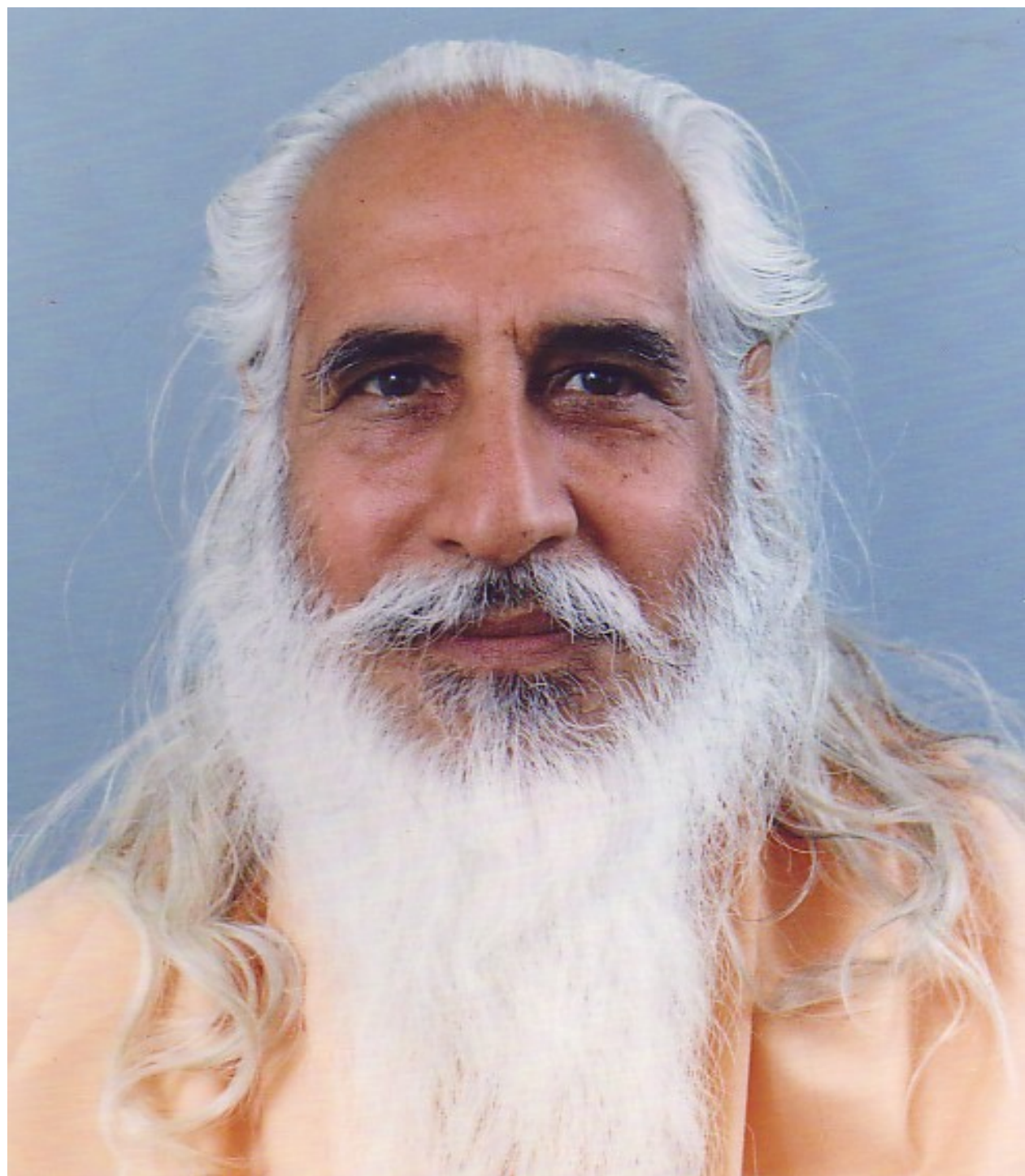


SONG OF SILENCE



Chandra Swami

All rights of this book reserved to Sri Chandra swami udasin



FOREWORD

Footprints to Eternity, — that is how I would venture to describe this bunch of Bhagwan Chandra Swami's answers to several questions posed by his disciples and devotees, mostly foreigners. Like all sages of the past and present, the Master lights up the path of the pilgrim to Truth. Even most of us, ordinary mortals, may be prompted to stop chasing the world, for a while, and to hearken to what the 'inner spirit sings', because Chandra Swamiji speaks here, as elsewhere, from experience, unmistakably — hence the certitude, appeal and power of what he says. Without straining himself, the reader can glean a rich sheaf of thought provoking conclusions. The world is not to be discarded, and life is to be lived but we have to be alert and sensitive to the experience which life unfolds at every step and all around. We have to be aware that life is too significant to be regarded as noise and fury, and too precious to be frittered away. To know this is to feel the urgency of a quest. One will find this quest well defined in the answers of the saint, comprising the present volume — not only that, here is a new direction to reflection, a new way of looking at things which we have been letting slide, and here is, above all, the wherewithal needed for the quest to become result-oriented. As we understand the dimension of the quest, and as we start it, we are led

to ponder the position of man as he continues to live. He seems to be like a creature lost in the vanity fair of the world very much like a child lost in a crowded, jostling fair on losing the grip of his parent's hand. Merry-go-rounds, and sweets, and consolations may beguile the child but only from moment to moment because the pang of separation from his parent never leaves him; it keeps on tugging at his heart. Likewise, man, separated as it were from the source of eternal Happiness, is always in despair though the dolls offered by the world entertain him from time to time. Behind every smile is a tear and behind every laugh a sigh ! Call it good luck of the lost child when someone from the crowd offers to take the child to his parent and, call it grace, when some Master, like my revered Swamiji, offers to take us across this turbulent, jostling world, to eternity, to the source of peace which once reached is reached once and for all. In the language of Yoga Vashista, at this source of life, there is harmony never ending, restfulness everlasting, and oneness never changing.

I met Chandra Swami, for the first time, in late fifties, at Hari Devi (Hari Parvat, Srinagar, Kashmir) as he sat, like a steady flame of peace, under an old mulberry tree, facing a stretch of Nagin Lake, on a bewitching early summer evening, when a star here and a star there, twinkled on a cloudless sky, and the surrounding snowy peaks glistened in the myriad hues of a blooming dusk. He seemed to be one with the overwhelming beatitude and solitude of the sacred spot. Meeting him several years after, in April 1994, at **Jammu**, I felt (I submit it unreservedly, even though I **am** conscious that I have no competence to say it) that

I was face to face with a *Yogi* who had only just returned from a dip in the *Triveni* (confluence of three holy rivers) of Truth, Consciousness and Bliss. Even while mixing with the people present on this occasion, he was in tune with this *Triveni* — to me it was very, very clear.

Chandra Swami is not given to miracles and preachings, and what may be called spiritual exhibitionism. I have had the good luck of being at His feet, more often mentally than physically, these many decades. “Ascend the Panchala step by step; step by step climb the *Bhairava* mountain of *So Ham* — but take care that the diamond there, gets no cut (is not pecked at in any manner). Arise, and worship the Lord ever and unflinchingly” says the famous Kashmiri saint-poet, Pandit Parmanand. This poetic injunction has been the Master’s life breath. Syllable by syllable these beautiful words apply to his *Sadhana*. He is steeped in silence, all engrossing, incommunicable and all consuming. We may not know what it really is but we can have some idea of it, may be very hazy, in the following verse of another Kashmiri Saint-Poet, Pandit Krishan Razdhan;

“ O Lord, make me do that where no doing is done,
Make me think that where no thought is thought.”

The 10th of June, 1994
Udhampur (Jammu)

I am at the Master’s feet,
T.N.BHAN
Formerly Professor of English &
Principal, Govt. Degree College,
Higher Education Department,
J & K Govt.

ABOUT THE BOOK

The idea of compiling this book was conceived in 1993. Unfortunately the computer data of the whole book was corrupted and the entire exercise had to be repeated. Then, at an advanced stage, the idea of giving Swamiji's brief life sketch also came up and was realized with divine grace. This also took its own time. We are, however, sorry for the delay in the publication of this book. The book has three sections:

Section I — Questions and answers at Sadhana Kendra Ashram during 28th Feb., 1993 to 20th March, 1994.

Section II — Questions and answers at Tantur, Jerusalem (Israel) from 7th May, 1992 to 10th May, 1992 and those at Rösrath (Germany) from 28th May, 1992 to 31st May, 1992 during Swamiji's visit abroad.

Section III — Contains only Swamiji's answers as the questions were either not noted down or not preserved.

The questions asked in this book are mostly from Westerners. Therefore Swamiji has given answers which a Westerner can easily grasp. He has used the terms like Self, the Divine, Consciousness instead of God, which find favour with the modern Western

psyche. In Tantur and Rösrath, questions and answers were held in sessions of one and half hours' duration. Almost all wanted to ask questions. Therefore Swamiji being in silence, and having to write the answers, had to give very brief replies.

Some questions put by non-English speaking devotees are not correct grammatically, but we have not tampered with the language unless their meaning was too obscure or vague.

All his answers and basic teachings are consistent with the teachings of revealed scriptures and those of the great Masters. Yet, they have a flavour of his own. At times, for example, he gives totally revolutionary definitions of the words 'desire' and 'idolatry'.

According to him: "Seeking what is different from you is desire. Seeking God is not 'desire'. It is your birth-right. It is recognition and owning of your true Self."

Similarly: "To pay high regard to and live for anything which is temporal is idolatry. It may be a country, a social or political 'ism' or anything which is less than the Divine, the infinite Godhead. On the other hand, seeking and worshipping God through any finite symbols of a name or a form or an idea is not idolatry but a practical necessity to think of the unthinkable."

Swamiji replies, with divine authority, to all the questions of varied dimensions about the Absolute, God, personal god, deities, Consciousness, awareness, Spirit, soul, meditation, *Japa*, *Samadhi*, enlightenment,

Realization, Fulfilment, fatalism, free-will, true spirituality, mind, intellect, self-effort, surrender, divine grace, scriptures, life, death, dreams, heaven, hell, *Sanyas*, *Sadhana*, *Karma* theory, mysticism, ego, fear, attachment, love etc.

We feel very much indebted to Mr Yvan Amar (Swami Ananda Chetan) of France, because some important facts about the life of Swamiji have been taken from the short biography written by him.

We wish to express our sincere gratitude towards Prof. T.N. Bhan of Jammu & Kashmir, Mr. Jörg Büchner of Germany, revered Vandana Mataji of Jeevan Dhara Ashram and Shri Anil Bhimjiyani of London, who have rendered their invaluable services at the various stages of preparation of this book. Besides, a number of devotees of Swamiji have contributed their humble bits. To them also, we are deeply grateful.

We hope that this book will go a long way in presenting spirituality in its purest form, and inspire seekers/*Sadhaks* of different faiths and beliefs to march towards their true Home with deeper conviction and committment.



LIFE SKETCH
OF
REVERED
SHRI CHANDRA SWAMIJI

W e have great pleasure in bringing out the first volume of 'SONG OF SILENCE.' However, before beginning with the book, let us first introduce the reader with the holy source whence the divine nectar has overflowed in the form of this book. We are talking of our beloved Master, Shri Chandra Swamiji.

Some three years ago, revered Anandji (Yvan Amar, the well-known French Master) was staying at Sadhana Kendra Ashram with Swamiji. While having meals in the dining hall he was whispering a great secret to a devotee — "His words are pure nectar, pure nectar. Believe me, believe me."

Yes, we believe that. His words are pure joy, sweet music, a powerful assurance, coming as they are, from the depths of his Realization. They are bathed in simplicity, purity, wisdom, and divine love. They are charged with deep compassion and good-will to share his experiences and awaken the slumbering souls.

We believe that having a glimpse of his wonderful and divine personality will help the reader to get attuned with him and to be able to receive his words in right perspective.

Blessed is the soul who has realized the ultimate Reality, and has been established in It forever, for it

marks an end to all its sufferings, wanderings in the vicious cycle of this world.

The entire creation is blessed and rejoices at this rare happening, for, behind the veil of names and forms, the liberated soul has realized the essential oneness of all. Therefore all creatures rejoice in this blessed event. Also, in this fulfilment, many holy dreams and hopes of yearning souls come true, foot-prints to eternity are laid and every happening in the life of a liberated soul assumes a divine significance.

And our beloved Master Chandra Swamiji is also such a God-Realized, Self-Fulfilled sage.

BABA BHUMAN SHAHJI

About three centuries ago there lived a great mystic, Baba Bhuman Shahji (1687-1747) in a village Bhuman Shah, district Montgomery, West Punjab (now in Pakistan). Babaji was a perfect *Yogi* by birth. He belonged to the much respected *Udasin* tradition of saints of Hinduism. *Udasin* is one who belongs to the order of *Udasin* monks. The order of *Udasin* monks began from Sanatan Kumar Rishi, one of the four Kumara brothers (Sanak, Sanadan, Sanatan and Sanat Kumar) mentioned in the *Vedas* and *Puranas*. Baba Shri Chanderji was one of the greatest exponents of the *Udasin* order. He was the son of Guru Nanak Dev, and was the 165th *Acharya* (teacher) in the line. He established four *Maths* (monasteries) in the four corners of India as Shankaracharya had done for the *Sanyasis*. He traveled all over India. He went to Afghanistan also, where there is still a shrine in his name.

In a small booklet — ‘Mirror of Bliss’, written by Swamiji, we get a glimpse of Baba Bhuman Shahji’s divine life. Many supernatural events and miracles are attributed to him, which happened through him effortlessly. His divinity knew no barriers of caste, creed and religion. Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims — all became his devotees, disciples or admirers. Even during his life time, Babaji had thousands of followers. He spent his whole life in unbroken communion with the Divine, in serving the needy and the poor, and in awakening the masses from the hypnotic slumber of ignorance. Later, the village where Babaji lived came to be known by his own name — Bhuman Shah village.

With the passage of time Babaji’s shrine grew in both fame and form and was, subsequently, served by some very powerful and enlightened Masters in his line.

It is this Baba Bhuman Shahji (Babaji) who is the beloved *Sadguru* (Master) of Shri Chandra Swamiji. We are reproducing here what Swamiji has expressed on various occasions about Babaji:

“Since his childhood, Babaji was blessed with the state of *Maha-Bhava* (a rare and very high spiritual state in which the devotee is completely immersed in the supreme divine Love and Bliss, with his divinised body and senses).

Remaining totally celibate since his childhood, Babaji passed his whole life in unbroken divine remembrance and inspiring the people in general to observe the virtues of purity within and without, non-violence, honesty, justice, compassion, friendliness etc.

Reflection on the vanity and trivial nature of this world phenomenon, and contemplation on the eternal, supremely sweet and charming nature of the infinite divinity, remained the focal point for him throughout his life. Babaji was spirituality incarnate in its perfection. He was fully capable of awakening spirituality in any worthy seeker by his mere wish. As for me, I have had such a deep and mystic relationship with Babaji that whatever I have known or realized, is all due to the total and unreserved protection, guidance and grace of Babaji. He is the Being of my being and Life of my life; without him I do not have any independent existence at all. And such feeling never, never leaves me even for a moment, by his sweet grace.”

“I am the creation of Babaji. I became what he made me. During the course of my *Sadhana* I did what he got me to do. My love for God and intense dispassion was actually born of my love for Babaji. When I was young, I used to weep in his love. I have always had an awareness of him, an awareness of his presence. I used to have his actual *Darshan* also frequently.”

“In what words can I express the glory of Babaji? He is my all in all. The riches, status and power of the whole world is nothing in comparison to what he has given to me. Should I be reborn, I cannot repay his debt in thousands of lives.”

“Everything can be realized with the grace of Babaji. Whatever one asks, one receives. If one does not ask anything from him, then he gives himself to

his devotees. There is no limit to his compassion, his knowledge and his divinity.”

“Should he wish, Babaji can make a king of a beggar and vice versa. All the impurities of the soul are cleansed and the life becomes radiant with divine Love and Knowledge through a mere compassionate glance from him. All glory be to Babaji again and again.”

This is the eternal relationship that our *Gurudev* and Babaji have between them even today.

THE FAMILY AND EARLY LIFE OF SURAJ PRAKASH

It was in this village, Bhuman Shah that Suraj Prakash (now Shri Chandra Swamiji) was born to Mata Vasudevi on 5th March, 1930. He had two elder brothers and one elder sister. His mother, Mata Vasudevi was a very kind, simple, amiable, elegant and devout lady. She was the only daughter of a renowned saint, Baba Gulab Dassji of that area. In Pakistan, till to date, the village in his name — Chak Gulab Dass exists. Mata Vasudevi had a strong spiritual background and inclination. In her home she had a temple-room in which Gita and Guru Granth Sahib were placed with honour along with the photographs of Baba Bhuman Shah, Guru Nanak Dev and Lord Baby Krishna. She used to do *Puja* and *Arti* daily with love and devotion. She was a great *Sadhak* too. Swamiji remembers that often he noticed her engrossed in *Japa* the whole night. She always kept a rosary under her pillow. Swamiji says: “Now on the

basis of my experience, I can say that she was a very advanced *Sadhak*. At that time I did not recognize her.”

The life of her mother is a typical example of an ideal Indian housewife showing how a woman, while attending to all daily chores of life, can grow in divinity merely on the strength of simplicity, purity of heart and devotion to God.

Swamiji's father, Lala Roopchandji, was a tall, well-built, sharp-featured and handsome man. He was very sober, liberal and modest by nature. In those days he was matriculate from D.A.V. School, Lahore though it was not usual in those days to find many matriculates in the backward area where he lived. After completing his High School studies, he could get the post of Police Officer directly but he declined it. He rather preferred to serve the *Dera* (a religious abode with a shrine of a saint) of Babaji. He had the General Power of Attorney and was the General Manager of the *Dera*, which he served with exemplary devotion and honesty to his last.

No wonder that our Master assumed his body in this holy and congenial family atmosphere for his spiritual perfection. Devotion was a tradition in his family. It is interesting to note how the grand father of Swamiji, Lala Lakshman Dassji, came to settle at the village Bhuman Shah. Lalaji lived in Muzzafarpur district of Multan (West Punjab) doing the whole-sale business of 'dates'. Once he was traveling from Multan to Lahore in connection with his business. During the train journey he heard about the holiness and glory

of the shrine of Baba Bhuman Shahji and of Mahant Baba Harbhajan Dassji, the ninth Master in the line of Baba Bhuman Shahji. Lalaji was a lover of saints. He got down at the railway station of Wasawewala near Haveli Lakkha and walked to Bhuman Shah village to have *Darshan* of Mahantji. He was greatly impressed with the divinity of Mahantji and decided to stay there for some days with him. There he virtually fell in love with Mahantji, took him as his spiritual Master and resolved to come and settle in Bhuman Shah so that he would be in proximity of and serve his beloved Master. He went back to Muzzafarpur in Multan, closed his shop and wound up his business thinking that he had earned enough for his family, and came to settle in Bhuman Shah village with his whole family.

In the light of the above, it is easier for us to understand how our Master also carried on with this legacy of devotion to God which ultimately culminated in its heavenly heights with his complete surrender unto the Divine.

Reverting to Swamiji's childhood. Right from the beginning Suraj Prakash had a very deep and natural attraction for Babaji and his *Samadhi* (tomb) as if it were continuity of a love-affair of many, many previous lives. Actually, that is what it was. Even as a child, he used to have mystical experiences and visions of various saints and sages unknown to him. One of the more frequent experiences he used to have, was the feeling of flying high in the sky because of the rising of *Prana* (vital force) to higher centres. He very much cherished and enjoyed this feeling.

He often felt the trembling in his body with *Sattvic* (pure) emotions like love, compassion etc. As a child of about seven years, his mind could not interpret these experiences though he did feel their elevating and blissful impact deep within himself. But these experiences never disturbed him and he continued to grow as a normal and balanced child.

A significant fact of Swamiji's life was revealed by a very devout and simple Kamboj lady, Mata Jyoti, who was wholly devoted to God and was a close friend of Swamiji's mother even before his birth. She was very much devoted to Guru Granth Sahib (holy book of Sikhs), so much so that at the time of partition of India in 1947, she carried on her head the Granth Sahib to India, leaving all her other valuable belongings in Pakistan. She gave some interesting information to Swamiji when he was living as *Brahmachari* with Mahantji in 1952. She said: "You were born in my presence in Bhuman Shah. For one full month you did not open your eyes. Your mother and I thought that, perhaps, you were born blind. But we did not tell anybody about it lest the rumour should spread. We hoped you might open your eyes afterwards, which you actually did after one whole month." Feeling very assured she remarked: "Now I believe that you were actually in deep *Samadhi* for one full month at the time of your birth."

In childhood, Suraj Prakash also had some extraordinary powers like clairvoyance, knowledge of future events etc. Sometimes he would feel dazed by such extraordinary gifts which he did not comprehend. When he was studying in class fourth, many times he

knew beforehand the persons who were going to visit his home and sometimes he would tell this to his parents before they arrived.

When Suraj Prakash was very young, around eleven years of age, he felt like doing *Sadhana* in seclusion. He would therefore go alone into the tomb of Baba Darshan Dassji, the sixth Master, very early morning while it was still dark and sit there in meditation. He preferred this place because Baba Bhuman Shahji's tomb was visited by many people in the early morning. There, in the beginning, he used to feel some mysterious presence, as if someone was touching him and would also feel scared. But gradually that fear turned into a silent joy. There he would pass into deep *Samadhi* beyond his body-consciousness and would come down from that consciousness only when *Pujariji* would come to the shrine in the morning to offer *Puja-Arti*. He used to have not only visions but direct *Darshan* also with naked eyes of Baba Bhuman Shahji, Baba Shri Chanderji, and Lord Baby Krishna so frequently. Besides, he always felt a constant and motherly presence of Babaji. Oh, what a privilege to be under the protection of such a divine mother!

Thus, the boy Suraj Prakash grew in the midst of high spiritual experiences and visions of different dimensions, which were quietly transforming and evolving him without even his being conscious of it.

After passing fourth class from his village, Suraj Prakash was sent to Haveli Lakkha for his further studies up to tenth standard. There he lived in a hostel and would come home only on week-ends and holidays. In his school days, he was fond of sports/games

though, otherwise, he was a very shy but balanced boy. Swamiji remembers that he was not inordinately and excessively attached with any member of his family including his parents. Babaji's *Lila* and grace so wished that after passing his fourth class, Swamiji never lived for long periods with his family. The ground was being prepared for the intense dispassion, detachment from the world that was to shine forth in him later.

We have been given some useful information by a devotee of Swamiji, Shri Jamuna Dassji of Jalalabad, Punjab, who had lived with Swamiji for two years in hostel at Haveli Lakkha while they were studying in ninth and tenth standard as also in S.D. College, Lahore. They even lived together in the same room. Shri Jamuna Dassji very clearly remembers that Swamiji was extremely handsome, simple and innocent like a child. Their hostel warden, Sardar Kesar Singh, a man of purity and mystical disposition, loved Suraj Prakash very much. Perhaps he saw something special in him. Suraj Prakash did not care much for eating things by himself; he liked to share them with his fellow students. He also loved to play flute, and was fond of seeing films. But we have been told that whenever he saw a love-scene or heard a love-dialogue in a film, he would start weeping in the love of Babaji. The world, with all its attractions, only intensified in him the love for Babaji and the Divine.

A noteworthy feature of his childhood and adolescence was his extraordinary giftedness for sports. Later, while studying at Dehradun, he excelled in athletics-events like sprints, long jump, high jump,

throws etc. He won many competitions at district and state levels, and was captain of volley-ball team and an all round champion of athletics in the college.

Often Swamiji draws comparison between a *Sadhak* and a sportsman, giving specific examples of the relationship between a sports-event and some typical forms of *Sadhana*. We believe that through sports, our *Gurudev* had practised and perfected many of the essential qualities of a true *Sadhak*. Therefore, long before meditating in caves and forests, he had already been learning on the playground, the essentials of *Sadhana*, like one-pointed love for the ideal, total commitment, perseverance, alertness, balance of mind, planning, selflessness, fearlessness, concentration etc. It is natural then, that in his own typical way, Shri Chandra Swamiji defines spiritual *Sadhana* as a process of conscious and deliberate exercise by which one taps one's physical, mental and spiritual energies, and sublimates and uses them in order to realize one's divinity.

Meanwhile, during all these periods, he continued to have spiritual visions and experiences. Thus a strong spiritual under-current continued to grow in him despite his apparently active life of a sportsman.

After passing tenth class from village Haveli Lakkha, Suraj Prakash was sent to Lahore for further studies.

STRANGE HAPPENINGS

In 1947, when he was a student of twelvth standard, an extraordinary event happened. The boy

had come to his village in his summer vacations from Lahore. For some days, Babaji appeared in his dreams. Standing before the boy, gazing straight into his eyes, he evoked the past memories and feelings of his intimate relationship of many lives with himself.

After few days a strange thing happened. One night Babaji appeared in the dream of his father and said, "Suraj is my spiritual child. He must renounce his family ties and complete his spiritual *Sadhana* in this very life. You should consecrate him to me. I will take care of him in every respect." During the dream, his father was so much overwhelmed by the presence and authority of Babaji that he readily agreed to what Babaji demanded. But the next day he ignored the incident, interpreting it as merely a dream. He did not speak to anyone about it.

The following night, Babaji again appeared to the father in his dream, but this time with an appalling challenge. He said, "You have disobeyed me. How dare you ignore the whole matter as a mere dream and break your promise! Now look, Suraj is dead." And indeed Suraj Prakash lying on his bed, appeared lifeless to his father. Babaji continued, "Would you give this child to me alive or rather have him dead?" Hearing this, the father started weeping and crying. At this, Babaji consoled and assured him, saying, "You need not worry about your son, as he would always be under my direct and full protection." Babaji, then, asked him to comply with his two wishes: The first was that the father should contact Mahant Girdhari Dassji, the tenth successor in the line of Babaji, and

the second was that the father must keep his word regarding the consecration of his son to him, and that whenever the boy wanted to renounce the world in search of the Divine, he would not restrain him from doing so. Babaji then disappeared.

Next morning the father told everything to his wife. Somewhat frightened and bewildered, they decided to go to Mahant Girdhari Dassji. They found, to their great surprise, that Mahantji was also waiting for them. Before they uttered a single word, he told them that Babaji had appeared to him also in dream and had instructed him to do certain things. He then explained everything to them.

SURAJ BECOMES CHANDRA

On 15th June, 1947, all the saints of the *Dera* and many villagers assembled in the *Darbar* Hall of the *Dera*. Recitation of the holy Guru Granth Sahib was held specially for this pious occasion. Suraj Prakash was made to sit on a special *Asana* (cushion) and some of his hair were cut by Mahantji as part of the ceremony. Mahant Girdhari Dassji picked up a sentence from Guru Granth Sahib at random and on the basis of the first syllable of that sentence, changed his name from Suraj Prakash to Chandra Prakash. The *Guru-Mantra* was whispered into his ear by Mahantji. He was given a *Kopin* (loin-cloth of monks) to wear. He was also given a cap and *Sehli* (a black holy thread) in accordance with *Udasin* tradition. Later, after the function was over, his head was completely shaven and *Prasad* was distributed. Thus

Swamiji was initiated into *Udasin* order at the age of seventeen years.

While changing his name from Suraj Prakash to Chandra Prakash, Mahantji remarked smilingly, "You were very hot (active) like the sun (Suraj), now you will be very cool like the moon (Chandra). Thus, Babaji, in his infinite grace, initiated Swamiji into spiritual life through the medium of Mahant Girdhari Dassji. After receiving initiation, Swamiji lived in the shrine for about one and a half month, but, hereafter, he never lived at his parent's home.

This was not a mere change of name, his whole outlook towards life and his interest changed completely. Chandra Prakash was submerged in a mighty current of dispassion and divine love. About his dispassion at that time, Swamiji once said, "Now I can say that my strong dispassion was based on my love for Babaji. It was because of his grace." The young *Yogi* came to know that he was a spiritual pilgrim of many past lives. The true aim of his life became evident and vivid to him at a very tender age.

When most of the boys of his age start learning and seeking worldly riches and get engrossed in the world of passions, name, fame, ego and worldly ambitions, this young boy made a firm resolve within himself that the aim of his life was nothing short of an integral divine Fulfilment.

Later, when he took the robes of a monk, he had given all sports colours won by him to a boy in Haridwar, distributed all his clothes to others and had thrown away all his academic and sports certificates

in the Ganges. Thus his very promising sports career came to an abrupt end, when he decided to dedicate his life to God-Realization as a monk, at the age of twenty-two years. It must have required a great spirit of sacrifice, a very strong heart, to say good-bye to one's cherished hobby.

INTIMATE REVELATION

Here is an absolutely rare piece of dialogue between Swamiji and one of his disciples. Rare, because Swamiji is very reserved about himself and much more so about his spiritual journey. Here he has revealed some important facts about himself, though unwittingly.

Disciple: Maharajji, it seems that your spiritual voyage has come to an end in this life. Since when has this arduous and very difficult journey been undertaken by you consciously ?

Swamiji: Since many lives.

Disciple: How many ?

Swamiji: I don't remember.

Disciple: Have you ever been a householder or married in the course of your spiritual search?

By gestures Swamji indicated that he had always been a monk during his spiritual journey extending over many lives.

Disciple: So you always opted for a monk's life which is supposed to have lesser obstacles and hindrances from spiritual point of view ?

Swamiji: Even a plant spreads its roots and branches, and an insect moves in the direction of least resistance. Only a stupid person invites unnecessary obstacles. However, a monk's life is not necessarily a path of lesser hindrances for every *Sadhak*.

Disciple: Can it be that even after Realization, one may have to take many births to get finally stabilized in the Realization ? Perhaps, because it involves the divinisation of all the aspects of one's personality, like emotions, intellect etc.

Swamiji: Yes.

Disciple: In your previous lives, were you a monk in Hindu religious orders or in other orders also ?

Swamiji: Only in Hindu religious orders.

Disciple: Why did you select only this religion and environment again and again ?

Swamiji: I did not select it. It is the divine power which makes the selection on the basis of one's *Karmas* and *Samskaras* and sends one to a particular set of environment, family, religion etc.

Disciple: Even then, it proves that it is you who actually made the choice through your *Samskaras*, *Karmas*, and experiences. The Divine only gave you what you chose.

Swamiji: (Only smiles).

Disciple: It seems that you were also present in the body at the time of Babaji. What was your relationship with him?

Swamiji: The relationship was that of a Master and a disciple.

Disciple: More information please ?

Swamiji: (Smilingly) You are asking very straight and blunt questions. Not everything can be disclosed about one's spiritual life. I want to tell you but I cannot write it. I will tell it to you when the right time for it comes, even without your asking for it. But not now.

After enjoying this very inspiring and elevating information about Swamiji, we continue with his early life.

In 1947, India suffered the upheaval caused by her partition. Hindus and Sikhs had to flee their homes to save their lives, leaving all their belongings behind. By then, Babaji's *Dera* had grown into a huge, magnificent shrine, with thousands of acres of land attached to it. At that time Reverend Mahant Girdhari Dassji was the tenth Master occupying the seat in the line of Babaji. All had to be left behind. The families of Mahantji and that of Lala Roopchanji also migrated to India along with other Hindus. But for Chandra Prakash, the separation from the shrine of Babaji was unbearable. In his own words: "After partition, I used to weep alone in hiding, in the memory of Babaji's *Samadhi*. For months together I was possessed by the idea of running away to go and continue to live at the shrine of Babaji in Pakistan, in the garb of a *Fakir*."

After migration Mahantji came and settled at village Bahauddin in district Sirsa, of Haryana. He later made a new shrine of Babaji at village Sanghar

about five kilometers away from it. Gradually, devotees of Babaji made temples of Babaji at many places in north India where *Puja-Arti* are offered to Babaji with love and faith.

After partition Chandra Prakash completed the final year (twelvth class) of his F.Sc. course from Sanatan Dharma College, Ambala in 1948. He passed his B.Sc. with Physics, Chemistry and Maths from D.A.V. College, Dehradun (UP) in 1951. During the year when he was studying in M.Sc. (previous) he was again possessed by the urge for God-Realization. This time it was irresistible. He, therefore, did not appear in the exams, abandoned his studies and came back to Mahantji at village Bahauddin in February, 1952.

