leaf of every tree. That means Suka was not in one particular place. Therefore, the *ishta devata* is our God, and becomes the universally inclusive reality which finally inundates us also. All creation can be explained in terms of this Universal Reality. It is infinite happiness. All other happiness in this world is relative. Even the heaviest sorrow cannot shake us from that happiness. Even if the earth cracks and the sun falls on our head, even if such a thing can be imagined, we will not be shaken at that time, because of our entry into the very substance of all things. That is called yoga which is the separation of consciousness from all sources of pain. We must definitely attain it, and unite ourselves with it by not being despondent, and by total union with the Self, which is the ultimate yoga.

14. NAMA AND RUPA—NAME AND FORM—CANNOT BE ATTRIBUTED TO GOD.

One who is united in yoga beholds the realities of things as the location of all beings in God and the location of God in all beings. Equanimously he sees the same substance in the variety that is this world. Everything in the world is made up of five constituents: *asti*, *bhati*, *priya*, *nama*, *rupa*. *Asti* means existence; *bhati* means consciousness; *priya* means bliss, joy; *nama* means name; *rupa* means form. Every object in this world has a name and a form. It exists, it has a self-consciousness, and it enjoys itself. The *nama* and the *rupa*, or the name and form complex of a particular object, is a characteristic of its location in space and time. If the object is relieved of its involvement in the space-time complex, it will not appear as something having a name or a form. But *nama-rupa prapancha*, or the world of names and forms, is supposed to be relative and not absolute. Therefore, *nama and rupa*—name and form—cannot be attributed to God, because God is absolute. Name and form are relative to the circumstance of objects in the world in terms of space and time. But *asti-bhati-priya*—Existence-Consciousness-Bliss, known also as *sat-chit-ananda*—are the essences which constitute the basis of all things, and are permanent. An eternity and a temporality characterise all things in the world. The eternity in things is in the form of Existence-Consciousness-Bliss, *sat-chit-ananda*. The temporality or perishability of objects is in their name and form. Name and form are rejected by the yogi, and he sees the essence. He sees the gold in all ornaments. Whatever be the shape of the ornament, he sees one substance there, which is the shining gold.

**15. IF THAT WERE NOT THE CASE, THERE WOULD BE NO
POSSIBILITY OF EVOLUTION.**

This is a very difficult thing, to look at all things as we look at ourselves. The difficulty in practising this doctrine of seeing everything as one would look upon oneself arises on account of the egoism of the individual. We must be in a position to sympathise with the circumstances of all people and things. An insect loves itself as much as an elephant loves itself. It crawls, wriggles, runs or flies if somebody tries to catch it and kill it. Every living being has a love for itself, and the largeness or the smallness of the body is immaterial here. Though the body of an elephant is larger than the body of an ant, the selfhood of the ant is not in any way smaller than the selfhood of the elephant. The ant feels hunger as intensely as the elephant feels hunger. The physical dimension of the body is not in any way a deterrent to feeling pain and pleasure, whatever be the circumstance and the species into which one is born. We love all things as we love ourselves. Even the trees and the stones will respond to our call. There are no non-living or dead elements in this world. The various levels of creation such as matter, vegetable, plant, animal, human, etc., are only various stages of the expression of consciousness, but no level is totally without consciousness. It is present even in a stone. If that were not the case, there would be no possibility of evolution. Inasmuch as we are able to locate our Self as the deepest reality of all things, we will be able to locate the same reality even in a stone. Everything in the world will shine like the light of the sun, and sparks of flame, as it were, will be seen jetting forth from every atom in the cosmos. If we see solar light emerging from every atom and every electron, only then does it become possible for us to consider outside things as beloved, as valuable as our own self.

16. OUR YOGA PRACTICE WILL NOT BE FUTILE OR A WASTE.

“Suppose death overtakes me before the attainment of the goal of yoga, notwithstanding the fact that I have been practising yoga. What will happen to me? Is it going to be a waste of effort? Is it true that when death takes place, everything is destroyed? Will not the soul perish into shreds of unfulfilled aims like a cloud rent apart? What good is there in practising yoga when death is at the elbow and it can kill me at any moment?” To this, a great consoling reply comes from the great Lord. There is no perishing of effort. The body may be discarded, but the force that is generated by our concentration, by our practice of yoga, will come with us because in death the body perishes but the mind does not perish. What takes rebirth is the mind. The desire-filled mind discards this body because it cannot have any more experience through this body. As we discard an old shirt because it is worn out, and put on a new shirt, the mind that is to fulfil further desires in some form or the other discards the old shirt of this body and puts on a new shirt in the form of a new body. Therefore, the mind does not die in death. It is only the body that goes. Hence, because all effort in yoga is a mental effort, a conscious operation, our yoga practice will not be futile or a waste because the mind will take with it all its assets in the form of the great work that it has done in meditation. The power of meditation which is impregnated into the very structure of the mind will be carried with it even if we take another birth. So, we should not be afraid that if we die in the midst of the practice of yoga there will be a loss of effort. No such thing will take place. Because of the power of our practice, we may be born in a highly conducive atmosphere in which there is no kind of disturbance to us.

17. THE GURU IS A FORCE.

Whether it is a Guru or a god, we must not consider a Guru or a god as some outside person. The Guru is above us, and not outside us, in the same way as the teacher is above the student, though he looks as if he is sitting outside on a chair. The outsideness of the teacher does not make him an external object to the student. He transcends the student in his comprehension of the teaching capacity and his knowledge. We have to be able to understand what *transcendence* means. The teacher's knowledge includes whatever the student has and, therefore, he is above the student, even though he looks like an outside object sitting in front of the student. This also applies to the Guru. The Guru is not an object whom we can photograph and keep a picture of. The Guru is a force; and in that sense, we may say the Guru never dies. As God cannot die, the Guru also cannot die. It is a generated power which includes us, is above us and, therefore, it is not a physical individual. The Guru is a force. We know that the physical body of the Guru will perish one day, since it is as much a component of physiology and anatomy as anybody else's and, therefore, there is nothing especially valuable or divine in the physical body of the Guru. The divinity that is the Guru is in the essence that is inside, which is emanating a graceful energy around us as an aura; and that does not die. The Guru that we worship, in spite of our imagining that it is a physical body in front of us, is actually a force. It is a force which we could not detect with our physical eyes, but which evoked a respect from us. So is the case with a Guru, and with God Himself. The Guru initiates us into a god whom we can conceive as something outside, and our dear god is standing in front of us as Lord Krishna, as Sri Rama, or Devi, or Jesus, as the case may be.

18. WHATEVER YOU SEE IN THIS UNIVERSE IS JUST THESE EIGHT PRINCIPLES OPERATING WITH MY HELP.

“My *prakriti*, the material out of which I have created this cosmos, can be classified under eight principles.” Earth, water, fire, air, and ether are five well-known physical elements; they are known as *bhumir apo'nalo vayuh kham*. These are the gross manifestations of the subtle substances behind them, which are known as *tanmatras: sabda, sparsa, rupa, rasa and gandha*. These five elements are the principal building bricks of the cosmos. Then there is the mind, which is the subtle, rarefied matter which reflects consciousness through it as a mirror reflects one's face. Then there is *buddhi* which understands, decides, and logically concludes, and *ahamkara* which is self-conscious. So earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intellect and egoism are the eight categories out of which the whole cosmos has been manufactured, as it were, by God. “What I have mentioned to you up to this time as the eightfold constituents of the cosmos are lower categories; but there is something which is higher—through which, by which, I sustain the cosmos.” “I become the cosmic *jiva*. I, as the *jiva tattva* of the cosmos, the vitality of the cosmos, keep all these elements in unison so that you see a universe rather than chaos.” The Atman enters this body and gives it life through the *karana sarira, sukshma sarira*, etc. In the same way, the cosmos becomes a living organic entity, beautiful to look at and meaningful in every way, when the Universal Consciousness enters into it. Hence, that higher principle is a greater *prakriti* than the eight lower ones mentioned earlier. “Whatever you touch, whatever you feel, whatever you see in this universe is just these eight principles operating with My help, as I invisibly animate the whole cosmos” says the Lord.

19. BRAHMAN IS TOTALLY INVISIBLE

AS IS THE CLOTH BEHIND THE PAINTING.

In the Panchadasi and other Vedantic scriptures, much is told to us about the way in which Brahman becomes Ishvara, Ishvara becomes Hiranyagarbha, Hiranyagarbha becomes Virat. The illustration given in the Sixth Chapter of the Panchadasi is that *Brahman is like a clean cloth. Ishvara is like the very same cloth stiffened with starch.* The painter cannot paint directly on the cloth. The cloth must first be stiffened. Starch is applied to the cloth—that is, the cloth assumes a concretised form, as it were. It is not the pure cloth that it was, but the cloth is still there as the base. Without the cloth, there cannot be the starchiness; but without the starch, the cloth cannot be a good background for any painting. The painting on the canvas is very attractive indeed, but we never think of the background on which the painting has been made. It gradually stiffens itself into a will to create, just as the cloth is stiffened by the application of starch. That stiffened form, which is the will of Brahman, as they call it, is Ishvara-tattva. After the cloth is stiffened with starch, he draws an outline of the picture that he will paint. *This outline of the universe which is not yet fully manifest is Hiranyagarbha.* We have a faint idea as to what will be the character of the universe that is going to be created, even as by seeing the pencil drawing, we can know what the painter is actually going to paint. *The full painting is the Virat.* This is the Virat—the whole cosmos, looking so beautiful, the finest and the most complete manifestation of that which was only an outline in Hiranyagarbha, and which was only the will to create in Ishvara, with Brahman as the background. *Brahman is totally invisible as is the cloth behind the painting,* but it is very, very substantial; and without it, nothing can be.

**20. THERE WAS NO VEDA IN THE KRITA YUGA;
PRANAVA WAS THE VEDA IN THE KRITA YUGA.**

Pranava is Omkara, Om. In the Manusmriti it is said that Brahma expanded the three letters A, U and M that constitute Omkara into the three metres of the Gayatri mantra. The three feet of the Gayatri mantra are the expanded forms of the three components of Omkara—A, U, M. The three sections of the Purusha Sukta of the Veda are further expansions of the three feet of the Gayatri mantra. The three Vedas—Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda—are further expansions of the three sections of the Purusha Sukta. If we extract the essence of the three Vedas, we will get the Purusha Sukta. If we extract the essence of the Purusha Sukta, we will get the Gayatri mantra. If we extract the meaning of the Gayatri mantra, we will get *pranava*, which is the seed. There was no Veda in the Krita Yuga; *pranava* was the Veda in the Krita Yuga. The Veda did not manifest itself in its present form in the Treta Yuga also, because the present form of the Vedas is nothing but the classifications made by Veda Vyasa Krishna Dvaipayana, who was a contemporary of Bhagavan Sri Krishna in the Dvapara Yuga. Perhaps in the earlier cycles of creation, the exposition of the great Truth in words or in detailed forms of expression was not felt necessary. Therefore, Sri Krishna says, “Essentially I am the Omkara—the supreme vibration which gradually became concretised into the visible universe.”

21. THRUSTING FOOD INTO A CORPSE WILL NOT GIVE IT ENERGY.

Sri Krishna says, “Essentially I am the Omkara—the supreme vibration which gradually became concretised into the visible universe.” That pure vibration is the unimaginable continuum, which is originally nothing but motion and force. Even according to modern science, there is only motion and force—vibration, as it were—trying to get condensed into tangible substances finer than even atoms, which gradually descend into more grosser forms of molecules, cells, organisms, and the huge cosmos of physical elements. “The origin of all things I am, and the exposition of it is here in the form of *pranava*. The supreme vibration that caused the whole cosmos is Me; and the vibration emanated from My will, the central will of Ishvara.” The reverberation of sound that is caused by space when we make any sound anywhere is also caused by the universal existence of Ishvara in space itself. Otherwise, there would not be a reverberation of sound; it would be only inside our ears. The heroism, the strength, the virility, the energy that people feel in themselves, that also comes from God. It does not come merely from the food that we eat, because thrusting food into a corpse will not give it energy. The vitality that is necessary for the body to digest food and make it its own comes from Vaisvanara Agni, which is the universal fire. “I digest your fourfold food working as the cosmic fire, Vaisvanara Agni, in the stomach.”

22. THE SUN'S LIGHT IS LIKE DARKNESS BEFORE THAT SUPREME RADIANCE.

The energy content in the cosmos, the energy quantum in any person, in anything whatsoever—even the energy of the elephant or the lion—is a manifestation of that immaculate, immeasurable energy, the *shakti* of Brahman. The fragrance of the flower and the beautiful scent from things in the world are components of the earth. The space principle, *akasha*, has only one quality: the production and reverberation of sound. Air has two qualities: in the form of wind it can make sound, and also it can be felt by us. Space cannot be felt. We can only see it as an expanse that is the cause and the reverberation of sound. Fire not only makes sound and we can feel it, but it also has colour, which air does not have. So as we come down, the number of qualities increases by one. Thus, there is only sound in space; there is sound and touch in air; there is sound, touch, and colour in fire; there is sound, touch, colour, and taste in water; and there is sound, touch, colour, taste and smell in earth. “The smell which is in anything that is formed of earth, even in the highest rarefied form in a flower—it is My presence in it that gives life to things in the form of the fragrance.” “The brilliance of the sun is My brilliance.” The sun’s light is borrowed light. In that Supreme Light of lights, the sun does not shine. The sun’s light is like darkness before that Supreme Radiance. Of all the light that we can think of, we can think of only sunlight as the greatest. They say that there are stars which are bigger than the sun, more brilliant than the sun, towards which the entire galaxy is moving. All these things are unthinkable. But the spiritual Light is not merely an expansion in quantum; it is also qualitatively more intense. We are not fit even to think what it is.

**23. WE HAVE EXISTENCE, WE HAVE CONSCIOUSNESS,
BUT WE ARE NOT HAPPY PEOPLE.**

The qualities of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* are the activities of *prakriti*—which correspond to light or radiance, desire, and torpidity of nature—and are various degrees of the manifestation of the Supreme Absolute. For instance, the Absolute exists in stone. Stone exists. It is. This is-ness, or the existence of stone, is due to the existence of something behind it—the be-ness, as we call it. Stone exists, but it cannot think. There is no consciousness in it. It cannot even know that it exists. The existence aspect of the Absolute is manifest in inanimate things like stone. The life principle, which is vitality, is manifest in plants and trees, which breathe and feel hunger and thirst. The consciousness aspect in a translucent—not transparent—form manifests itself in animals in the form of instinct; and in a more perspicuous way, consciousness, *chit*, manifests itself in the intelligence of the human being. Thus, in the process of evolution, existence gradually becomes consciousness. But bliss is not fully manifest in the human individual. We have existence, we have consciousness, but we are not happy people. That is because our consciousness is mixed with a little of *rajas* and *tamas*. We are over-active in an externalised sense, taking the world as a total reality that is external to us. This causes distraction of the mind and senses to such an extent that the integral bliss of the Absolute cannot manifest itself in us. Thus the human being, though called ‘the image of God’, is only an image to some extent in the existence and the consciousness aspects. The consciousness in the human being is distracted, so full insight is not available, and the bliss is completely obliterated. The bliss aspect of the Absolute is manifest in some way in the deep sleep state, where the mind and the sense organs do not operate.

24. AT THE FEET OF THE ALMIGHTY, *MAYA* VANISHES.

LIKE MIST BEFORE THE SUN.

(Illustration of The action of a fishing net.)

Divine is this power of delusion which we generally call *maya*. It is nothing but the operation of the three *gunas*. The *trigunas* are the so-called *maya*. The power of the action of the *gunas* of *prakriti*—*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*—blinds our vision completely. The *gunas* blind us completely, and it is not easy for anyone to overcome them. We cannot overcome them because our very personality is constituted of the three *gunas*. Who are we to overcome them? The body, the mind and the sense organs, which are our property and our asset and our very existence, so-called, as we are constituted of them—how can we overcome them unless there is a power that is above what we are constituted of? “You cannot overcome these three *gunas* until you resort to Me.” This point can be illustrated by the action of a fishing net. The fisherman throws the net far away from him, and fish which are far away are caught by net; but those fish near the feet of the fisherman are not caught. The nearer is the fish to the feet of the fisherman, the less is the chance of it being caught. The farther it is, the greater the chance of it being caught. So, do not go away from God. Catch hold of His feet. Once we take resort at the feet of the Almighty, *maya* vanishes like mist before the sun. But if we try to overcome these three *gunas* with our own personal effort minus the grace of the Almighty, it will not work. In a sense, we may say there is a power that is more than what we can conceive in this world, and only that power is the final resting place for us. It is the resort of all people. Unless we resort to God’s feet, there is no way of escape from the clutches of the three *gunas*. Human effort alone is not sufficient.

**25. ANYBODY WHO WANTS SOMETHING
FROM GOD OR THROUGH GOD IS A LESSER DEVOTEE.**

“One in distress seeks Me. Merely because he seeks Me, I consider him as My devotee, whatever be the motive behind it. Those who are in search of knowledge also seek Me. Those who are in need of material gain, but seeks the fulfilment of *purusharthas*, also want something from Me. The whole point is, these people want something from Me. The distressed ones want Me to free them from sorrow. That is, they are using Me as a kind of instrument to free them from sorrow.” Those who want knowledge also consider God as an instrument for gaining knowledge. The other type also uses God as an instrument. They do not consider God as the ultimate aim. If we want anything from God—from God, through God, utilising God for the achievement of a purpose—we certainly consider that purpose as superior to God Himself. We are using God as an instrument in the fulfilment of our desires, whatever those desires be—even the most glorious of desires, the love for wisdom. We are asking God to give us wisdom, as if God Himself is not equal to that. But the Lord says that the *jnani* is the best of the devotees because he does not want anything from God. He has ceased to have any kind of expectation from the world, and does not have any kind of ulterior motive. The devotee who wants only God, and wants nothing from God or through God, is the *jnani*. Anybody who wants something from God or through God is a lesser devotee. “But I consider the *jnani* as the supreme because he does not expect anything from Me. He wants only Me.” Do we not think that the giver of boons is greater than the boons themselves? So how is it that we are so foolish as to expect boons from God, not knowing that God is greater than all the boons that He can give? Only a *jnani* knows that.

26. 'A FRIEND IN NEED IS A FRIEND INDEED.'

Nothing that I can do for you or give to you is real affection in comparison with that affection which considers my self as your self and your self as my self. The identity of souls is the highest of devotion, and is the highest that we can expect from anybody in this world. The unity of one with the other is the highest friendship. Two friends cannot be real friends unless they are merged into a single soul. If they are two souls, they are ultimately not reliable friends. They will not be friends in need, because each one has his own soul and he has not merged his soul with the other. Even if the friends appear to be inseparable, if each one has his own egoistic individuality by maintaining his own individual soul, he will not be a good friend. He will desert you one day or the other.

Paul and Peter were very great friends. They were very close. One day when they were in the forest, a bear pursued them and wanted to pounce on them. Paul climbed to the top of a tree to save himself. Peter did not know how to climb. He lay down on the ground and held his breath as if he was dead, because he heard it said that animals do not attack corpses, they attack only living beings. Even lions do not eat what they themselves have not killed. The bear came and sniffed Peter in the ear and in the nose, and concluded that he was not a living being. It went away.

When the bear left, Paul came down and humorously asked, "What was the bear whispering in your ear, my dear friend?"

Peter replied, "It whispered to me, 'A friend in need is a friend indeed.' You simply climbed the tree, leaving me alone here."

27. ANYBODY WHO EXPECTS ANYTHING FROM GOD IS NOT AS DEAR TO GOD AS THE ONE WHO WANTS GOD ONLY.

If the friends appear to be inseparable, if each one has his own egoistic individuality by maintaining his own individual soul, he will not be a good friend. He will desert you one day or the other. The son of a king and the son of a minister were close friends; they were inseparable. They ate together, walked together, talked together and slept together. They were always together. The public felt that their friendship was very dangerous because one day one boy would become the king and the other boy would become the minister, and their closeness would not make for a good government. There must be some difference between the minister and the king. What is the use of having a minister if he is equal to a king, and what is the use of having a king if he is equal to a minister? Everybody felt that the two boys should be separated, but could not think of how, as they were always together. One man had a brainwave and said, "I shall separate them in a minute." The two boys were going for a walk, hand in hand. "Gentlemen!" he said and called the minister's son, "Please, come just for a minute. There is something that I want to tell you ." When the boy came, the man whispered in his ear, "One paddy contains only one grain of rice." "Eh!" the boy said. "This is all that you want to tell me?" And he went back. Then the king's son asked, "What did he say?" "Eh! Stupid! He said that one paddy contains only one grain of rice," replied the boy. "No, it cannot be," said the king's son. "A man will not call you to secretly tell you that. You are not telling me the truth." Immediately the two boys were separated and their friendship was ended. They would not talk to each other after that. Here is a mystery. Anybody who expects anything from God is not as dear to God as the one who wants God only.

28. SUCH A PERSON IS INDEED RARE IN THIS WORLD .

It is difficult to love God. The love of things is so attractive, so promising and rewarding that the invisible God may not be as attractive to the senses. We take a series of incarnations—millions of births—to come to the human level, and then only is it possible for an individual to think in terms of pros and cons, and entertain logical judgments, which is not available in the animal, plant and mineral kingdoms. After taking many an incarnation and passing through many bodies of various species, we become human beings. Even as human beings, it is not easy for every-body to reach God because there are categories of human beings. There are demoniacal human beings, selfish human beings, cut-throat human beings, tit-for-tat human beings, so they are not in a position to attain God. It is a blessed one who has polished his personality through austerity, by means of the practice of the various stages of yoga in the different incarnations that he has taken. “After the completion of many, many lives—then only the *jnani* attains to Me as the only goal, resorts to Me as the only purpose in life.” Such a person is indeed rare in this world who has the conviction that God is all, that Narayana is all, Vasudeva is all, the Almighty is all. Such a conviction cannot arise in ordinary people. After many millions of births, such a conviction may arise. The sense organs will not play havoc with that person who knows in an integral manner that God is all, because their feeling and understanding merge into a kind of intuition; and then there is no use of expecting anything from this world. “The world merges in God as I myself also merge in God.” Sri Aurobindo said that when the British put him in prison due to a bombing and he was summoned by the magistrate, suddenly in the courtroom he had the vision of Narayana. Such an experience is rare.

29. THEY ARE FACETS OF THE SINGLE CRYSTAL OF THE SUPREME BEING.

“Not knowing Me as the All, people resort to so many gods.” The ‘so many gods’ are to be considered as influxes and emanations of the Supreme Being. We may worship Ganesha, Devi, Durga, Lakshmi, Saraswati, Vishnu, Siva, Surya, Kartikeya, Skanda, or any god, provided we do not consider them as individual gods standing independently in their own sphere; otherwise, we will receive from them a blessing that is completely limited. A limited god can bless us only in a limited way. There is no harm in worshipping these gods, but we should consider them as a hand or a finger of the one Almighty. Whether it is Siva or Vishnu or Christ or Buddha or Mohammed or anyone, they are facets of the single crystal of the Supreme Being. Any facet of the crystal reflects the whole crystal. Therefore, there is no harm in worshipping individual gods. But if we consider them as independent gods—Mohammed is different from Christ, Christ is different from Krishna, Krishna is different from Devi, and they have no connection with one another, we want something from Devi and something else from Krishna—if that is the case, we will get what we want. With desires which are discrete and diversified in nature, people run to all sorts of divinities—a stone, a snake, a tree, a symbol, a diagram. Everything is a god for a person with desires of various types. Such people who have multifarious desires of a *rajasic* and perhaps a *tamasic* nature and who worship varieties of divinities independently, as it were, will have their own result granted to them. “In My ordinance, I have arranged that these people also shall be given whatever they want.”

30. WE HAVE THE GREAT MASTER WHO CAN GRANT US ALL THAT WE WANT WITH HIS OCEANIC MERCY.

If we ask for a handful, we will get only a handful. If we ask for a bucketful, we will get a bucketful, and if we ask for the whole earth, we will get the whole earth. But we will get only what we want, not more than that. There was a person who wanted that any thought that arose in his mind should materialise, and he was blessed with that boon. Whenever he thought something, it would materialise. He was very happy, and felt that now the whole world was under his control. He sat under a tree and thought: "Let there be mangoes on the tree." Immediately mangoes dropped from the tree. "Let there be cool water for me to drink," and immediately cool water flowed in front. "Let there be many servants to massage my feet," and servants came. "Let me have a good bed to lie down on and rest," and a bed immediately appeared. While he was lying down, he thought: "This is a forest. Suppose a tiger pounces on me, what will happen?" Immediately a tiger came and pounced on him, and he was finished. This is what happens if we have desires which are not controlled by real knowledge, wisdom. Therefore, we should not propitiate small deities in order to fulfil petty desires when we have the great Master who can grant us all that we want with His oceanic mercy. Anyway, in His goodness and mercy He says: "Even if the little gods are worshipped, you will get something. Don't bother yourself." Immensely merciful is God. He knows the futility of our efforts and the foolishness of our worships, but in spite of that He says, "I'll give you what you want." So kind is God!

31. THE INFINITE CAN RESPOND AND GRANT US INFINITE BLESSING ONLY IF WE APPROACH IT AS AN INFINITE SOUL.

“If Ganesha blesses you or Devi blesses you or Surya blesses you or anybody blesses you, ultimately it is My blessing that is coming. I am conscious of what you are thinking and feeling.” The omniscient Absolute is aware of our intentions, our limitations, our foibles, and our poor approach to the deity, which is based on our mental conception. Nevertheless, the omniscient eye, which sees through the very deity that we are worshipping, grants, with its omnipotence, the energy that our deity requires to grant the boon that is expected by us. Lord Siva’s power or Lord Vishnu’s power or anybody’s power is the power of the Absolute, and the omniscience and omnipotence of the Absolute is the reason why any god is capable of blessing us. Our minds are limited, like little cups, and can contain only cupfuls and not the entire ocean. This is because our minds are limited to the concepts of space, time and objects and, therefore, even our spiritual expectations are limited to these objectively presented dimensions, which are limitations, and which will end. The whole point is that whatever has a beginning will also have an end. Therefore, it is good for us to ask for something infinite, which has neither a beginning nor an end. But that infinite can respond only if the infinite in us rouses its spirit and asks for the infinite. The infinite within us alone can ask for the infinite outside. The little soul in us cannot ask for the infinite. The infinite can respond and grant us infinite blessing only if we approach it as an infinite soul. A poor understanding of the nature of spiritual life—not knowing that God is everything, and expecting something ulterior from God—is not true spirituality or religion.

**32. THE FOUR-DIMENSIONAL UNIVERSAL KNOWS EVERYTHING
THAT IS TAKING PLACE IN THE THREE-DIMENSIONAL WORLD.**

.Plato gives us the allegory of the cave. People are bound hand and foot in a dark cave for their entire life, without being able to see the entrance to the cave. But the entrance is open, and sunlight enters and falls on the wall of the cave. People are walking in the sunlight on the road above, and their shadows appear on the wall. The prisoners watch these two-dimensional shadow images dancing on the wall. Because they have been bound hand and foot right from the beginning and have never seen sunlight, they think that this is the only reality. They do not know what light is. They have always been under the impression that the whole world of reality is this two-dimensional dance. This world appears three-dimensional, but reality is four-dimensional. We are unable to conceive the four-dimensional reality, which is timeless and spaceless, because of our being bound to the concept of only three dimensions—length, breadth and height. But suppose these prisoners are released, and they are brought to the sunlit road. They will be surprised to see that the three-dimensional figures are people walking, and they will be blinded by the sunlight. They will not know what has happened to them because they have seen only the two-dimensional shadows cast by people who were walking on the road. Due to a peculiar structure of our sense organs and mind, we see things only as length, breadth and height, even though there is no such thing as length, breadth and height. It is an illusion that is created by the peculiar structure of our sense organs. The four-dimensional Universal knows everything that is taking place in the three-dimensional world; but people bound to three-dimensional perception cannot know the transcendent, which is of four dimensions.

33. WHAT IS THE FOURTH DIMENSION? THAT IS THE UNIVERSAL.

There are actually no dimensions. That the world is dimensionless is proclaimed today by our modern scientists. So Sri Krishna says, "I know everything. But the world of three dimensions cannot know the four-dimensional Eternal." The four-dimensional Universal knows everything that is taking place in the three-dimensional world; but people bound to three-dimensional perception cannot know the transcendent, which is of four dimensions. We think that there is no such thing as four dimensions, because we cannot imagine what it is. Dimensions are only length, breadth and height. What is the fourth dimension? That is the Universal. Nobody knows what universality is because they know only subjectivity and externality. Total universality is completely obliterated from our perception. It is only a dream for us, an imagination and an abstract concept. Yet, that is the true reality. The universal four-dimensional continuum—which is neither space nor time, which is neither object nor anything solid—is the reality, though we mistake solid, three-dimensional objects to be realities. Hence, the Immortal Being, the timeless four-dimensional essence, says: "The Universal that I am, I know everything—past, present and future." Because in a spaceless and timeless existence there is no past, present and future, at once there is a grasp of eternal instantaneous knowledge in the Supreme Absolute. One grasp is equal to a total grasp. The past, present and future are in the palm of our hand, as it were, because the past, present and future do not actually exist. They are only a three-partite division created by a peculiar structure of our mind and sense organs. In this sense, the world is illusory. It is not as it appears to be. Things are not what they seem.

34. ACTUALLY WE ARE TWO INDIVIDUALS, LOVING AND HATING PEOPLE.

Ignorance is born with us and we get deluded right from childhood itself, right from babyhood, right from the time of coming into existence in this world. What is the reason for this? Throughout the different incarnations, the soul has been involved in likes and dislikes. There is no way of thinking except through likes and dislikes. Psychoanalytically, we should go deep into our own mind and see if we can think without the touch of love and hatred. It is impossible for us to think anything without a touch of some like for something and dislike for something else. Therefore, this division that we have unnecessarily created in our psyche creates a split personality in our own self. We are not whole persons at any time. We are double dealers, two-partite fractions, as it were, dovetailed together—like Jarasandha. We are two different things altogether. The love aspect and the hatred aspect of our personality become dovetailed into a single individuality, as it were, making it appear that we are one individual. Actually we are two individuals, loving and hating people. Therefore, our perceptions are dual, and we never have an integrated perception of anything. There is non-alignment of our inner psyche. We are double-dealers in our own selves, let alone in respect of other people, because of this involvement in love and hatred. Do we not think that it is a great happiness to be in a state of love and hatred? “I love this immensely, and hate that immensely.” This is the way that we live in this world, and it gives us great satisfaction. It is a great satisfaction to love something, and it is a greater satisfaction to hate something. Both are satisfactions only; and it is this kind of satisfaction that we get in this world. The idiotic mind does not understand anything.

35. THE BHAGAVADGITA IS THE GOSPEL OF THE ART OF REACHING GOD .

The Bhagavadgita is the gospel of the art of reaching God, yet it confuses us by saying that we cannot easily reach God. Why cannot we easily reach God? It is because our mind is confused by its lodgement in a kind of split-psychic personality caused by love and hatred, which are the principles of mental operation. In any way, we have to get out of it. There is a necessity to integrate the psyche; we cannot go on living a split life. The object of final spiritual realisation is the total God, not a partial God. It was conceded that the lesser gods are also equally good. They are equally good in the sense that they will give us some benefit—a benefit that has a beginning and an end. But liberation is not something that has a beginning and an end. Hence, a beginningless and endless achievement cannot be attempted by the worship of any kind of localised god—a god that is placed in some heaven and distinguished from other deities. Therefore, the merciful acquiescence of the Almighty in giving us permission to worship any kind of independent god does not mean that it is a solution to the problems of *samsara*. It is a solution to our daily problems, no doubt—problems regarding material prosperity, social status, freedom from illness, and joys of various kinds that this earth can give us. All these can be the boons that we can expect from our gods, but we will not get liberation. Liberation is a total merging in the Total Reality and, therefore, any localised god, conceptualised god, isolated god or limited god will not permit us this attainment. Meditation is the way in which we accommodate this total concept of God in our own self.

36. THE ASPECTS OF GOD THAT MAKE THE TOTAL— WHICH HAVE TO BE IN OUR CONSCIOUSNESS AT THE TIME OF PASSING.

The *adhibhuta prapancha*, which is the externally perceived world, should not be taken as merely the world which God indwells. God also indwells the *adhyatma prapancha*, which is the inward reality of our own self. The third thing is the consciousness that enables us to know that there is a blend between us and the world. There is a third person operating between us, as the individual perceiver, and the world of objects outside, whose preponderance in our mind causes an inference that it is not possible to have consciousness of an object outside unless there is a third element, a connecting link which is transcendent. This transcendent element is called *adhidaiva*. At the time of death, we are supposed to meditate on the total concept of an inclusiveness of ourselves, the world outside, and also the transcendent superintending principle—*adhidaiva*. There is a thing called *adhidharma*, which brings into a focus of cohesion all these three principles mentioned. This unifying principle is called *dharma*, the total ruling force of the cosmos. In Vedic terminology it is known as *rita* or *satya*. God cannot be outside the world because if that is the case, nobody in the world can reach God. Nor can the world be outside God because if that is the case, it is an external object with no substance, no existence whatsoever. This is because only God can be existence. “Whoever can conceive this Total in the mind—Brahman as the Absolute, which includes the *adhibhuta prapancha*, the *adhyatma prapancha*, and also the connecting link of *adhidaiva*—and removes from the mind the idea of the causality of God in terms of the world, such people are really able to think of Me in the proper manner at the time of passing.”

37. WHAT IS BRAHMAN? WHAT IS *ADHYATMA*?

The Lord answers these questions one by one. The indescribable, eternal, timeless and space-less Absolute is called Brahman. It exists everywhere, and yet it appears to be nowhere. It exists everywhere and, therefore, everything lives and exists. It appears to be existing nowhere because it is not the object of the perception of anybody's sense organs. Inasmuch as the world is an object and the Absolute Brahman is not an object, the world appears to exist and the Absolute does not appear to exist anywhere at all. "Non-existence was there in the beginning". The negation of all causes of duality and multiplicity ends in a tremendous positivity, and the so-called void becomes the complete plenum. *Bhuma* is the word used in the Chhandogya Upanishad for this utter perfection; such is the Absolute. Eternal space and time—eternal reality, which is indivisible—that is Brahman.

The natural disposition of the individual is his *svabhava*. That kind of peculiar individuality, conditioned by the mind and the body, differentiates one individual from the other—just as one house can be differentiated from another house, not because of the building bricks which may be the same in all cases, but because of the different shape given by the architects. The permutation and combination of the physical elements and the psychic components differ in different individuals, though the soul that charges these components with life and intelligence is one and the same. The different individual disposition that each one has on account of a preponderance of a different permutation and combination of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* is called *svabhava*. In that, there is also an indwelling principle called *adhyatma*.