He stayed with Mahantji for about ten months. Here, he often used to meet his father also, but he never went back to his parent's home. Now he allowed his hair to grow longer and put on white clothes like a *Brahmachari*. He used to get up very early in the morning and regularly sat in meditation for two hours each in morning and evening. As usual, his mind could at once become elevated and fixed on the Divine. It was so natural for him. He also did lot of *Swadhyaya* (reading of holy scriptures/books). He read Gita, Vichar-Sagar (a *Vedantic* scripture), books by Swami Ram Teerth and Swami Vivekananda and Kalyan. He also used to serve Mahantji in various ways. Before going to bed he would press the feet of Mahantji with devotion. He also played games whenever he had the opportunity. Thus the days passed quickly.

By now, the cup of his dispassion was full. It grew

into a storm which forced him to close his eyes to everything else except the search of God. Now it was impossible for him to stay there, in the world anymore. He then wanted to become a recluse and put his heart and soul into his search of God. Finally, at the end of 1952, he took permission from Mahantji and came to Haridwar. That was the moment he finally abandoned all his worldly ties for good; he renounced everything and set out on the last phase of his spiritual journey — the toughest and least known. But as we know, he was not alone. Babaji was with him, ever protecting and guiding him.

Chandra Prakash stayed in Haridwar for three months. Here he lived in an *Udasin Ashram*, Narayan Niwas, at Kankhal which belonged to the *Dera* of Baba Pritam Dassji (of Pakpatan, Pakistan), who was the *Guru* of Baba Bhuman Shahji. There he met Swami Krishna Dassji *Udasin* and was greatly impressed by his purity, simplicity, intense *Sadhana* and divinity. Swami Krishna Dassji was a very sweet natured and compassionate sage, with many extraordinary spiritual powers which he did not like to display. Pandit Nityanandji, the famous *Tantric* of Srinagar, Kashmir, used to say that Swami Krishna Dassji had the power of traveling with his astral body at his sweet-will and could visit any place in the world within a few seconds. Reading the thoughts of others, was another power he had but he used it sparingly. Even some rationalists and non-believers who came to him could feel it and acknowledged it. Many highly educated youngsters wanted to make him their *Guru*, but he never accepted any disciple.

Chandra Prakash stayed with him for some days and noticed that Swami Krishna Dassji was an exceptionally gifted sage, not only with extraordinary powers but also with rare love of God and divine wisdom. Chandra Prakash, full of burning dispassion, implored Swami Krishna Dassji, "Kindly give me the robe of a monk. I have no interest at all in the world. I want to dedicate myself to God-Realization whole heartedly and exclusively." Swami Krishna Dassji had already seen deeply into the conscious and subconscious layers of the mind of Chandra Prakash and was moved by the sincerity and consistency of his spiritual aspiration. He agreed and clothed Chandra Prakash with the robe of a monk by uttering some *Mantras*. But he said, "I am not your *Guru*. I have simply done what should have been done by your *Guru* long ago." He, then, smilingly addressed Chandra Prakash as 'Chandra Swami' and advised him to observe the rules of a monk strictly, and follow the footprints of Baba Bhuman Shahji with unbroken zeal. He said, "Never feel any difference between Baba Bhuman Shahji and Baba Shri Chanderji. They are one and the same divine person come into different bodies in different situations."

One day Chandra Swamiji expressed his desire to Swami Krishna Dassji and said, "Sir, I wish not to touch *Dhan* (money) for the rest of my life and will live only on total trust in God." Swamiji laughed and said, "I very much appreciate your trust and faith in God, but do you know that *Dhan* does not mean only money. Money is merely a means to simplify the barter system. *Dhan* includes all the material things. If you

don't want to touch money, you should also not ask for food or clothing or anything else from anyone. And to observe this rule for a period of three years is enough for you to learn to live trusting God alone whole-heartedly. As a matter of fact, trust in God has little to do with the possession or non-possession of material things, including your physical body which is also material."

Swamiji, then, took permission from Swami Krishna Dassji to travel in the Himalayas on foot and have the holy *Darshan* of saints.

HIMALAYAN PILGRIMAGE

From Haridwar he went on foot to Rishikesh and had the *Darshan* of H.H. Swami Shivanandaji of the Divine Life Society and stayed in his *Ashram* for three days. Shivananda Ashram at that time had just started coming up and had only a few huts attached to it, which were not in good shape. The common kitchen and dining hall for the *Brahmacharis* and *Sanyasis* (monks) were made of tin sheets. From Shivananda Ashram Swamiji went to 'Neel Kanth', a historic place of Lord Shiva and stayed there for two days. After that he went to Vashishta *Guha* (cave) to have the *Darshan* of Swami Purushottamanandji, who was a great and renowned sage. From Vashishta cave he came back to Rishikesh and started for Uttar Kashi on foot, via Tehri and Dharasu.

When he reached Dharasu, his feet, unaccustomed to such arduous journeying, were swollen and his soles had developed painful boils. He was therefore forced

to stay there for three days till he became fit to move further. On his onward journey, he spent one night in a cave, which was full of wild insects. In the morning, his whole body was again swollen. Finally, he reached Uttar Kashi. There, he went to see a great, elderly, scholar-saint Swami Tapovanji. In Uttar Kashi he first stayed for two days in Kailash Ashram. Afterwards, he found an empty cave at the bank of the Ganges and went to live there. He stayed in that cave for about twenty days. During that period he would take food from a nearby Sadhu-Bela Ashram, once a day. The incharge of that *Ashram* had great affection for Swamiji. The cave in which Swamiji stayed was highly charged and his *Sadhana* went very well there. By then it was the end of winter. Swamiji thought that perhaps the saint of that cave would come back from the plains at the onset of summers. So he decided to leave Uttar Kashi. Swami Krishna Dassji had also told him that Kashmir, too, was a beautiful and appropriate place for *Sadhana* with glorious landscapes and springs. Therefore he made up his mind to go to Kashmir for his *Sadhana* and left Uttar Kashi for Haridwar.

SANT GURMUKH SINGHJI

From Dharasu to Narinder Nagar he was given a lift by a truck driver, who was devoted to saints. He implored the young Swami to travel on his truck and bless him. Having traveled on foot from Narinder Nagar to Haridwar, Swamiji again developed boils on the soles of his feet. So he decided to halt at Haridwar for some days. From another saint he heard about the

greatness of an aged and enlightened sage, Sant Gurmukh Singhji, who lived in Sapta Sarovar *Jhari*, a forested island amidst the seven streams of Ganges. He went there to have the *Darshan* of the sage and stay there for few days with him, if possible. (Later, Swamiji himself lived at this place for years).

When Swamiji reached the specific place in the island, he found Sant Gurmukh Singhji sitting outside his thatched hut at the bank of Ganges on a bamboo-chair and absorbed in meditation with his eyes closed. To quote Swamiji's own words:

"I humbly bowed my head before the sage and sat before him silently. Near him, I felt a very strong presence of something though I could not comprehend what it was."

"Coming from Nirmala denomination of saints, established by Guru Govind Singhji, the tenth Master of Sikhs, Sant Gurmukh Singhji was a very quiet and loving sage with his face radiating peace and *Tejas* (light). He was also a great scholar of Sanskrit. After over thirty minutes he opened his eyes and looked at me, and asked me for an introduction and the purpose of my coming to him. On hearing me for two, three minutes calmly and patiently he said, 'I have heard about the glories of Baba Bhuman Shahji from some people. He was a very great sage. But it is for the first time I have met you, a monk of his order.' He was very kind to me and treated me as his child, and allowed me to stay in his hut."

"I recall an interesting incident on my very first night in his hut. At midnight, I felt as though

something with a hissing sound was moving under the mat on which I was sleeping. I felt a little scared. I opened my eyes and saw in dim light of the moon coming in the hut through a ventilator that the sage was sitting crossed legged, deeply absorbed in meditation, about five feet away from me. I could not sleep the remaining four hours of night because of fear, but the sage sat unmoved in the same posture in deep meditation. In the morning, after sunrise, I told the sage of my experience and fear during the past night. The sage laughed and said, 'There is a baby python (a type of big snake), which comes often into the hut and he spends his night here. More than four times I caught him in a pot and left him about one kilometre away from the hut in the forest, but he persisted in returning to the hut to spend his night here. So I have now stopped trying to push him out. He is very loving and intelligent and will not bite you or do any harm to you, even if you inadvertently happen to put your foot on him.' "

Swamiji stayed with Sant Gurmukh Singhji in this forested island, called *Sapta Sarovar Jhari*, for about fifteen days. He used to take heavy breakfast at ten a.m., which was brought from *Sapta Rishi Ashram* by a devotee of the sage, who shared it with Swamiji. Then he would go about one kilometre upstream on the bank of Ganges and sit there till the evening, devoting himself to prayer, *Japa*, meditation and reading *Swami Vivekananda*, and would come back to the hut after sunset.

This historical, pious place is called *Sapta Sarovar* in the name of *Sapta Rishis* (the seven great seers who

had performed austerities there in the ancient times as mentioned in the Hindu holy scriptures). Charged with the spiritual vibrations and pure and calm atmosphere, it was very conducive for spiritual practices in spite of its being frequently visited in the night by elephants, tigers and other wild animals living across the Ganges in Kadli Van. This *Van* (forest) was a dense forest full of wild banana, bamboo and *Saal* trees. This is written in the Bhaagwat Maha Purana also. Swamiji had come to like this place very much for *Sadhana*.

The sage was very kind and affectionate and told him, "I am glad to see your sincerity for *Sadhana*. You may stay here as long as you wish." Swamiji humbly thanked him very much and told him that he had already decided to go to Kashmir and would come back to this place, if and when, the Lord so willed. As the sage had come to know about the vow taken by this young Swami for not touching the money for three years, he asked one of his devotees to arrange for a railway ticket from Haridwar to Pathankot. The sage, who had showered motherly love upon the young Swami for fifteen days, blessed him and said, "I see a very bright spiritual future for you. And I somehow feel that you will come here again for taking the last plunge in the ocean of supreme divine Consciousness." Swamiji bowed down before the sage, touched his holy feet and left the place.

After boarding the train from Haridwar railway station, Shri Chandra Swamiji reached Pathankot next day early in the morning. He had read about a

historical, extraordinary event connected with the life of Baba Shri Chanderji, who had, in the last leg of his spiritual mission, stayed in the village Mamoon near Pathankot. It is written that a dry and dead tree under which he sat and made *Tapasya* (penance), had turned into a green and lively tree. This had happened about four hundred and fifty years ago. Swamiji felt the urge of first visiting that place, considering it to be a pilgrimage because from his childhood he had deep devotion and reverence for Baba Shri Chanderji. Already at the railway station he had enquired the whereabouts of Mamoon village from some local people and set out towards it. It was a few kilometers away from Pathankot.

He reached the particular spot connected with Baba Shri Chanderji. A monk was living there, but he had gone out. The place had two, three rooms and, of course, that blessed tree. While the monk was away, Swamiji meditated for two hours under that tree and was blessed with the vision of Baba Shri Chanderji. We understand that Babaji gave him some specific instructions and his visiting that place had some important significance. When the monk living at that place returned, he warmly greeted Swamiji. He prepared simple food which both ate. The monk also informed Swamiji that a permit was then required for all Indians to visit Kashmir which he could seek at Pathankot, from the office of the Trade Commissioner of Jammu and Kashmir state. Therefore, from Mamoon village Swamiji straightaway came to the office of the Trade Commissioner.

EVER PRESENT PROVIDENTIAL PROTECTION

At that time Swamiji's only possessions were, a loin cloth, a thin shawl, a water bowl and two books, one by Swami Ram Teerth and another by Swami Vivekananda. He met the Trade Commissioner, Mr. D.N. Jalali and gave him an application requesting for a permit to travel to Srinagar, Kashmir. Mr. Jalali spoke to Swamiji and was greatly impressed with the spiritual glow on his face. But since Swamiji did not know any gazetted officer in Pathankot who could attest his identity, and as the political situation in Kashmir was not very stable at that time, he refused to grant permit to Swamiji, albeit with a heavy heart. Disappointed, Swamiji walked back and was wondering what to do. After walking some distance, suddenly he felt the presence of Baba Bhuman Shahji near him and almost simultaneously, he heard a voice calling him from his back. He turned back and saw the peon of the Trade Commissioner running towards him. The peon came to him and said, "The officer is calling you." Swamiji went back to the office. The commissioner welcomed him with a smile and said, "I have reconsidered your case. We are granting you the permit." After the office closed, he respectfully took Swamiji to his home. He invited his friends to introduce them to this young monk of unusual magnetism and full of dispassion. Next morning even without telling anyone he bought a bus ticket for Swamiji upto Srinagar and saw him off at the bus-stand. Before seeing off Mr. Jalali also enquired from Swamiji about where he would stay in Kashmir and

for how long. Swamiji told him that he would stay at Shri Chander Chinar Ashram on Residency Road, and he would go to Amarnath pilgrimage also. More than that he did not know. In Srinagar Mr. Jalali used to pay visits to Swamiji whenever he had an opportunity, and would take him to his bungalow at Rainawari for lunch or dinner. Later, he took Swamiji to a famous Kashmiri Shaivite saint, Swami Laxman Joo also.

"Yoga Kshemam Vahamyam", says Lord Krishna in the Gita, "Providing them with all that they need, I take full responsibility and total care of my devotees."

The bus started from Jammu for Srinagar in the morning. A Sardarji in military uniform was seated beside Swamiji. He was a Namdhari Sikh from Punjab who was going to Srinagar, where he was posted. Namdhari Sikhs are generally very devout, religious and open-minded, and give due respects to the saints and sages of all religions. This gentleman, the Sikh soldier was also a very religious person with deep interest in spirituality. Finding a young monk with spiritual charm writ large on his person, he could not restrain himself for long. After about fifteen minutes he politely introduced himself to Swamiji and started talking on religious and spiritual matters. Within a very short time, after exchanging his spiritual aspirations and ideas with Swamiji, he became very much attracted, rather devoted, to Swamiji. He asked very practical and intricate spiritual questions and was fully satisfied and convinced by the answers that Swamiji gave to him in simple words, supported by quotations from Guru Granth Sahib. The time passed

so quickly. Moving with slow speed, at about one p.m., the bus reached Kud, a village about ninety kilometers away from Jammu, covering the serpentine mountainous roads. All the passengers alighted from the bus and went out to the restaurant to have their lunch except Swamiji, who alone kept sitting on his seat. He had no money and would not ask for food or anything from anyone according to his vow. In the empty bus, he relaxed himself on his seat, closed his eyes and became absorbed in meditation.

Hardly five minutes had passed when the conductor of the bus came in and shouted, "Babaji, here is a cup of tea for you." He looked to be emotional and continued, "It is sent by the owner of the small tea stall on the road, who saw you sitting alone calmly in the bus. That person is poor, but very religious. He feels joy in serving the monks. He will not charge anything for it." Swamiji said, "I don't need tea. I had a heavy breakfast in the morning, but taking it as *Prasad* of God, I will not refuse it. Please convey my thanks to that man." Swamiji took the tea enjoying it as if it were royal *Sharbat* (sweet drink). After another forty minutes or so, all the passengers boarded the bus including the driver, who started blowing the horn to alert all the passengers that the bus was ready to leave. But that Namdhari Sikh in the uniform of a soldier had not yet arrived. Swamiji informed the conductor about this, who told the driver to wait. Five minutes later, the soldier rushed into the bus and took his seat. The bus started. The Sardarji took out a packet containing some *Chapaties* and vegetables, and,

offering it to Swamiji, said, "There is a small military camp with a mess a little away from here. I had gone there to take my lunch. I have many friends of mine presently staying in this camp. I have brought a small packet of food for you also. Please accept it and eat it." He also offered some water to Swamiji from his flask. Swamiji had lunch and was marvelling as to how the Divine was taking care of him. He attributed all this to the grace of Babaji whom he took as the Divine incarnate.

The bus reached Srinagar tourist bus station at about ten p.m. Incidentally, the Sardarji had been to Shri Chander Chinar Ashram on residency road before. It was not far away from the bus-station — only fifteen to twenty minutes walk on the main road. Sardarji guided Swamiji to the *Ashram* and wished goodbye to him, saying, "God willing, I will see you again." And Swamiji walked to the *Ashram* with his small bag containing two books and one woollen shawl.

HIS HOLINESS SWAMI KRISHNA DASSJI

When Swamiji reached Shri Chander Chinar Ashram, H.H. Swami Krishna Dassji whom Swamiji reverentially addressed as 'Maharajji' (which literally means the king) was present in the *Ashram*, and was going for his dinner. He felt very delighted to see Swamiji and hugged him with love. In fact, he was expecting Swamiji, because, only a few days before, he had heard from a *Sadhu* that Swamiji had been proposing to come to Kashmir by foot. But he had not liked the idea of his walking all the way to Kashmir as it would have taken over one month. He, therefore,

wanted to arrange a bus ticket for Swamiji through anyone of his devotees from Jammu or Pathankot, but could not do so as he did not know the whereabouts of Swamiji. Now, seeing that Swamiji had reached Srinagar only in few days, His Holiness smilingly remarked: "The Divine knows what is best for his devotees, and invariably creates situations in which lie the true good of his devotees."

Then, Maharajji (Swami Krishna Dassji) shared his meals with Swamiji. When they finished the meals, Swamiji wanted to wash all the plates. To the great embarrassment of Swamiji, Maharajji too tried to do the same. Swamiji then humbly said, "Maharajji, you are putting me to shame by trying to do so. Kindly give all the plates to me for washing-up". Maharajji replied, "If a mother cleans the used utensils of her child, would the child be ashamed?" In the meanwhile, the servant of the *Ashram* came and took away the utensils of both of them for cleaning.

A story told by Maharajji to Swamiji demonstrated his utter humility. Maharajji told him an incident somewhat in following words: "I was walking on the village road when a person, bare-footed and in dirty clothes, approached me and threw before me a ten paisa coin. I felt that perhaps he had taken me as a beggar. So I picked up the coin and returned it back to him. The man took the coin and walked away in the opposite direction."

"Within a few seconds, I realized that I should not have reacted like that. I turned back and called out to the person to stop. I went to him and begged his

pardon and requested him to give that coin back to me, to which the man obliged.”

Maharajji said, “I reflected and realized, who was I if not a respected beggar after all ? I would normally have accepted gifts in kind and cash from many others when offered in big amount. But I don’t earn the money myself for my maintenance. I should not have refused to accept a ten paisa coin from that poor and uneducated person who did not give the money in a proper courteous way. But he gave it of his own goodwill.”

And after that Swamiji added in his own humble and humorous way: “Perhaps Maharajji wanted to teach me by relating this incident. Whenever someone offers me anything I am reminded of the words of Maharajji.” And Swamiji ended the story with his own experience: “Once at Frankfurt airport an officer, while checking my passport, asked me: ‘What is your profession?’ I said, ‘I am a respected beggar.’ ”

Swamiji observes: “Maharaj Swami Krishna Dassji was humility incarnate. He gave respect to the lowest of the low ones. He was one of the greatest sages, yet he was so simple, humble and humane, that even some of his devotees, unable to comprehend his greatness, would sometimes feel embarrassed by his humble behavior. He was totally free of the ego, incapable of thinking himself to be a sage or a great man. He lived with the spontaneity and innocence of a child.”

“He was a priceless spiritual gem, generally unrecognized by the so-called wise (in reality the foolish and ignorant men of the world), who are always

starved of or hungry for name, fame, position and power, and running after these to catch hold of shadows for their whole lives. As long as I lived with him", says Swamiji, further narrating his association with Swami Krishna Dassji, "it was a great opportunity to learn from him. Every act of his inspired me to follow the footprints of great sages like Babaji, Ramakrishna Paramhansa and others. I lived near Maharajji for not more than five months in Chinari Ashram in 1953. Then I had another three months' association with him in Sapta Sarovar *Jhari* during the winters of 1957 (Swamiji had lived in *Jhari* in 1957 for a short period) when he graciously agreed to stay with me there, and about four months at random, for few days each time, at different times. But I learnt so much from his practical life that I am still trying to assimilate it all into my own life."

Swamiji stayed in the *Ashram* upto the end of September, 1953. In those days Swami Govind Dassji, the eldest *Gurubhai*, was the Mahant. Swami Ram Sharan Dassji, the younger *Gurubhai*, was managing all the affairs of the *Ashram*, while Swami Krishna Dassji, the youngest *Gurubhai*, was totally devoted to his spiritual *Sadhana*. Maharajji would remain closed in his small, cell-like room for the whole day except in the afternoon when he would come out to meet the waiting seekers. He virtually did not participate in the management of the *Ashram*. Swami Govind Dassji knew Chandra Swamiji since his student days in Dehradun. Though Swami Govind Dassji and Swami Ram Sharan Dassji showered their love on Swamiji and took all care of him, it was the unreserved love,

care and spiritual guidance of Maharajji, which kept Swamiji in the *Ashram* for these five months.

Swamiji was lodged in the room of Swami Ram Sharan Dassji, who was busy in the management of the *Ashram* for whole day, and would only sleep in his room in the night. Swamiji spent most of his time in *Sadhana* in his room up to lunch and, then, in the afternoon, in the secluded open veranda on the back of it. Here he engaged himself in meditation, *Japa* and *Swadhyaya* (study of the scriptures). He would meet Maharajji at the time of lunch and also have his *Darshan* in the afternoon when other seekers came to ask spiritual questions to Maharajji. There he would simply listen to the answers of Maharajji attentively.

SATSANG BORN IN A PARK

In the evening Swamiji would go for a walk in a park, half a kilometer away from the *Ashram*. He would take a walk for forty minutes and then sit for about twenty minutes calmly on a bench in the remote corner of that park. This was almost his daily routine.

One day, in the evening, when Swamiji was quietly sitting on bench, two elderly persons came and shared the same bench with him. Though they seemed to be attracted and impressed by the strong presence of the young monk, they remained quiet without speaking anything to Swamiji. They kept coming, the second day, the third day. They felt a sort of peace near him. On fourth day, one of them, Pandit Agyaram Dogra, could not restrain himself; and he humbly introduced himself and his colleague to Swamiji.

Pandit Agyaram Dogra was a retired Reception Officer and the other gentleman, Sardar Hari Singhji, about eighty five years old religious person, was a retired Settlement Officer of Jammu & Kashmir state. They had come to spend their summers in Kashmir. Panditji was an Arya-Samajist, a religious minded old man. But in 1947, when India was partitioned, and thousands and thousands of innocent and virtuous people were massacred in cold blood during the communal riots, and millions suffered untold miseries without any apparent fault of theirs, his faith in the existence of God had been shaken. He had stopped performing *Trikal-Sandhya* (three times daily prayers); his mind became overwhelmed with doubts in the *Karma* theory as also in God, whom he had thought was just, merciful and omnipotent at the same time.

After introducing himself, Panditji enquired from Swamiji about his name, residence, education, the purpose of his becoming a monk at such an early age, and asked other questions about suffering, God etc. Swamiji gave him short, simple, convincing and lucid replies, somewhat in following words:

Swamiji: I have heard the call of God. It is irresistible. I can not ignore it, much less suppress it. I must see Him. I have resolved to realize Him first hand. I am seized with the aspiration to discover Him.

Panditji : Where is God ? How do you know that He really exists ? Where does He live ? Why do you waste your life seeking something which may be a myth?

Swamiji : I do not know God. I do not know what He is or what He does. I do not even know much about

this world. But I have faith in God and in the words of sages and saints.

Panditji: Why is there so much suffering in the world created by God ? Floods cause havoc where there is no need of water, washing away men and animals, and destroying crops and properties; but, where water is needed, He causes drought, and crops wither away, the people suffer. Again, there are people in the world who die of starvation, and there are those also, who have so much wealth in surplus earned by hook or crook, that their extravagant and luxurious way of living matches that of kings and rulers. How does God, who is just and merciful, tolerate all this ?

Swamiji: I think it is man himself who is responsible for all this mess, all this suffering. He has cut and destroyed the forests and disturbed (what we would call today) the 'ecological balance' in the nature causing floods and droughts. The various mal-adjustments in society, degeneration in moral values, have contributed greatly to the suffering of man. In the mad pursuit of more and more comforts and conveniences, he has polluted the atmosphere, and is making his own life more and more miserable. His selfishness has crossed the legitimate limits and doomed him to be violent, aggressive and militant, creating, as it were, a hell on earth.

Panditji: Why do you not do good to others? Serve your parents, your society and your country. Is it not selfishness to seek your own salvation?

Swamiji: I appreciate your noble ideas. I am not against your observations and suggestions. All men in

this world do not have the same feelings, ideas and inborn tendencies. Some live and die for themselves only; they cannot see beyond their noses. There are some who live and die for their families. However, some others, fewer in number, sacrifice their lives for their country caring for nothing else. But there are still some others, though very, very few, who live and die to realize God, the ultimate Truth. To call such chosen people selfish would be quite absurd and unjustified. The innate urge in man for immortality and infinity is irresistible. It is a fact which cannot be disputed.

By this time it was getting late and dark, so they bade fare-well to each other, and the meeting dispersed.

Next day, when Swamiji reached the park, Panditji and Sardarji were already there. Obviously, they were waiting for him, near whom they had felt a peace which was palpable and an assurance which could satisfy their questioning hearts and dispelled their disturbing doubts.

Soon, such park meeting became almost a daily routine. Besides these two gentlemen, some other people from different walks of life, including a retired Muslim officer and a Sufi Haaji owning a transport business, also got attracted and started coming to these informal spiritual talks. What was beautiful, was that all participated in the discussions, which were held in a very cordial and friendly atmosphere with open minds under the spontaneous guidance of Swamiji. Swamiji's sweet and convincing answers, supported by scientific explanations, touched, appealed to the

reasoning minds and the hearts of the emotional ones alike. Swamiji's holy presence had become a sort of spiritual feast, which these yearning souls enjoyed more and more. Soon many people became his friends and started inviting him for meals at their homes as a token of their devotion, which he so often accepted. For many friends, the sweet and devotional relationship with Swamiji, became their most precious possession, which they held on to dearly, as long as they lived.

Within a short time, Sardar Hari Singhji had become very much devoted to Swamiji. Years later, at the time of his death, just before proceeding to his onwards journey, he came to Swamiji in his astral body. Swamiji once told us: "I was staying in *Sapta Sarovar Jhari*. At midnight I woke up, feeling the presence of someone in my hut. When I opened my eyes, I saw Sardar Hari Singhji sitting crossed-legged on the ground facing me. He was smiling and looked peaceful, but did not speak. After about fifteen minutes, he disappeared. Next morning, I told this incident to a devotee who had come from Jammu. The same evening I received the telegram that Sardarji had expired the previous night."

In the meanwhile, the Naamdhari Sikh, the soldier, who had traveled with Swamiji on bus, kept visiting Swamiji on Sundays. Once he requested Swamiji to visit a cave-temple, which had a natural Shiva-Lingam. This gentleman stayed in his camp at village Khrew, about some kilometers away from Srinagar. The village was at the base of a hill, on the

top of which the said cave-temple was situated in a corner. People of the neighboring villages knew of that cave-temple. Some Kashmiri *Pandits* also used to go and worship there once a year. One had to climb a steep distance of three kilometers aided by a village guide, to be able to locate that cave which had a very narrow and hidden entrance. Swamiji agreed to go to the cave.

TRANCE IN THE CAVE-TEMPLE

Swamiji himself narrated: "We engaged a guide from the village who informed us that sometimes an encounter with wild bears could take place near that cave. In winters, some bears even took shelter in the cave. The guide also told us that once a monk in Tibet had seen that cave in his vision, and had come and spent four months in the cave in spiritual *Sadhana*. The guide took some articles like sticks, rags and kerosene oil to light a fire, if necessary, to scare away the wild bears. He also took a torch and a lamp saying that it was always dark inside the cave. For refreshment we took a flask of milk and some snacks. It took us about an hour and a half to reach the cave-temple. Fortunately, there was no encounter with any bear on the way. As the entrance to the cave was very narrow, only one person at a time could enter it with a light. First of all, the guide entered and lit a lamp inside. We followed one after another in that light."

"As soon as I entered that cave, I felt a very strong presence there, which stopped all my thoughts and aroused some peculiar subtle movements of energy

in my body. I had to take the support of the Sardarji to walk few steps in the cave and had to sit down abruptly on the ground which was wet. My eyes closed, as if, compulsively and my attention rushed to the *Agya Chakra* (the point in the middle of the forehead). I started to have visions of different saints, sages and *Rishis*. I forgot my body completely. Of the saints and sages I saw during that period of about fifteen minutes of trance, I could recognize only Baba Shri Chanderji. Two of them looked like Tibetan monks with shaven heads and three or four, like Kashmiri *Rishis* with white long robes called *Farans* on their bodies and turbans on their heads. The vision of each sage would have perhaps lasted about two minutes. These visions gave me a feeling of being transported; an inner joy filled me which cannot be described in words."

"After about fifteen minutes, my eyes opened gently and I looked around me. I found the guide and the Sardarji sitting besides me quietly. They thought I was meditating. My breathing had become very, very slow and for the few moments after opening my eyes, I could see very dimly and almost could not speak. I felt much weakness in the physical body. Slowly and gradually, say, in about five minutes, I felt normal and got up."

"The guide showed us the *Shiva-Lingam*; it was not hand-made, but was a part of the rock, placed almost in the middle of the cave. The cave from inside was so spacious that fifty to sixty people could sit in it. And most wondrous thing was that drop of water would fall every few minutes from the uneven ceiling

of the cave, right on the top of the *Shiva-Lingam*. A few drops also fell on the ground here and there sometimes, making it wet. The temperature inside the cave might have been around 20° C in the month of June.”

“In the opposite side of the entrance of the cave, was a narrow passage going somewhere. We tried to peep into it with help of a torch, but the beam of light did not go beyond eight to ten feet. The guide informed us that it was believed by some people that the passage went as far as Tibet.”

“Having remained in the cave-temple for about one hour, we came out and took our refreshment under a tree. After taking rest for about another hour, we walked down the hill to the village. I had been thinking in my mind about staying in that cave for a few months, for *Sadhana*. I made certain enquiries from the guide in this regard and was told that there was no source of water near the cave. The Tibetan monk who had once stayed there for four months had to go down the hill for two kilometers to bring drinking water for him. From there we went by foot upto the metalled road. We reached Srinagar by bus in the evening.”

“The same evening I told Maharajji about my experiences in the cave and my intention to stay there. But Maharajji dissuaded me to do so. He also told me an interesting story about one of his young Kashmiri devotees who had an encounter with a wild bear near that cave, and had a providential escape.”

AMARNATH YATRA WITH SADHU-PILGRIMS

One day a tourist from Dehradun came and stayed in the *Ashram* with his sister and her two children. He was a rich person. He already knew Maharajji and wanted to live near him. Maharajji introduced him to Swamiji. Within a few days he became a great admirer of Swamiji. Whenever he went out for sight seeing in bus or taxi, he would take Swamiji also with him, insistently. Thus Swamiji came to see all the natural and beautiful spots in Kashmir valley within eight-ten days.

From July to September, every year, about thirty thousand pilgrims including *Sadhus* and saints come to Srinagar from all over India to participate in the historical and famous Amarnath *Yatra* (pilgrimage). It is the cave of Lord Shiva, about one hundred and twenty kilometers from Srinagar and is one of the most sacred places for Hindus. It is the same famous cave where Swami Vivekananda had the vision of Lord Shiva. The cave enshrines a *Shiva-Lingam* formed of snow, which assumes its full size on the full moon day of *Shravan* (a month according to the Hindu calender falling in August). In those days, Shri Chander Chinar Ashram used to take care of many pilgrim-*Sadhus* and arrange for their camping and meals etc. right upto the cave and back. Swamiji also performed the pilgrimage to Amarnath with this group of *Sadhus*.

In the month of September, after participating in the birthday celebration of Baba Shri Chanderji in the *Ashram*, Swamiji decided to leave Kashmir as it was getting very cold indeed.

As we have seen above, Pandit Agyaramji and Sardar Hari Singhji had become very close to Swamiji during this period. Due to the influence of Swamiji, Panditji's faith in God had been restored and he had again started sitting in meditation and performing *Trikal-Sandhya* daily and regularly.