38. WHAT IS KARMA?

The word 'karma' that is used here represents the power or the energy with which the whole cosmos emanates from the Absolute. Everything rushes out, as it were, from the bosom of the Ultimate Reality—the Mahat Brahma, as it is called. This great force, this complete potentiality rushing outwardly in the direction of space and time, is the originally conceived karma. This total karma, we may say, which is the action of God that causes the emanation of the world, gradually descends into lower categories of activity until it becomes an ordinary action of a human individual. In the process of the coming down of the intensity of this action, which was originally cosmic, it delimits itself into lesser and lesser dimensions of personality so that finally it becomes a very little individual. In the beginning, it was a cosmic action, then it became a space-time vibration, then it became *akasa*, then *vayu*, then *agni*, the *apa*, then *prithvi*, and finally it became the individual bodies. All these are karmas in different densities and areas of action. But original action is the will of God. The Supreme Purusha's original will is the first action. 'The Purusha Sukta' makes reference to this original dharma. That dharma subsequently conditions every other kind of dharma in the world by delimiting the process of creation through the *tanmatras* and the five elements, etc. The original dharma is the will of God. But that will of God also permeates all the other lesser wholes that act as the media of action, including our own selves. We get caught by the selfishness of wrongly thinking that our will is confined to our body, while actually it is a propulsion from a cosmic existence. It is said that no action is individual; every action is God's. So karma is defined here as the propulsion of the Cosmic cause for the purpose of the emanation of the effects in various degrees of descent, until the lowest atom is created.

39. WHAT IS *ADHIBHUTA*?

The perishable world is the *adhibhuta prapancha*. All the world of names and forms, including this body, is perishable. It is under mutation; it is a flux. It is a continuity of a succession of events, and no object in this world can be said to be existing individually or independently even for a second. Persons like Buddha have highlighted this aspect by saying that the world is like a flowing river, where we cannot touch the same water the next moment. Like a flame that is burning and every minute, every second, there is a new set of atoms of fire rushing forth, the world is not a total indivisibility, but a movement. As a flame is a movement, as water in the river is a movement, the world is a movement. Therefore, it is perishable because when it moves, it is conditioned at every minute into bits of process. Similarly, this kind of concoction of matter into the form of this so-called physical world is cut into pieces—into little processes which are like links in a long chain—and so it cannot be regarded as imperishable. It is perishable. All the perishable nature that we see in this world, including our own body and the entire structure of space-time-object, is *adhibhuta prapancha*.

40. What is *adhidaiva*? What is *adhiyajna*?

There is a Supreme *adhidaiva* who brings everything together into a hierarchy of divine operations, even when the different gods act. Indra, Varuna, Mitra, Surya, Agni, Devi, Narayana, Vishnu, Siva, Ganesha—all these divinities represent facets of the Supreme Absolute—or, we may say, the fingers of God operating; and they have to be put into a pattern of harmonious action so that one will not do something which would contradict what the other does. Gods do not contradict themselves. Siva does not contradict what Ganesha does, nor does Ganesha contradict what Narayana does. There is a harmony of principle in the mode of behaviour and action of these gods. They are all conditioned by a supreme constitution of the Absolute, and that is the *adhidaiva*. The constitution of the government is the *adhidaiva* that rules the entire governmental system, and this *adhidaiva* comes down in lesser and lesser degrees until it becomes a little connecting link between you and me. The Lord says, “The *adhiyajna*, which is the field of action, is nothing but Myself becoming intensely active through the forces of *rajas* and *sattva* for the purpose of the evolution of the cosmos.”

41. “HOW ARE YOU TO BE CONTEMPLATED UPON AT THE TIME OF PASSING?”

Every one of us is required to present ourselves before the Supreme Godhead in a total fashion—not partially. The different facets of the Supreme Being (Brahman, *adhyatma*, *adhibhuta*, *adhidaiva* and *adhiyajna*), all of which have to be taken into consideration at the same time in the final meditation, in which we have to engage ourselves daily, and especially at the time of leaving this world. We cannot expect to have that blessing of concentration at the time of passing from this body unless we have cultivated that habit even earlier throughout our life. If we have lived a dissipated, indulgent life during our normal tenure here, our span of life, do we think some butter will come by churning water? At that time, our minds may be disturbed, or we may be delirious. We may be in a coma. So let our minds enter God’s lotus feet now itself, and not later on when it is possible that we may be afflicted with physical illness and mental delusion. The whole of life is a preparation for death. The whole of the time process is a preparation for eternity. All our activities are a worship of God, and every step that we take in this world is a movement in the direction of the final liberation of the spirit. So there is no question of postponing this great duty on every-one’s part to a future date, which may not come at all. The Lord says, “Whoever contemplates My Glorious Being while leaving this body will be inundated with that Being after death.” This is because the shape that the mind takes at the time of death will be the shape into which it will enter after death. Thus, the pattern of our future life in the other world is laid at the time of our passing from this body, depending on the state of thinking in which the mind is lodged.

42. WHAT KIND OF PERSON IS THAT SUPREME BEING?

For the purpose of enabling us to picture that Supreme Being at the time of death—or always, as the case may be—we are told what kind of person that Supreme Being is. That Being is All-knowing—*kavi*. There is nothing that we can hide from that Almighty Being. That Supreme Being is most ancient—*purana*—because it was there even before creation. Before there was space, before there was time, before there was anything, it was there. Therefore, it is the *purana purusha*, the *adi purusha*, the most ancient one; the all-knowing ancient one. *Anusaitaram*: It is the ruler of all the worlds, the ultimate destiny of everything, the final authority of all things, and the great God of creation. *Anor aniyamsam*: It is subtler than the subtlest. The grossness characterising objects of sense cannot touch this pure subjectivity. It is the highest subjectivity. The highest subjectivity means free from any kind of externality of space, time and connection. Therefore, it is called subtle—the subtlest of all—and not even the subtlest space can be compared to it. *Anusmared yah*: Whoever can contemplate this Mystery of mysteries. *Sarvasya dhataram*: The father and the grandfather of all people, the great protector of all beings, the final resort of everyone. *Acintyarupam*: Un-thinkable is that Being. Our eyes will be blinded, we will become deaf by the vibrations that it produces, and our sense organs will simply melt into the liquid of an experience that can best be described as spiritual realisation. *Adityavarnam*: The sun is like a shadow before that light. *Tamasah parastat*: The whole world is darkness in comparison with that light of all lights. We think we are in daylight, but it is pitch darkness before that utter luminosity. We must contemplate on that at the time of passing.

43. BY THIS PRACTICE, WE SHALL REACH THAT PARAMA PURUSHA

“Now or never! Let this flesh melt and the bones crack. I shall not get up from this place until I get it!” was the resolution of Buddha. If we have that resolution with a devotion that surpasses all understanding, we are really blessed.

Concentrate on the point between the eyebrows because of the fact that in the waking condition the mind is supposed to be actively operating in the *ajna chakra*, which is located there. In the dream state, it is in the throat, as it were; and in the sleep state, it is in the heart. Inasmuch as we are mostly in the waking condition and the mind is already in the point between the eyebrows—which is its *svasthana*, or its own abode—it is profitable for us to concentrate on that point instead of dragging the mind from its abode to some other direction. So it is said to concentrate the mind on the point between the eyebrows and raise the *prana* to that point—because wherever the mind is, there the *prana* is. The *prana* rushes to wherever we are concentrating our mind, and even the bloodstream moves in that direction. By this practice, we shall reach that Parama Purusha, Purushottama, the Being of all beings, the Supreme God, Whose realisation is our be-all and end-all. “The longing for the union of which, people practise continence, and restraint of the senses and the mind.”

44. THIS IS CALLED *SARVADVARANI SAMYAMYA*.

Sarvadvarani samyamyā : “Close all the gates of your body.” The five senses of perception, these avenues which are the windows of knowledge, are closed completely. Do not see, or hear, or touch, or smell, or taste; and do not allow any agitation of the other active limbs such as the hands and the feet, etc. Neither the sense organs of knowledge, nor the organs of action should be active at that time. These principles of action are withdrawn completely into the mind, in which case the mind becomes intensely potent. Usually the mind is weak because more than fifty percent of its energy is depleted through sense perception—through the sense organs of knowledge and the activities of the other *karmendriyas*, or organs of action. A little knowledge is there, and that is also distracted by the activities of the senses. But when the activity of the senses is withdrawn, the holes through which the energy goes out in the direction of space and time are blocked. This is called *sarvadvarani samyamyā*: Blocking all the holes which are the ten sense organs. *Mano hr̥di nirudhya ca*. It was said that the mind is to be concentrated on the point between the eyebrows. Now it is being said that the mind will be concentrated in the heart. In deep sleep, in death, and in the samadhi state, the mind goes to the heart; but at other times it moves in the throat or the brain. In deep meditation, transcending the consciousness of the concentration that we are practising on the point between the eyebrows, we go deeper into the heart. When the mind is made to slowly descend to the position of the heart, it ceases from externalised ways of thinking, and settles in its true abode. The final abode of the mind is the heart. As the Upanishads tell us, in the state of deep sleep it is supposed to be lying in the *puritat nadi*.

**45. THE *MATRA* OF THE *PRANAVA*, OR *OMKARA*,
BECOMES *AMATRA*, OR SOUNDLESS VIBRATION.**

The *pranas* have to be raised to the centre of the head. At the same time, it is said that the mind has to be concentrated on the heart. This seems to be a very difficult injunction. The idea is that our reason, feeling, understanding and emotions should get blended together so that what we think through the brain—the concentration that is active through the reason—is blended together with our deepest feeling. We are not merely in a state of understanding or feeling; we are in a state of intuition, which is a direct grasp of the total essence of things. Therefore, it is an injunction for two things: concentration on the centre of the head, which is the abode of the activity of rationality, and concentration on the heart, which is the abode of feeling. Thus being absorbed in the highest mood of yoga meditation; *om ityekaksaram brahma vyaharan* : chant Om. When we chant Om, we will feel that it finally becomes soundless. The *matra* of the *pranava*, or *omkara*, becomes *amatra*, or soundless vibration. The message that we receive from the broadcasting station is not a moving sound. It is a vibration which is converted into sound waves in our receiving set. In a similar manner, the sound that is articulated in the form of chanting Om, or *pranava*, becomes rarefied into a soundless universal equilibrium of energy wherein we get lodged as the Soul of the cosmos. The eternal Brahma it is, in His form of vibration. “Chanting like this, uttering this great *pranava*, and deeply concentrating on My Being, whoever departs from this body, whoever leaves this world quitting this body, he reaches the eternal abode.”

46. AFTER REACHING THE ABSOLUTE, WE WILL NOT COME BACK.

Ninety percent of devotees have a question of this kind: “What good is there in reaching God if I cannot come back?” The Almighty Himself has told us that if we go to Him, we will not come back; and if we want to come back, we need not go to Him at all. He is not compelling us to go to Him. But our attitude is like a double-edged sword. On one side we say, “I’ll reach God.” On the other side we say, “I’ll come back to work for my fellow humans.” “After reaching Me, you shall not enter this impure, perishable abode of sorrow because I shall absorb you into the timeless state of eternity, and not send you back to the time-ridden, space-limited world of sorrow and death.” They have reached utter perfection. Having attained Supreme Perfection in the Almighty Universal, the question of coming back does not arise. It is as if we want to go back to the dream world after having woken up. In the world of dream we had friends, relatives, large assets, money, and the goodwill of people. When we woke up, what happened to all those people? Have we not committed a deeply treacherous, selfish act by waking up and leaving all our relations in the condition of dream? If we think that we have done a treacherous, selfish act in waking up from dream, we will do the same thing when we reach God. Remember this. Even if we reach Brahmaloaka, there are certain conditions in which we may have to come back; but after reaching the Absolute, we will not come back. *Sayujya* is entry into God. Is God somewhere in space and time? Spaceless and timeless existence is such that the coming back from it would be like coming from eternity to time—as the entry from waking into dream.

47. THERE ARE TWO KINDS OF DISSOLUTION.

There are four *yugas*—called Krita, Treta, Dvapara and Kali. These are the time cycles or ages, as we say. We are said to be in Kali Yuga, the worst age, where there is conflict. The age of conflict is called Kali Yuga. This age is supposed to extend for 432,000 years. The duration of Dvapara Yuga is double that, the duration of Treta Yuga is triple, and Krita Yuga is quadruple. The total of all these figures is called one thousand divine years; but according to us, it is a multiple of several thousands of human years. Imagine what it means: 432,000 multiplied by 2, then multiplied by 3, and then multiplied by 4. That total is the duration of one day of Brahma. One day of Brahma is as long as this computation of the years of the four *yugas*, and one night of Brahma is equally long. This is twelve hours of day and twelve hours of night of Brahma. What is the night? The *pralaya*, or the dissolution of the cosmos that will take place at the end of the *yugas*, is the night of Brahma. There are two kinds of dissolution. There is dissolution of all life everywhere, but not dissolution of the elements—earth, water, fire, air and ether. They remain. The dissolution of all life takes place after one day of Brahma; and then he sleeps. When Brahma wakes up, he creates beings—gods, celestials, angels, men, beasts, etc.—once again, as he has done previously. But there is another kind of dissolution, which dissolves everything. The whole cosmos, including the five elements, is dissolved. After one hundred years of Brahma, the entire universe is dissolved, and Brahma also gets dissolved. He enters the Absolute. One day of Brahma is one thousand years for the gods but, according to the human concept, it is many millions of years. When Brahma goes to sleep, all beings, including us, merge in the *avyakta prakriti*. It does not mean that we will be liberated.

48. BEFORE THE LORD OF DEATH FOR JUDGMENT.

The stories in the Garuda Purana and such other scriptures, even in the Bhagavata, are really frightening. When the soul departs from the body in the case of the lower, unpurified and negligibly religious souls, it is taken away by the messengers of Yama and placed before the Lord of Death for judgment. It is said that Yama asks the soul, "What have you done?" Ordinarily, it cannot remember anything. It will say, "I don't know." The shock of separation from the body removes all memory, and it cannot remember what it has done in the previous life. It is said that then a hot rod, called a *yamadanda*, is kept on its head, and immediately it remembers its entire past. It knows every detail of the actions that it did, both good and bad. The soul says, "I have done a little good, but have also made many mistakes and performed so many erroneous actions." Yama asks, "What do you have to say about it now?" The soul replies, "I have got relatives. They will expiate them for me. They will conduct *yajnas*, charities, worship, *sankirtans*, *bhajans* and meditations in my name, and I shall be free from the consequence of the sins that I have committed or the mistakes that I have made." "Go then!" says Yama, "And see what they do." Apparently, it takes ten days for the soul to be brought back, so some ceremony is usually done on the tenth, eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth days. The soul hovers around, observing what the relatives are doing, and Yama's messengers stand behind like policemen to see what is done. If an expiatory ceremony is done in the name of the soul, such as the Bhagavata Saptaham, the Rudra Yaga, the Narayana Bali and the Vishnu Yajna, and varieties of charities are done, and all those things that were dear to the soul are also given in gift, the effect of these good deeds is credited to the account of the soul and it is exonerated to that extent.

49. THAT IS WHY ANOTHER CEREMONY IS DONE AFTER ONE YEAR.

Suppose like modern boys, the relatives do not believe in the observances: "If our father died, let it go, that's all. We won't bother about it," and there is no charity, no goodwill, and they behave as if nothing has happened; or, they do not even believe that something happens after death because they think that there is no life after death. If that is the case, the soul is dragged back (to the abode of Yama). When the police-men know that someone is a culprit, and it is confirmed, they deal with him very severely. If they know that he is going to be released, they do not bother much about it. But if his relatives have done nothing, it is certain that he is going to be punished, so for one year they drag the soul to the kingdom of the Lord of Death. At first they brought it within ten days because they wanted to know what was happening. When it is certain that it is going to be punished, they drag it, pull it, scratch and beat it, and it will be hungry and thirsty and bleeding. That is why another ceremony is done after one year; it takes one year for the soul to return to the abode of Yama. The *varshika* (annual) ceremony is very important. If nothing has been done on the tenth to thirteenth days after the passing of the soul, at least something should be done on the anniversary so that some mercy may be granted by Lord Yama before the sentence is passed. If the soul has no merit at all, it will be sent to the land of punishment, whatever the punishment be. When the soul is expunged of all its sins by suffering in the prison of Yama's hell, it is released. It is said that then it is sent to Rudraloka, and will not be allowed to leave. To release the soul from Rudra's clutches, Rudra Yajna is done. Then it is sent to Vaikuntha, so Vishnu Yajna is done; and after many, many years, the soul attains moksha. This is how a bad person gets purified in a very painful way, and then finally attains blessedness.

50. GOD IS IN THE WORLD, BUT THE WORLD IS NOT IN GOD.

All particulars are in the Universal; the Universal is not in the particulars. The waves are in the ocean; the ocean is not in the waves. We can draw a similar analogy when the Lord says, “I am in everything, but things are not in Me.” Existence-Consciousness-Bliss, or *sat-chit-ananda svarupa*, is present in every name and form, but name and form are not in *sat-chit-ananda*. God is in the world, but the world is not in God. This is the reason why the Lord says, “Everything is in Me, but I am not in them. I remain transcendent though, at the same time, I am immanent in all things.” *Na ca matsthani bhutani* : “I said that everything is in Me, but now I am also saying that, in another way, they are not in Me.” This is because the world of dream cannot be sticking to our waking consciousness. “Nothing in the world can be in Me, inasmuch as the world does not exist for Me. Inasmuch as I am immanent in all things and I pervade all things, all things may be said to be in Me, now I say that I am without externality, without space, without time. Therefore, things cannot be there; and therefore, the question of things residing in Me also does not arise.” *Na ca matsthani*—immediately the previous statement is contradicted. “Things are also not in Me, for another reason altogether.” *Pasya me yogam aisvaram*: “Look at My glory; see My majesty.” “Look at Me,” the Almighty says. “How wonderful is this majesty of My abode where I am everywhere. Everything is in Me, and yet nothing is in Me.”