The wife of Sardar Hari Singhji, who was addressed as *Bayji* was an old and very religious lady. Though not very well educated, she was an authority on Guru Granth Sahib and would often give extempore discourses on Gurubani. Many people were her admirers and devotees, who often invited her to their homes. It was their strong belief that her intercession with the Divine, on their behalf, could certainly attract the grace of God, and help them overcome their problems and bless them with a happy and spiritual life. Bayji had become greatly devoted to Swamiji and had developed a motherly love for him. She introduced many families of Jammu to Swamiji, who received spiritual inspiration from him. Bayji used to tell her admirers that Swamiji's spiritual influence had transformed her from a conservative religious woman to a liberal, spiritual person, who pays due respects to all religions and their saints and sages.

When Panditji and Sardarji came to know that Swamiji had decided to leave Kashmir, they requested him to come to and stay in Jammu, which, they pleaded, was called a city of temples and which had many suitable spots for *Sadhana*. Swamiji kindly acceded to their request. Panditji booked a seat in bus for Swamiji upto Jammu. He also informed Pandit Prem Nath Dogra, a renowned and noble personality

of Jammu, about Swamiji and requested him to arrange some secluded and remote place suitable for *Sadhana*. Sardarji had also told his one retired subordinate employee to welcome Swamiji warmly and make necessary arrangements for his stay in consultation with and help of Pandit Prem Nath Dogra.

IN VED-MANDIR, AN ABANDONED TEMPLE-ROOM

On the day of departure, Swamiji touched the feet of Maharajji, and took his leave. Panditji and Sardarji saw him off at the bus stand. When the bus reached Jammu, Sardarji's man received him respectfully and took him to the famous Raghunath temple for night stay and took all care of him. In the morning he took Swamiji to the outskirts of the town showing him many secluded spots. He had already met Pandit Prem Nath Dogra in this regard, who had assured that any spot selected by Swamiji would be made available to him. After visiting about a dozen spots in and around Jammu, Swamiji selected a small empty temple in the vicinity of Ved-Mandir. It was a temple only in name since there was no idol in it and it was lying abandoned and unattended for a long period. No one visited that temple. At some distance from the temple was a big and old hall in bad shape, which was also lying vacant. The other part of the plot which was attached to Ved-Mandir, was spread out into many acres. It was virtually a forest except one small house at the end of the plot, in which the care-taker of the Ved-Mandir, Shri Shastriji, had been staying with his family.

Swamiji came to this empty temple. Pandit Prem Nath Dogra was also the President of the Ved-Mandir committee. According to his instructions, Shastriji provided two mats and a bucket with a mug, and daily brought him his lunch which he got prepared in his own home. Pandit Agyaramji was also one of the trustees of the Ved-Mandir Committee. He arranged milk for Swamiji on daily basis through Shastriji. Sardar Hari Singhji and his wife, when they came back to Jammu, would so often invite Swamiji to their home for lunch and send some fruits to him in Ved-Mandir.

In Ved-Mandir Swamiji stayed for about three months. In the initial days he used to remain enclosed in that small temple-room absorbed in his *Sadhana* for the whole day except when he went out for lunch on invitation from some of his close devotees. His *Sadhana*, in those days consisted mainly of *Japa* aided by meditation and *Swadhyaya*.

In the meantime, Swamiji got introduced to some prominent, respectable and noble people of Jammu by Bayji and Pandit Agyaramji. They included the families of Shri R.D. Lakra, Sardar Harnam Singh Sachdeva, Doctor Mela Ram Chabra, the Chief Medical Officer of J & K, Lala Ishwar Das Mengi, Dr. O.P. Mengi, Sardar Amar Singh, the senior most I.A.S. officer of J & K, Thakur Jaffer Singh, Pandit Labhu Ramji, the Chief Engineer and others. All loved and revered this young monk and served him in one way or the other. Besides, some seekers of Truth also came to know about Swamiji staying in Ved-Mandir through its

keeper, Shastriji. Among those, one Shri Niranjan Dass Kamotra and Shri Munshi Ramji, a cloth merchant, were very sincere seekers, who often visited Swamiji. They used to sit in meditation in the presence of Swamiji and also seek spiritual guidance from him. Lala Ishwar Das Mengi used to study for thirty minutes daily in Swamiji's temple-room, the *Gita Rahasya*, written by a great scholar and *Karma-Yogi*, Bal Gangadhar Tilak.

DO GHOSTS EXIST ?

It will not be out of place to mention here an interesting event which happened during Swamiji's stay in Ved-Mandir. He mentioned it to us when someone had asked him a question relating to ghosts. He explained, "I have never seen a ghost but once I did feel the presence of a disembodied soul."

When Swamiji was staying in Ved-Mandir, a retired Subedar started coming to him from a nearby village. Initially, he talked only of spirituality and religion, but after some days he opened himself up and said: "Swamiji, I have a big problem at home. A ghost comes to my house every night and greatly troubles all my family members including myself. The ghost enters the bodies of all of them one by one and strangulates them. They want to scream but can hardly do so. In this manner he tortures us the whole night. I have done everything possible to get rid of this trouble but in vain. I brought some *Tantrics* also, who tried to exorcise the ghost by performing certain *Tantric* rites, but they could not succeed and expressed

their helplessness. They said that the ghost was very strong and even troubled the *Tantrics* themselves. Not only that, any relative or friend of ours who comes to stay in our home, is also put to the same tormenting experience."

"A competent doctor, who is a friend of mine and who does not believe in ghosts, took this whole incident as some sort of a disease in my family. I once invited him to stay at my house and to his great surprise and horror, he too was put to the same trouble in the night. Now he does not visit my home. I even left that frightful house and went to live in another village for six months but the ghost would not spare us. He came there also. He follows us wherever we go."

With tears in his eyes he continued, "Swamiji, I am a brave soldier and can manage to pass the remainder of my life and bear with this horrible fate of mine, but I am very distressed about the agony of my two children. Please Swamiji, help me; I have great faith in you, save me." Swamiji consoled him and said: "I don't know anything about *Tantric Vidya* (science of the *Tantras*) nor have I ever seen a ghost. However, I have deep sympathy for you and I will pray to God to free you from this ghost if there is one. Come to me after a week and tell me what happened."

After ten days, the Subedar turned up and after doing *Pranam* to Swamiji said: "Thank you, Sir. I can not express my gratitude to you in words. After many, many years, since this trouble started, at last, only this week we have had respite from that ghost. But for the last two days he has again started coming in

the night; though, now he is not troubling any of us. This time the ghost entered the body of my children only, but went away within a few minutes. Now I am very confident that you can save my children also from the ghost. Though I don't want to give you more trouble, it is my heartiest and humble request that you should come and stay in my home for atleast one night. I will bring a *Tonga* (horse-cart) to take you to my home and bring you back here the next day."

Swamiji agreed to go to the village of the Subedar and stay there for the night. Two purposes prompted him to do so. Firstly, the possibility of the alleviation of suffering of Subedar's family and secondly, he himself wanted to experience what a ghost was, even if the latter harassed and troubled him. Therefore, as arranged, Swamiji reached the Subedar's home in a *Tonga*. Some of the relatives and neighbors of the Subedar had also come to receive Swamiji. In the evening, after dinner, as directed by Swamiji, *Sankirtan* (singing of the praises of God) was held in the big room where all the family members used to sleep together at night. At about nine-thirty p.m. when the *Sankirtan* stopped, Swamiji said, "I would like to sleep alone in this room in which the ghost comes and troubles you. All of you should sleep in the next room, leaving the common door open." All obeyed his instructions.

Swamiji narrated the exciting sequence of the incident: "From nine-thirty to ten-thirty I sat in meditation and then lay down to sleep. At midnight while I was not fully asleep, I felt the presence of some being in my room. I flashed my torch all around the

room. There was no one who could be seen with the eyes. But the feeling of someone else present in the room persisted in my heart. After a few minutes I felt that an invisible force had entered or was entering my body, but it came out immediately. Within a few seconds I heard the screaming of one of the Subedar's children from the next room. All of us got up and lit a lamp. The child stopped crying after a minute or so. Then we put out the lamp and went to sleep again. Nothing happened for the rest of the night and we all had a sound sleep upto six a.m. in the morning. After my daily meditation and *Japa*, I took breakfast and left for Ved-Mandir by *Tonga*. While leaving his home, I told the Subedar; "I shall pray for you with the hope that everything will now be alright."

Swamiji reached Ved-Mandir before lunch. After that, for a number of nights, Swamiji felt the presence of that disembodied soul (ghost) in his temple-room. But he did nothing. After about twenty days the Subedar again visited Swamiji and informed him, with a sense of relief, that the ghost had stopped coming to his home and harassing them. He told him that only the previous night the ghost had come to his home but did not harass anyone.

Later, when Swamiji shifted to the cave from Ved-Mandir, the Sudebar again came there, after about six months and informed Swamiji that though the ghost was still coming to his home the frequency of his visits was gradually decreasing and that he did not trouble anyone in the family anymore. Thus came an end to the horrible tale of sufferings of the Subedar and his

family. It is so obvious how this family got rid of its horror, merely on the strength of Swamiji's sincere intercession with God and by his purity and his compassion.

EXPERIENCE OF BHIKSHA

At another time Swamiji told us about an amusing incident. When asked by a devotee whether he had ever begged for his food. Swamiji laughed and wrote:

"When I was staying at Ved-Mandir, one day I wished to have an experience of doing *Bhiksha* (of begging food). I told Shastriji not to bring my lunch on that day, and after finishing my daily schedule of meditation and *Japa*, I took my *Bhiksha*-bowl and went to a nearby village for *Bhiksha*. I stood in front of a house, the door of which was half open. I called out the words: 'Hari Om, please give me *Bhiksha*', in the traditional way of begging food by wandering monks in India. But no one responded or came out. I repeated the same call but to no effect. I waited for five minutes, standing in front of the door and then moved to the next home. Its door was closed. I gave the call, this time a bit louder: 'Hari Om. please give me *Bhiksha*.' Within a minute an old woman came out with a handful of corn flour and offered it to me. I gently refused it saying that I needed cooked food. She said there was no cooked food with her and went back. I, therefore, moved on to the third house for *Bhiksha*. 'Hari Om, a *Sadhu* is at your door asking for *Bhiksha*,' I called once again. A young man with an athletic, strong body came out. He looked at my face, bowed before me and requested me to come in. I followed him

inside his simple, village house. He offered me a cot to sit on and seated himself on the floor upon a mat. He was a very devoted gentleman with a simple faith in God as also in the saints and *Sadhus*. He first offered me water to drink and said, 'Sir, *Khichari* (rice mixed with pulses) is being cooked on the fire pot. It should be ready within fifteen minutes. I will, then, serve it to you.' In the meantime, he humbly introduced himself to me saying that he was a soldier in the army, who had come on leave to see his parents in the village. He was very much interested in God-Realization and seemed to have read many religious and spiritual books. He asked me some searching questions about the Divine, as also about the *Sadhana* to realize Him. I was moved by his sincere spiritual aspiration and guided him according to my knowledge, telling him an example of a soldier turned *Sadhu* who had reached the lofty heights of spiritual experience. He was pleased and smilingly remarked; 'Sir, my life is also like that of a saint, based on discipline and self-sacrifice. Having been posted on the border where exchange of fire often takes place between the troops of two countries facing each other, life can pass into death anytime. I remember the Divine each and every moment.' "

"By that time the *Khichari* was ready. He offered me to wash my hands and served me a full meal of *Khichari* with a lot of fresh butter. His devotion and faith had to be seen to be believed. It made the food all the more delicious and tasteful. While I was eating I began wondering if I was having a *Bhiksha* or celebrating feast on that day!"

DRAWN TO SOLITUDE

After having spent about three months in Ved-Mandir, Swamiji felt an urge to go to some more secluded place and plunge himself headlong in search of Truth. The examples of Swami Rama Teerth and Paramhansa Ramakrishna made him restless within to fathom the depths of divine Consciousness. Babaji's inspiration infused in him the spirit of 'do or die' for God-Realization. Life without a first-hand experience of the Divine seemed to him totally meaningless and unbearable, as it were. One day he expressed his intention of leaving Ved-Mandir and going to some more quiet and solitary abode to Thakur Jaffar Singh. The Thakur told him about a small cave at the bank of river Tawi, which was built for meditation under his supervision for the *Guruji* of the queen of Poonch state. "That is the most suitable place for *Sadhana*. Although it is lying abandoned for more than ten years and is in a very bad shape now, I will get door fixed to it, if you like the place and decide to stay there," he said. Next morning he took Swamiji with him to that cave. They had to walk along the bank of the river, crossing over big boulders; there was no foot-path, let alone a road, leading to the cave. It took them over forty minutes to cover a distance of not more than one kilometer along the bank of river Tawi.

To quote Swamiji: "I saw that cave. There was a small room in front of the cave and a kitchen attached to it. The wooden doors of both the rooms and the cave had been taken away by anti-social people. Only a structure of cement and bricks stood there in a very

bad condition. The platform in front of the rooms was half broken and had been washed away by the floods of the river Tawi, which was flowing about ten feet below, touching the broken platform. Across the river, there was a vast dry bed of stones and river-sand, and beyond it, a dense forest spread up to one kilometer to the other side of the hill. There was pin-drop silence at the place. About half a kilometer down stream, some people could be seen taking a bath in the river. I sat there on the broken platform, in silence, for fifteen minutes to feel the vibrations of the place, and enjoyed it. I told the Thakur that I had liked that place and would soon come to stay there."

Next day Swamiji left Ved-Mandir for the cave at nine a.m. In Swamiji's own words, "It was very, very cold at the bank of the river. I felt it specially in the evening. I had no warm clothes nor any bedding. The sun set behind the hill at three o'clock."

"By seven o'clock it became very dark. At about seven thirty p.m. I went inside the cave. In those days I used to wear only a *Dhoti* (a piece of cloth round the lower part of the body and legs) as you see Swami Ram Teerth in his photograph. So I had to make two pieces out of the *Dhoti*; one piece I used as *Dhoti* and the other I used as a curtain where the cave had an opening and where a door would be one day."

"At about eight p.m. a devotee, Shri Munshi Ramji reached there with a laborer who was carrying a bedding. I was surprised and asked him how he reached there with the bedding. Munshi Ramji told me that he had been thinking of bringing a bedding for

me for the last so many days. But that day, at about two p.m., he felt an irresistible urge to bring it to me. He gave the cloth from his shop to a tailor and asked him to make a quilt, a mattress and a pillow which were made in two hours. He stuffed the cotton and the bedding was ready by six thirty p.m. Then he went to Ved-Mandir. There he came to know that I had moved to some cave at the bank of the Tawi, near the water-works. He managed to find the cave and gave me all these things he had brought."

"Also, on the very first day, Pandit Agyaram sent me, through the keeper of Ved-Mandir place, a mat, a bucket and a 'can' of *Panjeeri* (a nutritious and whole-some preparation of wheat flour, sugar and *Ghee*)"

Thus Swamiji was not put to any difficulty even for a single day. It seems as though the Lord was following him more closely than he was following the Lord!

That cave was in some way connected with Shri Hanumanji and an ordinary person could not have borne the power and purity of this mighty deity. Therefore not everybody could have lived in that cave. In the beginning, Swamiji too felt a little disturbed, but, pure and highly evolved soul that he was, after a few days all seemed normal and all right.

INTENSIVE SADHANA

This was the beginning of Swamiji's specially intense period of *Sadhana*, dedicated exclusively to God-seeking. The young monk plunged headlong into

the inner depths of his being. The chief means of his *Sadhana* at that time were: meditation, *Japa*, *Pranayama* (breathing exercise), practice of witness consciousness and above all, total surrender to and taking refuge in the Divine.

While living at the cave in Jammu, Swamiji used to sing for half an hour each evening, the *Maha Mantra* (the great *Mantra*)—"Hare Ram Hare Ram, Ram Ram Hare Hare, Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare", with *Khartals* (instrument played in one hand for rhythm.) Swamiji told us: "I had devotion both for Baby Krishna and *Devi Shakti* (the divine power, the feminine aspect of God, as Mother). Naturally, both—the divine Baby and Its Mother seemed to me always as one and the same: My *Sadhana* was predominantly devotional, though I had full faith in *Advaita Vedanta* (Non-duality as taught in the Upanishads). When I read the scriptures of *Bhakti* (loving devotion), I would weep." Once, when asked by a seeker if the *Bhakti Marga* (path) did not involve duality, Swamiji remarked: "All paths of *Sadhana* do involve duality, implicitly or explicitly."

It may be interesting and useful for *Sadhaks* to give here a schedule of Swamiji's *Sadhana* at that time. We found it in one of his note books written about thirty five years ago.

DAILY TIME TABLE

- Getting up	2 a.m.
- Prayer	2 to 3 a.m.
- <i>Pranayama</i>	3 to 4 a.m.

- Meditation	4 to 5 a.m.
- Call of nature, etc.	5 to 6 a.m.
- <i>Japa</i>	6 to 7 a.m.
- Light <i>Aahar</i> (breakfast), setting, cleaning and putting things in order.	7 to 8 a.m.
- <i>Swadhyaya</i> (study of scriptures).	8 to 9 a.m.
- <i>Vyayama</i> (Physical exercises, <i>Yoga Asana</i>) and bath	9 to 10.30 a.m.
- <i>Nitya Karma</i> (<i>Puja</i> or worship) and reciting <i>Shlokas</i> from holy scriptures and praying for the good of all beings.	10.30 to 11.30 a.m.
- <i>Pranayama</i> (breathing exercises) and meditation	11.30 to 1.00 p.m.
- Meals & rest	1.00 to 4.00 p.m.
- Attending to visitors or <i>Swaadhyaya</i>	4.00 to 5.30 p.m.
- Light <i>Aahar</i>	5.30 to 6.30 p.m.
- <i>Vyayama</i> (<i>Yoga Asanas</i>)	6.30 to 7.30 p.m.
- <i>Pranayama</i>	7.30 to 8.30 p.m.
- Meditation, <i>Japa</i> & Prayers	8.30 to 10.00 p.m.
- Washing of clothes	Wednesday
- Replying to letters	Sunday

In the same note book we found a very useful information about various aspects of *Sadhana* which is being given below for the benefit of all seekers:

“The undermentioned three powers are present in each and every person:

- a) *Kriya Shakti* — the power of action through which actions are performed.
- b) *Bhava Shakti* — the power of feeling.
- c) *Gyan Shakti* — the power of understanding.

The all round development of a person involves the refinement of these powers and directing them for spiritual unfoldment.”

The following methods have been prescribed for the same, as written in the said note book:

- a) For the development of *Kriya Shakti*:

Pranayama and breathing exercises, prayer and concentration on the navel center.

- b) For the development of *Bhavana Shakti*:

Kirtan, Japa, prayer and concentration on the heart center.

- c) For the development of *Gyana Shakti*:
Swadhyaya (study of inspiring scriptures),
Satsang, Vichar-Vimarsh (spiritual discussion),
 prayer, *Japa*, and concentration on the *Agya Chakra*.

Looking at Swamiji's own daily schedule of *Sadhana* as mentioned above one wonders as to how integral and balanced his *Sadhana* was.

INNER EXPERIENCES AND VISIONS DURING INTENSIVE SADHANA

From the very next day he moved to the cave, he had started observing silence. It was his first experiment with silence. Aided with dispassion and

deep aspiration to fathom the inner recesses and in order to know first hand the truth of his Being, silence turned his mind more and more inward, opening up the world of inner experiences. Some inner experiences that came to him in the beginning were frightening, others quite engrossing, before he started having the visions of various sages.

To quote Swamiji's own words: "For the first fortnight or so I have had some very horrifying and painful experiences. During meditation, and even in dreams, I would feel sinking in a pit full of excreta; sometimes I would see 'beings' with frightening forms and faces. Passing through raging fires and being tossed in ruffling waves of ocean was also felt. At that time I did not know how and why all this was happening. It was so terrible that but for my deep faith in God and protection of Babaji, I would have given up, left the place and even stopped the *Sadhana*. I prayed the Lord again and again to bring me out of this predicament. Slowly and gradually, the frequency of such experiences slowed down and finally they stopped after about twenty days."

"Then the nature of inner experiences suddenly changed. The painful ones were replaced by some thrilling ones. During meditation I started to see very beautiful scenes and landscapes of rivers and mountains. Many kinds of musical sounds were also heard in the right ear. Very often I would witness the play of lights of different shades at the *Agya Chakra*. Such experiences encouraged me to go deeper and deeper within. Consequently, the visions of great sages and saints, some known about whom I had heard or

read, and some unknown about whom I had not, started coming to me. I did not contemplate or concentrate on any of them, though I have had a great respect and adoration for some of them.”

He had the visions of Ramana Maharishi, Shri Aurobindo, Guru Nanak Devji and of Baba Shri Chanderji. One day he was blessed with the vision of Kumara Brothers, the *Vedic Rishis*: Sanak, Sanandan, Sanatan and Sanat Kumar. *Rishi* Sanatan Kumara initiated him with a *Mantra* and instructed him to recite it with a particular technique for a specific number of times. During the practice of this *Mantra* he gave up all other spiritual exercises including breathing exercises, reading of books on religion and spirituality, and meditation. He, however, continued with the prayer in the morning and evening regularly. More than eight hours every night he devoted to the practice of *Japa* of the *Mantra* given by *Rishi* Sanatan Kumar. If and when the sleep would tend to overpower him during the practice of *Mantra* in the night (or in the day), he would practise the *Mantra* in the standing posture with the support of a specially made *Bairagan* with a long leg. In the first spell, he stayed in this cave for one year and a half continuously.

There is a divine guidance working secretly in this world. It sometime takes the sincere seekers to the realized ones or even to those who are spiritually more advanced. A few more sincere seekers started coming to Swamiji during this period of one year and a half. One of them was Vasudev Kaul of Rainawari, Srinagar, who was a Govt. employee and had come to Jammu in winters when the Government offices had

moved from Srinagar to Jammu as usual. He was a renowned social worker and religious man of Rainawari, Srinagar. He told Swamiji about a place (near Rainawari, Srinagar) which, he said, was spiritually charged and very much conducive for *Sadhana*. He persuaded Swamiji to come and stay atleast for the summer months at that holy place. That place was Hari Parbat.

AT HARI PARBAT

Hari Parbat is a small hill on the outskirts of Srinagar, near Rainawari. It is known as Siddha Peeth where many saints and sages, both Hindus and Muslims, performed spiritual *Sadhana* and achieved spiritual fulfilment. Hundreds of Kashmiri Pandits circumambulate everyday this holy place with devotion by walking on foot, covering a distance of around four kilometers. The atmosphere of this place is very congenial, both hygienically and spiritually.

Mr. Vasudev Kaul took Swamiji to Hari Parbat and arranged a very small tent for his stay which was pitched on the top of the hill under a mulberry tree.

A few religious minded young Kashmiri Pandits from Rainawari, who came from lower, middle class families, came forward and started bringing meals and milk from their homes daily for Swamiji. Mohan Lal Kaul, Sham Lal Pir, Ram Krishna Duloo, Mohan Lal Ambardar were the few of these young men of Rainawari who served Swamiji with deep devotion, especially when he stayed at Hari Parbat.

It will be relevant to quote here the words of Shri T.N. Bhan, the retired Principal, Govt College, Sopur, Kashmir from the 'Introduction' to Swamiji's book: The Practical Approach to Divinity. In his 'Introduction' he wrote, "Nearly a decade ago, I walked slowly up a hill towards a solitary, small tent pitched on the top, under the shade of an old mulberry tree. The sun was about to set; there was a shower of golden hues on the majestic mountains surrounding the beautiful Kashmir valley. The mid-summer verdure of fields and forests, of pastures and plains, of rivers and lakes presented a bewitching prospect on every side. Just opposite the hill, at the distance of a few furlongs only, a lotus-lake reflected the charm of the evening as it began to bloom amidst a feast of colours. There was a stillness and silence which seemed to calm the most restless of all things, the mind of man. As I reached the spot, I found a few youngmen, sitting quietly, in a semi-circle facing a vacant *Asana* which lay at the foot of the tree. Except for the rustling of mulberry leaves and twigs, there was no sound or movement. Even the sheep, which dotted the right and the left sides of the hill, made no motion. I joined the silent, small company, and without ever knowing it, in a few minutes the silence and stillness of the scene enveloped me. After a while I became conscious of a gentle stir inside the tent. Soon, the flap was lifted and a graceful figure, wearing the robe of a *Sanyasi* walked forth, and occupied the *Asana*. All of us got up and bowed to him. As he sat there, he seemed to me like a steady and gentle flame of peace and inward happiness. His eyes reflected the repose of his mind. That was Chandra Swami. I fell in love with him at the very first sight."

The above words quoted from the retired Principal, who also happens to be the writer of the 'Foreward' to this book, would give to the reader a glimpse of the calm and quiet atmosphere of Hari Parbat and of the beautiful landscape around it, as also about the spiritual charm of the young monk.

At Hari Parbat Swamiji used to observe silence for the whole day, but would speak for one hour and a half in the evening, discussing spirituality with the young seekers whose number increased day after day. Even some Muslim seekers living in the vicinity of Hari Parbat would come and make spiritual enquiries. Swamiji, being well acquainted with Sufism and having a fairly good knowledge of Urdu and Persian, gave convincing replies to them according to their own way of understanding, and impressed them.

As mentioned above, giving up all other spiritual exercises he had exclusively devoted himself to the practice of the *Mantra* given by *Rishi* Sanatan Kumar. Most of the night he would practise this *Mantra* on the beads of very long rosary made of over one thousand beads. In the day also he spent over four hours reciting this *Mantra* which had slowly become synchronised with his breathing and gone deep into his subconscious. In Swamiji's own words: "The *Mantra* had overwhelmed me and permeated all my outer and inner activities. I would take my food with the *Mantra*; I would walk with the *Mantra*; I would even sleep with the *Mantra*. I was possessed by the *Mantra*, as it were, all the time. My whole being became soaked with the *Mantra*. The *Mantra* had brought a sort of inebriation in me which persisted ceaselessly. I don't know how

to explain the purifying effect of a *Mantra* embodied with the divine holy Name. The holy Name of the Lord is verily the divine elixir.”

Having spent the summer months at Hari Parbat, Swamiji came down in the cave at the bank of the Tawi river at Jammu. From this time onwards he would stay at Hari Parbat during summers, and in the aforesaid cave at the bank of Tawi river during the winter months. This continued till the month of October, 1961, except the period of one year in 1957 during which he lived in *Sapta Sarovar Jhari*.

For the first two years at Hari Parbat, he stayed in a small tent. In the subsequent years of his stay there, the devotees had provided a small portable wooden cabin. They would dismantle the cabin and take it to the home of one devotee when Swamiji would go to live in the cave at Jammu during winters. They would fix the cabin again when he would come back to Hari Parbat for staying there during summers.

He completed the *Japa* of the specific number of the *Mantra* under direct guidance of Kumara brothers within a period of little less than three years. After that he strictly followed the intensive *Sadhana*, the daily time-table of which has already been given. During this period of his *Sadhana*, he had the visions of Lord Jesus, Lord Rama during His exile in the forest, Swami Ram Teerth, Swami Vivekananda, Mother Durga astride a lion and Lord Shiva. He also had the vision of Hermes Trismegista of Egypt (whose strange head-dress Swamiji described without ever

having seen the head-dress of an Egyptain pharoah). He had the visions of some *Siddha* saints whom he had not heard or read about. Those visions were spontaneous and Swamiji never meditated on these saints or gods as a part of his *Sadhana*. An other vision which usually would come to him during the night was the dazzling light of golden colour which filled his cabin. This vision would last only for few seconds.

Gradually all these planes were transcended and the visions also stopped. They were replaced by an ever expanding joy which filled his being more and more. His consciousness soared to higher and higher levels. Finally, the immutable, eternal *Atman*, the Spirit, was realized by him as his essential nature and true Being. He was, then, only twenty nine years old.

THE BELOVED OF PEOPLE

During his stay in Jammu and Kashmir, though living in utter seclusion, as a great *Yogi* and Master, he influenced a large number of people of all walks of life. Intellectuals, professors, saints, professionals, public men, students, children, the rich, the poor — all used to visit this magnetic monk. Even to date, people of Jammu and Kashmir have many fond memories to tell of their sweet association with Swamiji. They remember him and they weep for him. In Jammu and Kashmir his devotees used to invite him to visit their homes and live with them for a couple of days like one of their family members. There, he would play with

their children yet all the while strictly following the schedule of his *Sadhana*. Here too, many people implored him to initiate them as his disciples. He gave *Mantra-Deeksha* (initiation) to some people there.

IN THE *JHARI* — A FORESTED ISLAND NEAR HARIDWAR

In 1961, he was prompted by the Divine to leave Kashmir and come to live in Haridwar for his further *Sadhana*. Here Swamiji selected a secluded thickly forested island surrounded by many currents of holy Ganges, where he had already stayed before. Some of us have had the *Darshan* of Swamiji there, many times.

Here he cleaned up an area to build a hut and surrounded it with a fence of wild bushes. Later, he built his huts there facing the East, right at the bank of holy Ganges. The mother Ganges followed southwards at that spot and was quite wide. Just a little ahead, it took a huge turn southwards, becoming even more wide. An unusual serenity and quietude filled the whole atmosphere, with no soul around and everything beautifully cleared, cleaned and well arranged. It looked as though the holiness of the place and the divine splendor of Swamiji were wedded to each other. It was a rare visual feast to have had the *Darshan* of Swamiji there. Swamiji says that place is very much charged with spiritual vibrations and that, still many sages are living there in their subtle bodies.

During 1962 and 1966 while he was living in the *Jhari*, some seekers came into his contact and became

his disciples or ardent devotees such as Lala Kushi Ram (Kaura Ram) and Shri Kishan Chand of Karnal, Shri Mohan Lal Arora (now Banprasthi Yog Premanandaji) of Patna, Panditani Shimla Devi (a very devout old lady) from Haridwar, Lala Mukand Lal Garg of Saharanpur, Shri D.R. Monga of Delhi, Shri Kishan Chand Goel of Meerut, Shri J.N. Malhotra of Kota, Shri C.L. Sahgal of Amritsar, Chaudhry Behari Lal Chugh of Fazilka and many others.

THE FULFILMENT

The great Yogi was already enjoying the peace of *Atman*. But he did not stop there. He himself writes: "While realization of the Self is a very, very high spiritual experience, it is not the ultimate goal. It is only the experience of one aspect of the Divine, that is, the *Nirguna Brahman* (One without forms and attributes), the immutable, passive Self."

He, therefore, continued to move on, keeping himself open, receptive and docile to the tender touches and calls of the Divine. But the journey was no longer tedious or thorny, and the approach no more a groping in the dark. It felt rather like a prince returning to his kingdom in broad day-light on the royal path. The journey itself was transporting and full of joy.

Little by little, Swamiji's realization of the Self expanded to include the whole manifestation. Finally, he had the ultimate and integral Realization of the Divine at the age of thirty five years. The journey of

many, many lives came to a blissful consummation. All apparently paradoxical aspects of the *Brahman* (Absolute) became reconciled in the light of his integral Realization. He then realized a complete harmony between the silent, passive, immutable *Atman* on the one hand and the universal, dynamic power of the Divine on the other hand; between the formless, unqualified, transcendental Reality and the qualified, immanent, all-inclusive aspect of the Divine. The illusion of *Maya* was broken forever. This ultimate Realization got stabilized and settled in him. He was fulfilled. Since then, his life is a spontaneous and intuitive response to all situations and a constant expression of divine joy. Swamiji attributes all his inspiration, efforts and achievements to the unreserved grace of Baba Bhuman Shahji, the Master of his heart and soul.

LIFE IN THE *JHARI*

During his stay in *Jhari*, he remained in complete silence and seclusion for six months of the year (*Kastha Mauna* period). For the remaining six months, he was available for his *Darshan* and *Satsang* for one hour daily, in the afternoon. For almost four months of the rainy season, every year, his hut-dwelling was completely cut-off from the outer world; that island became surrounded by so many, surging streams of the Ganges. There he lived alone with dangerous wild animals, at the risk of his life, every moment. That area was infested with wild elephants and, therefore, living there was very, very dangerous.

Once a rogue wild elephant charged upon him near his hut. Swamiji closed his eyes and sat on the ground resigned to the will of God. But when nothing happened for a few moments, he opened his eyes, and saw the elephant going across the Ganges looking back as if wondering why, at all, it had become hostile towards this God-child! At another time, two elephants completely trampled one of his huts, but left untouched the one in which he was sleeping that night. In the monsoons his huts were full of snakes. Just imagine him sitting in meditation and a huge cobra hanging from the roof just a few feet above him! But he had learnt to live with them. When, sometimes, he felt disturbed by their presence, he would request the snakes to go away and they actually would go. So great was his humility and so powerful the impact of his pure and innocent 'Will' — even towards the wild animals.