51. PEOPLE WHO ARE LIMITED TO THEIR OWN BODIES, AND CANNOT THINK BEYOND THEIR SKIN.

God is a transcendent Being, and therefore, even if He is immanent and actually indwelling in these potential individuals, He is not contaminated. He cannot be said to be doing anything at all. The process of creation and destruction do not seem to affect the original will of the Supreme Being because of its being transcendent and immanent simultaneously. It is involved in every bit of creation, and yet it is not involved in anything. “I am in all things, and yet I am not in anything. All beings are in Me, and yet nobody is in Me.” “The whole creation is due to Me, and yet it is not due to Me.” The *gunas* of *prakriti* cannot in any way touch the supreme transcendence of the Absolute. “The whole cosmic dance is due to My presence, of course.” The progenating capacity of *prakriti* through the three *gunas* is due to the light of the Cosmic Being that is activating it, as our lives are activated by the light of the sun that rises in the morning. The whole world gets transformed constantly, and never rests in one condition—*jagadviparivartate*—on account of the restlessness that is inherent in the *gunas* of *prakriti*; and their activity is enhanced into a continuous movement by the action of the consciousness of the Supreme Purusha—Bhagavan, the Absolute. But, “People who are limited to their own bodies, and cannot think beyond their skin, cannot know that in My transcendent capacity I incarnate Myself as the *adhyatma*, or the essential soul of all beings. People who do not have proper understanding, who are involved in the clutches of the *gunas* of *prakriti*, cannot appreciate this mystery of Mine that I am transcendently disconnected from everything that is taking place in the realm of *prakriti*, though everything is taking place due to Me only.”

52. BUT HIS ESSENTIAL NATURE WAS NOTHING OF THE KIND.

“People imagine that I have got a form.” We say that Lord Krishna was in Brindavan, that he was in Dvaraka, that he was in Kurukshetra, and so on; but his essential nature was nothing of the kind. That which is not human was masquerading in that apparently human form. Otherwise, that apparently human form could not have assumed a non-human Cosmic Form—which it did on various occasions. Bhagavan Sri Krishna’s Visvarupa was shown four times during his life, including once in the Bhagavadgita, and each time the presentation was qualitatively different. The Visvarupa appeared in a particular manner the first time, it appeared differently the second time, was another thing altogether the third time, and was something altogether different the fourth time. It was a Universal manifestation, no doubt, but it looked different according to the conditions or the exigencies of the time. In the context of the Bhagavadgita, it appeared as the Time Spirit that was up and doing for the destruction of all beings. “People think that I am a human being—walking with two feet, living in a palace with a large family—but nothing of the kind is My nature. My body, My personality, is only a focusing point of a larger existence which is My real nature, which pervades all space and transcends space and time.” People who are infested with the *rakshasi prakriti* of intense *rajas* and *tamas*, who believe in the reality of the external world of matter, who also believe, simultaneously, in the internal world of the physical body—these people who are of a *rakshasa* nature are deluded by their involvement in these *gunas* of *prakriti*. *Daivi prakriti* is a divine nature, It is the higher *prakriti*, in contrast with the lower *prakriti* of instincts, sensations, mentations, intellections, etc.

53. GODS ARE LESSER IN NUMBER THAN DEMONS.

“Knowing Me as the Origin of all things, knowing Me as Supreme beyond all things, knowing Me as All-in-all, knowing that in Me everything can be found, knowing that I am the source of immortality, the great souls, mahatmas, resort to Me, being endowed with the highest quality of *sattva*, which is *daivi prakriti*. They adore Me in their spirit, they worship Me in their spirit, they praise Me in their spirit, they concentrate on Me through their spirit, and wish that their spirit gets merged in My spirit.” “Those whose mind cannot be distracted in any direction other than My Universal existence, such people I consider as mahatmas, the great souls that inhabit this cosmos.” Such great souls are very few in number, as the Yoga Vasishtha tells us. It is said that they are very few in number because the earth cannot bear the weight of such great people. Great souls are very few in number; wicked people are multifarious. In one of his commentaries, Sankaracharya says that gods are lesser in number than demons. Mahatmas are very few, and two mahatmas cannot be in one place. It is said that Bernard Shaw was invited to come to India during Mahatma Gandhi’s lifetime. He said, it seems, “I cannot go to India, inasmuch as two mahatmas cannot be in one country. Because Mahatma Gandhi is already there, and I am also a mahatma, and two mahatmas cannot be in the same place, I am not going. One country can have only one mahatma, as only one lion can rule in a jungle.”

54. “*EKATVENA PRITHAKTVENA BAHUDHA VISVATOMUKHAM*”.

God can be visualised as a manifold manifestation, as the souls of all created beings; or He can be considered as a dual manifestation, transcendent and immanent; or He can be beheld as one only. It is said that Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa once came to Benares to have darshan of the great saint and sage Trilinga Swami, a great *siddha*. The greatness of that *siddha* was such that it drew even Ramakrishna Paramahansa. It appears that Sri Ramakrishna put a question to Trilinga Swami: “Maharaj, how many gods are there?” Swamiji raises three fingers, then two fingers, then one finger. That was the answer. “Yes I understand you.” The great disciple understood the great Master’s significant gesture: God is threefold, God is twofold, God is single. *Ekatvena prithak tvena bahudha visvatomukham*: In any form we can worship Him. This is the great charity of feeling and vision that we develop when we become the greatest of souls. The greatest of souls are highly charitable in their feelings, in their gestures, in their speech, in their behaviour, in their actions. *Prithak* means double, two; *bahudha* means manifold. According to Sankaracharya, there is one reality; according to Ramanuja, there are two realities; according to Madhva, there are many realities. Therefore, all the three Acharyas are satisfied with this half verse that Bhagavan Sri Krishna speaks. Rama asked Hanuman, “Who are you? Please tell me. Describe yourself.” Hanuman replied, *Dehabuddhyatava daso ’ham*: “If you think that I am a body, that I am totally different from you, I am your servant.” *Jivabuddhyat vadamshakah*: “If you think that I am a soul, I am a part of you.” *Atmabuddhya tvamevahanam*: “If you think that I am the spirit, I am you only.”

1. "FALSE IS THIS PROMISE!"

THE BRAHMIN EXCLAIMED IN ANGER.

There was a Brahmin who was fond of the *sloka* "Ananyas cintayanto mam ye janah paryupasate, tesam nityabhiyuktanam yogakhemam vahamyaham". He devoted himself entirely to this one verse. He was a beggar, and had to go for alms every day. He had a family which he had to feed. One day it so happened that even though he had wandered throughout the streets the entire day until sunset, he could not get even one grain of rice. He came back disappointed. The children asked, "Papa! Where is the food?" His wife asked, "What has happened?" He replied, "I do not know. God has deserted me. He has not fulfilled His promise. I tried my best by wandering throughout the day, but I could not get even one grain of cereal. False is this promise!" the Brahmin exclaimed in anger. The verse from the Bhagavadgita - was written on a palm leaf. He tore that *sloka* with a nail, thinking that is a false promise, and left the house in disgust. About an hour or so after he had left, a boy came to the house with a big bag full of cereals and grains, etc., threw it on the veranda, and loudly called to the Brahmin's wife who was inside, "Here are the rations sent by your husband." But the boy's tongue was torn and bleeding. The wife asked, "Who sent this?" "Your husband has sent it." "My husband? I am very glad. What is the matter with you?" "He was very angry with me because I was a little late, so he tore my tongue," replied the boy. When the Brahmin came back, his wife said to him, "Are you out of your mind? You tore the tongue of the boy who brought the rations which you sent." "I didn't send any rations," he said. She showed him the bag. He fell at the feet of that lady and said, "You are my Guru from today because you had *darshan* of the Lord. I am a sinner. Because I tore the *sloka*, I could not see Him."

2. "WHAT HAPPENED TO THE TRAIN?"

There was an incident that took place in the Punjab sometime back. A railway guard had to be on duty at 8 p.m. in the evening, and before that he happened to go to a *satsang*. He thought that he would remain in *satsang* until 8 o'clock and then go to the station. The *satsang* inspired him to such an extent that he fell into a state of ecstasy. He remained in this state all night, and forgot the time. In the morning, he became conscious that he had not gone on duty at the railway station and thought, "What happened to the train? What is the matter? Now what will happen to me?"

He repented very much, and went to the chief officer and said, "I am very sorry. I could not come on duty. I do not know what happened to the train. I was to be on guard duty."

"What is the matter?" the officer asked. "You were on duty. I saw you."

"Don't talk to me sarcastically. I could not come."

"What are you saying? The train went on time. You were there. See your signature in the attendance register."

His attendance was marked, and his signature was also there. He was stunned. It seems he wept before the Almighty and said, "O Lord! If Thou art so kind to me, I shall devote my entire life to you only!" He immediately submitted a letter of resignation, left the service, and spent the rest of his life doing *bhajan* and *kirtan*.

The lives of saints are replete with instances of this kind. The lives of saints are standing illustrations of the truth of the great statement of the Almighty, which is applicable not only to saints and sages, but to every one of us. Perhaps we are saints in the making. Eternally awake is the Almighty in His omniscience.

3. IF WE OFFER OURSELVES, THAT SHALL BE THE GREATEST PLEASURE TO GOD.

What is offered is not of consequence in the eye of God. The *bhava*, or the feeling, or the mode, or the attitude with which it is offered is what counts. God does not want anything from us. If our heart is there, then of course He will accept it. If our heart is not there, the offering is devitalised. Devitalised offerings are not accepted. If we offer ourselves, that shall be the greatest pleasure to God. If we offer something that is dear to us, that is also a pleasure to God, but a lesser pleasure. But if we offer something that is not dear to us—an old coin or a torn note—that is not going to satisfy God because He knows our feelings, our motives.

It is said that Arjuna and Bhima were worshipping Lord Siva. Arjuna was collecting tons and tons of *bilva* leaves, and offering mountains of these leaves to Lord Siva in worship. Bhima was also worshipping Lord Siva, but he did it only in his mind. He had no physical leaf, and did not bring anything from the forest to offer to Lord Siva. One day, it seems, Arjuna and Bhima were taken to Kailasa for some reason. They saw cartloads and cartloads of *bilva* leaves being brought by the *ganas* of Siva, and they were poured at His feet. And some people were also bringing little handfuls of leaves and throwing them. Arjuna asked, “Who are these people who are bringing little bunches of leaves and offering them, and who are these who are offering cartloads?” “That little bit is what has been offered by Arjuna, and the cartloads are the offerings of Bhima,” they said. “Bhima? He never does any worship,” said Arjuna. “He has done the worship, and Lord Siva is pleased,” they replied. Bhima offered cartloads because his mind was there; and Arjuna offered a little bit because it was a physical offering.

4. “MAY YOUR ACTIONS BE DEVOTED TO ME, DEDICATED TO ME”.

“If you offer anything in sacrifice, *yajna*, let it be to My satisfaction. I am the Universal *bhokta*, or the enjoyer of all sacrifices. If you eat anything—a meal, breakfast, lunch—let it be offered to Me.” This kind of offering of food which goes into our stomach as a dedication to the Almighty is described in the Chhandogya Upanishad. It is called *pranagnihotra*. *Pranaya svaha*, *apanaya svaha*, *vyanaya svaha*, *samanaya svaha*, *udanaya svaha*—people chant these mantras and sip water five times before they start their meal. This is a ritual known mostly to Brahmins. The idea is that we should not eat our meal like animals, gulping it like pigs or swallowing it like dogs. Our attitude towards food should not be that of an animal. Food is a sacred offering to the divinity inside, who digests whatever we eat through the *Vaisvanara fire*. The *pranas* are the digesters of the food. If the *pranas* are not satisfied with the food that we throw into our stomach, it is not going to be received. Disturbed *pranas* will not receive any kind of delicacy; and if the stomach is not operated by the *Vaisvanara agni*, the food is not going to be digested. “Whatever you offer outside in the form of sacrifices, in *yajnasalas*, that is also an offering to Me, and whatever you offer inside by way of a meal that you take, that is internal *yajna* that you perform as *prana-agnihotra*. Therefore, may your actions be devoted to Me, dedicated to Me. Whatever be these actions, whether secular or religious—clerical, military, business, sweeping the floor, or anything that you perform according to the station of your life and your location in society—let it be dedicated to Me, and you shall see that you are taken care of abundantly by the guardians of the earth.”

5. HERE IS A RECIPE TO BREAK THE CHAIN OF KARMA.

Whatever we think, that shall take place. Whatever we believe in, that shall materialise. Whatever we deeply expect, that shall be granted to us; and if we expect the grace of God, it shall be poured abundantly upon us. One who is an adherent to the dharmas of *sannyasa* and yoga—renunciation and actual practice—such a person is freed from all the results of good and bad deeds. *Karmabandha* is broken. Karma is supposed to be binding, and no one can be freed from the bonds of karma. But here is a recipe to break the chain of karma; and the laws that usually operate in the world of space and time, the three-dimensional realm, do not operate in the four-dimensional realm. That is the meaning of saying that even sins are pardoned and destroyed. If we commit a mistake in a dream, we are not punished for it when we wake up. Whatever be the mistake that we commit in a dream, it is absolved merely by the fact of our waking. So is the case with any mistake that we commit here. Any error, even any sin, is abolished completely, root and branch, because we have awakened into the consciousness of the eternal four-dimensional Absolute. God says, “I have neither friend nor foe. Like sunlight and rain, I pour myself on all people equally. But if you do not open yourself to Me, the light will not shine upon you and the rain will not affect you in any way. I am equally accessible to all.” The basic fundamental reality behind all the names and forms is one and same: *satchit-ananda svarupa*—Existence-Consciousness-Bliss. It is equally present in all names and forms—in inanimate matter, in insects, in ants, in reptiles, in animals, in plants, in human beings, in the gods in heaven. It is equally present everywhere, as the ocean is equally present and at the root of all the ripples, waves, etc., that appear on its surface.

6. WAKING CONSCIOUSNESS IS SUPERIOR TO DREAM CONSCIOUSNESS.

There is no sin before God. The mistakes, the karmas, the sorrows, and the hells and heavens that we speak of are the reactions set up from the forces of nature to our own actions; and these reactions cannot cease as long as we are bound hand and foot through this body in terms of space, time and objectivity. But if our soul rises beyond the limitations of this body and does not get attached to anything that is in space and time, the very concept of sin is destroyed because it is relevant only to the world of space and time. So when we are free from space and time, and our worship is through the soul rather than through the mind or through the hands and feet, then all forces—even the greatest gravitational forces of the planets—are overcome because no law in this world is a law in that eternal realm. The laws of eternity and of temporality which catch us here bit by bit and annoy us, and man-made laws, scriptural laws, or laws made by anybody—every law is completely negated. This is because they are valid only in the three-dimensional world of space and time, and are completely invalid in the waking of the soul into Universal Existence. All experiences of dream are invalidated in waking. Whatever be the experiences of sorrow or joy, emperorship or beggary—whatever we have been undergoing in dream—the whole thing is abolished in one stroke merely because we have woken up. Waking consciousness is superior to dream consciousness. A beggar in waking is certainly happier than a king in dream. The point is not whether one is a king or a beggar; the point is whether one's consciousness is superior or inferior. The superior consciousness of that eternity abolishes all the laws of this temporality of earthly existence.

7. COMPLETE REJECTION OF ANY PERSON IS NOT IN THE CONSTITUTION OF GOD'S ORDINANCE.

It is said that even the worst of sinners—very bad people, wicked persons—can also reach God. They do not get damned to hell. Eternal damnation is not the doctrine of the Bhagavadgita. There is punishment, to some extent, meted out on account of erroneous actions performed in this world, with the nemesis following automatically. Action breeds reaction. It is not punishment meted out by somebody; it is a punishment meted out by the action itself as an automatic reaction that comes forth on account of an action—whether it is good or bad, positive or negative, harmonious or disharmonious. Complete rejection of any person is not in the constitution of God's ordinance. The poem *Abou Ben Adhem* by Leigh Hunt describes how the humblest person, who was unknown and unrecorded in human history, received the first call from God. Famous people do not go to God so easily. The greatest sages and saints are unknown persons in the world; the known ones are second-rate heroes. The greatest of beings, who come to redeem humanity by merely their existence or thought, perform no action in the historical or political sense. They merely release some energy—an aura around them, a potential—that pervades the whole earth. We are told in our scriptures that Vyasa and Narayana are residing in the Badarikashrama for the solidarity of mankind, and are invisibly performing miracles by their very existence—and not necessarily by the movement of their hands and feet. Even hell is a kind of purgatory, like a temporary prison. No one's spirit is damned forever to an eternity of suffering. On account of the compassionate presence of the immanent God in all things and there being nothing external to God, there is no such thing as an eternity of suffering or eternal rejection.

8. WHERE WAS GOD SITTING BEFORE HE CREATED THE WORLD?

God's existence is a difficult thing to conceive. We say that God is all-pervading. This idea of the all-pervadingness of God arises due to the space which we see before our eyes. Pervading all things means existing as a vast expanse, like space; but this comparison is inept for God Himself because God is prior to the manifestation of space. He is said to be omnipresent because of our idea that there is an extended spatial universe. If there is no space and no expanse of the three-dimensional world, the idea of omnipresence will not arise in our mind. We say He is omniscient—knows all things; but where were the 'things' before creation took place? So the idea that He is all-knowing is also not a good definition of God. We say He is all-powerful, omnipotent; but on whom does He exercise His power if there is nothing external to Him? Where was God sitting before He created the world? Because of the world, because of this created universe, we say He is everywhere, He knows all things, and He is all-powerful. Do we describe Him in terms of what He has created? What was He before He created? Where was He seated? Such difficulties are beyond human comprehension. The statement "Everything comes from Me—even the universe, the gods, and the rishis" leaves us in a state of mental perplexity as to how God could be the Creator and yet remain transcendent. And, in His transcendent state, where does He exist? This question is very intriguing because the term 'where' implies space, location, distance, and a situation. We would realise and appreciate that, because of this difficulty, God cannot be defined. It is Pure Existence.

9. THERE IS NOTHING IN THIS WORLD EQUAL TO ILLUMINATION.

God says “All things come from Me. Everything is an effect manifested from the ultimate cause, Myself. All difficulties vanish in one moment in the case of those great devotees who realise that even the worst of things have a location in My existence. They resort to Me day in and day out, undisturbed by the events taking place in the world. These devotees of Mine are always happy. They smile and dance in ecstasy at all times because their mind is absorbed in Me, and their *prana* is absorbed in Me. And when they talk among themselves, they talk only about Me and My glory; there is nothing else in their minds. They tell stories about Me—about My incarnations, My manifestations, My performances in this great creation. Every day they are involved in this spiritual activity of contemplating on Me, singing My glories, mutually instructing one another on the mystery of My life. In great compassion, I endow these devoted souls with the highest kind of understanding by which they cannot forget Me at any time. Those who are perpetually united with Me and who worship Me and adore Me and praise Me in intense devotional love, to them I give this great blessing and grace of Mine in the form of superior understanding.” If the gods want to help us, they do not come to protect us with a stick in their hands like a shepherd protecting sheep. Their help always comes in the form of an enhanced understanding, a blessing which they pour upon us in the form of an increased insight into the nature of things. This is because knowledge is the greatest blessing, insight is the greatest power, and there is nothing in this world equal to illumination. Objects, property, wealth, social status—none of them can stand before illumination and insight into the true nature of things, with which God blesses those who are eternally, perpetually, united with Him.

10. THE HIGHEST SADHANA IS THE POURING FORTH OF OUR SOUL INTO THE UNIVERSAL SOUL.

In *bhakti marga*, the emphasis is on God being entirely responsible for the welfare of the devotee, both here and hereafter. He shall see to it that we are provided with all physical, material amenities for our daily sustenance. He shall also see to it that we are properly educated in the spiritual sense. He shall see to it that all our ignorance is destroyed. He shall see to it that we are absorbed into Him. When effort is necessary, and we do not merely depend on the pouring of God's grace from above, this is called *markatanyaya*, or the monkey doctrine, because when a monkey runs about with a little baby, the baby clings to it with its effort. But where the emphasis is only on God's grace that He shall take care of us, it is like a cat carrying its kitten. A cat carries its kitten by its neck, and the kitten need not have to cling to it. Here God stresses the point that "Whatever you be and in whatever condition you may be living, if your heart is in Me, you need not bother about anything, either of this world or of the other world." He is emphasising that even the ignorance in our mind will be destroyed. We need not have to read scriptures and go to lectures, or make any particular effort in the direction of what is called spiritual practice. The only sadhana that we are required to perform is surrender. *Ananya saranagatih* is the pinnacle and the last point in *bhakti marga*. Love of God is the entire sadhana. There is no need to roll the beads or do different breathing techniques and sit in certain postures; nothing of the kind is necessary. And all these techniques are futile if the love of God is absent. The highest sadhana is the pouring forth of our soul into the Universal Soul; then everything shall be taken care of automatically.

11. SRI KRISHNA REPLIED, “INFINITE ARE MY NAMES”.

(Story of Muchukunda and Kalayavan)

There was a great sage called Muchukunda, who helped the gods in a war with the demons. Indra, who was highly pleased with him said, “Ask for a boon.”

He said, “I am very much tired. The only thing I need is a good sleep. This is the blessing: Let me sleep somewhere in a corner without disturbance, and bless me also that if anybody disturbs me while I am asleep, he shall perish in one second.” “Be it so!” said Indra.

Then Muchukunda, with post-war fatigue, went into a cave and fell asleep. Meanwhile, Kalayavana, a demon discharged by Kamsa under the instigation of Jarasandha and others, was pursuing Sri Krishna; and Sri Krishna, with a double motive in his mind, entered the cave in which Muchukunda was sleeping, which Kalayavana saw. Sri Krishna was dark blue in colour and, fortunately or unfortunately, Muchukunda was also the same colour. Sri Krishna entered the cave and stood in a corner, and the demon Kalayavana also entered. When he saw someone with almost the same colour as Sri Krishna lying down, fast asleep, he said “Oh, you are sleeping here!” and kicked him with his foot. The sleeping man slowly opened his eyes, and immediately the demon was reduced to ashes. Then Sri Krishna came forward. Muchukunda looked at him and said, “Who are you, this great mysterious magnificence that is standing before me? Will you kindly tell me your name?” Sri Krishna replied, “Infinite are My names. You can count the grains of sand on the shores of the ocean, but My glories and My names are larger in number than the sands on the beach of the ocean.”

12. MENTAL POWER CAN CONTROL THE WHOLE WORLD.

God manifests Himself in creation through His essential natures. His natures can be classified as existence, knowledge, power and bliss. God is existence. Existence is common to all things. Even a rock, even a hill, even a stone exists, and in that sense, philosophically, we may say that God is present even in inanimate things. But the quality of existence seems to be a special consideration in the assessment of any kind of value. If a person merely exists, we do not feel that it is adequate. If a person exists and also has knowledge, we consider that person to be superior to the person who merely exists. If a person exists, has knowledge, and also has some power, we consider that person as superior to the person who has existence and knowledge but no power. But if a person has existence, knowledge, power, and also immense bliss characterising his personal life, we consider that person to be almost superhuman. We can appreciate that knowledge cannot be found anywhere except in a human being. There is some kind of knowledge in everything—even plants have an inkling, and animals have some knowledge. When we speak of knowledge, we generally speak of the understanding that characterises the human species. But power can be either physical or mental. In physical power, animals are superior to man. Man cannot stand before animals as far as physical strength is concerned; but man has a mental power which is superior to animals. Hence, while any animal can terrify man physically, man can subdue any animal mentally. Mental power can control the whole world, while physical power is local and it can work only at a particular place, and not everywhere. Wherever there is an enhancement of the character of Selfhood, or pure subjectivity, there we may say that God is predominantly manifest.

13. THE ELEVENTH RUDRA APPEARED IN THE FORM OF FIERCE HANUMAN.

There are eleven Rudras, of which the most peaceful and compassionate one—the salubrious and most easily approachable, calm and quiet one—is Siva. Rudra is supposed to be very angry, ferocious and active; but all forms of Rudra are not like that. Rudra is also Siva. There is the Siva aspect which is calm and blessed and subdued, and there is also Rudra which is fierce. “There are eleven Rudras, of which the glorious, peaceful Sankara am I, radiating love and compassion.” It is said that Ravana worshipped Rudra in all the forms. Ravana had ten heads. The story goes that Ravana cut off one of his heads and offered it to one form of Rudra. He then cut off another head and offered it to the second Rudra. In this manner he offered his ten heads to ten Rudras; but the eleventh Rudra could not be appeased because Ravana did not have eleven heads. The eleventh Rudra became angry because nothing had been offered to him, so he appeared in the form of fierce Hanuman. It is said that Hanuman in Lanka was a manifestation of the eleventh Rudra—Rudravatara—who destroyed Lanka because Ravana could not satisfy him. It seems that Ravana wept and said, “If I had eleven heads, I would not have suffered like this. I had only ten.” God says, “I am the destroying principle at the end of time. I become Rudra and dance to the tune of the dissolution of the whole cosmos. The *tandava nritya* of Rudra will take place at the end of time. When the music of the *damaru* starts, the earth will tremble and become pieces; the sun, moon and stars will fall down, and the whole of creation will become liquid. I am that destroying principle. I am also the principle that will re-create after the destruction.”

14. “DO YOU WANT ME? THEN YOU SHOULD NOT BE.”

We say that so-and-so had *darshan* of Lord Krishna—which means to say, we want to see Lord Krishna with our own eyes, standing before us, but we do not know the fact that Lord Krishna, or whatever our concept of God is, is an all-pervading presence and, therefore, we cannot stand outside God. A dry piece of grass cannot carry hot embers; the grass will be reduced to ashes. So when we ask for the vision of the Almighty, perhaps we do not know what it is that we are asking for. We are asking for the abolition of our existence in order that God may exist. There is an old saying: Where there is desire of any kind in terms of the mind and the sense organs, there God is not. Where God is, this kind of operation through the mind and the senses cannot be there. Either we are or God is; we can choose between the two. There is no bargaining: “Let me be there a little bit, and You also be there little bit.” This kind of bargaining is not possible with God. He is utterly special, Who wants everything to be cut and dried. “Do you want Me? Then you should not be.” We will be frightened. “If I am not there, what good is there in my asking You to have this vision? If You are there, how will I know that You are there? You say I should not be there. Okay, maybe You are there. How would You expect me to know that You are there if I am not there?” God says, “I do not know all that. Either you are and I am not, or I am and you are not.” We are not prepared for this kind of logic on the part of the Absolute. This is the reason why none of us can be said to be wholly fit for this kind of realisation, and neither was Arjuna.

15. SRI KRISHNA SHOWED THE VISVARUPA FOUR TIMES IN HIS LIFE.

Sri Krishna showed the Visvarupa four times in his life. When he was a little baby, his elder brother complained to their mother that he was eating mud. His mother caught hold of the child and gave him a slap, “You are eating mud!” “No, I didn’t eat mud. You can see my mouth,” he said. He opened his mouth, and that lady saw the whole universe—all the oceans and rivers—and she was stunned. Then *maya* immediately cast a veil over her and she entirely forgot the vision, and placed the child on her lap. The second time Sri Krishna showed this terrific vision was in the court of the Kauravas, when Duryodhana would not listen to any good advice. The third time was this Bhagavadgita Visvarupa Darshana. The fourth time was when Sri Krishna was returning to Dvaraka after the war was over and on the way, near Rajasthan, he met a sage called Uttanka. Uttanka stopped Sri Krishna and said, “Please! What happened, after all? There was a quarrel between the Pandavas and the Kauravas, and you were trying to mediate. What was the outcome of it?” Sri Krishna replied, “Oh, it was all no good. I tried my best to make peace, but Duryodhana would not listen. War took place, they were destroyed, and the Pandavas were crowned king.” “Oh! You are a very partial person. This is very bad. You could have stopped the war if you wanted to. No! I’ll curse you just now,” said Uttanka. Then Sri Krishna said, “Why do you waste the little *tapasya* that you have gained by the service of Guru, etc.? Your curse cannot affect Me, because the Universal Power is in Me.” “Is it so? Is it? Are you the Universal Power? May I know that, then?” Immediately Lord Sri Krishna showed the Visvarupa once again, and then he left for Dvaraka.

16. THE MAJESTIC POWER OF BHARADVAJA RISHI.

Bharata, the brother of Rama, went to the forest in search of Rama. He was accompanied by a large retinue, with elephants and horses and chariots, thousands in number. Perhaps he was under the impression that Rama would yield and come back, and he would take him back in all glory. He happened to pass through the ashram of Sage Bharadvaja, who was living in a little hut; and he wanted to offer his obeisance to the great Maharaj before continuing. He went to the sage's ashram and prostrated before him. "Have you come alone, all the way from Ayodhya?" asked Sage Bharadvaja. "No, Maharaj. There is a big army with me," replied Bharata. "Why did you not bring them here?" "I would not like to disturb your holy atmosphere." The sage said, "I would like to entertain you today with dinner for all people". Bharata said, "Maharaj, We have got our own preparation. We require only your blessing." Bharadvaja said, "It shall be a pleasure to serve you with a repast. The sage went to his *vajnasala*, lit the fire and poured ghee, and said, "*Indraya svaha*. Indra! I want to serve Bharata and all his host with a repast. When he uttered these words, immediately, there was a dazzling light. The forest vanished. Celestials carrying golden plates started descending from the skies. Thousands of cooks, with food which was so fragrant that it could be smelt even from a distance, started serving such delicacies that even the emperor had not tasted. During dinner there was beautiful music. There was celestial bedding for everybody. Then they all slept, and had a good rest. In the morning, everything vanished. The sage called Bharata and enquired, "Did you have a good dinner? Did you have a good rest?" Bharata did not know what to say. He was weeping with joy. The idea is that these people are Godmen; and what God can do, these great heroes of spirit also can do.

**17. EVERY EVENT TAKES PLACE SIMULTANEOUSLY
IN EVERY PART OF THE WORLD.**

Though the Bhagavadgita was spoken prior to the commencement of the war, in another realm of existence the Mahabharata had already taken place, and victory had been won by the Pandavas. Everything had been done in another realm; we may call it the fourth dimensional realm, where events occur prior to their manifestation in the three-dimensional world. A lot of time is taken for events to manifest themselves as concrete appearances in the physical world. Even when wars take place in the world, they occur in heaven first. Ideas clash before people physically clash. An ideological war takes place first in the ethereal realm. The decision as to what would be the outcome of the Mahabharata war had already been taken in higher realms, and the implementation of the decision in the form of an actual conflict, from the point of view of the process of time, was yet to take place. There are wonders and wonders in the world. It is said that in some of the realms of creation, the Mahabharata has not yet occurred. It is to take place. In some of the realms of creation, the Mahabharata has already happened; and in other realms it is happening just now. Suppose a king comes in a procession from Delhi to Laxmanjhula. For the people in Delhi, the procession is about to start, and he has moved. He has reached Muzafarnagar. The people in Delhi say the procession is over. The people in Muzafarnagar say the procession is taking place. The people in Rishikesh say it has not yet taken place. Thus, for one it has already happened, for another it is just happening, and for a third person it has not happened at all. This applies to all the events in the world. Every event takes place simultaneously in every part of the world, but they appear to be manifest at different times.

18. THIS IS MENTIONED IN THE DRONA PARVA.

Many of the contributors to the victory (of Pandavas) in the war are not known to history. Of course, Sri Krishna's participation in this great Armageddon is well known, and we need not say anything about it. The hypnotic effect that he cast on the entire army when he gazed at the warriors was also a great contributory factor, as it drew fifty percent of the strength of the Kauravas. Hanuman, who was invisibly present on top of Arjuna's chariot—Arjuna is known as Kapidhvaja because of this—terrified the nerves of all the soldiers with his roar, and they were practically paralysed by the very sound of it. But something more was there. After the war was over, Arjuna was sitting calmly at one place, and Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasa came to see him. Receiving the honoured guest and seating him, Arjuna posed a question: "Great Master! I have some doubt in my mind. During the war, which is now over, I saw something in front of me every day—some human-being-like figure whose feet were not touching the ground. It was whitish and greyish, with a trident in hand. I had no occasion to ask this question to anybody. But now thou art here, O Master, will you tell me what it is that I have seen?" Vyasa replied, "Blessed you are, Arjuna. It was Lord Siva. He knew that you were helpless. Before Bhishma, Drona and Karna, even a hundred Arjunas could not stand. Knowing this, knowing your goodness and your physical incapacity to meet these people, Rudra himself was standing in front of you. He did not take up arms. He did not use his trident. He only exuded a fragrance around him. That fragrance killed them, and they had no life afterwards. Though they appeared to be alive, they were actually corpses. Who could win this victory except Rudra, that great yogi of yogis? O Arjuna, You had *darshan* of the great Sankara." This is mentioned in the Drona Parva.

19. HUMAN ACTION CANNOT TOUCH ETERNITY.

Human action cannot touch Eternity, because all action is in the process of time. All action is in space and in time. This Eternal terror which was beheld by Arjuna is not in space, not in time. Therefore, our studies of the Vedas, our *tapasyas*, our charities, our philanthropies, our deeds—whatever their merit, they are, after all, like performances in the dream world. When we wake up, the merits of all our good deeds in dream disappear. Similarly, in the quality of the perception of the Supreme Being, actions of the human being in the world of space and time bear no relevance. No action which is conditioned by time can take us to the Unconditioned Reality, which is not in time. The Imperishable, Eternal Reality cannot be contacted through the instrumentality of perishable deeds. Actions, deeds that we perform in this world have a beginning and an end. They are not eternal. How could we have the vision of that Eternal, contact with the Eternal or attain realisation of that Eternal, which is timeless, when the instruments that we are using for that purpose are in time? Who is saying, “I am afraid”? It is the ego of Arjuna that is saying that. The ego of Arjuna has not melted. It is frightened, as we are frightened to touch the oceanic waves. The Eternal is death to everything that is in time. Therefore, God looks like a terrific being to all who is afraid of death, because God is the death of all death. In one moment of that stupendous vision, the world vanished before Arjuna. The fourteen worlds of the entire creation melted down into the liquid of the flame of the Eternal Godhead. Unable to behold it for a long time, he beseeches the Lord to come down to the original human form. This request is granted, and Sri Krishna is standing there as before—with a whip in his hand, grooming the horses.