Once in the rainy season, when the island, in which he lived, had become cut off on all sides with water for over three months, he had to eat wild green leaves and wild fruits from the jungle because his rations became infested with fungus and insects. At another time the flood water almost came into his hut. His devotees on the other side feared that perhaps he had been washed away. We don't know fully how many other hardships he underwent for his Beloved happily. We have heard him say so often that wilful suffering for the sake of the Beloved brings joy to the lover.

Even while in the forest, he lived in a very organized way. He had made four huts: one for his

own living, one for the kitchen, one for meditation and one for stores and guests. Later, his devotees had the floor made of concrete and the roof of grass replaced with asbestos sheets. A hand-pump for water was sunk, and a temporary latrine was built. His hut was surrounded by a fence of thorny bushes. The whole area was always kept absolutely clean, and one could see how his life habits were well cultivated. Along the fence, he had grown lovely flowers and had made a beautiful three feet wide pathway right from his hut upto the Ganges which was fifty yards away. It was lined on both sides by white round stones brought from Gangaji's bed. The pathway was perfectly levelled and kept clean and no wild bushes were allowed. Thus, even in the jungle, Swamiji lived in his own regal way.

He used to take meals once a day which he cooked himself. Babaji took care to send him necessary eatables and milk through his devotees. He had always enough and to spare. For the monsoons he stored necessary things. Initially he used to cook food with fire wood which he himself cut and collected from the jungle, but, later, he used a kerosene stove and a cooker.

It was in this island in 1969 that revered Yvan Amar (Swami Anand Chetan), the French Master, first met Swamiji.

He lived at this forested island till 15th Oct, 1970. Very little is known about his thrilling life in the jungle; we have written whatever little we have come to know from here and there.

SEWAK-NIWAS ASHRAM

During all these years, seekers from far and wide, from India and abroad, kept coming to him. The numbers of his disciples/devotees began to increase. They found his charm and magnetism overwhelming and his talks simple, inspiring and authentic. As in Jammu and Kashmir, here also, his devotees included scholars, philosophers, monks, influential officers and ordinary persons. All loved and revered him. Swamiji himself liked to remain away from publicity and curious crowds.

Meanwhile, his devotees were repeatedly pressing him to move to Sapta Sarover because of the frequent floods in the Ganges, the difficult access to his place, and the danger from wild animals. In Dec, 1970, Swamiji very kindly conceded to their request and come to what was beautifully and humbly called Sewak-Niwas (an abode of devotees), a small *Ashram* constructed by his devotees on the other side of the Ganges at Sapta Sarover in Haridwar. That piece of land where Sewak-Niwas was constructed, was donated to Swamiji by Bhagat Mulkhraj Gambhir of Delhi who was the brother of Mata Ram Piariji of Jammu. For the management of the *Ashram*, a society, 'Seekers Trust' was already constituted. Later, as time passed, more accommodation was added to the *Ashram* by his devotees.

It was in Sewak-Niwas that Doctor Satya Pal Gupta of Jammu came to Swamiji around 1973 for his *Darshan*. He was very much impressed with Swamiji and his whole family became devoted to him, and

subsequently got *Mantra-Deeksha* from him. Some close friends of Doctor Satya Pal also followed suit, got initiation from the young monk and became his disciples.

In the year 1974, Doctor K.K. Kanuga of Gandhidham, Kutch (Gujarat) came to Sewak-Niwas with some of his devotees to meet Swamiji. Doctor Kanuga is a holy and inspired man, deeply devoted to God. Many people have turned to life of purity, truthfulness and God-search through his association. He got influenced by Swamiji and became his admirer. After that many families of Gandhidham (Gujarat) were attracted to *Gurudev* and became closely devoted to him. Some of the devotees from Gandhidham started living in Swamiji's *Ashram* and are, presently, the inmates of Sadhana Kendra Ashram, devoting themselves exclusively to God-Realization and selfless service.

Respected Ram Baba (Shri Magan Bhai Bhimjiyani) of London also came to see Swamiji during the same year. Ram Baba is a man of God, well known in U.K. and India. He has dedicated his life to God-remembrance and founded Jigyasoo Satsang Mandal in London. His spirit of service to saints and sages as well as to the poor and needy, is boundless. In a short period he developed close spiritual relation with Swamiji. Ram Baba's many family-members got initiation from our Maharajji and became his devotees.

Meantime, many seekers of Truth from India and abroad also started coming to Sewak-Niwas for spiritual guidance. Some of the Indian devotees who

are very close to Swamiji are from Singapore, U.K., U.S.A., and U.A.E. Shri Ambalal J. Patel of middlesex (U.K.) is very much devoted to Swamiji, and his selfless services to the poor and to the *Ashram* are exemplary.

In Sewak-Niwas, Swamiji lived quietly (1970-1990), avoiding all publicity. Here also, his life, as always, was perceived to be based on very regular, punctual and balanced habits. His small^m apartment included a little, sound-proof meditation room. He remained absorbed in meditation which had become as natural to him as breathing. He used to go for morning and evening walks daily along the Ganges for an hour, both the times, alone or with his devotees accompanying him. Sometimes, he would take his devotees to the spot in the jungle where he lived for many years or to Har Ki Pauri (one of the most holy pilgrimage places for Hindus) and would play and make merry with them. A small court was added to Sewak-Niwas where he played badminton with his devotees — which he still continues to do daily even today! As he had gained a long experience of cooking, sometimes he would prepare delicious meals and serve his devotees with great joy.

During his initial years at Sewak-Niwas, his life was very reserved and he lived alone in his room quietly, relaxed and in an unbroken communion with the Divine. It was, as it were, a play of his absolute freedom — to remain alone and turn inwards. There seemed no reason behind it except the divine will or call. His appearance in those days gave an impression

of a fully contented lion living in a self-imposed seclusion.

He continued with his programme of observing periodic total silence (*Kastha Mauna*) for six months in a year in seclusion. On 15th of October each year, when he would end his *Kastha Mauna*, his devotees used to assemble and celebrate a feast, in which hundreds of saints were fed. Later, after shifting to Sadhana Kendra, Swamiji discontinued this practice.

In Sewak-Niwas many renowned saints and monks used to come for his *Darshans*. But since he was living a life of silence and seclusion, he did not ask who was who. Therefore, many such visits have gone unnoticed. Still mention must be made of the two saints who used to visit him frequently. They were Swami Val Dassji Maharaj, the head of Kacchi Ashram, Sapta Sarovar, Haridwar and Swami Divya Prakashanandji of Africa Ashram. Swami Val Dassji Maharaj himself was a great and inspired sage. He knew well that Swamiji was a great enlightened Master. Swami Val Dassji and many other devotees of Kacchi Ashram served Swamiji in all possible ways, ever since he came to live in the *Jhari* (forest) in 1961 until he left Haridwar in 1990. On every *Guru Purnima* (the day when all *Gurus* are worshipped), Swami Val Dassji, along with his hundreds of devotees, used to come to Swamiji to take his blessings before his own devotees worshipped him. Even now the bus-loads of devotees from Kacchi Ashram come to Sadhana Kendra Ashram to have *Darshan* of Swamiji with their present head, Swami Hari Dassji Maharaj. Another renowned Saint Divya

Prakashanandji of Africa Ashram, in Haridwar, also regularly visited Swamiji, until he shed his body. In his daily discourse on the holy scripture, Yoga-Vashishta, he used to refer Swamiji often while discussing the life and traits of a God-realized person. Besides, Swamiji was well known and revered among the saints of Haridwar, in general, as an inspired sage living in silence and seclusion.

THE LONG INDEFINITE SILENCE

On 15th Oct, 1984, a strange thing happened. When Swamiji opened his *Kastha Mauna* of one year, he informed his devotees that he had been prompted by the Divine to take to continuous silence for an indefinite period — a silence for a minimum period of twelve years. His close disciples and devotees pleaded with him and even wept bitterly to dissuade him from taking that decision but to no avail. He gently told them that he was merely following the sweet will of his beloved Master. "Saints are soft like butter and hard like rock," according to one saying. So his long silence began on 15th oct, 1984, in the late evening and is still continuing indefinitely. To the various curious questions about his silence, Swamiji says, "I have fallen in love with silence. Love knows no reasons. Does it?" Or on other occasions he retorts: "I will speak when God will want me to speak."

A SIGNIFICANT STEP IN SPIRITUAL GROWTH

In Sewak-Niwas at Haridwar during the period of his ordinary silence, he used to give *Satsang* in the

evening to his devotees who visited him. It was in the form of talks full of practical wisdom and pure spirituality. His voice was very sweet and soothing. Unfortunately, no record is available of those talks given during the *Satsangs*.

Around 1988, while still living in Sewak-Niwas, he started the practice of one hour meditation four times a day for the seekers. All staying in the *Ashram* participated in it and he himself led the meditation in every session. This was a very significant step from the seekers' point of view, because this way, he initiated the practice of compulsory *Sadhana* for all his devotees and seekers connected with him, under his direct guidance. Also, it marked an end to his self-imposed seclusion. He became gradually more and more available to the seekers and devotees. Since then, the practice of his disciples, devotees and seekers coming to stay with Swamiji for some period to do *Sadhana* under his direct guidance, has become a regular schedule of the *Ashram*. Needless to say, he continues to attract seekers of Truth from far and wide as before.

SADHANA KENDRA ASHRAM

With the passage of time, the area of Sapta Sarover, where Sewak-Niwas was situated, became very crowded and commercialised. It was no longer a quiet place fit for *Sadhana*. Therefore, at Swamiji's inspiration and initiative, in 1988, the devotees connected with the *Ashram* decided to shift the *Ashram* to some other suitable place. Even though he was in silence, for one full year Swamiji undertook arduous

trips to the various river-banks, mountains and far-flung places in search of a suitable site for the new *Ashram*. What a manifestation of his infinite compassion for his devotees and seekers! Finally, by his own *Lila*, a beautiful plot was found in 1989. Soon, with extraordinary speed, the old *Ashram* was disposed of and the construction of a new *Ashram*, Sadhana Kendra began with the sale proceeds of the old *Ashram* and voluntary donations from his devotees. In fact, this new *Ashram* is a manifest symbol of deep faith, love and reverence of the devotees in their Master and that of Master's infinite compassion and concern for them. He took special care to fulfil all legal formalities in disposing of the old *Ashram* and building the new *Ashram*.

It will not be out of context to mention here that just within a year of the disposal of Sewak-Niwas, there came up a huge temple of Mata Vaishno Devi, with so many shops around it on the vacant land adjoining Sewak-Niwas. There was no proposal of this project whatsoever when we left. Today that spot is the most crowded and noisy one in the whole of Haridwar. The spot is always thronged by thousands of tourists. Surely, Swamiji had the fore-knowledge of the things to come and he acted just at the right moment.

The new *Ashram* was built with extraordinary speed and skill. He entered the partially-built Sadhana Kendra Ashram on 7th Oct, 1990. It was on account of Swamiji's great gift of meticulous planning, rare foresight, deep practical knowledge of construction

activities and personal, keen supervision of all the works that the new *Ashram* could be built and developed so quickly and so beautifully. And all this, of course, was achieved in total silence. Besides, all the devotees contributed their services in the construction of the new *Ashram*, in various ways.

The newly constructed Sadhana Kendra Ashram is located at a remote and small village, Domet in district Dehradun, in the foot-hills of the Himalayas. The *Ashram* is right on the bank of Yamuna river overlooking a grand panoramic view of the mighty Himalayas on three sides, an expansive basin of holy river, Yamuna with its zigzag, murmuring and fast-flowing stream, large and green fields interspersed with clusters of tiny, hilly houses. The calmness and serenity of the spot is tangible to any receptive heart. Here lives the great sage, Chandra Swami, making the small, beautiful valley spiritually meaningful and inspiring.

Thousands of devotees, sincere seekers from India and abroad, visit the *Ashram* to have Swamiji's *Darshan*, to seek spiritual guidance and to pursue their *Sadhana* in his divine presence. The *Ashram* under his guidance, runs on the love-offerings which his devotees and admirers voluntarily contribute with profound devotion and reverence for Swamiji.

As already stated, an important activity of the *Ashram* is a minimum of four sessions of meditation in which all those staying in the *Ashram* participate. The daily schedule of *Sadhana* continues for the whole year uninterrupted, without any advertisement or

publicity. Besides, there is a questions and answers session daily in which Swamiji kindly writes answers to spiritual questions asked by the seekers. Of late, we have become wiser and have started preserving the answers of Swamiji to give them a shape of future books, both in English and Hindi.

The *Ashram* has modest accommodation with boarding and lodging facilities. Any sincere seeker of Truth belonging to any caste, creed, religion or belief is welcome in the *Ashram* for *Sadhana* to live in accordance with the rules of the *Ashram*. Simple and *Sattvic*, vegetarian food is served to all those staying in the *Ashram*. Sometimes the *Ashram* is full, and the management has to be selective in granting permission of stay so that as many seekers as possible can benefit from Swamiji and the *Ashram*. New *Sadhakas* are required to obtain prior, written permission for coming to the *Ashram*.

A few of Swamiji's disciples live permanently in the *Ashram*. They do their *Sadhana* as well as render humble *Sewa* (services) in the multifarious activities of the *Ashram*. Seekers from outside also render their services in the *Ashram* activities voluntarily as a part of their *Sadhana*.

Besides, the *Ashram* serves also the poor villagers of the area on a modest scale. The *Ashram* renders services in the areas of education, medical help, to the poor and destitute, common utilities and spiritual awareness by free distribution of spiritual booklets etc. On some festive occasions a *Bhandara* (free feast) is arranged for the poor in our neighborhood. On such

occasions, free distribution of clothes, blankets etc. is also made in charity.

SWAMIJI, THE MAN OF GOD

Swamiji is plus 66 years old. But how can one describe his unearthly divine beauty ? In him, the divinity has descended to the physical level in all its splendour. He is majestic and graceful like a benevolent king, but simple and innocent like a shy child. His *Darshan* is a holy feast; one has to experience it to believe it. Even at this age, his tall, well-built body is very muscular, strong and perfectly proportioned. It always exudes tenderness, purity and divinity. He wears a long and loose ochre robe down to his holy feet. His complexion is fair, somewhat wheatish. His peaceful face with a broad forehead is ever aglow with *Yogic* radiance. His lovely, bright, meditative eyes are always alight with deep compassion and goodwill; his long, white, clean and dense beard adding to his grandeur; and that bewitching and soothing smile which is always there on his tender lips! One is never tired of gazing at his beauty again and again. And those who have ears, can hear divine music emanating from his whole presence.

In 1990, the well known 'Life' magazine published from New York, USA had undertaken a world-wide survey entitled 'Men of God' and discovered nine saints and sages from different countries. In its edition of December, 1991, the magazine published the names and pictures of those nine saints alongwith a brief introduction about them all — with their photographs.

Swamiji figured in that issue with prominence, both as representative of Hinduism and as a great sage of high spiritual status. Among the other eight celebrities covered therein, were: The Revered Dalai Lama, His Holiness Pope John Paul-II and other religious leaders from Egypt, Japan, Israel, Norway and England.

Swamiji has traveled abroad a few times for short periods at the invitation of his devotees, and has visited over fifteen countries. He first went abroad in 1974 when he visited few countries of Europe. He also went to Jerusalem twice and visited the holy places of pilgrimage connected with Lord Jesus. His Love and rapport with Jesus is often reflected in his talks when he quotes the enlightened and inspiring words of Christ. His Holiness influenced many people in those countries, in the middle East, and also in the other parts of the world as an enlightened and compassionate Master.

LIFE STYLE

It is interesting and inspiring to read two of his beautiful sayings written on the wall and put up as texts to remind those living in the *Ashram*.

“The ultimate aim of life is to live in God;
The ultimate way to achieve it is to live for God.”

and

“Keep a place for everything;
Keep everything at its place.”

His own holy example is more than an embodiment of these sayings. With the Divine being always the centre and key note of life, all his life's activities seem very well planned and smoothly flowing. His gently, serene, harmonious, never-failing equanimity and his balanced ways of dealing with people even in the most unexpected events, bear the stamp of the ways of God.

It may be mentioned here that in Sept, 1994, Swami Krishna Dassji Maharaj shed his mortal sheath. He was then the spiritual head of Shri Chander Chinar Ashram, Srinager Kashmir, as also the president of Shri Chander Chinar Bara Udasin Akhara Trust, Srinagar, Kashmir. He very much wished that Shri Chandra Swamiji be his successor after his demise, and had, many times, when he was alive, insisted upon Swamiji to agree to his strong wish. Swamiji however had always pleaded with Maharajji that he was neither competent nor interested to take such a big responsibility after him, but Maharajji would not listen. After Maharajji left his body, the Trustees made Swamiji the spiritual head (Mahant) of Shri Chander Chinar Ashram and the president of Chander Chinar Bara Udasin Akhara Trust inspite of Swamiji's reluctance to assume that position. The ceremony of this event was graced by the *Mandleshwars* — the head of different denominations of *Sadhus* of Haridwar, Bombay and Delhi on the eleventh of October, 1994, in Sapta Sarovar, Haridwar. Swamiji accepted this position only because of his faith in and reverence for Maharajji and also, because, he felt that his refusal would be a breach of trust that

Maharajji had reposed in him. But Swamiji's silence goes on as before.

Shri Chander Chinar Ashram, Srinagar is one of the four historical *Maths* of Udasin *Sadhus* founded by Baba Shri Chanderji in the four corners of India.

Sober and very humble as he is, Swamiji addresses even the servants of the *Ashram* with suffix 'ji', a sign of respect. Not to speak only of persons, even the inanimate articles — his clothes, shoes, utensil, car and other things are also used with so much care and gentleness, as though they were alive. And no wonder that these articles also love to give him long term companionship and good services! His attitude to small children, cats, kittens and all God's creatures reveals the same gentle concern for them.

Once he told us that everything in the universe has a *Devta* (a supporting deity) e.g. a spoon has its own *Devta* because nothing is exclusive of Consciousness. That element of Consciousness inherent in everything, is its corresponding *Devta* called *Adhishthatri Shakti*. We asked him how to worship the *Devta* of a spoon! He replied: "By using the spoon properly, gently and with care." What could be simpler than this to live a worshipful life all the day!

Swamiji has an irresistible and indescribable holy charm because it arises from the depths of the Spirit. He is never seen excited or depressed. He appeals to all alike whether they are Easterners or Westerners, educated or uneducated, children or adults, devotees or strangers, believers or sceptics. The impact of his Being is so contagious.

To his disciples/devotees, he is their father, a most beloved friend, the ultimate guard and guide. But he is the disinterested lover of all. Like a silent fragrance, he pervades the whole *Ashram* and the hearts of his devotees. Occasionally, he visits his Indian devotees, when invited. The love and the respect that he is showered with, is something beautifully touching and gives rise to reverence in all hearts. We have seen devotees weeping, laughing and singing in ecstasy at the time of his sanctifying visit to their homes. His visit, for some of his devotees, is one of their greatest festive occasions. And Swamiji ! He remains the same — unmoved, unexcited and silent witness to all honour.

He is unassuming as a child. One does not feel belittled in his towering presence. Instead, one feels a closeness, as one does to one's mother. He is indeed a great Master who does not at all seem to suffer from the ego of being so. He mingles with all. Of late, he has been playing badminton almost regularly in the *Ashram* with his devotees. He seems to enjoy it as much as the youngs who play with him; and sometimes he beats them too. He takes his meals with all the residents of the *Ashram* and the visitors. He has a marvellous sense of humor which keeps the atmosphere around him light and informal. He plays jokes; often they bear some spiritual teaching and have an impact; cheerfulness is the way of his life. Non-stop long sessions of laughter in the dining hall and even during the morning walks with him, are not an uncommon sight. And through humour and jokes he always gives some spiritual hint, a message, an inspiration.

He is very hospitable and courteous to all who visit him. His hospitality signifies his immense humility. For, he greets God whenever he greets anyone, with his heart full of love and warmth in his eyes. His greatness lies in his rendering small services to his devotees himself, whenever possible. Like sweetness he is sweet; like softness he is soft. He is specially respectful to the *Sanyasis* and saints — sharing a part of his own meal — with those sitting near him.

We feel obliged to give here a small but moving incident which his devotee, Sardar Charanjeet Singh of Jammu told us recently. He became the devotee of Swamiji when the latter was living in the Jammu cave. Then Sardarji was a young boy who loved to visit Swamiji in his cave, play with him and share meals with him. All the family of Shri Charanjeetji along with his parents are greatly devoted to Swamiji. After his marriage, he went to the *Jhari* in 1964, along with his newly wedded wife, Smt. Hardarshanji, to have the blessings of Swamiji.

They reached his hut at one thirty p.m. Swamiji was then in silence. He asked Charanjeet Singh's wife by gesture to prepare meals for all. At two p.m. when he ended his silence, they all had their meals together. Then Swamiji invited them to take some rest, since they were very tired. So they readily agreed and fell asleep on the floor. Swamiji lovingly started fanning them with a hand-fan. Shri Charanjeetji recalls that they must have slept for at least one and half hour or so. To their utter surprise when they awoke, they found that the Master was still fanning them like their divine Mother. When they got ready to go home, he

came all the way from his hut upto the last current of the Ganges to see them off. There are innumerable incidents showing such sweet and moving conduct of Swamiji which are engraved in the minds and hearts of his devotees.

Unassuming and modest as he is, Swamiji is very unobtrusive and never imposes his ideas on others. He gives full regard to the persons' individualities no matter who they are. On his own, he never tries to control or preach to the people who visit him. Evidently, he does not suffer from the desire to teach or preach. But like the Divine, he is always available to those who approach him. He simply responds; he never asks who or what they are. His presence is more like a mute joy, like a gently-blowing fragrant breeze, like the humming of sweet music, like the coolness of moonlight. His joy is so infectious for receptive hearts.

AN ARTIST OF LIFE

A close watch on his day-to-day activities will reveal what a great artist of life he is! Adaptability and acceptance are his other great virtues. How amazingly flexible he is! How easily he turns the stumbling stones into stepping ones! How he agrees in disagreement! How he accepts everything that life unfolds to him from moment to moment — pleasure, pain, meetings, separations, criticism, praise, illness, old age, glories, solitude, crowds, silence or speech, activity or inactivity. During all his life he has never run after worldly things. It was rather the other way round. He truly lived like a divine prince.

Swamiji has perfectly equanimous vision, He deals with different persons differently, but always justly and rightly. There are no ups and downs in his holy disposition. He indeed is a *Sthitpragya Purusha*, (a man of wisdom steady and rooted in God) of the *Gitaji* who never becomes depressed or excited over any matter whatsoever. This is repeatedly observed and felt by his devotees.

Being the Master and *Ishta* of thousands of devotees, he is approached incessantly by people with their worries and excitements. With his infinite listening power, he digests everything like Lord Shiva. The devotees come to him on every occasion — death, marriage, birth, loss, profit etc. He receives all in a divine manner and gives most loving and pragmatic guidance to his devotees. Sometimes a devotee comes with an exciting news of the marriage of his only son; soon after another devotee visits with the heart rending news of the death of his only child. Like God, our *Gurudev* has his share in the joys and agonies of both, all the while remaining 'Himself', with his characteristic holy indifference. Though he himself remains an ever-unperturbed, uninvolved witness, centred in his true Being, yet to our wonder, we have observed that whenever some tragedy befalls his devotees, he does not laugh it away. For a moment, like a mother, he shares their grief and sorrow. But at the same time he gives inner strength to the sufferer to bear the tragedy in the name of God. More often than not, he utilises such occasions to disturb the slumber of his devotees and awaken them to follow whole-heartedly the path that leads to immortal life and lasting happiness.

During 1992-94, Swamiji's body was sick and suffered very much for two years. He accepted everything very quietly and gently all the while, taking full care according to medical advice, but without much ado about his sufferings.

Now, he has been in continuous silence for over twelve years. But all persons coming in contact with him feel that he is communicating very intimately with them. No one feels ignored or unattended. His compassionate silent communication more than compensates the absence of his words.

He is a great giver and a great forgiver. His magnanimity knows no bounds. When he gives, no one knows, sometimes not even the receiver. And when he forgives, the one forgiven surely knows it. There are innumerable persons who have gained from him materially but, of course, far more spiritually. His devotees, (perhaps more easily the Indians) have the firm conviction based on their experience that all their well-being, whether material, mental or spiritual, is due to the grace of their beloved *Gurudev*.

Totally free from the five great evils of lust, anger, envy, ego and attachment, he is pure and unblemished like mother Ganges. Though he does not claim to perform any miracles or supernatural things, to us, there does not seem to be a greater miracle than his complete mastery over this very turbulent, tough and tenacious thing called 'mind'. He uses it appropriately and does not let it use him.

Many a life has been kindled with his divine love; many a worldly person has been turned to God by his

grace, overcoming age-old subservience to their lower nature. No wonder that among the circles of friends he is known, he is regarded as one of the great artists of life among the greatest living spiritual Masters. He is considered a compeer of spiritual giants like Shri Ramana Maharishi, Maharishi Aurobindo, Swami Ram Teerth.

Swamiji never weakens the faith of anyone. He rather strengthens and refines it by affirming the essential and the eternal elements and by ignoring the non-essential and dogmatic part in it. His approach, therefore, is very positive. And that is why he is able to work upon, help and evolve a seeker of any religion, any aptitude and capability. Nothing is useless for him. Sincere and receptive seekers are so quickly overwhelmed with his love and divinity that they develop quick personal rapport with him. They feel his grace strongly which Swamiji readily and spontaneously radiates. Almost all feel peace, purity and a simple child-like joy in his presence. He keeps encouraging the *Sadhaks* through his written answers, jokes, praises and even gentle rebukes. He constantly guides and protects the *Sadhaks* specially through the difficult periods of their spiritual journey.

AS TEACHER, SCHOLAR AND WRITER

The teachings of Swamiji are very pure and simple, devoid of any worldliness or mystification. Their essence may be summed up as — deep aspiration, sincerity, practice of discrimination, dispassion, prayer, purity of character, constant remembrance of any

aspect of the Divine, meditation, *Pranayama* and/or breathing exercises, reading of the inspiring scriptures, association with inspired saints and faith and refuge in the Master and the Divine. And alongwith all these spiritual exercises he stresses for a simple, modest and balanced life and serving the needy and poor in the name of God. Thus his teachings are very integral which involve the refinement of all—the physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual aspects of a person.

He is very well read and has made a very good comparative study of all the major religions and spiritual traditions of the world. In a personal note book of his, written about thirty five years ago, one finds good extracts, quoted from thinkers, philosophers and saints as divergent as Plato, Aristotle, Schopenhauer, Bradley, Kant, Hume, Mill, Newton, Huxley, Nietzsche as well as Christian saints and mystics like saint Jerome, Catherine of Siema, Augustine, Bernard, Eckhart. Also a collection of Biblical texts, especially some words of Jesus are found. His reading of Western philosophies and mystics surely enabled him to understand, help and guide the seekers from West more effectively.

He is naturally well versed in classical Hindu scriptures. He never purchased any book in his life. But he has his library full of rare books on spirituality of wide spectrum. All these books have been presented to him by his devotees, from time to time. We are hereunder quoting some rare pieces from Swamiji's written answers, shedding some important light on his

scriptural learning in his present as well as previous births.

“One can recapitulate the knowledge easily by studying what one has already studied (in one’s previous births), but which one has forgotten now.”

“Babaji always sent me the books which I was required to study, through someone, at the right moment.”

“I read all the *Vedantic* scriptures and *Shatdarshans* in Hindi, a language which I did not learn in school or college. I understood all these scriptures completely without the help of anyone. I cannot recite all *Shlokas* but I know their essence. Ordinarily, it is not possible to learn these scriptures without the aid of a teacher.”

“Usually I understand the import of the whole book by reading a few pages of it.”

So we see that his scriptural learning had been completed in his previous births. And now, the essence of all these learning are alive in him. We will quote a small incident of his previous life in this regard, which Swamiji himself once told us:

“Prof. L.N. Gupta, Head of the Department of Chemistry was my teacher while I studied in D.A.V. College, Dehradun. I had a great love and respect for him. I even longed to wash his feet. He also loved me very much. Though an Arya Samajist, he was a great devotee of Lord Rama. To me he always looked like a saint. His wife had died just after two years of their

marriage and thereafter he did not remarry and remained alone. Later, I had a vision that, in one of my previous lives, when I was a monk, I studied Sanskrit from him at an *Ashram* in the Himalayas. Prof. Gupta was a Pandit in that *Ashram* who used to teach Sanskrit to monks. I never told him about this vision. Our contact continued even after I became a monk. He wanted to make a 'Will' of all his property in my name. Later, he willed all his property to D.A.V. College, Dehradun on my advice. He loved me so much that he wanted to have me besides him at the time of his death to help him. And so it happened." Swamiji reached there only one hour before he breathed his last. Swamiji put a little water charged with some *Mantra* in his mouth at the last moment. Such an intense love for someone in itself is a sure indication of some connection during previous lives.

Coming back to his present *Lila*, Swamiji also reads newspapers and magazines of general interest, keeping himself abreast of the latest developments in the country and abroad. He uses all the most recent information or happenings aptly in his conversations, in a spiritual context.

Swamiji is a good writer also. The books authored by him, his letters to his devotees and his random answers to questions bear testimony to it. His language is also like himself—full of simplicity, brevity, authenticity and divinity.

His book, 'The Practical Approach to Divinity' is a rare, condensed treatise and a classic in spirituality. This small book, the only one written by him in 1964,

is a hand-book for all seekers. The other two booklets — ‘Spiritual Musings,’ ‘Living Buds of Yogic Consciousness’ are more like great revelations of Truth by a seer. They contain the essence of true spiritual wisdom in plain and inspiring language. Only last year he wrote another booklet, ‘Mirror of Bliss’ containing in brief, the life and teachings of his beloved *Guru* — Baba Bhuman Shahji. His books have been translated in many languages of the world. Swamiji has good knowledge of Hindi, English, Urdu, Punjabi and Persian languages.

Of late, we all have been requesting Swamiji to kindly write a detailed account of his long period of *Sadhana* and seclusion as it would be very inspiring and helpful to the *Sadhaks*. He has, very kindly, agreed to our request and says that he would do so if and when God/Babaji so wishes.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SATSANG

During the daily question-answer’s session at the *Ashram*, Swamiji usually sits on a chair surrounded by a small group of his devotees and seekers. When someone puts a question to him, he listens to it very attentively. And with his piercing insight, he understands the real problem and the whole personality of the questioner. And therefore, his answers are addressed to the questioner rather than the question, and are not the same every time.

It is a great delight merely to watch him write his answers. While writing his answers he is so calm, composed and serene, with his head erect and eyes

lowered on the paper. He looks as if in meditation. He writes very patiently, and invariably rereads the answer, makes minor changes if necessary, and then hands it gently to the questioner with that usual smile. His writing is unhurried, and therefore always legible and very neat and clear. If, some day, there are no devotees for questions-answers, he sits alone and relaxed. We have never seen him anxious to teach or preach. He is never uneasy or agitated over any question. His replies are always spontaneous and to the point. His purpose, clearly, is to communicate and not to display his immense spiritual and practical wisdom.

Another important feature of his answers is that he never criticises or comments upon other saints and Masters. Also he does not encourage questions about his past life, his *Sadhana* and his achievements. Nor does he encourage undue interest in miracles, supernatural powers and incomprehensible complexities of the workings of the Divine. His emphasis is on practical spirituality, based on the simple logic that this transient world phenomenon, full of woes and sorrows, can never be an aim of a rational being and that the divine urge in all of us to discover and realize the eternal life, is inherent and fundamental. It is therefore very natural for us to aspire for and seek the Divine.

Another common and lovable scene that comes to mind is that of his public *Darshan* — of Swamiji seated calmly in his chair in the big hall, surrounded by his silent devotees at the time of his daily ten minutes

Darshan. There he sits with his characteristic holy indifference, like a gently overflowing cup of Fulfilment. At that moment his peace almost touches you; and his silence converses with you.

SWAMIJI AND THE WEST

Ours is an age of possibilities — one such is that of universal sisterhood and brotherhood uniting different people, cultures and traditions based on the essential spiritual oneness of all. It is a great cosmic law, towards the fulfilment of which mother nature has been striving hard. The changes taking place in the world are a pointer to this. Poojya Shri Chandra Swamiji is also a powerful link in the great chain of modern Indian sages like Swami Vivekananda, Swami Ram Teerth, Maharishi Aurobindo etc. through whom the Divine has been working purposefully towards the unification of East and West.

It is no wonder that Swamiji has such an appeal for the Westerners. Swamiji's transparency and universality of Spirit draw them to him. In fact, in many ways, Swamiji looks quite a Westerner. His habits of punctuality, regularity, his organized way of doing things efficiently, his scientific approach to things, straight forwardness, and above all, his respect for each individual person's freedom of thought and action have a great appeal for Westerners. And this selfless love of his, seeking nothing, not trying to bring others to his way of thought or life — and his serene, unassuming ways are attributes that they find rare and touching. For many of them, quoting Norman

William, the conqueror. "They came, they saw and they were conquered."

The Western devotees who come to do *Sadhana* under Swamiji's direct guidance are usually very sincere, serious and mature. Initially the Westerners came to Swamiji through Anandji and through Arnaud Desjardins' *Ashram* in France but afterwards they started coming from all over the world.

Here it seems expedient to write briefly about Mr Yvan Amar (Anandji) and his relationship with Swamiji.

Mr Yvan Amar had come to India in 1969 in search of an enlightened Master. By God's will, he found Swamiji while the latter was living in the forested island (*Jhari*) near Haridwar. He was greatly influenced by Swamiji's divinity. About Yvan Amar, Swamiji himself told us that he was a very sincere seeker and totally committed to the search of Truth. He used to come daily in the evening *Satsang* at *Jhari* in the forest. Within few days, there developed a sort of rapport between them. Due to his proximity with Swamiji, and with his very frank, blunt and Western nature, Anandji would ask even personal questions about Swamiji himself, his *Sadhana* and his achievements. Perhaps an Indian would have hesitated to do so, because in India such questions are termed as *Anadhikar Cheshta* (an undue attempt) in scriptural parlance. We, the devotees, however feel greatly indebted to Anandji for his so called *Anadhikar Cheshta*. Before meeting Anandji, Swamiji had never talked of himself or his *Sadhana* to anyone. Almost all

along his spiritual voyage, Swamiji lived alone and in seclusion entertaining seekers only for an hour or so and replied to spiritual questions. Anandji therefore did the trick and brought forth some significant informations about Swamiji which are included in the present life history.

Afterwards, Yvan Amar came to Sewak-Niwas and stayed with Swamiji for quite a long period. From that period onwards they are in uninterrupted communion with each other. In Sewak-Niwas, Anandji did intense *Sadhana* with total commitment. He observed silence also. Subsequently he had one of the highest and substantial spiritual experience and awakening.

Anandji first invited Swamiji to France in 1974 when they visited England and Italy also. In the meanwhile, he himself kept visiting Swamiji. Later, Swamiji visited France again and again at his invitation. He is, at present, one of the renowned spiritual Masters in France and hundreds and hundreds of people come to listen to his discourses and are pursuing their *Sadhana* under his able guidance.

Western devotees of different faiths come to Swamiji. Many are his initiated disciples. But the beauty is that even after their association with Swamiji, they carry on with their own faith and on their own path, only with a greater conviction. Swamiji simply refines and sublimates their faith and makes it stronger. He helps them to see the essentials in their own religion and follow the same. Man of Spirit as he is, his devotees are bound to him only by pure spirituality.

We know so many Westerners whose lives have been completely transformed. *Sadhana* has become a part of their lives. Their sincerity, commitment and perseverance are an inspiration to all. And overwhelming is their love for Swamiji; many weep silently in his love and for what he gives to them. During their stay in the *Ashram* they adapt themselves willingly to the life style of an Indian *Ashramite*. They live simply, clothe themselves modestly, accept simple and *Sattvic* food and do *Sewa* also sharing the *Ashram* chores.

THE REGALITY OF A PRINCE OF DIVINE ORDER

We wish to reproduce the feelings about Swamiji, expressed by one of his devotees who accompanied him during his many foreign visits:

“My first impression of Pujya Swamiji on setting my eyes on his person, was that of one who was tranquility, harmony and love-incarnate, adorned with an extraordinary radiance, normally attributed to ancient *Rishis*. After spending a few days with him and with the benefit of his *Satsang*, I found that the glimpses of spirituality imparted are unique, precise and with an extra-dimension — that of Self-Knowledge. He is simple yet majestic, loving but detached, highly knowledgeable yet unassuming.”

“The Western devotees found in him an overflowing fountain of selfless and disinterested love, quite a rare phenomenon, actually not only in the West

but anywhere else. This magnate drew a wide spectrum of seekers. The clarity, depth, precision and authority of his spiritual observations were much appreciated. His ability to answer meaningfully and instructively, any question, however difficult or strange/vague on the subject of spirituality, was amazing. At times, the questioner himself/herself did not quite understand the meaning of the question and Swamiji would unravel that too for the questioner. The Western devotees specially enjoyed Swamiji's natural wit and universal sense of humour, often sprinkled with constructive sarcasm. Those known to him often comment upon his aura, an aura of a possibly realized Master. Those who have known him and are near him, are certain, he is one."

"For all the devotees and disciples, Swamiji is a perfect Master in their spiritual quest. His celibate devotees need only follow diligently his instructions. To the householder devotees, he is a patient and loving guide, counselling them according to their particular circumstances. To the distant devotees he is always available whenever they sincerely call on him. To the resident devotees with him at the *Ashram*, he is everything — friend, teacher, mother and father. Among his peers, he is a jewel in the ocean."

"Above all he carries with him the regality of a prince of divine order with discretion completely at his disposal."

There is yet another aspect of Swamiji's personality. With his simplicity and child-like innocence, it must not be inferred that he is a

simpleton or naive. He is equally adept in worldly affairs. He always has an open mind. He readily agrees to the legitimate suggestions, and, gently but firmly, rejects the wrong and useless ones.

He always takes independent, unbiased and objective decisions in his day-to-day activities after weighing the pros and cons. He does not jump to conclusions, but once taken, his decisions are firm. He cannot be coaxed or compelled into any act of commission or omission. He makes quick decisions. If we watch him closely, we will notice that his activities are not mechanical; they are bathed in spontaneity, alertness, awareness and intuition; they are deliberate and directed. He does everything with patience, calmness and confidence. Like God, he is never in a hurry. While doing any work he remains quite relaxed. He is Master, at once, of both — action and non-action.

With these qualities and his unbiased mind, he learns any new concept very quickly. All his knowledge is applied knowledge which he utilizes at the right moment. He has an unbelievable memory because he is unbelievably attentive. Actually he is the Master of whatever he deals with. He is a very good swimmer and a driver of vehicles and has a fair amount of expertise in all mundane affairs like — cooking, house keeping, washing, health and hygiene, interior decoration, gardening, horticulture, animal husbandry, stores management, electricity systems, sanitary works, construction activity, repairs, legal knowledge, typewriting, office management/correspondence etc.

It may be interesting to know that he had been doing all the accounting work by himself, both of the

Seekers Trust and that of his own, from 1970 to 1989. Trust's accounts were being audited every year by qualified Chartered Accountants. But there was not a single flaw or irregularity found during these twenty long years. Moreover, he did not have the background of accountancy. He had simply learnt basic accountancy from someone. Besides, he had been regularly filing his personal and the Trust's accounts in Income Tax Department and obtaining clearance every year. We think, few persons, perhaps very few, much less among the saints, will be as particular and meticulous on all such financial matters as our *Gurudev* is.

He is an organiser and planner par excellence. It is he who has conceived, planned and executed the idea of Sadhana Kendra Ashram. He is an able administrator too. In his dealing with people/devotees, he praises them, but never flatters, points out their mistakes, but never hurts. It is a delight to observe how this silent sage manages both the mundane and spiritual affairs of the *Ashram*, with such diligence and deftness.

Before closing this holy song of his glories, we give below some of Swamiji's very moving words, which might throw some light on the depth and immensity of his teachings:

1. Meditation is the way to concentrate on one's Beloved, which is God/Truth for the seeker. When meditation is ripe, one is in communion with one's Beloved and very happy. In the end, one merges into one's Beloved. The lover and the Beloved become one; this is the highest meditation.

2. Surrender does not mean losing your freedom as the word sometimes connotes. When you surrender to the Divine, you become completely free — as free as the Divine Himself. In this divine state you can use the ego, but you are not used by the ego.

3. I have not come here to teach or preach. My purpose, if any, is to awaken. I have discovered that silence is much more powerful than speech.

4. If you are open, you will receive my help wherever you are.

5. Wisdom/knowledge gives clarity, love gives power. Both are needed. But true and selfless love has not only power but also a sort of intuition.

6. You have not only to look for God, but you have also to be looked after by God.

7. Question implies challenge; aspiration implies humility.

8. No plane of existence is independent of Consciousness as such.

9. You become what you constantly think of and you think effortlessly of what you love.

10. Realization may come at any moment. It comes to one as soon as one is completely open, passive, receptive and alert; otherwise, it may take lives after lives.

11. You have not only to want God but you have to want only God.

12. Love is God and God Love. Love is complete

in itself. There is no need for it to desire or expect.

13. Opposite poles are created by the mind. Truth is non-polar. The highest and the deepest meet in God-experience.

14. Purity of heart is more important than intellectual knowledge.

15. Intuition is a means to true perception. It is the immediate response to pure Existence, without the interference of one's limiting mind and senses.

16. If the path of Truth is difficult, will you not follow it? Do you want convenience or Truth ? The path is as it is. As long as we are ignorant, we make it difficult and suffer.

17. Grace is like air, you cannot live without it, and yet you are not aware of it.

18. If I force freedom upon you, it will not be freedom for you; it will become your bondage. I will come to you only when you open your doors on my calling and let me come in. I will not break open your doors and come to you....Yes, I will keep on calling you.

19. A purified, placid, relaxed, unprejudiced, non-stubborn, open, receptive mind is the key. An impure, unstable, prejudiced, closed, tense mind is the trap.

20. You neither claim nor proclaim, when you have realized yourself.

21. Have a burning desire to be desireless.

22. There is pleasure, when you satisfy your desire. But there is a deep satisfaction and joy when

or after you have overcome your desire.

23. Everyone is afraid of suffering because it does not conform to the essential being of man.

24. You have not to be mindless, but mind-free.

25. It is the Spirit reflected in and identified with the mind plus the mind what is known as the soul, which seek the Divine.

26. You are in solitude when you are not thinking of someone or something.

27. The sun is not covered by clouds. It is your eye which is covered.

28. It is not the experience which teaches you; it is the reflection on an experience through which you learn.

29. Who and what are you ? At present you are a sum total of your beliefs, opinions, desires, emotions, fears.....

30. Tourism! Tourism for what ? You have been chronic tourist for innumerable lives, but you are still unsatisfied.

31. Enlightenment comes like a flash. It comes and it may go also. When the flash of Truth happens again and again, it starts turning into Realization. And the highest consummation of Realization is Fulfilment. It never waxes and wanes. It is constant in time, but is timeless at the same time.

32. Alertness is the key.

33. Ego subsides by itself when it is purified, transformed, and centred in the Divine.

34. Conditional love is better than no love at all. Love in itself has an inherent power to grow.

35. Form is to matter what matter is to the Spirit. Essentially they are one.

36. First be empty and innocent like a child. And then aspire, pray with simple love, and wait. And your cup will be filled.

37. You are conscious of time only when you are tense. In the state of pure and perfect happiness, time-consciousness completely disappears.

38. Your last moment at the time of death is completely determined by how you have lived your life.

39. Your duty is to teach your children not what to think but how to think.

40. A veil turns into a mirror after Realization.

41. Ego is the shadow of the soul. It is the false centre. It is born of clouding of Consciousness and it has no positive existence, as darkness has no positive existence.

42. You can know anything only if you are already familiar with it. Knowing is only owning, remembering.

43. You can always be happy but you cannot be always unhappy, because happiness is your essential nature.

44. When the hardest effort on the part of the

seeker, and unreserved grace on the part of the Divine meet, the miracle of Realization happens.

45. Your fate is your potential worth as it were, but you are always adding to it by your present effort. It is not something static.

46. Remember, the web in which you find yourself enmeshed, is of your own making (which you, perhaps, had knitted for others). When you feel the urge to be out of it, you are a seeker in the real sense of the word.

47. Time and space are basically one. Both are energies. Time is the energy which moves all things in their relative positions. Space is the energy which holds all things in their relative positions.

48. Simplicity means spontaneity. It is the fruit of complete surrender.

49. The perception of all those who see with no-mind, is the same.

50. Proof ? As soon as you really want Him, you find Him.

51. Body-mind can never be perfect. It is always subject to limitations.

52. How to stop the modifications of the mind ? Sit calmly and watch your mind.

53. At some level of your consciousness you are still aware of spiritual joy, otherwise you would not long for it. Can you want a thing which you have never seen or tasted ?

54. The more passive you are, the more alert you are.

55. Realization is not experience. It is experiencing. It is constant, unbroken awareness.

56. Don't take anything seriously except God.

57. A saint is only an instrument. If she/he does not take any decision, God does not take that decision.

58. Watch tension as a witness, and it will subside. If you watch your anger, it loses intensity.

59. Dispassion itself has its characteristic or peculiar joy.

60. Work is for the purification of mind, not for the perception of Reality. The experience of Truth is brought about by the light of awareness and not, in the least, by actions.

61. You have vested interests in the world. When you forget the Divine, it is easier for you to follow those interests.

Limitation of time and space compel us to close this very sweet song about our beloved *Gurudev*. Those of you, who are fortunate to have had the taste of his proximity, will agree with us how inadequate and imperfect has been the description of our Master. For, how can the feeble wings of expression scale the infinite heights of his glories; how can the unfathomable be fathomed; how can the indescribable be described ? But we, his children, believe that it is a love song which never ends. It has been and will

be ringing in the hearts of his devotees for ever and ever.

Finally, we pray and implore our *Gurudev* that may we grow in virtue, purity, faith and devotion and remain open to his sweet grace which he is always showering on us.

27.12.96
The day of
Maha Samadhi of
Baba Bhuman Shahji

At the feet of Master,
The disciples,
Sadhana Kendra Ashram,
Domet, Dehradun.

SECTION - I

Q: Do you consider yourself as a religious leader ?
What is your role towards your followers ?

Swamiji: I do not consider myself as any type of leader. Some people, however, regard me as their *Guru*, their spiritual mentor. They get guidance from me. I happily share with them what I am or what I have (achieved). And that is what is my role towards them, should you call it a role !

Q: Do you think Hinduism can be applied to Western world ?

Swamiji: Hinduism, as I have understood it, is not a religious denomination or sect. It is not founded by a particular man. It is not opposed to any other religion of the world. It rather includes all that is found in other religions, and yet, it has its own flavour and fragrance. It is most compromising, tolerant and open. Every individual can find his/her way to Truth in Hinduism, the way which suits his/her soma-psychic needs. Many people in the West have been attracted to Hinduism and have benefited from it in their own way to discover the Truth.

Q: Is religion a power ?

Swamiji: Religion is, basically, a way/path which leads man to lasting happiness and inner freedom through the discovery and realization of his true Being which is absolute Existence, absolute Knowledge and absolute Bliss.

Nevertheless, religion, when followed sincerely and with reflection, with consistency of spiritual discipline and purpose, releases in man a power which enables him to tame his emotions, desires, passions and purify his heart and makes him free from the subservience to his mind and senses.

Q: What do you think of today's religious renewal (particularly in Eastern countries) ?

Swamiji: I don't call it religious renewal or renaissance. Nowadays, religion is being more and more politicized and some clever people are using it for their vested political ends. They exploit the religious sentiments of people and divide the masses in the name of religion to gain personal position and power in society. It is very unfortunate. They, in fact, are doing great harm not only to religion as such, but also to the cause of world peace.

East, the mother of all religions has, however, never been devoid of true religions and of inspired people who have realized the Truth for their freedom and Fulfilment.

Q: Religion = The salvation of souls or philosophy of life ?

Swamiji: Religion is the philosophy, science and art of life, all of them together — 'a three-in-one'. Realization

of divinity is its true purpose, and salvation, the freedom of soul, is its sweet fruit !

Q: Do you think beliefs have to adapt themselves to the present ?

Swamiji: Certainly, yes. Clinging to ready-made religious beliefs does not help the seekers in their religious or spiritual upliftment. The seeker after Truth must assess every situation without prejudices; he/she must keep himself/herself open and available to Truth.

Q: The world religions : a hope of cohabitation ?

Swamiji: I don't think the world religions will bring about harmony, peace and unity in the world. There are mainly two reasons for this : Firstly, because the essentials of religion are not practised by common masses. The spirit of religion is sacrificed and its form widely taught and emphasized ; the ceremonial part of religion has overtaken the common spiritual element in all religions. Secondly, because the contractors of religion, with/for their vested interest, go on dividing the people in the name of religion.

Q: Your greatest memory ?

Swamiji: What I cannot ever forget is the grace of my beloved Master, Baba Bhuman Shahji, a great saint and mystic of the eighteenth century. His unreserved grace has helped me in many critical situations and miraculously upheld me in every sense, and at every stage of my spiritual *Sadhana*.

Q: Could you describe your thoughts as you are in meditation ?

Swamiji: Meditation is a state of mind free from all thoughts. The thinking process comes to a standstill in meditation with the cessation of all the projections and images created by the mind and you are bathed in the Love-Light-Life of pure and naked Existence.

Q: Why did you take the vow of silence ? Is it for ever ?

Swamiji: I did not take the vow of silence. I love and enjoy silence. There is no motive behind it. As a matter of fact, I am following the 'inner voice', — the soft and sweet voice of my Master.

I don't know how long this silence will be continued; it is all in His hand. I will speak if and when my Master likes me to speak.

Q: A key message for your followers ?

Swamiji: My message for my devotees and admirers and others who are in search of peace and lasting happiness is :

Be awake and alert. Be lovable and loving. Be cheerful. Be unassuming and humble. Make best use of all your energies for your spiritual unfoldment and for that of others. And pray daily. Sit in meditation regularly. Read holy books which give you inspiration. Practise breathing exercises.

Go periodically to inspired saints and sages and listen to them with faith and simple attention. Serve the poor and the needy in the name of God.

Q: When you write about Shankara, is it the other name of Shiva ? That means, Brahma is the creator, Shiva, the destructor and Vishnu, the conservator ?

Swamiji: When a man stitches clothes, he is called a tailor; when he washes the clothes, he is called a washerman; when he drives vehicles as a professional, he is called a driver. But he may be the same person doing all the above mentioned jobs.

Similarly Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva are not different persons. They represent the three aspects of personal God — the trinity — the manifestation of one power that projects, sustains and absorbs the world in itself. This process goes on eternally.

Q: Does the process of universe go on indefinitely ?

Swamiji: Universally, it is eternal. It becomes manifest, and unmanifest (like a seed). But the individual can go out of this process, that is what is called liberation for the individual.

Q: When I reflect on death, I can see the limitation of my mind. I cannot feel that death is real ?

Swamiji: Death is only imagination. There is no death at all. You can never experience your death. It is impossible. It is paradoxical. If you can experience death, it means you are not dead. If you were dead how could you experience it ? You see people dying. It does not mean they have died. They have assumed different bodies or have gone to other places. You cannot see them, recognize them or meet them. They have changed their place and form. This is what is called death; otherwise, they have not died at all.

Q: Does that mean we are sad and cry for something which does not exist ?

Swamiji: You cry because of attachment which the so-called death has broken apparently. You cannot see your beloved. You cannot meet him or her and so you cry.

Does anyone cry over the death of one's foe? You may even rejoice if your foe dies. Hundreds of thousands of people are born and die daily but it does not concern you. You are concerned only with your friends and foes.

Q: Is the change a sort of death ?

Swamiji: If you say death is only a change, then it is not death at all. Change you are experiencing every moment, but you don't call it death or cry over it. A bud is becoming a flower and changing but you don't experience death in the process. A flower ripens, the petals fall and it changes into seeds but you don't cry over it. If death is taken only as change in name and form, then the question of crying does not arise.

Q: When I reflect on A's death I don't believe she is dead. I have not the experience of her death in me. I have to believe what others say.

Swamiji: She has died in the sense that she does not exist now in the same form as you know. You cannot see her, you cannot talk to her. You don't know where she is and what she is doing. In that sense, she is dead for you.

Q: Once you said that death was always in action, that all things were going towards death, but I don't have this kind of sensation or feeling.

Swamiji: Everything is going into the mouth of death and coming out from another outlet in a new form. Hindus do not differentiate between Brahma and Shankara — the creator and destroyer. He is one and the same person.

Q: You said that death is an imagination. But in the state where I am, I feel that death is the continuation of life and is also real.

Swamiji: Death is real for the moving mind. All motion, change is the perception of a moving mind. When mind stops, everything stops. When mind stops, time stops, and you enter into timelessness. You perceive everything as moving because your mind is moving.

Q: When we experience a situation that seems to be false and unpleasant, do we have to accept it totally as our fate (*Karma*) or should we change it or avoid it ?

Swamiji: A given situation involves many people, particular place and time. Every person involved in the situation tries to make it to its own liking. Since the likes and dislikes of different persons vary invariably, it creates stress and strain in the persons involved. A particular situation can be pleasant to X and unpleasant to Y. And no situation is static, every situation changes with time. The wise person is flexible and compromising. A person should have the capacity to adapt himself/herself to any climate, place and situation without getting disturbed.

Karma does not imply fatalism. It denotes relative freedom of action. There is a potential worth, called fate of a person which moves or tends to move a person towards a particular direction but there are so many other forces involved in shaping the course of man's life. Man cannot be compared with a machine or a robot howsoever sophisticated it may be. After all it is man who makes robots.

The seeker after Truth should avoid the situations which create stress and strain in him/her. But he/she cannot run away from all the situations and cannot remain absolutely in isolation. One has to think, reflect and react rightly in regard to a given situation.

Q: What are the other forces involved in our life ?

Swamiji: The factors that mould your life are :

1. The influence of your parents.
2. The type of education you get especially when you are a child.
3. The influence of your society, your friends.
4. The influence of the books you read.
5. And there are some invisible forces, both good and evil, which tend to influence you and try to make you their tool.

Besides these, the idiosyncrasies and impressions you carry with you from so many of your past lives.

Q: Referring to the previous question, do we need a psychological study of ourselves to help us complete the work that we do during the *Sadhana* ?

Swamiji: There is no need to specialise yourself in the science of psychology. But you have to observe your mind and understand it through introspection and reflection.

Not all the sages were psychologists. They went beyond mind and its trappings through faith in and remembrance of the Divine. Freud was a renowned psychologist who could know how the mind worked, but he was practically a slave of his mind. He could not even control his impulses, leave alone going beyond his mind.

Q: We are conscious that we have got some psychological problems that drive us in the wrong direction and that hide to us the Truth or the Real. Can Swamiji help us to recognize and solve these problems?

Swamiji: Illegitimate desires, passions, negative emotions like anger and hatred, violence, prejudices, wrong beliefs, greed, attachment, infatuation etc., are the mental traits that make mind not only impure but unstable also, making it incapable of reflecting the Truth. The seeker has to get rid of all these impurities of mind through reflection, meditation, prayer, breathing exercises, guidance from inspiring books and enlightened ones.

The senses and mind which are like wild horses, have to be tamed so that they can be utilized in the path of self-unfoldment. Mere speculation, intellectual analyzing and acquiring information and knowing theories about Truth is not enough. Self-discipline

aided with deep understanding and the most sincere individual interest to follow the path of Self-Realization are the essentials of *Sadhana*.

Q: Are we on the right way to realize God ?

Swamiji: From the answers of the above two questions you can know whether you are on the right path or not.

Q: If we reflect only on psychological problems, can it also be a trap ?

Swamiji: As a matter of fact psychologists are more occupied with knowing the mental problems of other people and trying to solve them. They cannot face their own problems.

In my recent European tour many persons, who were mentally so much distressed and disturbed, came to me and asked me how to resolve their problems. When I asked them what they were doing, they told me that they were working as psychiatrists or psychotherapists and helping the mental patients.

Q: During our trip in India, we have often met people interested only in making money (*Rickshaws*, shops, hotels). We tried to find something or someone for spiritual quest, but we haven't found anything. Have we missed that 'Good Train' or may be that it is our destiny ?

Swamiji: The desire of making money is universal. Money gives power, position, comforts, status, opportunities of a pleasurable life. Right from a poor *Rickshawala*, who works like a horse all the day, but

can hardly feed his family, to the richest businessman in the world, all want money and more money. There is no end to the greed of man. It is a universal phenomenon. India is a poor country. In villages, most families cannot afford two times meals. An average Indian cannot go abroad for want of money. Poverty is a curse for a family man, especially. Even a poor Westerner who can spend so much money to travel abroad, is considered a rich man by the poor Indian masses. Every country has good people as well as bad ones in it. It is really unfortunate that you have come across mostly those in India, who are liars and nasty and unhelpful people. All the Westerners, who come to India, do not have the same experience or opinion. Some Westerner tourists like to come to India again and again. Some find inspiration here and some do not. Some come only for sight-seeing.

The spiritual quest may take years and years. Much non-sense and commercialization goes on in the name of religion, God and spirituality in all the countries, including India. There are more thorns and less flowers everywhere but both are there.

Carry on with your spiritual quest. You may some day meet someone who can lead you to the light that never fails.

Q: Do we have to take care of the feelings of some Hindus, who pay a lot of attention at what we are or what we look like ? What is the right reaction ?

Swamiji: There are orthodox people in every religion. Usually Hindus are more tolerant and compromising

because they believe that all religions can lead to God-Realization. Hindus have never tried to convert or change the religious faith of others. Every Hindu is allowed to choose his own way of approach to realize God. They give respect to all the prophets of all religions. For Hindus there is no Kafir or a gentile. The past history shows that Hindus welcomed the people of all other religious faiths in India, even the people who were thrown out of their countries or persecuted in their countries because of their religious faith. Hindus have never believed in a theocratic state.

Every society has its own cultural rituals, language, way of dressing. The people are conditioned by the social customs of the society to which they belong. When they see some person observing different rules of conduct, wearing a peculiar type of dress, it rouses their curiosity about that person. That person becomes a focus of attention of many people. These conditions are different from place to place in India. In Haridwar, for example, there are saints who remain quite naked and no one objects. But here in Dehradun, if a person roams naked in the market, he will be beaten by the people or arrested by the police.

Even in Europe, the Churches don't allow the people to go inside, if they are not modestly dressed. I observed it last year, when some members of our Western group were told to cover up their legs and arms before entering a Church.

It is always better to follow the customs and social rules of the place where you go. By doing so you may avoid many problems which are unnecessary. Every

society has its own code of conduct, and social customs. In India, the premarital or extramarital relationships are a taboo while in the West it is not a social offence to have a girl-friend or a boy-friend, though things are changing in urban India with the spread of Western education and people don't mind the Westerner's free mixing up of boys and girls. But, still, some orthodox people don't like such freedom. This may be one of the causes that you have not been treated well and properly.

In the Indian tradition marriage has never been considered a social contract. It is associated with religion and spiritual commitment so that each partner, after marriage, is bound with the other for the whole life as a co-traveler not only in the journey of this world but also in their spiritual sojourn. Mutual loyalty is a life long affair. They even wish to be together in their next lives.

Anyway, you are not bound by the Indian code of conduct or customs. I have only said this so that you may know why some people might appear to be indifferent to you.

We are not orthodox. We don't differentiate between Indian and foreign seekers, but being new to this place we are to be very careful about the image of the *Ashram* till we get a foothold here, and local people come to know who we are and what is the purpose of the *Ashram*.

Q: We are rather young (20 and 26 years old) and, therefore, many persons do not take our *Sadhana* seriously; even here in this *Ashram*, we feel this

indifference. Even from Swamiji. Does it mean :

- a) This is not the place where we should be ?
- b) We don't need any help, encouragement, support ?
- c) We are not committed enough spiritually ?
- d) This is the best way to teach us ?

Swamiji: I am not a teacher, much less a preacher. I have no mission in my life. My work is complete and the body may drop any day, any moment. I have no ambition left at all to spread my teaching or spirituality or to leave any institution in my name behind me. This may have given you the impression that I am also indifferent to you. Yes, in that sense I am indifferent not only to you, but to everybody else. If anyone asks me for some guidance, I try to give it according to my experience and knowledge. On my part, I have to say nothing to anyone. As a matter of fact, what should be said cannot be said at all. All words fail to convey the experience. And what can be said is only half truth or may be even less.

Q: When I concentrate, I can feel that the past does not exist. It has always been present. The same for the future. But if I stay in that moment and start to reflect, I feel there is no present but only movement.

Swamiji: If there were no past and no future, your life would be totally free. Not to speak of your actions, even your thinking is determined by your past experience. What you call 'your reflection' is also influenced by your past. Your body is made of the past, your mind is made of the past. Everything in time is

a product of Time. It may be said that the past is dead, because you cannot do anything with it. It is gone. You can only learn through the memory of the past. The past exists only in memory; the future only in imagination. And what is 'present', that is Real, cannot be grasped through the moving mind.

Q: If I would control the thought, I feel that I don't need the past anymore.

Swamiji: As there is a timeless Consciousness in man (or better to say that man is essentially embedded in timeless Consciousness) he has the potentiality of being free from the influence of the past and the future. Past and future are phenomenal. Present is existential.

Q: To find God we need a *Guru*. How to get the *Guru*, the real *Guru* ?

Swamiji: It is not possible for a seeker to judge if a *Guru* is a real *Guru* or not. One has to take risks in life. One should not at once adopt a *Guru*. The seeker should associate with different saints and sages and when he feels that he has got some inspiration and peace in the company of a particular saint/sage, he may make him his *Guru*. It is a very big commitment in life, from which it is too difficult to backout, according to Hindu tradition.

Q: Mind moves fast from one point to another while you try meditation. How to make it standstill or what are the ways to do so ?

Swamiji: Mind can be tamed and its undue movements can surely be controlled. The modification of mind can

even be stopped completely. It needs a long and persistent discipline, understanding, reflection and dispassion aided by guidance to overcome the subservience to one's mind.

Q: In family, the problems are enormous. Is it possible to meditate in these circumstances ? If so, how ?

Swamiji: Problems are everywhere whether you are with a family or without a family. You have to face the unavoidable problems with calmness and courage. Most of the problems are created by one's own mind. When life-interest is basically transformed, most of the problems drop away. Due to some inevitable limitations of earthly life, some problems do remain, but they do not disturb you. They pertain to inevitable limitations, and once you accept them as a part of life, they cease to disturb you. It is quite possible to meditate and follow the path of God-Realization in family life. Most of the *Vedic-Rishis*, who discovered great spiritual truths, were house-holders. They lived a very disciplined life and were totally dedicated to discover timeless Reality.

Q: It is said that even a small deed, good or bad, occurs on this earth with the wishes of God. If so, then when a bad deed happens (just like terrorists killing innocent people) then we should not feel sad as it is done by God ?

Swamiji: How would you know God's will when you do not know God ? And how will you be able to know the working of God when you do not know God's will ? It is impossible to know or logically explain the working

of God's 'will'. "Everything is done by God" is not a proposition. Your question has arisen because of making it a proposition. For the one who has realized the 'will' of God in everything, the question of good or bad does not arise in his/her mind.

The primary goal of the seeker is to realize God first and not to know the how and why of this world.

The experience of God's will doing everything comes to those only who have abandoned their self-will completely and reached the state of no-mind. This is a very high state and is reached after ardent discipline and search after Truth, performed with total mind and trust, for a long period of time. You start with discriminating between right and wrong, direct and exercise your will towards spiritual Fulfilment and, in the end, reach a state where the will/mind drops or stops. This state cannot be conceived by mind, much less by a mind which is full of desires, attachment, likes and dislikes and such other negative propensities. It is only common that people justify their wrong doings by misquoting the spiritual experiences of sages and scriptures.

There is, doubtless, a state of consciousness which transcends all such dualities as good and bad, pleasure and pain, hell and heaven and so on. But very few chosen ones reach this state.

Q: In Courmettes (meditation camp held in France), I felt fully your grace.....

Swamiji: What is your criterion of judging that you are being blessed or not ? It may be owing to your changing moods and not mine.

Q: I don't find the same feeling here in the *Ashram*.

Swamiji: Grace is always there like the Divine. We only feel it, when we are open and receptive.

Q: Here, even I am feeling that you ignore me.....