20. NO MORTAL DEED CAN TAKE YOU TO THE IMMORTAL.

Bhagavan Sri Krishna speaks to Arjuna. “Impossible it is to behold this (Cosmic) Form. You have seen it; but it is not easy to see it. The gods are also eager to visualise this, to have *darshan* of this Great Form. Every day they eagerly await that occasion when they can have this *darshan*. But I cannot easily be known, not even by the gods, because the means that they employ to have *darshan*, the vision of this Supreme Form, are inadequate. The means and the end should be on a common pedestal. An inadequate means cannot suffice for the achievement of an end that is supremely adequate. Study of the Vedas and scriptures, and intense physical austerities, mortification of the flesh, any kind of charity and philanthropic deed that you perform, and sacrifices of any kind—these will not suffice. No mortal deed can take you to the Immortal.” The word ‘*ananya*’ comes many a time in the Bhagavadgita. Sri Krishna never forgets to use this word ‘*ananya*’. Of course, everybody has devotion for God in some measure. We are all devotees of God in some way; but are we *ananya*? *Ananya* means undivided, non-separate, non-externalised, whole-souled love. Now, many of us may not be able to entertain such a thing. We love God and pray to God, we worship God and consider Him as the Ultimate Reality and the aim and goal of our life—accepted; but yet, there is some string that pulls our devotion back in another direction altogether. We have loves of different types which are connected to this world and, therefore, these devotions are secondary in their nature and fall into the category of *gaunabhakti*. Because our devotions are more ritualistic in their nature, externalised in their nature, we express our devotion in some form outside; but the *ananya* bhakti that is spoken of here is the devotion of our soul for the Universal Soul.

21. VERY RARELY OUR SOUL ACTS..

When the soul rises into action, the mind and the body cannot stand it. Very rarely our soul acts. In deep sleep we are possessed by our soul, and so we are immensely calm, quiet and happy. In the state of deep sleep, there is a subdual of all distraction for the time being. And in intense agony at the point of death, the soul also rises and is in complete possession of our personality. When we are sure that death is imminent and we do not have permission to live even for a second more, then the soul rises up into an action of agony. The third occasion when the soul rises is in an intense fulfilment of passionate action, whether it is political or personal. Where one loses oneself completely in a frenzy of behaviour and action, at that time the soul temporarily takes possession of us for a minute, for a second. It is only in these three conditions that the soul acts: at the greatest point or height of intensity when our longing is fulfilled, or when we are dying, or when we are sleeping. At other times the soul is sleeping, and only our mind is acting. It is necessary for the soul to act in devotion to God—not merely because we are dying, or we are fulfilling some desire, or we are sleeping. This is a fourth kind of state altogether in which the soul acts. The thrill, the stimulation, the rejoicing, the horripilation, the sense of loss of self-consciousness, and the sense of being possessed by Universal-consciousness characterise this devotion gradually, stage by stage. This alone can permit us to have this Great Vision. No action, no *tapasya*, no study, no ritual, no charity can help us, because they are all in the world of space and time.

22. SUCH A PERSON REACHES ME.

There are three processes: knowing, implementing, and materialising the love of God. First of all it is a vision and a knowledge. To know and to visualise, to see and to understand, has been bequeathed to Arjuna. He understood because of the explanation given by the Lord Himself as to what it is. He saw it, but he did not enter into it. He was standing outside it, as it were. He was looking at it. But it has to be borne in mind that the fulfilment of God-consciousness, or God-realisation, consists not merely in having the vision of God or knowing Him in a special characterisation. We have to merge ourselves into it. The Atman becomes Brahman. The soul enters into the Maker of all things. “This devotion, which is the supreme means of knowing Me, will enable one to know Me, to visualise Me, and finally to enter into Me, which is the salvation of the soul.” Sankaracharya tells us in his commentary that the verse “*matkarmakrn matparamo madbhaktah sangavarjitah, nirvairah sarva-bhutesu yah sa mam eti pandava*” (11.55): is the quintessence of all teaching. That is his opinion. “O Arjuna! Such a person will reach Me who performs all action and duty for My sake—*matkarmakrn*; who regards Me as supreme above all things anywhere—*matparamo*; who is intensely devoted to Me throughout the day and night for all time—*madbhaktah*; who is not attached to anything and is free from contamination by anything in the world—*sangavarjitah*; who has no enmity with anybody and doesn’t hate anyone, and no one is an enemy of that person—*nirvairah sarvabhutesu*: no living being is antagonistic to that person and he is not antagonistic to any living being. Such a person reaches Me.”

**23. UNLESS WE BECOME WHOLE,
WE CANNOT ATTAIN THE WHOLE.**

Kaliyuga manifested itself in full force in the picturisation of the Mahabharata battle. No one loved another. Everyone hated the other. From that *samsaric* mire of intense antagonism, conflict and fear, the soul had to be taken gradually, stage by stage. This has been done by the instructions that Sri Krishna gave, as a very good schoolmaster would give, without telling more than what is necessary under the given condition. Apt words were used and suitable suggestions fitting to the occasion were given—not a word more, not a word less. But gradually the tempo went on rising, and we have observed how the tempo rose. The explanations became more and more clarifying, more in depth in their nature, until they reached a kind of perfection, where the individual person was taught the art of self-integration and making oneself whole. Unless we become whole, we cannot attain the Whole that is the Universal Reality. As we know very well, most of us are shreds of personality, fractions of the psyche, torn pieces of individuality, and none of us is complete in ourselves. We think different things at different times, and we do not know today what we will think tomorrow. There is a non-alignment of our psychological individuality. The understanding, the feeling, the willing and the emotion do not act harmoniously in concert. Therefore, unhappiness, suspicion and even sleeplessness are caused by this distracted action of the psychological organ *antahkarana*—*mano*, *buddhi*, *ahamkara*, *chitta*, which act as if they are independent entities, while actually they are four facets of a single action of the total psyche. For the integration of personality—to wean the person away from this difficulty of non-alignment—the art of meditation is prescribed.

24. READ THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER OF THE BHAGAVADGITA EVERY DAY.

The true religion of humanity is impartial in its nature and considers every human being as a brother or a sister, a co-operator, a pilgrim on the path. There is a spirit of cooperation among the individuals on account of everyone wanting only one God, because it has been emphasised that outside the one God there cannot be another god. The little gods, whom people generally worship, are the manifestations, the facets, the fingers or the more concretised forms of the Universal Being, and their worship will also bring some result. We will get some blessing even from a *patwari*, but that is not enough. It is not sufficient because full authority of administration is not invested with the *patwari*. So is the case with the little gods. They will give us some blessing, but these blessings have a beginning and an end, and we will repent afterwards that the thing that we sought was not actually obtained. Therefore, it is necessary to seek the One God, outside Whom there cannot be any other god. It is further added that God is so kind and merciful that He shall take care of us as a kind father, as a kind mother, as a grand-father, as a great grandfather, as our very life-breath, our very sustenance—everything. For the perfection of yoga, for the removal of dirt in our mind, for removing even sins, and to do *prayaschitta* for any mistakes that we have committed, the Eleventh Chapter is generally read. The Eleventh Chapter of the Bhagavadgita is like a *mantra* which will purify us, cleanse our mind and burnish our soul. Students of yoga, students of true religion, lovers of God, would do well to read the Eleventh Chapter of the Bhagavadgita every day, because without some kind of prop, some assistance from outside, we will not be in a position to contemplate on God independently.

25. KARMAPHALATYAGA, IS FINALLY SUPERIOR EVEN TO MEDITATION THAT IS COUPLED WITH A DESIRE FOR THE FRUITS OF ACTION.

The Lord says, “Do the works that you perform every day as a duty. ‘Duty for duty’s sake; work is worship’ is the motto that you may keep before Me. Do not expect anything from the work that you perform. Let it be an unselfish service that you render to people or to anyone for whose sake you are working.” This is karma yoga. *Jnana*, or knowledge of your union with Me, is superior to the practice that you attempt for concentration on Me.” That is, wisdom of God is superior to just daily practice. But *jnana* does not mean merely knowing in an academic or scriptural sense. We may know God through the study of the Bhagavadgita or the Upanishads. Here, *jnana* is used in two different senses: the higher knowledge, and the lower knowledge. The higher knowledge is that which has no object in front of it. The lower knowledge is that which is a means of knowing something else, a means to the performance of work, etc. In the case where knowledge is of a lower type which has an object in front of it—it may be scriptural knowledge, academic knowledge, learning, whatever it is—it is inferior to meditation. Direct meditation is superior to knowledge which has an object in front of it. Hence, higher knowledge—knowledge which has no object in front of it—is superior. But if we meditate with a desire for the fruits of our actions, this meditation is inferior to our renouncing the fruits of actions because if we meditate with a love for the fruits of action, our selfishness persists. “So I consider *karmaphalatyaga*, the abandoning of fruits, or the result of all that you do, as finally superior even to meditation that is coupled with a desire for the fruits of action. From this kind of renunciation of the fruits of action, you will attain peace.” *Tyagac chantir anantaram*: “You will get peace with these methods that I mentioned.”

26. WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONSCIOUSNESS AND MATTER?

The so-called field—this body or anything that is material—is an unconscious presentation that is usually called matter. That which knows matter is consciousness. Throughout the history of philosophy, there has been a lot of controversy on the theme as to what is the relationship between consciousness and matter, and this controversy has not subsided even today. How do we connect consciousness with matter? The knower of the field knows the field. Consciousness has no characteristic of matter, and matter does not have the characteristic of consciousness. Consciousness does not move, whereas matter is always in a state of flux and agitation. Therefore, they are dissimilar in their character. They cannot have any kind of connection, yet they seem to be working together in some way for the purpose of effecting some aim, which seems to be the very process of evolution. The Sankhya doctrine gives a very humorous analogy to explain how consciousness, which is intelligent, works together with matter, which is unintelligent. Consciousness has eyes but no legs. It cannot move. It is universal existence. Therefore, it can see because it is intelligence, but it cannot move because it has no legs. *Prakriti* has legs; it can move. But it has no eyes; it cannot see. It has no consciousness. Now, suppose there are two persons going on a journey: one who can see but cannot walk, and another who can walk but cannot see. They make an arrangement between themselves. The blind person who can walk carries on his shoulder the legless person who can see. So the carried person sees and directs the path, and the legged one moves. This is how consciousness and matter work together, says Sankhya in a humorous analogy.

27. THE SANKHYA ANALOGY DOES NOT EXPLAIN MATTERS.

The Sankhya analogy (of the blind person and the legless one) does not explain matters, because the two persons are independent of each other. The seeing person and the walking person are not one person. Therefore, consciousness and matter cannot become one unit. Unless there is a blend of the two, it will be difficult to explain perception of any kind. This subject has been taken up in the Vedanta Shastra as an improvement on the dualistic doctrine of the Sankhya, which carries on its philosophy with its eyed-one and legged-one combination. The Lord says, “Arjuna, I am the knower of the field. I am the Pure Consciousness that knows all things and operates these material forces; and I am not merely in one body. When I refer to the body, you may be thinking of some particular body, this body or that body, and there is a consciousness in each body. That may be so, that consciousness is inherently present in every body, within each person, but that is not the point. I am present as the *ksetrajña*, or the knower of the field, in all the fields. That is, all individuals whatsoever—right from Brahma, the Creator, down to the atom—are indwelt by Me, and I know all things as the Omniscient Knower. In a sense, it means that the *ksetra* is the entire physical universe. The whole of creation can be considered as the *ksetra*, or the field of action; and Omniscient Intelligence that is operating in terms of this material manifestation is the *ksetrajña*. Therefore, the question of the relationship between God and creation, consciousness and matter, *ksetrajña* and *ksetra*, *purusha* and *prakriti*—all mean, finally, one and the same thing”.

28. THE WHOLE THING IS THE REALM OF THE *KSETRA* AND THE *KSETRAJÑA*.

In an individual sense, we may consider the *ksetra* as a material manifestation in the form of this body, and the *ksetrajñā* as the inner Atman; or in a cosmical sense, we may say the entire universe is the *ksetra*, the field of action of the one *purusha*, the one consciousness, which is the *ksetrajñā* in the cosmic sense. The cosmic *ksetra* rises from the lowest material realm of the earth up to Ishvara. The whole thing is the realm of the *ksetra* and the *ksetrajñā*. *Mahabhūta* is the name given to the five gross elements—earth, water, fire, air, and sky or ether. These are the things visible to our eyes because they are physically manifest as gross objects of sense; but there are internal realities transcending the five elements. The various functions of this *ksetrajñā* in a cosmical sense are mentioned as *ahamkāra*, *buddhi* and *avyakta*. The *ahamkāra*, *buddhi* and *avyakta* correspond exactly to the Sankhya principle of *ahamkāra*, *mahat tattva* and *avyakta prakṛiti*; or in another style, we may say that *ahamkāra* corresponds to Virat, *buddhi* corresponds to Hiranyagarbha, and *avyakta* corresponds to Ishvara. Ishvara, Hiranyagarbha, Virat, the five elements, and the *tanmatras*—known as *śabda*, *sparsa*, *rūpa*, *rasa*, *gandha*—constitute the entire cosmos. What are the constituents of the individual? There are five organs of perception, and five organs of action. If we also add mind as the chief perceiving faculty, it becomes eleven. Five objects of sensory cognition, together with the mind and the ten sense organs, constitute the substance of the individual microcosm. The macrocosm consists of the five elements, plus *ahamkāra*, *buddhi* and *avyakta*. The microcosm is mentioned as *pīṇḍanda*, and the macrocosm is *brahmanḍa*.

29. WHAT IS TRUTH?

Adhyatmajñananityatvam: Our daily routine should be working for the acquisition of *adhyatmajñana*, the knowledge of the Self. We should work for it day and night. *Tattva jñanartha darsanam*: We should aspire for the vision of Truth, and ask for nothing else. What is Truth? *Jñeyam yat tat pravaksyami yaj jñatvamrtam asnute, anadimat param brahma na sat tan nasad ucyate* (13.12): “I shall now tell you what Truth is. That Supreme Brahman is the Ultimate Truth, after knowing which there is attainment of immortality.” *Anadimat param brahma*: It has no beginning and no end. It cannot be designated as either existing or as not existing. It cannot be called existing because whenever we think of any existing thing, we want to see it with our eyes or consider it as some object of some sense organ. As it is not the object of any sense organ, we do not consider it to be existing; but neither is it non-existing—because, ultimately, it is the only existence. *Na sat tan nasad ucyate*: Therefore, it cannot be regarded as *sat*, and it cannot be regarded as *asat* either.

Sarvatahpanipadam (13.13): It is spreading itself every-where. Everywhere we can find the hands of that Being and feet of that Being. *Sarvato'ksisiromukham*: Everywhere are the eyes of that Being, everywhere are the heads of that Being, and everywhere are the faces of that Being. *Sarvatahsrutimal loke*: Everywhere are the ears of that Being. *Sarvam avrtya tisthati*: It envelops all things.

30. THESE ARE THE TREMENDOUS CONTRADICTIONARY QUALITIES OF GOD.

Sarvendriyagunabhasam sarvendriyavivarjitam (13.14): That which we cognise through the sense organs as objects of sense is also a manifestation of this Brahman, conditioned by the sense organs. But it is free from all sense organs. It can be cast into the mould of sensory perception in the form of objects, but it is not an object, because it has no relationship with any sense organ. It has no relation to anything in the world. Transcendent is the Reality. Though it is transcendent, it supports everything by also being immanent at the same time. *Nirguna gunabhoktr ca*: It has no quality by itself, because to say that a thing has quality would be to compare it to something else. It is blue, it is red, it is tall, it is short—we cannot say anything about it because all these definitions, all these descriptions, require a comparison of it with something else; and because something else external to it does not exist, it cannot be regarded as having any quality at all. Therefore, it is called *nirguna*. *Gunabhoktr ca*: But all qualities reside in it. Though it has no quality by itself, whatever beauty we see, whatever colour we see, whatever sound we hear, whatever sensations we have, everything is on account of its existence. Every kind of statue can be found inside a block of stone, but actually there is no statue at all inside a block of stone. *Bahirantas ca bhutanam* (13.15): It is everywhere—outside us, as well as inside us, like a pot that is sunk in the ocean has water outside it as well as inside it. This Brahman is flooding us: inwardly as the Atman, and outwardly as Brahman. Everywhere it is, outside and inside. *Acaram*: It does not shake or move; and it does not fluctuate like the world of the three *gunas*. *Caram eva ca*: It moves, and nobody can move faster than it; and yet it is totally immovable. These are the tremendous contradictory qualities of God.

31. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO KNOW IT

THROUGH THE INSTRUMENTS OF MIND AND INTELLECT.

Nobody can be faster than He, nobody can be quicker in action than He, and yet He does nothing; He is stable, remaining in His own abode. Because of its subtlety, because it is subtler than even the mind, subtler than even the intellect, it is impossible to know it through these instruments of mind and intellect. It is very far. It looks as if it is infinitely far away from us, beyond the stars, because we cannot see it anywhere. We always imagine that the Supreme Being is very far away—many millions of light years away—yet it is very near, in our throat itself. Nothing can be farther than That, because of its vastness and infinitude; and nothing can be nearer than That, because it is the Selfhood of all beings. It cannot be divided into parts—some *atman* here, some *atman* there. It is one indivisible sea of Selfhood, yet it appears to be divided into little *atmans*—my *atman*, your *atman*, this self, that self, etc. It looks as if it is cut into pieces of *atman* across many living beings, while actually it is indivisible—like space appearing to be cut into parts when there are vessels containing little spaces. Little spaces are not parts of the universal space. There is only one universal space, though it appears as if they are all divided into many vessels in which we cognise this vast space. It is the protector, the supporter, and the benefactor of all living beings. It absorbs everything into itself. It releases everything from itself. It is the Light of all lights. Thousands of suns cannot stand before it. The light of the sun is like darkness before it. Beyond the darkness of the world shines that supreme radiance of the Absolute. It is knowledge, it is the object of knowledge, and it is also the knower. All three clubbed together is that Eternity which is Brahman, the Absolute. It is in our own heart. It is in the heart of all.

32. *PURUSHA* IS INACTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS, WHEREAS *PRAKRITI* IS BLIND ACTIVITY.

Prakriti and *purusha* may be said to be *anadi*, or beginningless, if we are to go according to the original doctrine of the Bhagavadgita, which does not expect us to think of *purusha* and *prakriti* as two different things but as potencies, powers, or manners of working of God Himself—Ishvara, Purushottama. On the one hand, *prakriti* is extension, space-time; and on the other hand, there is *purusha*, or consciousness. Consciousness and extension constitute the principle of the immanence of God in the universe. *Prakriti* and *purusha* can be beginningless in the same sense as God is beginningless, because of the fact that they are powers of God. *Prakriti* is the cause of the origin of the causal chain. The cause-and-effect relationship is operative only in the realm of *prakriti*, whereas pain and pleasure are experienced by *purusha*. The contact of *purusha* with *prakriti* is the reason behind the experience of pleasure and pain. Experience is not possible unless there is consciousness, and consciousness is available only in the *purusha*. *Purusha* is inactive consciousness, whereas *prakriti* is blind activity. They somehow get juxtaposed, and it appears as if there is conscious activity. Actually, there is no conscious action. Action is always unconscious because it is connected with the movement of the *gunas* of *prakriti*, who have no self-consciousness. But the *purusha* does not act; it is conscious. So there is a peculiar jumble—a juxtaposition of the consciousness that does not act with the *prakriti*, which acts but does not know—and this results in the appearance of conscious activity. For instance, we seem to be doing something consciously. This ‘seeming to be doing consciously’ is due to a mix-up of the *purusha* and *prakriti* principles in us—our body being the *prakriti*, and our Atman being the *purusha*.

33. **PURUSHA DOES NOT ENJOY, BECAUSE IT ITSELF IS BLISS.**

Purusha located, or lodged, in the *prakriti* appears to enjoy the qualities of *prakriti*. When water moves, the sun that is reflected in it also appears to move. But really, the sun, which is the cause of this reflection in the water, is not affected in any way whatsoever. Similarly, this contact of consciousness with matter—*purusha* with *prakriti*—makes it appear that there is enjoyment, and that there is an agency in action. *Purusha* does not enjoy, because it itself is bliss; but the sorrow that is the fate of the *purusha* seems to be the outcome of its contact with *prakriti*. A pure crystal appears to be coloured, or disfigured, by the colour of the object that is brought near it. Thus, one enjoys and one suffers. Really, consciousness does not enjoy and does not suffer. But the movements of *prakriti* in this manner or that manner—as *sattva* or *rajas* or *tamas*—makes the consciousness, the *purusha*, feel as if it is transparent and happy when it is in contact with the *sattva* of *prakriti*; it is disturbed, agitated, angry and passionate when it appears to be reflecting through the *rajoguna* of *prakriti*; and it is very slothful, lethargic and static when it is in contact with the *tamasic* quality of *prakriti*. Because of repeated contact and getting habituated to this kind of contact with *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, the *purusha*—as it were, indescribably though—forgets its original universality, and develops a tendency to get involved in the fulfilment of its own limited desires, the limitation being caused by the *rajoguna prakriti* with which it also comes in contact. Just as a lion cub that is lost may end up in a flock of sheep, and may bleat like a sheep though it is actually a lion, the universal Purusha bleats like an individual on account of its contact with the distracting qualities of *rajas* and *tamas*, and it is born in various species.

34. Tulsidas says, “*Binu satsanga viveka na hoi*”

There are people who cannot do these things: they cannot meditate; they cannot contemplate the Self by the self; they cannot meditate on the categories of Sankhya (The twenty-four categories of creation mentioned in the Sankhya doctrine reveal the fact that our individuality is also constituted of the same universal categories and, therefore, we do not stand independently as persons by ourselves. Thus, our personality-consciousness and ego-consciousness automatically vanish even by contemplation on the twenty-four *tattvas* of the Sankhya. Hence, some attain the state of perfection by the Sankhya category); they cannot engage themselves in the *ashtanga* yoga of Patanjali; they cannot do karma yoga. What should they do? The compassionate Lord says: “They also reach Me, who merely listen to My glories and the glories of this knowledge in *satsanga*.” Not knowing the difficult techniques of practice, they can attain perfection by only hearing—*srutva*. *Satsanga* is a very potent method of self-purification. If the *satsanga* is properly conducted and we are honest in our participation in that *satsanga*, that *satsanga* itself will be sufficient not only for purification of the self, but it will even act as a supreme meditation itself. We will be in ecstasy at that time. As Tulsidas says, “*Binu satsanga viveka na hoi*”: Without *satsanga*, discrimination does not dawn. By merely hearing the glories through *satsanga*, people also attain perfection. Therefore, all of you will attain moksha. You will not be reborn, because at least you have heard what is being said. God is very compassionate. He will not harass you with hard disciplines. Listen, hear, and absorb this knowledge that you have heard into yourself. You will cross over the realm of death—*mrtyum atitaranti*.

35. THE SUPREME LORD EXISTS IN AN EQUILIBRATED FASHION EVERYWHERE.

All the manifestation, living or non-living, is due to a combination of *ksetra* and *ksetrajña*, a manifold type of contact of *purusha* with *prakriti* in various degrees of ascent and descent. In the higher realms of celestials where existence is transparent, the contact of *purusha* with *prakriti* is rarefied. Existence becomes more and more gross as the *rajasic* and *tamasic* qualities of *prakriti* become more predominant. *Sattva* is supposed to be predominant in the heavenly regions; *rajasic* qualities are predominant in the human realm, and *tamas* is predominant in the nether regions. But whatever be the contact through *sattva* or *rajas* or *tamas*—experiences either in heaven, in this mortal world or in the lower realm—every experience is a result of the contact of *purusha* with *prakriti* in various ways. Anything that is born has significance as an individual only because both *purusha* and *prakriti* are set together in some proportion. We are brought back to the transcendent existence of an equally distributed consciousness—not a little *purusha* coming in contact with *prakriti*, but something transcending the contact of *purusha* with *prakriti*. That Being is equally present in all as the Self of all. It is the Self of the ant and the elephant and the human being and the god. The distinction among them is due to the appearance of their subtle bodies and gross bodies, but the life that is behind the subtle and gross bodies is common—as sunlight is common and appears to be coloured or distorted according to the nature of the glasses that we put on. The Supreme Lord exists in an equilibrated fashion everywhere.

36. CONSCIOUSNESS CANNOT DO ANYTHING, AND DOING CANNOT BE CONSCIOUS.

‘Consciously doing something’ is a misnomer. Consciousness cannot do anything, and doing cannot be conscious. So, if this knowledge arises in a person that activity is only the movement of *prakriti* with its three *gunas*, and the consciousness thereof is totally independent of the *gunas*, they will not ever feel that they are the doer of action. That is, their consciousness will always be in a state of witness, or detachment, from the process of action. But our body and our consciousness are so intimate that we cannot distinguish one from the other. That is why we feel that we are doing things, while really there is no such thing. When a red-hot iron rod is placed before us, we do not see the iron rod; we see only fire, though the fire and the iron rod are two different things. And when we touch it, what are we touching? Are we touching the fire, or are we touching the iron rod? We may say that the iron rod burns. The iron rod does not burn; it is the fire that burns. Yet the two have been superimposed on each other in such a way that the rod looks like fire, and the fire appears to have the shape of a lengthy rod. The fire does not have the shape of the rod, and the rod has no heat; but yet, we mix up two aspects and say that the long rod is hot. In a similar manner, we make a mistake in our own selves by imagining this body is conscious. The body cannot be conscious. Consciousness is different from the body; therefore, when there is bodily action—which is nothing but the action of *prakriti*, because the body is made up of *prakriti*’s three *gunas*—we begin to imagine, “I am doing something. And because I feel that I am doing something, I also expect a result to follow from that action, and I must enjoy the result of that action. I am doing the action and, therefore, the fruit of that action should come to me.” Hence, karma *phala* comes as a recompense for the feeling that one is doing.

37. THE *KUTASTHA CHAITANYA*, THIS ATMAN, IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL THE ACTIVITIES THROUGH THIS BODY.

The *kutastha chaitanya*, or the witness consciousness in us, is the true self in us. That remains uncontaminated by anything that takes place, just as space inside a vessel cannot become affected by things that we pour into the vessel. If we pour something fragrant into the vessel, the space inside it does not become fragrant; or if we put something bitter into the vessel, the space inside it does not become bitter. It is the content that has the quality; space itself has no quality. In a similar manner, the content—which is the physical, the astral and the causal bodies—has the characteristics of action and the enjoyment of the fruits of action; but the witness, which is the light of the sun in the sky, as it were, is untarnished by anything that may happen to this body in all these three phases. Though this *kutastha chaitanya*, this Atman, is responsible for all the activities through this body, it is not in any way contaminated by the activities carried on through the *sariras*—*anandamaya*, *vijnanamaya*, *manomaya*, *pranamaya* and *annamaya*. The physical sheath, the subtle astral sheath and the casual sheath are involved in movement, action and the desire for the fruit of action. Their activity is impossible unless the light of the *kutastha*, the Atman, is shed on them. In the same manner, nothing in this world can live or act unless the sun shines in the sky. We are alive today because the sun is in the sky. No plant, no living being can survive if the sun in the sky does not blaze forth heat energy. Yet the sun is not in any way responsible for what is happening in the world. Though without it nothing can happen, it is not responsible for anything that is happening. In a similar manner, just because the *kutastha*, the Self inside, is responsible for the movement of the three bodies in us, it is not connected vitally in any way. It stands above the turmoil of the action of the three bodies, just as the sun transcends all the events taking place in the world.

**38. WE DO NOT WANT TO PERISH, BECAUSE THE DEEPEST
SELF IN US CANNOT PERISH.**

As the sun in the sky illumines the whole world, so does this *ksetrajña purusha*, this Atman pervading all things, illumine all bodies. Self-consciousness and the desire to survive are implanted in all species in creation by the operation of this all-pervading Universal Consciousness. Consciousness is eternal. That is why there is an instinct in everyone not to die. It is the consciousness inside that is actually responsible for our fear of death, and for our desire to lengthen our life as much as possible. It is an empirical, externalised, distorted form of the eternity of the Self. We do not want to perish, because the deepest Self in us cannot perish. But because we have mixed up the eternity in us with the three *koshas*, including the physical body, we make the mistake of perpetuating this body and wanting to exist as individuals for all time to come. Actually, this instinct for survival and the longing to exist always arise not from the body, but from the Atman inside, which is invisible to us. Its very existence is obliterated from our activity and perception, which is conditioned by the sense organs which always move in an externalised direction. The mind and senses cannot know that there is an Atman at all and, therefore, we are caught up. Those who are able to distinguish between *ksetrajña* and *ksetra*, between *purusha* and *prakriti*, between the Self and its object, and between consciousness and matter shall attain the Supreme Abode. If this distinction is clear before us, we will be totally unattached to everything in this world, and we will not be reborn into this world of *prakriti*, this world of the three *gunas*. We will attain the Supreme Abode—*param*.

39. SUCH A PERSON ATTAINS TO UNITY WITH BRAHMAN.

The principle behind the operation of the three *gunas* is that when one is active, the other two are inactive. When all the sense organs release in a kind of radiance, as it were, there is brightness in the face, there is a kind of composure in the personality of an individual, and there is a kind of calm and quiet aura around that person. If this is recognised in any individual, we must conclude that *sattva* is predominant in that person. When *rajas* becomes active, there is greed in the mind of a person; there is a sense of possessiveness. Always starting new projects but not being able to bring them to conclusion, never ceasing activity till the end of one's life, with desire at the back of all these projects of action, these are supposed to be the basic qualities of *rajoguna*. When *tamas* predominates, what happens? There is no light in front of oneself. There is no radiance or hope on the horizon at all and, therefore, there is no inclination to do anything. There is an inactive tendency in the person. There is always the committing of mistakes whenever any kind of initiative is taken. There is delusion at the back of all these things. That is the essential nature of *tamoguna*. If a person leaves this body while *sattva* is predominant, then that person reaches higher worlds such as heaven, and even regions above heaven. But if a person dies while *rajas* is predominant in the mind, he is then reborn into conditions of intense labour, work and attachment. If one dies while *tamas* is predominant, he will be reborn in a subhuman species as some kind of animal; and even if he is born as a human being, he will be a non-utilitarian individual who is usually called idiotic. When a person, with his eye of wisdom, sees that all the drama of life is only a performance of the three *gunas*, and only the three *gunas* do anything anywhere, and knows, at the same time, that there is something above the three *gunas* such a person attains to unity with Brahman.

40. ANALOGY OF TWO BIRDS PERCHED ON A SINGLE TREE.

This analogy is in the Veda and also in the Upanishad. On this large tree, two birds are perched. One of the birds is busy eating the sweet berries, the fruits that are yielded by this wonderful tree, but, unfortunately, these are forbidden fruit. So delicious is this fruit, so rapidly is the bird gulping the fruit, so insatiable is the desire to eat it, and so endlessly is this activity of eating going on, that it has lost consciousness that there is another bird sitting by its side. If we are at a large luncheon and are given delicious dishes, we may not notice the person sitting next to us because of our enchantment by the food. The bird that is by the side of this indulging bird is not eating anything. It is just sitting there and gazing at all the wonders of this manifestation of the tree, knowing everything about it, root and branch, but not concerned with either the majesty of the tree, the size of the tree, or the beauty of its product, the fruit. The bird that is eating the fruit of this tree is attached. The bird that is unconcerned and is just looking at the tree is detached. The tree cannot affect the bird that is detached, but the bird that is attached is bound hand and foot. When the eating is over and it is satiated, and cannot eat any more, the bird looks around and sees another bird sitting by its side. The moment it looks at that other bird sitting there, this bird attains liberation. By the mere consciousness of the existence of that bird, without having to do anything at all with it other than the mere awareness of it being there, liberation is attained. There is no necessity to deal with God. The only thing that is required is to be aware that such a thing called God exists. The mere awareness of the existence of such a thing called God is sufficient for the liberation of the soul, and no activity is called for here. The unconsciousness of there being such a thing called God is the reason why we are indulging in all the wondrous binding activities of the world and are busy eating the delicacies which this world is yielding for us.

41. IT IS GOOD TO REACH GOD, AND IT IS NOT GOOD TO COME BACK FROM THAT.

It is impossible to describe in words why it is not good to come back, and why it is good to be there (at the Imperishable abode of God). By any kind of logic or scriptural quotation, one cannot be convinced as to why that attainment, from where there is no return, is necessary. Some people try to give examples to convince us in some way, in a feeble manner. It is like going to the waking condition from the dream world. Would we like to go back to the dream world once again? Yesterday we had a good dream or a bad dream, and then we woke up. Now we have a very clear waking consciousness. Do we grieve that we have woken up from that dream, that we have lost our dream kingdom? We were Akbar Badshah or Caesar in the dream world, and now we have woken up as ordinary mortals. Which is better—being Caesar in the dream world or this perspicacious consciousness of waking? This waking consciousness includes everything that we saw in dream. Not only the dream perceiver, not only the seer or the observer of the dream, but the entire space, time and objects—the whole universe of dream—are contained in the waking mind. That is to say, this wondrous universe to which we are so attached, from which we are afraid of leaving, is contained in that thing which we are attaining and from which there is no point in returning—as there is no point in returning from waking to dream once again. We may say, “There are so many people in this world. Am I to leave them here and go alone, as a selfish man, to the abode of that from where I will not come back?” The same analogy applies here. Did we not see many people in dream? Why did we wake up, leaving them all in the dream world? These are some illustrations that will clear the cobweb of our mind and make us feel inwardly convinced that it is good to reach God, and it is not good to come back from That.

42. THERE IS A KIND OF THEORY CALLED PANTHEISM.

There is a kind of theory called pantheism, which says that God is totally exhausted in this world—as milk is exhausted when it becomes curd and it cannot become milk once again. The point here is quite different. God does not convert Himself into the world by a modification of Himself as milk modifies itself into curd, and God is not exhausted entirely in this world as milk is exhausted in curd. There is no exhaustion at all. The transcendent Being remains unaffected, even as our waking mind is not at all affected by what we saw in the dream world. The Lord says, “This *jivaloka*, this world of individuals, is sustained by Me, by a little fraction of Myself as the vitality of creation. What happens to these individuals that are so created with a part of Me? They are pulled by the sense organs, which are five in number.” These are the sense organs, including the mind, which is also considered as an organ of perception. The mind is the internal sense, and the other five—hearing, sight, touch, taste and smell—are external senses; so the five plus the mind totals six. The six senses, including the mind, are rooted in the powers of nature, which are the three *gunas*, due to which they are helplessly dragged hither and thither on account of the mutation of the *gunas* of *prakriti*. If there is a fragrance somewhere, when the wind blows the fragrance also is wafted up and the fragrance is carried by the wind in whatever direction it blows. In a similar manner, when an individual—a *jiva*, or a soul—leaves this particular body and endeavours to enter another body, the mind and the senses are taken together with it: The body is left here, but our main treasure trove—the mind with which we think, and the sense organs, which are the causes of our attachment—they, in a subtle potential form, get attached to the subtle body which is actually reincarnating. The *jiva* does not die while the body is apparently dead.

43. THERE IS AN ABSOLUTE BEYOND THE SEEING OR WITNESSING CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE WITNESSED WORLD.