Swamiji: When a child is scolded by the mother for some unbecoming behavior, the child thinks that its mother is not loving it. When she gives sweets to the child, the latter feels very gratified. But the mother scolds the child and gives sweets, both out of love. The child understands this, when it grows up and becomes a parent.

Q: I am afraid of renunciation, I feel I am not ready for it.....

Swamiji: If you renounce without achieving complete detachment, renunciation becomes more painful. As a matter of fact, it is not renunciation at all, when your mind is thinking of the past and future.

Renounce attachment, desire, hatred, anger, greed, jealousy and ego, that is true renunciation.

Q: I have real difficulty to be in harmony with a companion.....

Swamiji: That is the experience of all. Some talk of it, others hide it due to the fear of their partners.

Q: After different experiences, it seems to be impossible to find peace, love in a couple.

Swamiji: In India when marriage takes place, the wife and husband regard it as the first and last relationship. They accept it as ordained by the Divine

and submit to it totally. But things are changing now in India also due to the influence of the West. Peace and harmony between a couple depend upon their mutual loyalty and love.

Q: When I got married, I also thought that it was for ever.....

Swamiji: Mental suffering is aggravated through non-acceptance and reduced through acceptance. Mind can make a hell of heaven or a heaven of hell.

Q: Now such is my life that I often feel lonely.

Swamiji: If you could communicate with the Divine residing in you, you will never feel lonely. The feeling of not being lonely in the company of others is not lasting. One can feel lonely even while living among many friends.

Q: I have always in myself, a feeling of sadness. Can you help me to take all my emotions out of me ?

Swamiji: Why are you sad ? What is the reason ? Are you sad because you have lost something which you did not want to part with ? You must know why you are sad before you can dispel this sadness.

Q: Can you help me to open my heart ?

Swamiji: Love opens the heart; hatred closes it. Be loving and lovable. Give up negative thinking. Don't be pessimistic. Have trust in God and remember Him. Be in the company of holy men. It will inspire you and purify your mind and open it.

Q: To discover the real Being is the work that we have to do on ourselves ?

Swamiji: To discover oneself, one has to go within and see within. All the false identifications have to be broken. It needs a good deal of hard work on oneself.

Q: Will you be able to help me when you will be far ?

Swamiji: If you are open to me, you will receive my help wherever you are. If you have no trust in me and are not open to me, you are not able to receive my help even though you stay near me. Associate and live with those who are happy and wise. It may help you to overcome your sadness. Avoid the company of those who see only the dark side of things.

Q: Someone observed that in the West often we have forgotten what the laws of this world are.....

Swamiji: If a person who does not know swimming jumps in the river he/she is likely to be drowned. This world is compared to a great ocean, very, very deep and full of dangerous animals, and you are in this world !

Q: I try to concentrate on Jesus' image between my two eyes and I try not to lose this image and think nothing else. Is it a beginning of meditation ?

Swamiji: It needs a very long and sustained practice to hold an image of someone on the centre between eyebrows (which is certainly and scientifically the right place to do so), unless one is in burning love of the person whose image is being held.

Yes, this is the right way you are doing. When you practise it alone in your room, you can modify the practice as follows : Keep the picture of Lord Jesus on a stand in front of you. Burn incense. Light a small

and dim lamp, preferably green, in front of it. Pray to Him for His grace to help you in your spiritual unfoldment, and particularly in your meditation. With your open eyes, look at the picture lovingly and imagine that He is blessing you. Do it for five to seven minutes. Then, close your eyes and see His image at the centre between the two eyes as you are already doing, that is, without thinking anything else.

Besides this, repeat Jesus' name with all love and trust in Him and His grace, at least for two hours a day. It will slowly generate and strengthen His love in your heart in due course of time. The more intense His love is in your heart, the easier it would be for you to hold and concentrate on His image during meditation.

Do not meditate holding the image at the centre between the eyebrows when you are repeating the holy Name. If you try to do so, it will split your mind.

At the time of repeating the holy Name, listen to holy Name mentally at the same time.

Meditation and repeating of holy Name should be practised at different times. Sit in meditation in one sitting at least for half an hour and one hour at a time for repeating holy Name. Moreover, you should practise to repeat His holy Name, mentally, in your heart when you are free and not doing anything. You can do it also when driving a car or when cooking in the kitchen.

Q: In fact, I don't know what is meditation ?

Swamiji: Meditation is the way to concentrate on one's Beloved, which is God/Truth for the seeker. When

meditation is ripe, one is in communion with one's Beloved, and very happy ! In the end, one merges into one's Beloved. The lover and the Beloved become one. This is the highest meditation.

(For someone Swamiji made following observation)

I saw you on the roof between nine to ten a.m. Don't you sit in the meditation hall at the fixed hours for meditation ? Sitting in meditation at regular hours is like eating at regular hours which is good for health. The body-system adopts to a particular pattern if food is eaten at fixed time. Similarly, it is good for meditation (specially when one is not very advanced) to sit in meditation at fixed times and regularly, preferably at one place.

Q: I feel many difficulties to follow spiritual path in my family or in a group or association.

Swamiji: Spirituality is a personal affair. It is not necessary that to be spiritual, you must join some group or association or sect of spiritual people. Spirituality means turning your mind and interest to what is eternal. Spirituality means your inner relationship with God. Your husband and family cannot know what you are thinking or whom you are loving in your heart. If there is no harmony between you and your husband, it will disturb your mind and you may not be able to meditate properly.

Moreover, so long as you are not financially independent you need to live with your family. With your love, obedience you can slowly and gradually change your husband also. If you don't reconcile and

live with your husband, he will make friendship with other girls and your married life will eventually come to an end.

Day-to-day peace is very important for growth in spiritual life.

Q: More guidance is sought from Swamiji about the relationships among the members of the family.

Swamiji: Either she becomes totally independent or she adjusts herself in the family. What else she can do ?

Q: Is attachment the main source of suffering ?

Swamiji: Attachment and identification with what is not lasting is the cause of suffering.

Q: Are attachment and identification not the same thing ?

Swamiji: Identification is the basis of becoming attached. It is deeper than attachment. Identification means that you, more or less, feel one with what you are attached. You may be attached to your car, but may not be identified with it. If your car is stolen, you will suffer but not so much as when some very close friend of you meets a fatal accident.

Q: Two years ago, I felt so much anger, jealousy and sadness.....

Swamiji: Angry with me and jealous of me ? Or with whom ?

Q: Of others, because I felt they were better than me.

Swamiji: It is not bad to feel like that. You should try

to acquire those good qualities of others which you take to be better than yours. Take that as a challenge and try to reform yourself. Why to be jealous ? In that sense you may be jealous of Jesus also.

Q: After reflection on your answer, I see that I always keep myself behind others.....

Swamiji: There are thousand of hundreds of people who are behind you. Why don't you look to them and thank God ?

There is no limit anyway. Even if you become the President of your country, and be at the top of the people of France, you will still be less powerful than Mr. Y of U.S.A. And poor Mr. Y, he is also not all powerful. There are many invincible powers above him. He has his own limitations. May be, he is also a slave of his wife, whom he dares not disobey. So what if you go ahead of some people, of whom you feel jealous of? It is not going to make any difference if you go ahead of them, because you will still be behind some others.

(Swamiji indicating directly to one other devotee):

There are many more people who are much more sick than you.

Q: My daughter also told me that others could be more sick than me.

Swamiji: No man is perfect in the world. Everyone has his/her own limitations and problems. Only those who have realized that they are not the body-mind, and have realized their essential timeless Being, have found lasting peace which no power on earth can disturb.

Q: Yesterday during meditation, my thoughts were fighting against the *Mantra* which I wanted to repeat. It was very difficult but finally the *Mantra* won. But I felt little disturbed.

Swamiji: There is nothing abnormal about it.

The mind of a common man is like a battle field where good and evil thoughts/forces try to overpower one another. This fight goes on for quite a long time till the *Sadhak* reaches a particular stage of stability. Regular meditation supplemented with reflection, prayer and breathing exercises, conducted consistently and with patience, is the only means to attain purity and stability of mind. One should work with firm determination and total commitment to subjugate all the forces that try to disturb meditation. Selfless service to the poor and needy in the name of God also comprises a part of spiritual effort.

During meditation the power of the *Mantra* first brings up all that is hidden in the subconscious, which contains all sorts of good and bad impressions and *Samskaras*. One should not become afraid if some evil thoughts come up from the subconscious during meditation. Some suggestions come from outside also during meditation. One should refuse all those suggestions which go against one's spiritual upliftment and accept only those that are helpful.

Q: Two years ago I spoke to you a lot about my fear. Nowadays, I feel very less fear but instead I feel suffering.

Swamiji: It seems you became attached to your fear.

Now when fear is leaving, you are afraid of its leaving you, and therefore you are suffering.

Q: When you wrote about Truth you said that what we say is often half truth ?

Swamiji: What I said was that it was almost impossible to express completely one's spiritual experience of Truth in words or writing. Due to the limitation of senses and mind, it is difficult even to realize the whole Truth, and then to express totally what is experienced is yet more difficult. As such, what we read about Truth in books or hear through sages and saints is mostly half truth. Mostly what is said of Truth in books or in discourses are coded hints or directions which we have to decode and understand through our passive, unbiased, purified and stable mind.

Q: For many months I feel less and less the need to express my feeling, that makes me more and more involved in myself, but at the same time, I am afraid to close myself, to be far away from others. What could be the right attitude ?

Swamiji: In the pragmatic sense also, silence conserves the energy of feeling and thought, and you don't feel 'closed' but, instead, full of energy which wants to express itself. It is also true that if you express your feelings or emotions, good or bad, through speech and tell that you are angry for such and such reason with a person (with whom you feel angry), the intensity of anger decreases. Same is the case with love, love of God, or your spiritual experience. If you tell about your

love of God or spiritual experience to one and all, that love or experience loses its intensity. Have you read what Jesus said when he came down from the mountains after a long seclusion and started mixing with people and preached. He felt as if He had lost something. He told this to His disciples. You may read in the Bible His own words about it.

In silence you regain energy. Through speech you release it. It is just like that when you go to sleep, your mental and physical activities stop and you feel refreshed when you wake up. Sleep gives rest to your physical and nervous systems and you regain the energy which you have spent during awakened state through activity. During silence, you get more rest than what you get from sleep.

Q: I have been suffering so much in my body, I have seen so many doctors, done so many tests and injections that I don't trust this body anymore. I am terrified. I know that if my mind is not at peace, my body will be sick and if my body is sick, my mind is not at peace. How should I get out of this vicious circle ?

Swamiji: You must know that man is not perfect and can never be perfect so far as his body-mind is there. The body and the mind have their own limitations which depend upon so many factors which are beyond the control of man. Your health does not only depend on your wish to be healthy. It also depends upon the state of the health of your parents, when your mother was conceived; it depends upon your past *Karmas* also; it depends upon your present state of mind which is

not in your control and on so many other factors. Mind also can never be perfect, it is a product of past. The society has also contributed very much in the moulding of your mind, your emotions, your thinking and the pattern of your thinking. As long as you stand identified with your body-mind, you can never be at peace.

You have never tasted real peace, which comes through right and divine knowledge. What you call peace is only the absence of disturbance in your mind for a certain period, or when you have become unconscious of your body-mind. This body called Chandra Swami was ill for last more than one year, but I never lost the balance of my mind or peace even when the body was suffering very much.

Birth, growth, disease, decay and death are inseparably associated with the body. This is the law which cannot be avoided or denied in any way. Great kings suffer, great doctors suffer; there is no one who does not suffer. And fear of suffering makes you suffer more. One has to accept cheerfully suffering and every other adverse happening as the will of God, only then can one be at peace. Kings die, doctors die, great scientists die, saints die, even though no one wants to die. All suffer also in the body and with old-age. No one can be an exception. Only those who have realized their true, immortal, essential Being, find lasting Peace and lasting Happiness.

Q: You are a saint, why do you suffer in your body?

Swamiji: Why do I feel hungry when I do not eat anything? Should I not feel hungry because I am a

saint ? The body has to follow the physical laws.

Q: I think that if I am suffering, it is because I am not doing well, I am not meditating well, I am not loving God well—I always think that I am very selfish.

Swamiji: When you are in love with God—even when you are in love with a person—you lose your self-will. Selflessness becomes your nature and you get peace. Self-will and selfishness are the cause of all suffering.

Q: It is difficult to love God ?

Swamiji: It is so simple; the simplest thing is to love God. God does not demand anything from you. You may be a poor man, a rich man, a healthy man, a scholar or an illiterate person, you can love God. What is the difficulty in loving God ?

Q: I don't know Him, I have never met Him, sometimes I feel Him but it is very rare.

Swamiji: No Muslim who was born after the sixth century has seen Mohammed. They have not even seen his photograph and still they love him very much.

Q: I feel deeply attached but less involved with identifications. Is it due to meaning given to words ?

Swamiji: How can there be attachment without identification? First of all you become identified with your physical body, then other identifications and attachments follow. All your relationships, friendships, enemies, etc..... are there because of your identification with the body-mind. Isn't it so ?

Q: For example, I feel not to have identification with the role of mother, but I feel attached to the young man who is my son.

Swamiji: If you don't take yourself to be a mother, then the relationship of mother and son becomes irrelevant. When you are not identified with your body, you cannot even say whether you are a woman or a man. You may say that you are not identified with your body, but practically it is not so. If you cease to be a mother, then motherly attachment with the son does not have any meaning. Your attachment with your son is there, because you really feel that you are the mother of that body.

Q: I would like to go deeper in dispassion which leads to detachment. What can I do ?

Swamiji: You can reflect on the truism that whatever can be separated from you, you cannot be that. You are separated from your body at the time of death. Even in dream, you assume a dream-body and with that dream-body, you are taking a bath in the river, but your physical body or your bed does not become wet at all. In dream, you are in a different body.

In deep meditation, you come to know directly that you are not the body-mind. You can see it as you see a table or a chair. When you really see it, you are not attached; you are attached only when you don't really see it. Actually you don't see it, but you only think that you are not the body.

Q: As you are in silence, is it good also for us to be in silence ?

Swamiji: Silence observed with a motive is not complete and real silence, as love with motive is not real love.

Silence with a motive to communicate with the Divine is a part of spiritual *Sadhana*. As the Divine is the inmost essential Being of man, so speaking (speech) is not at all necessary for communication with the Divine. It is not good to imitate others. You may observe periodic silence on week-ends and devote yourself exclusively to prayer and meditation during the period of silence.

Q: I would like to help others ?

Swamiji: Service is a better word than 'help'. Help betrays a sort of superiority complex. Service of the needy also comprises a part of spiritual *Sadhana*. Do serve others in the name of God; it will help you in your spiritual edification.

Q: As you are in silence, there can be difficulties to teach and serve others ?

Swamiji: I am neither a teacher, nor a preacher, therefore speaking could easily be avoided by me. Moreover, written statements are considered more authentic than oral statements even in the practical worldly matters.

I have not come here to teach or preach. My purpose, if any, is to awaken. I have discovered that silence is much more powerful than speech.

Q: But to serve, we need to be competent ?

Swamiji: Service is of many kinds. Obviously if one

wants to serve in a specific field, one has to be professionally competent in that line. But the spirit of service can be applied in day-to-day activities without any special skill. For example, you can serve water to a thirsty man. You can take an injured person lying on the road to the hospital. You can humbly and cheerfully guide a stranger who is seeking guidance to go to someone's house in your locality, etc.

Q: Many times in meditation, I got the vision of Jesus crucified. I don't know what to think about it ?

Swamiji: To have a vision of Jesus in any form, in any place, at any time, and in any way, is very fortunate. Crucifixion of Jesus actually represents divine sacrifice for the whole of humanity. It inspires seekers to suffer cheerfully for others in the name of the Divine. It should be a matter of joy to live for others and also to die for others. It indicates total selflessness which not only alleviates the suffering of others, but denotes complete liberation of the selfless one.

Q: Was Jesus during His life, in contact with God ?

Swamiji: The *Avatars* are always aware of God, and of their complete oneness with God (as Jesus said : I and my father are one). But they don't come to demonstrate the powers of God. They come to uplift humanity spiritually in so many ways, to push up the process of evolution of the souls.

Q: What to think on what He said : "Father, why do you forsake me ?"

Swamiji: These are not His last words. It was a thought suggested to Him by an evil force, but He

rejected it at once. His last words were: "Lord, forgive them because they do not know what they are doing. And, let thy will be done."

Q: What can be the source of fear which I have in my body ?

Swamiji: Fear is felt by mind. The cause of fear is attachment. This attachment may be with any person, situation or any object. It may also be with one's ideas and opinions.

Q: But because of this fear I cannot be happy ?

Swamiji: You have to discard the attachment which creates fear in you. Through self-observation you have first to find out with what or with whom you are very much attached. Then through reflection on the transitory nature of all objects, situations and relationships you have to work to dispel that attachment. The other way is to have intense and deep love of what is lasting and eternal, the Divine, the Reality. It will change the interest of your life and your whole perspective.

Q: Swamiji, do you remember what you wrote in your book about attachment ?

Swamiji: You simply stop bothering about what is not lasting. There will be no place for fear in your life then.

I have no ready-made answers to questions. I don't give the same answer to a question each and everytime. I give the answers to questions on the spur of the moment.

Q: I usually fight, but sometimes I feel that half of me wants to fight and the other half wants to surrender. How to be in balance with these feelings ?

Swamiji: Complete self-surrender happens by itself when the experience of God-Realization becomes stabilized. Now what you say about your surrender, is actually that you are only thinking that you are surrendering. It is a mental process which does not last for ever. But thinking of self-surrender also gives peace, though it is not lasting. You feel peace or disturbance according to the modifications of your mind. When there is negativity in the mind you become upset and disturbed. When you are thinking positively, you feel a sort of satisfaction and joy. Sometime you have both feelings of joy and sadness, mixed together. It is so because your mind is not unified. You should try to cultivate the feeling of self-surrender more and more, till it becomes effortless. Self-surrender is the culmination of right spiritual self-effort made most sincerely, regularly and persistently for a long period. When self-surrender happens, you don't stop working; your life may become even more dynamic, but it is not directed by ego and self-will. You become the instrument of the Divine working in you and through you. Your action then becomes totally free, as the will of the Divine which works through you, is completely free. Surrender does not mean losing your freedom as the word 'surrender' connotes in common parlance. When you surrender to the Divine, you become completely as free as the Divine Himself. In this divine state you can use the ego, but you are not used by the ego.

Q: I would like to serve others spiritually.

Swamiji: The real competence to serve others spiritually comes only when you yourself have reached quite an advanced stage of spirituality, having direct spiritual experience. Otherwise, you become a professor of spiritual philosophy. There are so many professors/teachers teaching *Yoga* and spirituality in colleges and universities. But at the ground level, they are ordinary people, as much attached to worldly relationships and as disturbed as any common man. They teach through words but their example does not inspire anyone. It becomes more of an academic exercise than any spiritual, practical teaching.

Q: We could have in *Sadhana Kendra* some rooms for seclusion. But is it good and necessary to have this kind of *Sadhana* for us ?

Swamiji: There is no such provision in this *Ashram*. Here, if you regularly attend four times *Bhajan* and meditation, it is enough. Fifty percent of the inmates do not want to do even that much. And these four hours are not continuous. There is an interval of at least three hours between each sitting.

Q: Many questions on *Deeksha* and *Sanyas* and the imports concerning them.....

Swamiji: The English word of *Deeksha* is initiation, which obviously means to be initiated in a certain path of Self/Truth-Realization from someone whom you believe to be a realized one, or to be quite advanced in spirituality, and who can guide you on the path on the basis of his/her experience and who can remove the obstacles that come in your path.

In your question today morning, you did not mention the word *Deeksha*, you asked about *Sanyas*. *Deeksha* can be taken even without taking *Sanyas*.

If you already have an experience of Truth, you don't need to get *Deeksha*. That is what I wrote about the *Vidyut Sanyas*. *Vidyut Sanyas* means that you have already the experience of Truth, but you renounce the world and become a *Sanyasi* only to lead the life of renunciation and seclusion; you don't need to be initiated into the spiritual path by a *Guru*.

Swami Ram Teerth had taken *Vidyut Sanyas*. Swami Yogeshwarananda who was first called *Vyasdeva Brahmachari* took *Vidyut Sanyas*. They did not have a *Guru*. Swami Yogeshwarananda founded the Yoga-Niketan near Shivananda Ashram in Rishikesh. Swami Ramdas was initiated by his father. He wore the robe of a *Sanyasi* only to tour the places of pilgrimage in India, and to meet saints. It will however not be called *Vidyut Sanyas* as he got initiation and followed a path. His father was his *Guru*. But according to the *Shastric* norms one should not wear saffron robe of a *Sanyasi/Sadhu* by himself/herself. It is not official *Sanyas* according to the *Shastras*.

So many beggars wear saffron robes just to get food, because in India the one who wears saffron cloths is taken to be a *Sadhu/Sanyasi* and is given food with respect.

There are two kinds of *Sanyas* which are taken ceremoniously. One is the ordinary *Sanyas* in which the disciple's or devotee/seeker's name and clothes are

changed, and initiation is given so that the disciple's previous identity is changed and he/she is led onto a certain path which leads to Self-Realization. The second *Sanyas* is called the *Vidyut Sanyas*. It is taken by those who have already got Self-Realization, but who want to lead a life of complete renunciation and seclusion because they enjoy a life of seclusion more than the life of preaching, teaching or of social service. As a matter of fact, a realized one is not obliged to follow any line of action or inaction; he/she is totally free. He/she may be like a Janaka or like Shukadeva. No *Guru* and no initiation is needed for taking *Vidyut Sanyas*.

There is also a third *Sanyas* which is denoted by an enlightened state of mind, even though one is leading a married life. In the words of Gita, "Take one to be *Sanyasi*, who has no attachment, no desire, no hatred, who possesses the sense of equanimity and sees oneness in all beings."

In the first kind of *Sanyas*, in which your name and clothes are changed, and you are initiated into certain path, you are to follow certain rules and regulations as prescribed by your Master, and to live a disciplined life, strictly according to the instructions given by your *Guru*. There is certainly an impact created by changing your clothes and taking saffron coloured clothes of a *Sanyasi*. A *Sanyasi* with saffron clothes cannot openly go to attend a concert of rock or pop music; he/she cannot openly indulge in sensual activities or entertain sexual adventures; he/she cannot go for hunting etc..... The saffron clothes represent that you are a seeker of Truth and that you aspire to lead

a very noble life and practise spiritual *Sadhana*. If you do something against the norms laid down for a *Sanyasi*, you will be despised by society and it may also create problems for you. The society will not tolerate it. Saffron clothes are to *Sanyasi* what a uniform is to a policeman. A thief would not come to policeman (if the policeman is not corrupt) and take counsels from him as how to steal and evade police. He will definitely try to avoid meeting a policeman. So, if you wear saffron clothes, it may help you to avoid association of wrong persons who are very, very worldly and opposed to the right path.

Sanyas means the death of our old identity and it connotes a new birth. All previous relationships come to an end. Only the relationships in the name of the Divine survive. Then you have to deal with M not as your daughter but as the daughter of God, like other girls.

Q: I feel unable to manage with my ego, what can I do ?

Swamiji: You raise your hand by using your ego. You walk by using your ego. You ask questions by using your ego. Similarly you can learn to do something right by using your ego. But when you do something wrong, against your conscience, you are used by your ego.

So you have to learn the art of using your ego for constructive purposes. This learning comes by making yourself strong in spirit, by practising the divine Presence.

Q: So ego is a part of mind ?

Swamiji: Ego and mind are practically the same energy though this energy assumes different names on account of the different types of its functioning. You may say so if you like. But it is better to say that both mind and ego are the same energy. When this energy thinks and takes decisions, it is called mind. When this energy functions for identification with what is not spirit, it is called ego.

Q: Yesterday in meditation I saw the face of my mother full of hate and anger, what can I do with that?

Swamiji: Pray for her. Pray to the Lord to give peace to her soul.

Q: But I kept disturbed.....

Swamiji: Naturally, if one sees such a vision, one is perturbed. But you can help her only by praying for her soul. It will bring peace to you also.

Q: Is your name connected with your destiny, your function on this earth? Is it in connection with the moon (*Chandra*)? Why is it not Chandrananda as usual for names of saints?

Swamiji: Name is only used for practical dealings. All names and forms are *Maya*. You may call me by any name you like. It reminds me of my family name Suraj which means sun. When my *Guru* changed my name at the time of initiation from Suraj Prakash to Chandra Prakash, he laughed and said, "You were very hot/active, now you will be cool/calm and quiet". I was a very active boy in my childhood — not like A who is very calm and quiet.

Q: A's father said to Swamiji that he didn't feel his child to be so calm.....

Swamiji: He is not mischievous. I was very clever (playing tricks) when I was of his age. I am the creation of Babaji (Baba Bhuman Shahji). He made me what I am now. I cannot claim to have achieved anything without his direct grace.

Q: Was Shri Girdhari Dassji your *Guru* as he was in a physical body ?

Swamiji: He was the medium through whom Babaji chose me out of his grace. Have you not read the introduction written by Yvan in the French book "The Art of Realization."

Q: Is not a living *Guru* required to succeed in our spiritual path ?

Swamiji: All the gods, angels, sages, saints, *Gurus* have merged in Babaji for me.

Q: Are there some written materials about Babaji's teachings, here ?

Swamiji: Babaji was neither a teacher nor a preacher. He would not need to teach or preach. His mere graceful look or wish could transform the life of a person. He did not teach me any metaphysical or mystical teachings. His grace simply helped to awaken me. He simply said: "Be honest, loving and always remember the Divine." And that was all what he said to everyone. He himself demonstrated it through his own example. He was a God intoxicated man — more than a teacher.

Q: You said, "All name and form are *Maya*", but have we real names, divine names corresponding to the special essence or function of our Being in that body (like in the Bible, "at the beginning was the word")?

Swamiji: The essential Being is the same in each and everyone. It is the Divine. You can call the Divine by any name. Different people call it by different names — some call it Allah, some Om, some Jehova, some Rama, some Krishna, some Shiva but the essential Being is one and the same.

When this divine essence is associated with the body (body is of three kinds), it is called soul in English, and '*Jiva or Jivatma*' in *Sanskrit*. There are innumerable, infinite number of souls, but the essential Being is one. The soul may be defined as the reflection of the Divine in a mind/body plus mind. Soul is not eternal. When mind disintegrates, soul ceases to exist. The existence of soul/body/mind is only phenomenal. The fountain source of all sentient and insentient existence is one; it is the Divine.

As soul/mind/body is only phenomenal and temporal, therefore, all names attributed to soul/mind/body are also temporal. They are not real. That is why I said that all names are *Maya*.

Q: *Swamiji*, for me, at this moment, is it a good attitude to ask you some questions or would it be better not to ask any question and just live the *Ashram* life?

Swamiji: Mind is, as it were, a thought manufacturing machine. It is constantly working except, either in deep

sleep state or in certain types of *Samadhis*, or when you take some drug which takes you into a stupefying coma-like state. These thoughts manufactured by the mind-machine include questions, doubts, positive or negative feelings, deliberations and conflicts etc..... You have questions/doubts/confusions, so why to hide them or suppress them, you can ask me any questions you want, provided these are not connected with the criticism of any saint or sage or a God-man.

Q: In fact, the question should be a right question ?

Swamiji: Question put up by a person indicates the standing of the person asking the question. So if I tell you to ask the right question, I am actually telling you to be a right person. But if you were really a right and not a confused person, why would you ask a question at all ?

Q: That is correct.

Swamiji: But it does not mean that if you do not ask any question at all, you must be a right person. You may be like 'Tiger' (the dog of the *Ashram*) who has no question at all to ask.

Q: Shankaracharya said, "The one who wants to know that the Self is real, must practise discrimination."

Swamiji: What Shankaracharya said, is quite right. But according to his system of discipline for Self-Realization, 'discrimination' is the first step and not the last. By discrimination, he means right thinking (in the words of the Buddha), which enables you to see clearly the transitory nature of the world. When your

practice of discrimination advances, it must bring dispassion in you. If you have not become dispassionate, it means that you have not practised enough discrimination which would lead you to the second step called dispassion. As there are eight limbs of *Raja-Yoga*, similarly there are seven parts of the *Vedantic* discipline for Self-Realization. One step leads to the second, the second to the third, the third to the fourth and so on till you reach the final step called *Nidhidhyasana*, — that is the absorption in the thought of oneness of the Self with the Divine. In the ultimate plunge, this thought also subsides and you have the direct Realization of the Absolute which is one without a second. But the irony is that the modern *Vedantins* stop only at discrimination, as a predominantly intellectual exercise, and don't practise complete discipline of Shankara's *Vedanta*.

Q: But first, he must find a Master who knows perfectly what the Absolute is, and to whom mercifulness is as immense as the ocean. The seeker must approach the Master with great devotion and respect.

Swamiji: Yes, in all the disciplines to be practised the need of a Master is of paramount importance. The Master is merciful truly but the disciple should also be open, trustful, obedient, humble, receptive, to be able to receive the grace of the Master. Otherwise, true communion of the disciple with the Master is not possible.

Q: Swami Muktananda said, "when you are close to a great Being, and if your mind is clear enough, you can realize your true Self within one second."

Father, I am so ashamed of being so powerless to see you really and of being able to see only your body as if you were just my grandfather. How to stop being so blind ?

Swamiji: Eyes only see the form, ears only hear the words, skin only feels the touch, nose can only experience the smell and so on. But the Absolute or the true nature of the Master is seen only with the inner eye of wisdom which opens by practising the discipline expounded by Shankaracharya with total commitment, persistently and with undivided interest.

One second to realize the Absolute/the Divine is a very, very long period. Realization comes when you transcend time-consciousness completely; where time ceases to exist for you.

Q: Could *Japa* be the cause of physical troubles ?

Swamiji: Many people do *Japa* but they don't feel disturbed at all. Once, I had made *Japa* for more than two year continuously, without trouble. The power of *Mantra* should remove ailments — it does not produce ailments. *Mantra* is associated with the Divine, should it create problems for you, or remove your problems ? If you think negatively and become tense, it does produce many health problems. When you are very angry, some glands in your body secrete poison so much so that if you inject that poison into the body of a rabbit, the rabbit will die. Much research about the effect of negative and positive emotions and thoughts on the physical and physiological system of body has been made.

Q: I thought that soul was lasting but yesterday you wrote that soul is not eternal and will cease to exist when mind disintegrates.

Swamiji: Yes, soul exists as long as mind exists. When the body is dead, the mind does not die. Soul ceases to exist only when the mind dies. Spirit is eternal; soul is phenomenal, though it may go on assuming different bodies for millions and millions of years. Soul is like the reflection of the sun in a pot containing water. The pot containing water is, as it were, the mind. When the pot is broken and the water is spilled, sun ceases to get reflected in that pot. The reflection ceases to exist but sun is always there. There are as many souls as there are body/minds. But the Spirit is one.

Q: What becomes of the soul of those who commit suicide ?

Swamiji: Soul is separated from the physical body in physical death, howsoever it may occur. But if one commits suicide, the *Karmas* of the soul in that body are not exhausted. So the soul, more often than not, roams around that dead body in its astral body which is invisible to the physical eyes. When the dead body is completely destroyed, soul strays in the astral world in a state of great dissatisfaction, literally it becomes a ghost. It cannot proceed further to other worlds as long as its residual *Karmas*, which it had to exhaust in the previous physical body, are not neutralized. As the body is destroyed, the ghost sometimes tries to enter some other person's body. There are certain *Mantras*, rituals and prayers which can help the departed soul — the ghost — to be liberated from that

state and proceed further on its onward journey to other worlds.

Q: I know how to reflect or to think on something that I have read but I don't know how to contemplate on such an information or idea. How to practise that in daily life ?

Swamiji: It is not a question of understanding as how to reflect, it is a question of reflecting regularly. By regular reflection, you come to a right conclusion. You go on weighing, reasoning and counter reasoning on a certain issue and then reach a certain definite conclusion.

Contemplation means to stop reasoning, and to concentrate and live moment to moment on that conclusive intellectual understanding which has come to you through reflection.

Q: Swamiji, could you indicate me where I am exactly on the path of Self-Realization ? What is the main effort I have to do now ? It is very difficult for me to evaluate my true position on that way. Sometimes, I have the feeling of being very close to the goal and sometimes very far from it ?