The Bhagavadgita scores a point above the Sankhya when it says there is something above both *purusha* and *prakriti*. For the Sankhya, there is nothing above *purusha* and *prakriti*. According to the Sankhya, there are only two realities—consciousness on the one side and matter on the other side—and everything can be explained by the juxtaposition and the interaction of *purusha* and *prakriti*. So why should we want a third thing? But, interestingly and very specially, the statement is made that there is a Being transcending this so-called *prakriti*, and it is above even the *purusha*. The perceiving consciousness and the perceived object are transcended in a universal consciousness that absorbs both into its original essence. The *purusha* and the *prakriti* of the Sankhya can be said to be like a universal subject and a universal object; but we cannot regard a subject as being conscious of an object unless there is a mechanism which makes it possible for *purusha* to be aware of *prakriti*. As *prakriti* is totally *jada* and inert, it cannot act on *purusha*; and as *purusha* is wholly consciousness, it cannot act on *prakriti*. Therefore, they are total dissimilarities. If that is the case, creation cannot be explained. With all kinds of manipulated analogies, the Sankhya tries to explain how they act, though they cannot act, because of the original assumption of the Sankhya that the two have different qualities. But they appear to be acting, like the right and left hands acting in harmony. The two hands have no connection other than through the body, of which both are parts. It is here alone, in the Bhagavadgita, that a transcendent opinion is held that there is an Absolute beyond the seeing or witnessing consciousness and the witnessed world. God is not simply consciousness; He is not simply an object of perception in the form of the whole universe. “Unthinkable Reality, Supreme Transcendence, Purushottama am I”, the Lord says.

44. MAINLY A SHASTRA IS CONSIDERED AS A GUIDE.

Scripture is your final authority in matters of doubt. The Manusmṛiti says that the Veda is the ultimate authority whenever we have any kind of *dharmasankata*, or doubt in regard to a decision of what is proper and improper in our life. But if it is difficult to find an answer in the Vedas for the little difficulties that we have got in our life, what should we do? We must go to the Smritis, such as the Manu Smṛiti, Yajñavalkya Smṛiti, Parasara Smṛiti, etc., which go into greater details about the difficulties of human nature in a larger dimension than the Veda Samhitas. If we do not find a solution even there because these days there are some peculiar difficulties which Manu, Yajñavalkya and Parasara may not have thought of, what should we do? We should consider how great people, saints and sages, lived in this world. Like us, they must have also passed through tribulations and turmoils. We should look at the experiences of great saints and sages—Vaishnavas, Saivas, Saktas, or whoever they be—and see how they conducted themselves when they were confronted with problems of various kinds. That will be a solution for us. “What did that great saint do when he had this kind of difficulty? Oh! I see. I should behave like this.” But suppose we have such a peculiar, fantastic difficulty whose solution cannot be found in the Vedas or in the Smritis, and even saints had not passed through that experience, then we should go to our Guru. If we do not have a Guru, we should close our eyes and ask the Atman, “What is good for me?” If we are honest and sincere and repentant, the light within will tell us what is good for us. However, mainly a Shastra is considered as a guide. Hence, a Shastra is considered as a great *pramana*, an authority for us in matters of doubt concerning what is proper and improper.

45. THE MEANING OF OM TAT SAT.

The Supreme Being—Brahman, the Absolute—is designated as Om Tat Sat in a threefold definition or description. Knowers of the Vedas, known as Brahmanas, and the Veda mantras, and the *yajnas* or sacrifices, are all purified and consecrated by the recitation of this mystic symbol Om Tat Sat. The threefold description of Brahman as Om, Tat and Sat is always recited in all religious performances—during the study of the Vedas, at the conclusion of sacrifices or *yajnas*, and whatever rituals that Brahmanas, that is, the knowers of the Vedas, may undertake. Whenever we commence any holy act, we say Om. We never see people commencing a worship without chanting Om first. Whether it is a prayer, a meditational session, a worship or a *svadhyaya*, all this commences with an inward recitation of Om. Similarly, *yajna*, *dana* and *tapas* are associated with the other letter, Tat, in the same way as Om is associated with *yajna*, *dana* and *tapas*, and with all religious performances. Sat is the third symbol, which signifies goodness. We say *satsanga*, *sant*, saint, *mahatma*, which all come from the word ‘Sat’. Whenever there is something good or saintly, we call that Sat. Whenever there is something auspicious, then also we use the word Sat in regard to that auspicious beginning. The words *yajna*, *dana* and *tapah*—sacrifice, austerity and charity—are repeated again and again, but they become stable and meaningful, and bear the requisite fruit, only when they are associated with Sat, or Pure Existence. All the activities that we perform for the sake of fulfilling *yajna*, *dana* and *tapas*—anything that we do for the welfare of our own self as well as that of others, for the fulfilment of our spiritual aspirations, all come under Sat, or immense goodness.

46. IT (BRAHMAN) IS HERE, AND ALSO THERE.

Actually, the terms 'Tat' and 'Sat' signify the transcendent aspect of Brahman and the immanent aspect of Brahman, both of which are blended together in a universalised connotation, or denotation, as we may call it, which is Om. The Supreme Being is called Om because of the inclusiveness of the Supreme Being. Though the Supreme Being is inclusive, it manifests itself as transcendent and immanent when creation takes place. We are in this world of creation, and we know very well that every nook and corner and particle of every atom is pervaded and indwelt by the Supreme Brahman, yet this Brahman is not exhausted in this world. The whole of Brahman is present in this world, and yet the whole of Brahman is above this world. The whole Brahman manifests the whole universe, and the whole Brahman enters wholly into this whole universe. Though the whole Brahman enters wholly into this universe, the transcendent aspect of Brahman is not in any way affected by this entry of Brahman into the cosmos. The usual idea of location that we have in our minds is that if we are in one place, we cannot be in another place; and if Brahman is inside this world, Brahman cannot be outside the world. That is to say, if God is involved in this world as the immanent principle enveloping the whole world completely, there would be no God left beyond the world. There would be no transcendence. But it is not so. The entire Brahman remains there, uninvolved in the creational process in spite of the entire Brahman controlling the whole universe and entering into it, even to the smallest particle. Thus, the Tat is the transcendent, the otherworldly, impossible to grasp, beyond the reaches of space and time; and the Sat is that very same thing involved in this creation. It is here, and also there.

47. IF WE WANT TO DESIGNATE GOD, WE HAVE TO DESIGNATE HIM ONLY BY THE TERM OM, PRANAVA.

Try to think a thing minus the measurable characteristic of space. The mind cannot perform this feat. Minus space, nothing can be thought and, therefore, an immeasurable thing, or non-measurable thing, cannot be conceived in the mind. This is why God cannot become an object of thought. Nobody can think God because thinking is a process involved in space and time, and that which is called God is not in space and time. Hence, that which is not involved in the distance of space and the duration of time cannot be thought by the human mind, which always thinks in terms of distance and duration. Yet, in spiritual meditations we are expected to wean the mind from this involvement of thinking in terms of distance and duration, and bring together the concepts of transcendence and immanence, Tat and Sat, together in an Om that is all-inclusive. This inclusiveness is signified by Om, or *pranava*, which is partly a vibration that creates all substances constituting the universe, and is partly scriptural because it is a name or nomenclature for God. If we want to designate God, we have to designate Him only by the term Om, *pranava*. We cannot call Him by any other name, because all names arising from language denote some object which is in some place. When we say tree, the name 'tree' denotes some object which is in some place. Everything else is also of the same nature. When we utter any word that designates some object—it could be any word in the dictionary—that word connotes or denotes something that is in some place or at some time, but it cannot denote something that is everywhere and for all time. So, no word in any language can designate Tat which is everywhere and at all times.

**48. THE ABOVENESS IS TAT, THE HERENESS IS SAT,
AND THE EVERYWHERENESS IS OM.**

Om is specially regarded as a symbolic expression which embodies in itself the total process of sound production. All the letters of the alphabet, when they are uttered, create a vibration in the vocal cords. The sound box operates in some way when one letter is uttered, and in another way when another letter is uttered; and there are varieties of operations of the vocal system when different letters are uttered. But when Om is chanted, the entire sound box vibrates—Aaaaauuummm. This process originates from the deepest beginning of the process of sound and ends with just a rarefied form of the sound ‘m’, which merges into a soundless, ethereal, pervading something. This total sound vibration goes beyond the process of sound production and becomes an intangible super-sensory force. In this kind of Omkara, the transcendent aspect and the Sat aspect are clubbed together. Thus, the threefold definition of Brahman—Om Tat Sat—means God here, God above and God below, and God everywhere. The everywhere-ness of God includes the aboveness and the hereness of God. The aboveness is Tat, the hereness is Sat, and the everywhere-ness is Om. Therefore, Om Tat Sat is a complete mystical symbol which was evolved by ancient Masters. This is why in all auspicious beginnings, Om is chanted; and when we conclude anything, we say Om Tat Sat, dedicating the performance to the Almighty.

**49. YAJNA, DANA AND TAPAS—ARE VERY NECESSARY FOR
ALL PEOPLE.**

The contemplation of the achievement of something that is to take place in the future is called volition, and anyone who has not renounced volition, or will, cannot be a *sannyasin*. Abandoning actions which are filled with desire is *sannyasa*. Abandoning the fruit of any action is *tyaga*. Sri Krishna himself says that any undertaking is defective because we will come a cropper one day or the other, whatever be the project that we undertake or the work that we do. Because of the fact that there is a defect in every kind of undertaking, in any kind of action, action should be abandoned. This is the opinion of certain ancient Masters. But other great ones tell us that not all actions should be abandoned under the impression that they are all defective, because there are certain actions which are purifying in their nature, and they are obligatory on the part of every person. These actions—namely, *yajna*, *dana* and *tapas*—are very necessary for all people. What is *yajna*, what is *dana*, what is *tapas*? *Tapas* pertains to us, *dana* pertains to others, and sacrifice, or *yajna*, pertains to the gods. We have a duty towards ourselves, a duty towards others, and a duty towards the Supreme Divinity manifesting itself as the controlling power of the cosmos. Therefore, we cannot say that we shall not do anything. We have to do something for our welfare, for others' welfare, and for the satisfaction of God Himself. The sacrifice that we perform for the satisfaction of the Supreme Divinity, which is the ultimate sacrifice, is called *yajna*. The charity that we do for the pleasure of people and the welfare of people is called *dana*, or philanthropic deeds. *Tapas*—inward austerity, self-control, self-discipline, restraint of the mind and the sense organs—is a duty of every person seeking God.

**50. THE FINAL OPERATIVE FACTOR IS
THE CENTRAL UNIVERSAL WILL.**

The strength or weakness of the physical body, the motive of the ego, the instrument that is used, and the distractions characteristic of the mind are the four factors that are conditioning every work. There is a fifth factor, which we always forget: the will of God—*daivam chaivatra panchamam*. A thing that is not sanctioned by the Ultimate Will of the universe will not take place, however much we may sweat. That which is to happen will happen, whatever be our effort to prevent it; and that which is not to happen will not happen, even if we call for it. This is the inscrutable factor operating behind all things. Our very mind, our very body, our egoism, our mental faculty, our very existence, is conditioned by the central Cosmic Will; and if it does not permit any event to take place, that event will never take place even if millions of people work hard to make it happen. Empires will crash in one moment if it is the will of the universal historical principle; we may call it the time process or the time spirit. Whatever be our effort in the direction of guarding our person, our society, or our country, it has to be sanctioned by the Supreme Will. As Sri Krishna told Arjuna, “Go ahead. You will succeed.” But that sanction was not there for the Kauravas, and the opposite result followed. Thus, the final operative factor is the central Universal Will, with which we have to always stand in a state of union and communion. We should not egoistically assert too much of our own individual agency in action. We are not the only agents. There are five agents in the performance of an action, and among those five there is one supreme principle which we cannot afford to forget: the existence of God in the world. The principle of divinity permeating all things—the immanence of God—ultimately decides all factors, though others also act as instruments.

51. THIS CONCEPT OF MOKSHA HAS TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN OUR DAILY LIFE.

The whole of ethics, the entire code of conduct and behaviour, is summed up in three things: 1) the concept of dharma, *artha*, *kama* and moksha; 2) *varna* dharma; 3) *ashrama* dharma. Nothing in the world can tell us about ethics more than these three things. The ultimate goal, in its complete structure, is delineated in the principles of dharma, *artha*, *kama*, moksha. The concept of this fourfold aim known as the *purusharthas* is a highly compassionate, integrating and well thought-out discipline of life. Our requirements are classified into four principles: material needs, emotional needs, and ethical needs, all leading to spiritual needs. The ethical need is dharma, the material need is *artha*, the emotional need is *kama*, and the spiritual need is moksha. The concept of moksha, or the liberation of the soul, determines the other principles of dharma, *artha* and *kama*. This fourfold valuation of the whole of life is to be put into practice in our personal and social life. We have to live in this world in such a manner that we shall move upward gradually in the direction of the liberation of the inner spirit, and such a liberation is not possible unless we disentangle ourselves from our involvements which cause us bondage. The bondage is also of three kinds. Total ignorance of the ultimate aim of life is the greatest bondage, the inability to get on with people outside is another bondage, and not knowing what is happening to one's own self is a third bondage. It has to be very clear to us as to what kind of person we are. We should not under-estimate or overestimate ourselves. We must also know how we have to conduct ourselves in human society, where there are other people like us living with a common interest. The cosmical aspiration is summed up in this fourfold principle. But this concept of moksha has to be implemented in our daily life in society, and in our personality.

**52. VARNA DHARMA IS CONCERNED ONLY WITH EXTERNAL SOCIETY, AND
ASHRAMA DHARMA IS CONCERNED WITH OURSELVES.**

The terms—Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Sudra—refer to intelligence, power, wealth and labour. These are the footstools, as it were, of human society. No one can be entirely intelligent, no one can be entirely powerful, no one can be entirely wealthy, and no one can be entirely fit for hard labour. Some people are intelligent right from the beginning, some are royally construed right from the beginning, some have trading and economic tendencies right from the beginning, and some are traders, workmen, industrialists, technologists, etc., by their predilection and inclination. It does not mean that people can be classified only into four sections. There can be hundreds of differences among people, but this is broadly the category corresponding to our inner psychic faculty. We have *buddhi* or intellect inside us, there is will or volition in us, there is emotion or feeling in us, and there is also the impulse to action or work inside us. The fourfold classification of human society into Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Sudra, representing the guiding class, the ruling class, the wealthy class and the labour class, has relevance to the inner psychic preponderance of intellectual capacity, administrative capacity, economic capacity and working capacity. When these four are blended together in a proper form, society is supposed to be stable. It is not enough if we are merely stable socially. We also have to be perfect inwardly in our own individuality. *Varna* dharma, which is actually what is meant by this social group mentioned, is concerned only with external society, and *ashrama* dharma is concerned with ourselves. Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Sudra are external, social, outward, whereas Brahmacharya, Grihastha, Vanaprastha and Sannyasa refer to the inward graduated ascent of the spirit to higher and higher dimensions of comprehension. These two have to go together.

53. THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS MENIAL WORK AND BETTER WORK IN THIS WORLD.

There is what is called dignity of labour. Every work is equally good. There is no such thing as menial work and better work in this world. It is all a contribution from one's own point of view for the total welfare of humanity. Every work is equally divine; every work is equally contributory to the welfare of one's own benefit as well as others'. There is no such thing as inferior work, and no such thing as superior work, just as in a huge mechanism we cannot say which part is superior and which part is inferior. All parts are equally necessary because even if one little part is not working properly, the entire mechanism will be dislocated. So, the concept of dignity of work, and the divinity that one can see in the performance of duty, is to be the guiding factor in one's daily life; and there should be no complaint either in regard to placing oneself in a so-called inferior position or imagining that somebody else is in a higher position. Each one is fitted for something, and that must be done. So, we should not complain. Actually, every work has a defect in it. Nobody can be omniscient. Everybody is human. Inasmuch as we lack complete knowledge of every kind of involvement in a particular undertaking or work, there is likely to be some difficulty to be encountered on the way. We will not get everything that we want even if we work to the best of our ability and expectation. It is not that every-body will work perfectly without any kind of pain involved in it. Every work involves some kind of pain. Every undertaking has a defect behind it, because *rajoguna* and *tamoguna pravritti* are also together with the *sattvaguna pravritti*. Hence, there is a defect in every kind of undertaking. Knowing this, one should not compare one's work with another kind of work. All work is equally good or equally bad.

54. THE GREATEST SIN IS IGNORANCE OF GOD.

The greatest sin is ignorance of God, and every other form of crime, offence and sin is an offshoot of this ignorance of the Ultimate Reality. Because the final sin is the separation from God Himself, unity with God will destroy all sins—just as all evil that we perform in the dream state will be destroyed automatically by waking up. In dream we have borrowed so much wealth from somebody, we have committed this offence, that offence, all our property has been taken away, we are in a state of great grief. We are on our deathbed, as it were. All the experiences, all kinds of relationships that we were involved in during the state of dream do not produce any effect whatsoever when we wake up into a consciousness higher in quality than the dreaming state. The mere transformation of consciousness is equal to the fulfilment of all duties. Otherwise, even after waking up from dream we have to pay the debts that we have incurred in dream. Nothing will affect us, because consciousness determines everything. God-consciousness being the highest of awakenings, the world stands in relation to it as a dream. So, all the values, all the goodness and the badness, evil and sin in this world, whatever we call it, is like mist before the sun. It is annihilated root and branch because we have fulfilled the highest law. The offences and the sins that we commit in this world are no doubt violations of certain laws, but the fulfilment of the highest law includes all expiation in regard to the violations of laws that we have performed. God takes care of us to see that we shall not be punished, because we have done the greatest duty, more than anything that the world can conceive; and we have performed the greatest sacrifice, not comparable with any sacrifice that we can think of in this world; and we have cut at the root of all sin by uniting ourselves with God.

Om Shanthi Shanthi Shanthi. Hari Om Tat Sat.