Swamiji: You are right; you cannot know how far you are from the goal i.e. Self-Realization. The seeker is like a person trying to cross an infinite ocean on a small boat which is not equipped with modern equipments by which you can know your exact position in the ocean. What you can know is only the direction in which your boat is moving. There are certain signs which show you that you are on the right path of Self-

Realization. Those signs are growing detachment, dispassion, love and interest to realize your goal, the growing stability of your mind, the diminishing impacts on your mind of the changing situations etc.....

You come to know suddenly and only then when Self-Realization happens to you. You get it unexpectedly. It may come any moment. The seeker's duty is to work with a total commitment and most sincerely for Self-Realization.

The seeker must sit regularly in meditation, read spiritual books that lend him encouragement to follow the path of Realization, he should reflect regularly, tame his senses and mind, conduct periodic *Satsang* and associate with realized ones or those who are quite advanced on the path, lead the life of purity and honesty, render service to the needy according to his means. Be loving to one and all irrespective of their caste, creed or religion etc.....

Q: I heard in some Christian conference that we need to be purified and humble before practising *Japa*.

Swamiji: *Japa* is practised in almost all the religions. Even in the *Yoga*, which does not force you to believe in God, *Japa* is recommended.

It is absurd to say that one should not practise *Japa* unless one's mind is purified and one is humble. On the contrary, *Japa* purifies your mind, especially your subconscious, and is very helpful in dispelling your arrogance and making you humble. Even the greatest sinner can practise *Japa*. Through *Japa* you remember the Divine and invoke the divine grace. It is the easiest way to purify yourself.

There are different stages of practising *Mantra*. A stage comes when the chanting of the *Mantra* stops by itself (You don't discontinue it willfully) and your mind is absorbed in the meaning/energy of *Mantra*.

To say that it is better not to begin the practice of *Mantra* before your mind is purified, is quite ridiculous.

The practice of *Mantra* should, of course, be continued till it leads you to a very advanced stage when the *Mantra* has served its purpose and does not need to be continued.

It is only a few mystical *Mantras* which have to be practised with specific rituals to achieve some specific worldly goals. For practising those *Mantras*, you need the presence of your guide with you constantly. It is so, because, if the *Japa* of that specific *Mantra* is not practised with the right rituals and connotation, it may harm you instead of helping you. Mostly these *Mantras* are kept very secret and they are practised very rarely by over-ambitious people under the guidance of an expert guide in that line. Such *Mantras* exist in all religions; they are not used to invoke divine grace, but practised only to get some powers and to use them to achieve your goal. If something goes wrong with the practice of those *Mantras*, those very powers whom you wanted to use through those *Mantras* may harm you and you may become not only crazy but also mad.

Q: The *Mantra* referred at that moment was : "Lord Jesus, Son of God, pity me, the sinner!"

Swamiji: So how can this *Mantra* harm you ? You are remembering Jesus and invoking His grace, through these words. The repetition of such words cannot make you crazy. The invoking of divine grace is to remove your craziness. It cannot make you crazy. People are already crazy and when they become aware that they are crazy, they invoke divine grace through the *Mantra* to become purified, humble, balanced, composed and happy. The phrase from the Bible, which you have quoted, admits that you are a sinner and therefore, you are praying and invoking divine grace.

And the priest said : “This phrase should not be repeated unless you are purified.” Don’t you see a contradiction in it ? On the one hand the priest says that the *Mantra* (phrase) should be repeated only by those who are purified and humble, but on the other hand this prayer is being offered by one who is admitting that he/she is a sinner.

Q: In the Bible it is written: “The Father, the Son and the holy Spirit”. What is the holy Spirit ? What is the immaculate conception ?

Swamiji: The Father, the Son, the Spirit are one. The absolute One without a second. Mary is the divine Mother, the power of absolute Consciousness.

As sun and its heat are not different from each other, similarly the absolute Being and its divine power are not different from each other. The One manifests Itself into many through Its divine power, and yet remains the One.

It is like one actor assuming the roles of different characters in a drama. Manifestation does not mean

change. Manifestation means appearance. When a thing changes into another thing, the first thing is destroyed and a new thing is created. When milk changes into curd, milk ceases to exist and a new thing, curd is created. The Absolute does not change like that. The One actually does not become many but rather appears as many. It never loses its Oneness.

Q: Are *Mantra*, thoughts, breath sequential, all mind's moments?

Swamiji: The soul has to be rightly understood, because it is not the mind that does any action, but the soul. Mind is a rarefied matter. The Spirit reflected in mind plus the mind is the soul. Mind is an instrument used by the soul. *Mantra*, breath and thought are the objects of soul. Soul is the experiencer of these objects.

Q: What was the longest non-interrupted meditation you experienced ?

Does the energy available for intensive meditation becomes at low level sometimes during *Sadhana* ?

Swamiji: Many years.

There are ups and downs in the intensity of *Sadhana*. It is natural. One should not be perturbed by it.

Q: Is effort required during all stages of practice ?

Swamiji: There is a stage when the divine power takes up all the responsibility of the seeker. After that stage, the *Sadhana* still goes on, but the seeker is free from sense of doership.

Q: Why does a baby die ?

Swamiji: Birth and death are in the hands of God. No man has control over them. Death can be delayed by man but cannot be escaped. The Divine uses both birth and death for the evolution of the soul. The process of evolution goes on, both — on unconscious and conscious levels. Below the human level, the process of evolution is totally worked out by the divine power. But when soul reaches mental-consciousness, a man can participate in the process of evolution of the soul, either retarding the pace of its evolution or making it faster through his conscious effort which includes experiencing, reflecting upon the experiences, assimilating these and growing.

A baby died in the womb. It was the will of God. The will of God works as a divine force of evolution. In the divine scheme of things it was good for the baby, though you must have been disappointed and grieved, naturally. But if you think rightly and accept it as the will of God, it will help you spiritually too. To accept cheerfully the will of God is a great *Sadhana*. So you can make this apparently sad event a means of your spiritual unfoldment which ultimately leads to the Realization of the Divine. The divine will, the divine power of evolution works for the good of all beings, whether we are able to understand it or not. The saints and sages come to realize this Truth and remain undisturbed in all situations. Even if the whole universe is destroyed, meaning the death of millions of people, it does not disturb the sage who has realized the Divine.

Q: They say that the soul of a child that dies becomes an angel.

Swamiji: The soul of the baby, when the baby is dead, does not necessarily become an angel. In a baby is hidden the man/woman like a tree is hidden in its seed. What the soul of the baby becomes after death, depends upon the past *Karma*, or the potential worth of the soul of the baby.

One should pray that the soul of the baby should be in peace and its journey in other worlds should be peaceful and comfortable.

Have you read the book, "The Tibetan Book of the Dead." It deals with this subject. It deals with how to pray for a dead person or what type of suggestions should be given to a dying person. May be the book is in this library also.

Q: Should one have another baby ? Is it good or bad ?

Swamiji: If one does not feel fulfilled with one child, one may have desire to have a second child.

It also depends upon the social situation of a country. The countries which are over populated and poor, are adopting family planning. For countries like India and China, it is being made obligatory for parents that they should not have more than two children. In the West, there is no such problem, as yet. Some countries are even under populated.

Q: Swamiji, I am getting sad and nervous. Though I do my best but I cannot go closer to Him. I try, I cannot. At the same time, I miss His love. What could

I do ? Is it because my heart is closed and dry ? Could you please help me, could you draw me closer to Him ?

Swamiji: The feeling of missing God is a sign of coming closer to Him. It shows you love God, otherwise why should you miss Him ? So, instead of being sad, you should be happy.

You miss someone only when you love someone. Otherwise why should you miss anyone. It is a sign of love when you feel that you miss your beloved. The more intense this feeling is, the closer you are going to God. To quote the couplet of an Urdu poet : "When the time of the promise of meeting the beloved comes nearer, the zeal of meeting the beloved becomes more intense."

Do all people miss God ? They have no concern for God. They don't even bother if God exists or not.

If you miss God, it shows at least that you believe in the existence of God and are concerned and interested in meeting Him. The interest of meeting God is what is called love of God. Please miss Him more and more. This missing experience has its own beauty, in which you feel a sort of joy (in the feeling of separation), as it makes you remember your Beloved.

Does not the missing of your Beloved indicate your being aware of the Beloved ? The intense feeling of missing of (separation from) God is called *Viraha* in the *Bhakti* system of realizing God. It is taken to be a very, very high state of *Bhakti*. It is the *Viraha*, the intense and continuous feeling of separation of God,

which leads you to the union of beloved God. It is, as if, God is calling you to Himself. It is indeed a very, very rare happening. How many people in the world weep in the separation of God ? Thousands weep for getting health, wealth, power and worldly comforts and conveniences, but how many weep in the love of God ? It is very rare. Isn't it ? There was a time when I used to weep all the night for God because I could not see Him.

Why are you scared ? Devotees want and pray to be blessed with the intense love of God. This love unites the devotee with God.

Are you afraid of God ? God is not a cruel being. He is the embodiment of absolute Love, Beauty, Light, Wisdom, Awareness, and Delight. Are you scared of happiness ? Love of God brings lasting happiness to man. It seems you have some sort of misunderstanding about divine Love.

God's love dispels all fears and sorrows from man's mind. Divine love and fear can never coexist. Love is like the sun, and fear like darkness. They can never be face to face with each other. As a matter of fact, fear indicates the absence of divine Love and Awareness.

It is love of God alone which fulfils man. No pelf, power, property, position, favourable situation can fulfil the soul. How can the finite satisfy and fulfil the infinite soul of man ?

“Seek ye first the Kingdom of Heaven (God) and all else will be added unto you”, said Jesus.

Longing and seeking of the Divine is one aspect of the love of God.

Why should you be scared of God's love ?

When this love reaches its highest peak, the devotee becomes united with God, and seeking and longing is fulfilled.

Q: Kindly tell me the correct picture of humility, humbleness and gentleness so that we can live with humility in the practical way of life ?

Swamiji: Whatever you give to others, it comes back to you manifold. This is the law. If you give respect and love to others, it comes back to you manifolds. Be sweet to one and all. Don't hurt anyone. Speak sweetly. Have good-will for all.

Q: How to be able to explain to Christian people the theory of reincarnation ?

Swamiji: A Christian priest told me that in orthodox Christianity the theory of reincarnation has not been mentioned at all. So neither they believe in reincarnation, nor do they disbelieve reincarnation of soul. All the religions born in India like Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism etc. believe in reincarnation. And they not only quote their scriptures but prove it by reasoning also. Scientific research is also in favour of the reincarnation theory.

Mind is an energy and according to science energy cannot be destroyed. It assumes different forms. Isness cannot be destroyed. It only goes on changing its forms and names. An undisputed truth is that something

cannot come out of nothing. Do you deny your existence? You cannot. So I ask you if you exist now you must have been existing in some other form before you assumed this form and you will be existing in some other form when this form of yours is changed.

There have been many instances of children telling about their past life, of the parents and relatives of their past life, and when they were taken to the home of their previous life, they recognized all their things and persons there.

Different temperaments of children born of the same parents, educated in same atmosphere, point out also towards their past lives in which they acquired those temperaments.

There are so many arguments in favour of reincarnation. And how will you explain the theory of evolution without accepting the theory of reincarnation. Can a man evolve into a perfect being in one life only?

Q: Why Christ didn't talk about reincarnation ? For the Son of God, truth is truth.

Swamiji: It is not a truth but a fact. It has nothing to do with God. Christ was talking of God mostly.

From the standpoint of ultimate Truth, all change is phenomenal. Reality never changes. Only names and forms change. So the soul reincarnates only so long as it does not realize its eternal nature. The law of reincarnation is phenomenal like the existence of soul itself.

A saint went to Oriya Baba and asked him, "Is transmigration of soul, a reality ?" Baba replied: "You

are not here in the world to prove the theory of transmigration of soul, but to realize the Truth in which this transmigration — wandering in the mazes of this world, stops forever for you.”

Q: Someone asks another devotee: “The Doctor has prohibited you to eat sweets. Don’t you miss sweets”?

Answer given: “Yes, but if I cannot tame my desires for sweets, how would I be able to tame myself?”

Swamiji: Have you heard the story of a saint. A saint used to pray and sit in meditation daily for twelve hours. One day when it was time for his prayer and meditation, he felt asleep. While he was sleeping someone appeared in his room and shook him and woke him up, saying, “Get up, it is time for your prayer and meditation and you are sleeping; it is very bad.” The saint got up, thanked the person and asked, “But who are you — you seem to be a very God-loving person.” The person replied, “I am Satan”. The saint was surprised and said, “Impossible! The Satan makes people go to sleep when they are praying and meditating. He only takes people away from God. You cannot be a Satan; you must be some angel.”

The Satan said: “Don’t be mistaken, I am really Satan. I woke you up because I knew that after waking up, you would repent for that sleep (missing the prayer), so much that you would pray and sit in meditation next time for twenty hours which I did not want at all. That is why I woke you up.”

That is how the Satan plays tricks with you.

Q: In which context you said to us just now this story?

Swamiji: You don't repent, when you have missed the prayer. Some of you, always try to find some work to do at the time of *Bhajan*/meditation.

Q: What can I do to help my son who does not eat at all these days, especially what he does not like ?

Swamiji: That is natural. You don't want to eat what you don't like. Doesn't he feel hungry, you mean? Last time he was stealing biscuits from everyone's room and eating them. When the stomach is full of biscuits he will not eat dinner or lunch, for he is eating something all the time.

What about his weight ? You should check his weight every fortnight and see if he is losing weight. If he is not losing weight, then he is eating.

Q: I heard that love is powerful. Is it true ? And if it is true, how and why ? I don't feel that my love is powerful.....

Swamiji: Love of a child can make a mother fight with a tiger to save her child. The mother may jump into the fire to save her child. Love is very powerful. When you are in love with someone you are ready to make any sacrifice, for your beloved. There are stories of kings who became *Fakirs* (giving up their kingdom) for the sake of their Beloved. Saints abandon all ambitions of worldly life for the sake of God. It is the miracle of God's love. How do you say that love has no power ?

Wisdom/knowledge gives clarity, love gives power. Both are needed. If you have only wisdom, you can see but you cannot do anything. When you have love you can do everything but you may not see things in the right perspective.

But true and selfless love has not only power but a sort of intuition also.

Q: Can you give me an advice which I may use it just now as I am ?

Swamiji: The most important thing for a seeker of Truth is to be most unimportant, most unassuming, to be as if one is not, to be like the Divine. Self-importance is the greatest obstacle in the path of Realization.

Q: What to do to overcome the problems of self-importance ?

Swamiji: What difference does it make if I am not there or you are not there in the world. Nothing at all. If we understand this, the feeling of self-importance leaves us.

Q: What is the difference between concentration and inwardness ?

Swamiji: The senses are prone naturally to go outward. You have to change their direction inward. This is called backward flowing of attention. But you have also to fix your attention inward on a single divine idea, form or name. This is called the inner concentration.

Q: I don't know how to practise inwardness?

Swamiji: The satisfaction which the senses get from objects is not permanent. The more you try to satisfy your desires, the stronger the desires grow, making you more and more unsatisfied, till you exhaust your whole energy which could have been otherwise used, in

search of Truth. First cultivate dispassion. First learn how to practise *Pratyahara*. First withdraw your mind from outward objects.

Q: You often write 'name and fame' as obstacles on the path.....

Swamiji: The desire for fame is born of self-importance. It also produces jealousy. Fame and feelings of jealousy are greater obstacles. The other obstacles are the greed of money, lust and desire for power and status.

Q: The hope to be recognized is very strong.....

Swamiji: Recognition is fame. When you have the desire for recognition, and you don't get it, you become jealous of those whom you feel to be getting recognition. In the *Ashram* people should come for the purpose of overcoming the feeling of self-importance and recognition, and not for getting them.

Q: What is a therapist ?

Swamiji: Therapist means one who treats others for some sort of diseases, physical or mental.

Q: I would like so much to get *Vairagya*.....

Swamiji: True *Vairagya* is born of right understanding, and not of pain caused by unfavourable situations.

Q: If I look for God, I will get it.....

Swamiji: You have not only to look for God, but to be looked after by God. 'To look after' means to take care of. 'To look for' means to aspire and seek. You may cultivate *Vairagya* on the basis of pain and suffering,

as the Buddha did, but afterwards your search has to be based on love and understanding. The Buddha's *Vairagya* initially emanated from observing the suffering in the world.

There are two words: one is *Vairagi* and other is *Veetragi*. *Vairagi* means one who has developed detachment. *Vairagi* is opposed to attachment. *Veetragi* transcends both attachment and detachment.

Q: We heard that Yvan (Ananda) advises his devotees not to ask questions.

Swamiji: People put the same questions, again and again, to different teachers — isn't it? Even to one teacher they ask the same question again and again. Every answer (that is given to you from outside) creates many more questions in you. Nothing which is given to you from outside can satisfy you. True satisfaction comes from within. That is why Jesus said, "Kingdom of Heaven is within." Some people ask very silly questions. Ananda tells you not to ask silly questions.

Q: I cannot feel love because I am so much tense in my quest for God-Realization ?

Swamiji: The quest for worldly things makes you tense. The quest for God makes you loving. Love of God and aspiration for Self-Realization are the same thing practically, because God and true Self are identical; they are essentially one. In the West, because the Church exploited people in the name of God to a very great extent (the priests in every religion more or less exploit people in the name of God), the

educated man, with an intellectual and scientific mind, especially the youth in the West, rebelled against the Church and even denounced the concept of God as one who may be sitting in the clouds and giving mysterious orders. Christianity and Islam are religions mostly based on faith, though Christ was perfectly enlightened and realized.

The youngsters of the West turned to *Vedanta* and Buddhism, which don't disregard reason and psychology, but use them in the search of Truth. That is why the word 'Self-Realization' appeals more to the youngsters in the West than the word 'God-Realization'.

Q: It should be better to be relaxed ?

Swamiji: There can be no lasting relaxation without Self-Realization.

Q: And if the quest is too greedy ?

Swamiji: It is not a greedy quest, it is the deepest aspiration of soul (which has realized the futility of all worldly desires and pursuits) to find out and discover its true nature.

Q: (Many questions have been asked concerning Shankara's philosophy. Only Swamiji's answers have been recorded.....)

Swamiji: In Shankara's *Vedanta*, the existence of God is phenomenal; only the unqualified Consciousness is real. He said : "I am that unqualified Consciousness" He has never said, "I am God."

In the West, *Vedanta* is very wrongly understood,

because people don't understand the difference between *Brahman* and *Ishwara*. That is why they say, "I am God."

In pure Consciousness you and God are one. Shankara never said, "I am *Ishwara* (God)." *Jiva* can realize its essential nature which is pure and eternal Consciousness. He can never become God.

You cannot be *Ishwara* while in this body. You cannot control the whole universe when you are in this physical body. As *Jiva* you are a part of God. You cannot create even a fly. *Ishwara* creates the whole universe.

If you are *Ishwara* why do you pray to *Ishwara*? You do not have control even over the functioning of your body, how can you have control over the whole universe? God means *Ishwara*, the Master of the universe. He is omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. How can a soul, confined in a body, be omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent?

When they say there is no *Ishwara*, they also say that there is no world. It is only like a dream.

There is a personal God, but He is not eternal. He lasts as long as the world lasts.

God is personalized consciousness. The universe is the body of God. If you accept the world, you must accept its creator and controller also.

Brahman, according to Acharya Shankara, is *Nirguna*, non-qualified Consciousness. So Shankara says, "I am *Brahman*."

Brahma is creative aspect of *Ishwara*. *Ishwara* has three aspects :

- Creator : *Brahma*
- Maintainer : *Vishnu*
- Destroyer : *Shankara (Shiva)*

This is the trinity.

Brahman is pure Consciousness, it has nothing to do with *Ishwara* or *Jiva*. It has no relationship at all. There is no one higher than *Ishwara*. Pure Consciousness is neither higher nor lower. It is unqualified.

Vedanta has to be studied systematically, better from a *Guru*. If you try to understand it through books, you will become confused. It is a philosophical system. But philosophy, according to Indian *Rishis*, is only a commentary on experience.

Where there is some dispute between philosophy and experience, experience is taken to be the highest authority. Jesus said, " I and my Father are one." Pure Consciousness is common in Father and Son. It is neither separate nor united. From its standpoint nothing else exists, but only Itself.

Q: May we try to explain/analyse human beings by atomic theory ?

Swamiji: It is wrong to explain a human being on the basis of atomic theory. Atomic theory was discovered to know the nature of an atom, and not of man. So atomic theory should be applied only to explain the nature or movement of an atom.

Man is not merely a combination of atoms. He is much more. He is a tripartite, possessing body, mind and soul, and above all, the spiritual element which is the ground of body/mind/soul.

Body, mind and soul are very deeply correlated. So they influence one another. They are not absolutely different. The difference in them is not of kind, but only of degree of energy and consciousness.

Q: What is the difference between subconscious and unconscious ?

Swamiji: When you are in dream, you are in the subconscious state. When you are in deep sleep, you are in the unconscious state. Dreams are different for different persons. Deep sleep is the same for everyone. Subconscious is individual, unconscious is universal. There is a state where the distinction between the subconscious and the unconscious ceases.

Subconscious is much more powerful than the conscious and can be brought up to the conscious level. In meditation, your subconscious mind begins to come on the surface and tends to be conscious. *Samskaras* do not hang in air. It is the subconscious mind which supports the *Samskaras*. Subconscious mind in itself is a much more powerful force than conscious mind.

Q: I would like to have a child, even if I do not get married with a partner. Is it a hinderance on my spiritual path ?

Swamiji: A woman feels fulfilled only after having a child. It is the greatest creative action for a woman, greater than any artist can create. But to have a life

partner (husband) whose nature is the same as that of his wife, and whose thoughts and feelings are in tune with those of his wife is very essential. Otherwise, the relationship creates more problems and unhappiness both for the husband and the wife. Should you find a husband who understands your aspirations and who himself is inclined to spiritual life at the same time, then you should get married with him. If it is not practical, then it is better to remain alone and pay all your attention to the teaching of dancing and stand on your own feet.

Q: In the subconscious mind, the *Samskaras* lie hidden. Of what is the unconscious created ? Is it related with *Anandamaya Kosha*, or to God ?

Swamiji: The universe runs/works at two levels, individual and universal. To these individual and universal states of the soul are given different names. The *Samskaras* of the individual are in the subconscious. The *Anandamaya Kosha* is something different. It is beyond and above the Gnostic body,—the *Vigyanmaya* or supramental body. There is a critical point when a thing is transformed into another thing and assumes a different name and qualities. For example, when water is heated to one hundred degrees, it turns into steam. The name changes and its quality also changes. Coal changes into diamond. Similarly, mind acquires a new name and new quality when it reaches a critical point in its evolution.

Q: What is the force which relates the subconscious with the *Samskaras* ? How to get rid of it ?

Swamiji: Man is tripartite. He is a composite of body, mind and soul.

But the ground of all existence is an intelligent-conscious-power which people call God and by different other names, which upholds, sustains the whole universe. There is a law through which He works, though He is above all laws, and in very rare cases works transcendently. The law cannot be completely known by human mind, though a lot can be understood by it. The purpose of human life is not to understand that law but to realize the ultimate source of universe (God) and feel His all pervading divine presence. That is the highest and most transporting experience of life. There is no lasting and higher happiness than the feeling of that divine presence. What to say of knowing the inscrutable working of divine force, man has not been able to finally know the working and mechanism of an atom. See how theories change after every few years. There is no finality of human knowledge in science. The highest achievement of reason is to know that Truth/God is beyond reason.

Q: How does the power of the world work ?

Swamiji: The world affects you when you take it as real. When you are in a dream, the dream affects you even if it is not real. But as soon as you come out of it, and take the dream as unreal, the dream ceases to disturb you. Suppose someone inflicts an injury on you when you are in dream, you will feel the pain in dream, but as soon as you are awake, pain disappears.

Q: About experiences during meditation.

Swamiji: All the mental states produce changes in the physical body whether those changes are perceptible or not. In deep meditation, when the thoughts subside and breathing process becomes extremely slow, some extraordinary experiences happen. They vary from person to person according to his/her physiological make-up. The feeling of the body becoming expanded or reduced in size, the feeling as if the body is rising from earth or flying in the sky, the seeing of a halo of golden light enveloping the body etc..... are the experiences of the *Shakti* working in us, during meditation. There are other experiences also which are *Chetana* (consciousness)-dominated, such as, the feeling of complete detachment from the transitory world, the experience of transporting joy and peace, the feeling of divine presence in each and everything etc..... But these experiences do not last. They do leave an impact on the body-mind of the person which slowly and gradually transforms the personality of the person who has such experiences again and again. When the whole nature — body and mind of the seeker is purified and undergone transformation, the *Chetana*-dominated experience becomes permanent, and one is established in the lasting, dynamic joy of the Divine.

Q: Can we call the *Chakras* real ? That means the *Muladhara*, *Swadhisthana*, *Manipura*, *Anahata*, *Vishudha*, *Agya* and *Sahasra*. In which body do they exist ? You have already talked to us about the *Anahata* as the centre of the wordless word and the *Agya* as the centre of command. I also know about *Manipura* as the centre of vital force. I would like to know if in your teaching apart from the *Anahata* and

Agya, the other *Chakras* should preoccupy me. Otherwise, I would like to know more about the rest of them also.

Swamiji: These *Chakras* have nothing to do with *Yoga*. Patanjali's *Yoga-Darshan* is the most authentic book on *Yoga*. There is no mention of any *Chakra* in that book.

Chakras are the discovery of *Tantrics*, along with many postures and *Mudras* of the body. Very obviously, these *Chakras* are not located in the physical body, as these are mentioned with reference to their shapes and colours, otherwise with such an advance of science, these could easily be seen with most modern equipments.

These *Chakras* are in the vital (*Pranic*) body. I have experienced a few of them but not in the forms as described in the scriptures. I experienced them as centres where energy assumes a specific role/function, as that of *Kriya Shakti*, *Bhavana Shakti* and *Gyan Shakti*. These centres are, as it were, converters of *Shakti* (energy) into a special kind of force. To me, the shapes of these *Chakras*, as described in the books, are only symbolic.

Q: What is the difference between *Dhyana* and *Japa* ? Will your help reach me when I am in France ?

Swamiji: Your question is about *Dhyana* and *Japa*. *Japa* is a sort of dynamic *Dhyana*. You have to recite the *Mantra* and concentrate on it. After a long and persistent effort, a stage comes when the words stop, and you are absorbed totally in the *Bhava* of the

Mantra with the awareness of the presence of the Divine, which is at once immanent and transcendent. It is the easiest method to reach the highest *Dhyana*. There are other types of *Dhyana* — the passive *Dhyana* in which you do not do anything but simply observe some activity in your body — like breathing process or some light, without doing anything. It leads you ultimately to cessation of thoughts and gives you peace, but it does not at once transform your life, your habits and your *Samskaras*.

There is another *Dhyana*, in which you concentrate upon some divine form or divine quality to the exclusion of all the other forms or ideas. It also ultimately leads to divine Awareness. *Japa* and *Dhyana* on a form or quality should not be practised simultaneously. The proper centres in the body to practise *Japa* and *Dhyana* are different.

At the time of practising *Japa*, the attention should be focussed on heart centre. At the time of practising *Dhyana* on a divine form or a divine idea/quality, the attention should be focussed on the forehead. But both these methods should be practised at different times.

I always wish that you progress in the path of Realization and I feel you are slowly moving in the right direction. My help and support will certainly reach you wheresoever you are, if you keep yourself open to me.

Q: I have the feeling, I am worse than when I began to practise the spiritual path twenty years ago.....

Swamiji: You say that you began to practise the spiritual path twenty years ago, and now you have the feeling that you are worse than what you were twenty years ago. It may be a wrong judgement and feeling of yours. It may be that twenty years ago you were not aware and conscious of your weaknesses and infirmities, and since you have followed the spiritual path you have now become more aware of what was there, in you already, twenty years ago. Spiritual energy, when it works, brings up the hidden, dark propensities in man before it purges them out. Do not be disheartened. Spiritual effort does not go waste, though it may not yield the desired result in time according to one's expectations. Moreover, if your feeling of getting worse is true (inspite of your spiritual practice), then it is sure that your condition would have gone from bad to worse, if you had not made a spiritual practice at all. Of course, the effort should be in the right direction and made in right earnest and sincerely.

Q: I read in a book that after their death some persons who received initiation do not go in one paradise or in one hell but that they continue their spiritual path in another state of being. Is it true ?

Swamiji: No world/plane of existence is independent of Consciousness as such. The earthly life also represents a state of Consciousness. When one is in the physical body, which is a part of earth, there is a limit to the feeling of pleasure or pain beyond which one falls unconscious. But when the physical body is shed and soul is embodied in astral body, which is subtle and

more flexible, the capacity of the soul to feel pain or pleasure increases.

The worlds named as hell and paradise are parts of the astral world in which souls have to stay (the duration of stay is dependent upon the *Karmas* and spiritual evolution of the souls) and pass on to other worlds before they reach a world in which they become unconscious and assimilate their past experiences, forming a new personality. The soul with that new personality is again brought on the earth by the divine power/powers and it is again born in the human form in which alone it can evolve through conscious effort. The above mentioned path and process is one of the three paths which the departed soul follows after death when it has disassociated itself from the physical body.

Those souls who come to realize their true and essential divine nature during life, do not go anywhere after death. They already have realized their oneness with the Divine while living in the physical body. On death they completely merge in the Divine.

The souls of the persons who have been initiated into the spiritual path, but have not realized God/Truth in their lives, follow the path mentioned above.

Q: I received from Anandamayee Maa, what is called *Mantra-Deeksha* (initiation to *Mantra*).....

Swamiji: You say you received the *Mantra-Deeksha* from Anandamayee Maa. It is not necessary that the *Mantra* should be whispered by the *Guru* in the ear of a person. But a *Mantra* given by a *Guru* (when a person gives *Mantra-Deeksha* to someone, that person

becomes the *Guru* even though he/she may say that he/she is not a *Guru*) is personal and secret for one who is initiated.

We do not find in scriptures the mention of mass initiation; these are new phenomena invented by some jet-age *Gurus* who have made the giving of initiation as their profession.

Maa was a great saint. If she said she was not a *Guru*, she must have said it out of humility. Many people got inspiration and promptings to follow the path of Realization from Ma. And if she gave the *Mantra-Deeksha* even to a single person, she became a *Guru*.

Ramana Maharshi did not give *Mantra-Deeksha* to anyone (with the exception of a devotee whom he guided in dream to follow a particular path) in his life. He had no disciples in the strict sense of the word. But he had many admirers and devotees who got inspiration from him. He could really say that he was not a *Guru*. As a matter of fact, he never said that he was a *Guru* or not a *Guru*. Initiation is more than blessing, though it does involve the blessings of a *Guru*.

Q: I believe very deeply that the absolute Truth , the supreme Reality is non-dual. But at the point where I am, I feel the need of devotion, the need of God, the need to love and respect for God and *Guru*. I know Swamiji's path is *Advaita*. Does Swamiji yet accept to help me ?

Swamiji: *Advaita*, non-duality is absolute Truth.

It is the highest knowledge/realization that man can achieve. There is nothing beyond it, but this ultimate Realization of oneness can be attained through different paths. The path of love and devotion is one of them. This does not exclude reflection or meditation or even selfless service, but it is devotion-dominated. You start with duality but in the end come to the realization of that Reality which is non-dual.

The Absolute cannot be grasped by mind. It transcends all reasoning. You become what you think, and you think effortlessly of what you love.

Q: Jesus, before He died on the cross, said: "My God, My God, why did you forsake me ?" How is it possible for an *Avatara* to say such a sentence ?

Swamiji: Jesus is the embodiment of Divinity. Let His love grow more and more in your heart. It will help you in your spiritual unfoldment.

"My God, My God, why did you forsake me ?" — were not the last words of Jesus. His last words were, "Lord, Thy will be done, forgive them because they do not know what they are doing". "God, why did you forsake me", was a thought presented to Him by an evil force, when he was put on the cross, which Jesus rejected at once.

Q: In the theory of reincarnation, do people who lived on this earth really come back on this earth or do they go to other worlds i.e. in other states of being ?

Is it really possible that somebody who lived on this earth as a human being comes back on this earth

in the body of a dog or of a snake, for instance, or is it a symbol?

Swamiji: There are three paths on which the souls of men travel after they have shed their physical bodies. Most of the departed souls come back to earth after following two paths. Third path leads to the world of the personal deity of the soul, through other worlds where very advanced souls go. These souls stay in that world till the end of the present cycle of universe, enjoying the proximity of their personal *Istha*, and finally merge with the Divine along with their personal *Ishta*. These are "*Saa Lok mukti & Saa Yujya Mukti*". They never come back to earth. It is called *Krma Mukti* — liberation by stages.

Yes, the human soul can come on earth in the form of a dog or a snake or any other animal. But it is temporary arrangement to work out and exhaust a certain tendency which can only be done by assuming that body.

Afterwards, the soul again comes in the human body and starts evolving from the level of consciousness which it had already reached while in the previous human birth.

Q: Swamiji why do you do *Japa* and meditation, you have no need of it ?

Swamiji: I do *Japa* effortlessly. I had practised it for many, many years continuously as a means of communication with and remembrance of the Divine. Now it has become spontaneous. I do not do it now as a matter of practice. It is like dancing and singing to me now.

Can you ask a person, "Why are you singing?" Through singing he is expressing joy without any reason. If a person is weeping, you can ask him, "Why are you weeping?" Weeping cannot be without a reason. Singing can be without reason. *Japa* can be without reason also. The same answer for my meditation.

Q: Was Anandamayee Maa not an *Avatara* ? Or was she a great saint ? And are there still higher levels of saints ?

Swamiji: Maa was what she was. There are many types of *Avataras*. What she said is totally in conformity with the holy scriptures. Her sayings are inspiring. Any seeker can benefit from these sayings. There is no limit to spiritual Knowledge and Realization. After a certain point, the distinction between different saints becomes incomprehensible. Saints and sages, who have reached the highest knowledge, seem to be different because of their modes of expression. The way of expressing an experience differs from person to person.

Your taking Maa as the Divine Herself/Himself is not misplaced or misconceived at all. One's Guru must be regarded as the Divine in human form.

Q: Maa gave me *Mantra* on the name of Jesus. I thought only a realized one or an *Avatara* could give a *Mantra* belonging to other tradition. Is it true ?

Swamiji: You must repeat the *Mantra* Maa gave you, with all trust and faith. A *Mantra* given by Maa must be very much charged with spiritual vibrations. A

Mantra given by a realized one becomes very potent and powerful. That *Mantra* may belong to a tradition or may not belong to any tradition at all.

Q: When one says, "He/she is realized", does it mean supreme Realization ? Or are there many levels of realization about which it is possible to say, "He/she is realized ?"

Swamiji: There are many grades of Realization. Every realization has its own taste and projects its own perspective of existence. But in Divinity itself there are no grades or levels at all. Divinity is always and everywhere complete and infinite. It does not become incomplete or partial, though its expression or manifestation may be incomplete.

Q: Is egolessness a level of Realization ? Is it possible to say about one, who is egoless : He is realized ?

Swamiji: Egolessness is not Realization, but egolessness is the condition in which the flash of Reality comes, which, in due course of time, if egolessness persists, turns into Realization.

Q: It is almost a rule that a *Guru* never says anything about another *Guru*. What is your opinion in this matter ?

Swamiji: Yes, the realized one never makes comments on any *Guru* or saint as a critic. He/She may talk of some saint or *Guru* casually, to elucidate some spiritual truth but never for criticism. When Maa was there, there were many other saints in India, who were contemporaries of Maa, like Ramana Maharshi,

Aurobindo, Ramdas of Kerala, Swami Purushottamanand of Vashishtha Gufa, Swami Topovana of Uttar Kashi, Oriya Baba, Harihar Baba, Swami Yogananda—to name a few. All these saints were not less realized.

I was only indicating that some saints become famous and some others remain unknown. Some are very unassuming and like to remain unknown. Some even shun public recognition.

Q: I would like to stay here for two months to find God. I have a dream that I will stay and have sittings with Swamiji with no word and would like to discover my real nature.

Swamiji: You may stay here for two months. God is not far away. He resides in everyone's heart. His presence can be felt by a seeker whose heart is pure and full of divine Love. Right meditation and prayer make the heart pure and receptive. Pray to the Divine with love and trust. He will remove all obstacles in your path of God-Realization. Do not think of the future. Trust in God and make the best use of the present. God will do what is good for you. Devote more and more time to prayer and meditation. My good wishes are with you.

Q: I would like to hear within me the voice of God. I would like to stop the food for three weeks to overcome my weaknesses.

Swamiji: Every man has the potentiality of receiving revelation or hearing the *Paravaani*.

One has to cultivate the necessary qualifications

in oneself in order to hear the word of God. It may take a long, long time. The mind has to be completely pure, stable, passive and alert before it can listen to the voice of God. A moving and occupied mind cannot hear the word of God. Experiences come and go, but experiencing is always there. One has to be aware of this experiencing.

Stopping food is not the proper way for progress in meditation. Proper and light food is what is needed in the practice of meditation. I won't advise you to give up food for three weeks.

Q: I am in the *Ashram* to say 'Yes' and so many emotions are interfering.

Swamiji: One has to tame one's mind and its emotions and direct them to the Divine. This is a part of spiritual discipline. As a matter of fact when one's interest of life is radically changed and when one becomes totally interested in the Divine, temporal affairs cease to disturb that person. Be more and more devoted to the Divine, and you will get more and more strength to face all the situations calmly.

Q: I would like to find God.

Swamiji: I very much appreciate your aspiration for God-Realization. One has not only to want God, one has to want God only. All things other than God : self-respect, power, pelf, position, pleasure, fame etc., become unimportant for the true seeker of Truth. Self-importance has no place in the path of God-Realization. No one can have God-Realization by force. Truth and God, like love, cannot be forced on anyone. The seeker

has to overcome his/her weaknesses, pray to God, surrender and then wait, with patience and perseverance, for His grace.

Regular prayer, reflection, self-observation and alertness comprise essential parts of spiritual discipline. A sincere seeker works with all earnestness, trust and faith, without losing patience. Time does not discourage him/her nor do obstacles frighten him/her.

Q: I felt so disturbed at once to see that others occupy my place in the meditation hall. At that moment I am in contact with my anger and even my violence.

Swamiji: All places belong to God. People come and go. When a person is occupying a place, a piece of land, a house, he/she thinks it is his/her place. From there begins the problem—the sense of possessiveness is born. It not only binds the one who is possessive but also the one who is possessed.

If one can realize that everything belongs to God and all people have the same God in them, one could share everything happily with others. Sharing should bring joy. Any way, if you want that no one should sit in the meditation hall on the seat you have chosen, you should keep something special on that seat, so that other people can know that the seat is specifically meant for you. Don't let yourself be disturbed by trifling matters. Be reflective and strong. Why should small matters disturb you ?

Realization may come any moment. It comes to one as soon as one is completely open, receptive and alert; otherwise, it may take lives after lives.

Violence is not your true nature. Your essential nature is love and peace and happiness. Violence breeds violence, love begets love. Give love to all in the name of God, and you will receive the same love from one and all.

Q: I have already a *Mantra* from Anandamayee Maa and it is helping me very much. I would like to be given an Indian name by you. After few days I would like to go to Maa's *Mahasamadhi* at Kankhal. Do you also want to go there, please ?

Swamiji: Repeat the *Mantra* of Maa with all love and trust. It will enable you to communicate with Maa, and slowly and gradually, you will be transformed into a living image of Maa. You become what you think and what you love.

Whatever you loveth man,
That become thou must.
God, if you loveth God,
And dust, if you loveth dust.

It is good, you go to Maa's *Ashram* to pay your obeisance at her *Samadhi*. This body is not fit for such a long travel. As a matter of fact, this body and this mind both don't want to go anywhere now. Maa is your *Guru*. Have total faith in her. Her grace will surely transform you. If you have some problem in your *Sadhana* and need guidance, I will help you if you so wish. Once I had her *Darshan* in Kacchi Ashram.

When you are able to communicate with God, you are able to communicate with all the saints and sages who are established in God-Consciousness. Don't bother about the faces and forms. Look behind them and see

the Spirit. Be a big zero.

Q: I would like to be your *Sadhak*, I will be very honoured if you give me a *Mantra*.

Swamiji: I don't think it is necessary for you to receive *Mantra* from me at present. You should not be impatient for it and should wait for it. There is also no need of thinking about the distant future. You have come here for two months. Devote yourself single-mindedly to meditation and prayer during this period instead of day dreaming about the future.

I wish that you progress in meditation and tread the path of Realization resolutely. I will surely help you in your spiritual venture, and will also help you to remove the obstacles that come to hinder your spiritual progress.

Q: I want God, but I want not only God; I want to continue with my work, because nobody gives me money if I don't work. I want to keep my little house. My children think it should be good for me to get remarried. What is your advice ?

Swamiji: There is no need to give up your profession of a therapist. You have to work honestly and, at the same time, keep on sitting in meditation twice a day regularly.

You have already the experience of married life. When you married last, you must have liked your husband, thinking the man was your right choice, and, that married life would be quite happy and lasting. But you could not get along with that man. Now you want to be remarried. Your sons also wish you to do

so. But you must know that no two individuals are exactly the same in nature and temperament. Everyone has his own personality and his own temperament and thinking. There may be some similarities between two persons. If you can find some man of your liking, with whom you can reconcile to live and at the same time follow the path of Realization, you may marry him. It would be much better if the man speaks the same language as yours so that communication is easier. Adjustment with the partner makes married life joyful.

You have grown-up sons. When children are grown up, they should be treated as friends. You are obviously more experienced than your sons. You should give them friendly, positive advice based on the valuable experiences of your life, telling them what is good for them and let them follow what they want. Don't impose yourself on them.

You should not give up working. It is much easier for a *Sadhak*, who is financially independent, to concentrate within and meditate. You may continue as a therapist and help others. Be happy yourself and you will be able to make others happy. You can give to others what you yourself have.

It does not matter where you live, and what you do as a profession, provided you work honestly and with the right attitude of selfless service. What really matters is why you live and how you live. Should you live for God and lead purposeful life in the right direction, devoted to meditation, reflection and service, there is no reason then why God-Realization should not come to you.

My good wishes are with you, and I repeat that my help will certainly reach you wheresoever you live, provided you keep yourself open to me and have simple faith and trust in me.

God chooses those who choose Him. He does not impose Himself on anyone. He is not violent at all. He loves each and everyone, without any reason. Some respond positively to His love and are filled with divine Bliss and Love; others respond negatively and move away from Him, preferring the temporary pleasures of life; they are endlessly tossed in the turbulent waves of the world-ocean.

God is Freedom absolute, Bliss absolute, Awareness absolute, Love absolute, Light absolute and Life absolute. May He become the only purpose and aim of our lives.

Q: I was jealous because you gave a note to someone else and after that I stayed in my room. I was totally *Tamasic*. Please, Swamiji, teach me to 'Be' and teach me to love.

Swamiji: You have, like many seekers, the aspiration to grow in spiritual life, but your attachment with your past and your sensitivity towards trivial matters keep you wavering. You have to work hard to disassociate yourself with your past and be more and more sincere and serious towards the Divine. Why should a seeker give so much importance to temporary relationships and associations with others which are not to last for more than a month or two, and thus get disturbed by what other people say?

I have never been harsh to you nor to anyone else. I always try and have tried, to give right direction and guidance to all those who come to me and seek my guidance.

As for advising you to get remarried, I only suggested it because your mind is still thinking in that direction; otherwise, why should you have asked me about it. At your stage, you have not, as you yourself admit, yet overcome your past propensities and tendencies.

But if you carry on resolutely with prayer, the meditation and reflection upon the transitory nature of the world of relationships, you will gradually become stronger and stronger within, so as to shun all the negative tendencies, in due course of time.

Being fifty-five years old is not so bad, as you say. By this age the seeker becomes very mature with a fairly deep understanding of things and proper perspective if he/she has lived a life of reflection supplemented with self-discipline. Age after fifty years has its own charm, and one can grow in the life of spirit more easily when the storm and tumult of senses and sensations have abated i.e. after the age of fifty years.

Do not cherish the opinion of others about you. Look at yourself and at things around with your own unbiased eyes and mind. Do not look at things through other's eyes. This will help you to remain undisturbed and calm. Both attachment and hatred to things, situations and persons pollute the mind. Ego is the mother of all the negative tendencies. Ego is born

when one identifies oneself with something which is finite and not real. It is your ego which separates you from others. Can there be jealousy where there is no feeling of separateness. And rivalry ? With whom ? The same life and consciousness is pulsating in each and every person.

Love is God and God is Love. Love is complete in Itself. There is no need for it to desire or expect. Desire and expectation are strangers to Love. Love radiates love. Love and happiness are the same thing. When you are full of happiness, you radiate Love.

You are surely the Absolute in your real being and essential nature. But you are not directly aware of your absolute Being. You are identified with your body/mind. That is why you feel your unworthiness. When this false identification is broken, your inferiority complex as also your superiority complex will vanish. Can the Absolute be superior or inferior ?

You have already received a *Mantra* from Maa. It is a very powerful *Mantra* and if you repeat it with faith and trust it will lead you to the very same consciousness in which Maa was established. You don't need a *Mantra* from anyone again. That is why I don't feel that I should give you a *Mantra*. I have no desire to make many disciples or create any sect or spread any creed; however I don't avoid sharing my knowledge and experiences. I, therefore, have already told you that I will guide and help you if you have obstacle in your *Sadhana*.

I am glad that you have reflected upon and seen through your mental complexes and that you are

overcoming all your infirmities that hinder a soul from coming back to its Home, the divine Suchness. Should you carry on with your spiritual effort, patiently and with determination, alongwith invoking divine grace, you will receive help from the living sages and the invisible Masters in all the psychic world, who are always ready to help those who are sincere and earnest to grow in spiritual life.

The memory of past, as also the thinking about future are the two major obstacles in meditation and contemplation. The seeker has to discard these both during meditation.

Concentration is collecting one's mind on one thing within or without to the exclusion of all else.

Meditation is collecting one's thoughts and directing them or focusing them on something — some idea, quality, form, meaning, *Mantra* or holy name which is connected with the Divine. In meditation one's mind flows on any of the above particulars.

Contemplation means pivoting one's attention on a single divine idea, form or name. In the highest state of contemplation the subject becomes one with the object of contemplation. Finally, mind disappears, leaving pure Consciousness shining in its pristine purity. It is in this final stage of contemplation that the direct experience of one's true, divine nature happens.

Q: I just know that I have an appointment with you now and for that I had no time to prepare my questions.

Swamiji: The questions you have to prepare are not authentic questions. Only those questions are authentic which disturb your sleep. They are so real for you that you have not to prepare them.

Q: I worry a lot for your health.

Swamiji: The physical body is subject to change, old age, decay and death. Let it follow the laws of nature. It cannot be made eternal. The health of the physical body depends upon many factors which are beyond your control. It depends upon the health of your parents, upon past *Karmas*, upon the nature of genes of your body — all of which are beyond your control.

Ramakrishna and Ramana Maharshi died of cancer. The devotees of Ramakrishna requested him to pray to divine Mother for the cure of his cancer. He refused, saying he could not do it.

Q: You should do all that is possible to cure yourself.

Swamiji: That is being done. Medicine is like food and food is also like medicine.

Q: I feel you are a fatalist.

Swamiji: I am neither a fatalist, nor a non-fatalist.

Q: I pray for your health and I want that you recover.

Swamiji: Thank you.

Q: I am sad not to be your disciple.

Swamiji: Why should you feel sad ? You are so fortunate that Maa accepted you and gave you a *Mantra*. Repeat that *Mantra* with simple trust. It will bring you real happiness.

Should you have any obstacle in your *Sadhana*, I will guide you on behalf of Maa. I have never refused you that.

Q: I wish and want to do my job with all my energy and all my love.

Swamiji: I appreciate your noble will and determination to help others. What you give to others, it comes back to you manifold. If you give pain to others, it comes back to you. If you give happiness to others, it also comes back to you manifold.

Q: How to get the purest aspiration to realize God quickly?

Swamiji: Dispassion and aspiration for God are interdependent. The more dispassion you have, the deeper is the aspiration to discover and realize God. Cooling down of dispassion reduces the intensity and depth of aspiration. Dispassion is strengthened by constant reflection on the transient nature of things, situations, and relationships.

Q: How to recognize that only through dispassion we will realize God ?

Swamiji: There should be a radical and total change of life-interest in the seeker of Truth. "I shall live for God and die for God — no other thing, situation and person can attract me or disturb me" — is the deepest feeling of the lover of God.

Q: When I will leave the *Ashram*, all my difficulty to realize God will come again.

Swamiji: To confine the Divine in a single form or in

one name and in one place is to miss His true Being.

Q: As I cannot become your disciple in this life, I already request you to accept me as your disciple in our next incarnation.

Swamiji: Think of this life when you are in this life. Who has seen the next life; it exists only in imagination. Don't be speculative. Live in the present totally. Mind knows no limitation of time and space. You are where your mind is. If your body is in India and your mind is in France, you are actually in France. And vice versa.

Q: I actually don't like at all my body which is the result of all my difficulties nor the strength I have which makes me to look as a strong woman.

Swamiji: In reality you are neither woman nor a man. It is your identification with the body-mind that makes you take yourself as a woman or as a man.

Q: Swamiji, I have difficulties with administrative works and as I don't want to care for them I am really afraid of the consequences.

Swamiji: How can you realize God if you cannot face the world. Is it easier to realize God than to face the world ?

Q: Can you tell us what makes it difficult to realize God ?

Swamiji: There are three obstacles which prevent man from realizing God :

- a) The impurity of mind.
- b) The instability of mind.

c) The veil of ignorance.

Impurity is removed by selfless and good actions. Instability is removed by love and devotion to God. The veil of ignorance is removed by knowledge and awareness.

The integral *Sadhana* of realizing God includes all the three — *Karma Yoga*, *Bhakti Yoga* and *Gyan Yoga*.

Q: I do not get God's grace ?

Swamiji: God has given you these three energies out of His grace :

- a) Energy of action.
- b) Energy of feeling.
- c) Energy of thinking.

If you don't make best use of these energies, you don't honour the grace of God.

Q: Please Swamiji, tell me the biggest obstacle I have when I want to follow quickly the path ?

Swamiji: The obstacle is the restlessness and instability of mind. What makes mind restless ? Fear, attachment, desire, jealousy, anger, greed and so on. These negative emotions have to be got rid of.

The lesser these negative propensities, the easier it is to fix your mind on the Divine, the easier it is to be absorbed in meditation. When your mind is pure and stable, revelation comes.

Q: Do you believe that I have all these diseases in me ?

Swamiji: Each one is related with the others. If there is one, others are also there more or less.

Q: In fact since I felt that I was nothing, I am less afraid.

Swamiji: This understanding has to go very, very deep into the subconscious. Only then it transforms your life.

Q: Do you understand why sometimes I am so light, so luminous, so bright, and, even in the same day I become depressed, sad, in bad mood ?

Swamiji: It is because understanding is not yet consolidated. It comes and goes.

Q: Swamiji can you give me something belonging to you with which I can remember you immediately if difficulties start.

Swamiji: When you are depressed, pray to the Divine and you will get strength. Weep before Him. Cry, and strength will come to you.

The Divine is the source of all light, love, life, strength, happiness and peace. Keep yourself in His presence and you will never become depressed.

Q: Swamiji, you promise me to come if I need and call you ?

Swamiji: I will not only come but I will be with you if you keep me with you.

Q: Sometimes I feel I am in a high state but at other moments I feel in a low state.

Swamiji: These opposite poles are created by mind; Truth is non-polar. The highest and the deepest meet in God-experience.

Q: I know that it is not by reading the theory that one can reach Realization. But I think theory can be useful for discrimination. Is it not so ?

Swamiji: Yes, intellectual clarity has its own place and utility in spiritual unfoldment but mere intellectual knowledge of Truth does not dispel ignorance which is deep rooted in the subconscious level of mind.

Purity of heart is more important than intellectual knowledge. There are thousands of professors of *Vedanta* in colleges and universities who know all the intricate points of *Vedanta* intellectually, but, on the practical side, they are like ordinary people, having all sorts of desires, attachments with their families, ambitions, anger, greed and all that, and are as disturbed as any ordinary man.

Purity of heart and deep aspiration to see/realize the Truth directly are more important than intellectual knowledge.

Q: Does *Jivanmukta* mean one who has reached supreme Realization ?

Swamiji: *Jivanmukta* is one who has become free while living, having realized the Truth at first hand. There are other types of *Muktis* (liberations) which the souls achieve by stages after leaving their physical body.

Q: Is there one person who has reached supreme Realization in Europe ?

Swamiji: You should know better about Europe as you live there. Realization is not the sole monopoly of a particular country. There have been realized sages in

all the countries, and there must be some in Europe at present also. Search, and you will find.

Q: I am so sorry to be able to receive so little of your grace. But yet I hope it is better to come and see you than not to come, even if I am so unqualified.

Swamiji: You have all the potentialities of reaching the highest knowledge. You have to work on yourself more and more to bring that out (which is hidden in you). I wish from the depth of my heart that you receive the divine grace which is always knocking at your door.

Q: Is the Realization of Self an important spiritual experience ? Is it the supreme Realization ? Or is there some higher level ?

Swamiji: Divine Consciousness is infinite, without parts, simple and eternal. Mind cannot comprehend it; nor can speech express it. When you want to say something about it, you have to assume it to be of many aspects. And one talks of one aspect at one time to make it comprehensible to mind. So you talk of many aspects of the Divine — The *Nirguna*, the *Saguna*, with form, without form, *Avatara*, universal aspect, individual aspect and so on. There cannot be a higher experience / realization than that of oneness of all existence; it is like a bird trying to go beyond the sky which is impossible. One cannot go beyond it; because no separate being remains that would go beyond. The Self becomes the Divine, which it already is, when it realizes its divinity. Nothing new is achieved and nothing is lost. You simply become aware of what you are and this awareness never fades off.

Q: Yesterday you said, that an *Ishta* or image is not a hindrance on the way, if we are not stubborn and remain open to the manifestation of God. But does that mean, that we have to wait for or look for another manifestation of God besides that which can be seen everywhere ?

Swamiji: Should you feel or experience this world as a manifestation of God, then there is no need for you to concentrate on any particular image as a symbol. Moreover, the Divine has not only to be realized in the world of manifestation but also in His transcendental Being.

Q: Is this what we generally call intuition ?

Swamiji: Intuition is a means of true perception. It is the immediate response to pure Existence, without the interference of one's limiting mind and senses.

Q: Few people seem to be interested in the realization of impersonal God. Why ?

Swamiji: Realization of the formless, attributeless, nameless Divine is more difficult than of the one with form, name and qualities.

Q: Is there a way, or do I have to make an effort, or can you give any help to realize the Divine in His transcendental Being ?

Swamiji: Effort has its own place in *Sadhana*. One who does not want to make an effort can never realize God. And yet God-Realization is not the result of any effort.

When you have directed all your energies to the path of God-Realization and exhausted them in the name of God, then you become bereft of ego, and you receive the grace which fulfils you.

Q: I feel very much the same. But what am I to do ? Do I have to change my *Sadhana* ?

Swamiji: Certainly yes — your *Sadhana* must be appropriate to what you want to achieve or realize. If you want to realize God in His manifestation, you need not transcend manifestation. But if you want to realize what is beyond manifestation, you must go beyond all manifestation, including your body, senses and mind.

Q: But what to do ? Beyond body, senses, and mind.....I feel lost.

Swamiji: You will know what is beyond thinking only when your thinking stops completely in your waking state.

Q: When I stop thinking, all I can say about that state is a feeling of the unmoved mover. Is it that what you are hinting at, when you talk of the transcendental aspect of the Divine ?

Swamiji: The phrase ‘unmoved mover’ has been used by Aristotle. Intellectually it is a contradiction, because the one who moves the world will have to move Himself to do that. But you cannot express the nature of the Absolute in any other way than speaking in paradoxes. “The Divine moves and yet He moves not”, this is said in an Upanishad.

Q: But is that the transcendental aspect of the Divine ?

Swamiji: Do you know what a catalytic agent is ? The Divine is like a catalytic agent.

Q: Some devotees say what they know about a catalyst, and then wonder about that divine catalyst ?

Swamiji: An example does not fit in all respects. The import is, that as the presence of a catalytic agent initiates the chemical reaction without the former becoming affected in anyway, similarly the presence of the Divine disturbs the equilibrium of the three *Gunas* of *Prakriti* and the manifestation of this universe is initiated without the Divine becoming affected in any-way.

Q: I don't know in what state of mind you are, but I imagine there are not many people with whom you can share this state of mind. Is it that you feel lonely sometimes ?

Swamiji: Feeling lonely means feeling as if you are missing something or someone. Isn't it ? I do not feel lonely.

Q: When I try to know who I am, I see one part of mine which is completely beyond the influence of my will; all the vital functions of my body work by themselves; I can do almost nothing about it. And even most of my thoughts are not produced by me : they are coming to me uncalled. In this part I cannot find any 'I', any doing of mine; I seem to be like a puppet on a string, ruled by some unknown force. On the other hand there is will-power, control, and the feeling of responsibility and 'I'. I can decide to raise my right hand, and the body obeys. Would you please comment on these two aspects?

Swamiji: There are two kinds of actions you do: voluntary and involuntary. All your voluntary actions are done through *Sankalpa*, your desire. You made a volition to come here, and you came. You want to eat, and you eat. You want to sit, and the body obeys you.

Your involuntary actions are being done by your subconscious. That is why you feel as if they are not being done by you and are going on automatically. If you could have access to your subconscious mind, you would know that they are not automatic. What is subconscious now was conscious some time ago. It can also be brought to conscious level again.

Q: Is this subconscious functioning the same as the instinctive level of consciousness ?

Swamiji: What you call instinct is, in fact, degenerated or involved reason.

Q: After all, I was not asking about consciousness and unconsciousness.

I am looking for the 'I'. I didn't produce this body of mine.

Swamiji: You did. You sow the seed and you forget it. When the seed turns into a plant and gives fruit, you say : "It is not done by me. I am not responsible." It is your desire, your mind which is responsible for the creation of your body. The body has been created on account of your desire, so that you could work out your *Karma* through it.

And so long as you have desires you will have to take physical body again and again to work out these desires.

Q: I have no experience with past lives. So although the thought of *Karma* is very pleasing, mind-satisfying—it remains only a theory to me.

Swamiji: The *Karma* theory is the only tenable theory which explains diversity in the universe.

Q: But I doubt it. Since it is so pleasing and satisfying for the mind, may be it is mind itself which created it.

Swamiji: The highest proof is self-verification. They say you can see your past lives, if you wish so.

Q: In spite of your warnings, even if my life becomes worse, I would like to know about a past life. One would be sufficient to prove the *Karma* theory.

Swamiji: You have to be totally disinterested in your present life, and your conscious mind must become inactive, so that the subconscious may come up.

Q: So, that means also, mind or whatever it is, has been existing forever ?

Swamiji: It exists so long as you don't discover your true Self.

Q: You told me in order to become ready, I should practise to make myself more and more passive and alert. But may be it would also be of help to me, if you tell me, what I should avoid or what hinders me to get ready ?

Swamiji: What hinders one's readiness for Realization is twofold : impurity of mind and modifications (movements) of mind. These two obstacles have to be removed.

You cannot see your face, as it is in itself, in a dirty and moving mirror; can you ? The mirror must be clean first, and it also must stand still, so that you can see your face. The mind must be clean, free from attachment, anger, hatred, jealousy, fear; it must also be free from changing thoughts and images; it must also be undivided, unbroken.

If you see your face in a mirror which is broken in many parts, you may see yourself with many faces, even though you have only one face.

Q: So, that means realizing the Divine in its transcendental Being would be the same, since the mind must come to a standstill ?

Swamiji: Yes.

Q: What is the use of drugs (L.S.D.) for spiritual upliftment ?

Swamiji: It stimulates the *Pranic* energy, which rushes to the brain upward. You feel a sort of elation. When it comes down, you feel very much depressed and you want to take it again to overcome that depression.

Q: Without drugs can you produce such states of mind at will, or do they come by grace ?

Swamiji: It can come through your power of concentration, which, in turn, you may have got through practice or through love of the Divine.

Q: But someone told me, that during a trip of LSD he was looking for hours at a cupboard without getting bored, since the cupboard was constantly changing its form and outlook.

Swamiji: If you are not 'out' and can keep your balance, you can see the aura of vital energy around any material object, which is luminous.

Q: To be able to see the aura, does it also mean to know its meaning, that you can 'read' it ?

Swamiji: You feel elated and transported, when you have that experience. Moreover, it gives you the knowledge/perception of the vital body of a material object, which you cannot see through the senses normally.

When Van Gogh is absorbed in making the painting of a chair for many, many days, he is in fact in contact with the vital part of the chair and is bewitched by it.

Q: But is the aura of a chair the same energy e.g. like that of a tree, since the material is the same — wood or is it different, since man in making the chair brought his own energy in ? Does this interference lead to a mixture or a new energy ?

Swamiji: There is a hierarchy of the manifestation of consciousness in metals, minerals, physical objects, plants, animals, man, gnostic being, and so on.

Q: Yesterday X told me about some divisions of mind or self like *Manas* and *Ahamkara*, but she didn't remember all and well. Would you please tell us about that ?

Swamiji: *Manas* — mind, faculty of relative perception
Buddhi — intellect, faculty of discrimination
Chitta — subconscious mind
Ahamkara — ego

Q: And what is this all together ?

Swamiji: The inner means of perception, the *Antahkarana*. The five senses are the outer means: eye, ear, tongue, skin, nose. The outer depends on the inner.

Q: And what about a perception without the mind interfering ?

Swamiji: If the mind is not attached with the eye, the eye does not see.

Q: That reminds me of something I learned in psychology: If two people walk on a street and are asked afterwards what they have seen, they tell really different things.

Swamiji: (laughing) Do you mean, one person will see a dog and the other a cow in the same animal ?

Q: No, of course not. But, for example, a pregnant woman perceives many more things which concern children. Mind is selecting our perception.

Swamiji: That is the question of attention and interest. Interest makes you interpret what you perceive. It does not make you perceive.

Q: So what makes me perceive ?

Swamiji: Seeing/perception is the essential nature of Consciousness.

Q: Who says that mind does not die ? I have never seen a living body without a mind or a mind without a body. Are they not connected to each other ?

Swamiji: Do you think that mind has no separate existence from the body ? If it were so, then what would be the difference between a stone and a man ?

Q: Well, man is alive. That is his nature. But it is not a proof, that mind does not die.

Swamiji: It is written in the Buddhist literature that Buddha refused liberation and took a vow that he would come again and again to this world, so long as even a single man was caught in ignorance. How could he come again and again if nothing was left behind when his body died ?

Q: But who is there to help and who to be helped? Ramana Maharshi who is said to have been a great saint said: Who is there to kill and, who is there to be killed ?

Swamiji: If there is no one, who is quoting Ramana Maharshi ?

Q: Are there invisible beings? Can you experience them ?

Swamiji: Yes, you can know directly the existence of so many beings who don't have physical bodies. You can communicate with them and deal with them.

Q: Yes, but there is no freedom at all in this kind of relation. I heard of a man living in London and contacting dead people.....

Swamiji: He may not be absolutely free, but he must be more free than you. You are conditioned with your physical body. He is not.

Q: Where does one go after death ?

Swamiji: Where would you like to go after your death ?

Q: I 'd like to go nowhere.

Swamiji: You want to be here as you are ?

Q: I want to reach liberation.

Swamiji: What do you mean by liberation ?

Q: I want to stop going anywhere after death — nor do I want to come back again.

Swamiji: How can it be so as long as you are fond of sweets ? Your attachment with sweets will bring you back.

Q: Up to the present moment I have been living my life without being able to answer the question “what happens after death?” Is it really necessary to care for it ? May be it is completely irrelevant, since there is enough to look after in everyday life.

Swamiji: Yes, the seeker should not engage himself/herself in knowing anything which is not Absolute.

Q: But how to know what is Absolute ?

Swamiji: Can't you know what is 'relative'? Don't be seriously interested in what is relative, and Absolute will be revealed to you.

Q: Would you please tell me something more about the mind being something separate from the body ?

Swamiji: This body has been given to the soul, so that some of the unfulfilled desires could be worked out in this body. But all the desires cannot be worked out

through one body. Thus reincarnation becomes a need for the soul.

Q: You spoke only of body and mind. But now you are introducing a third thing : the soul.

Swamiji: Man is tripartite — made of body, mind and soul. When the body dies, man does not see, does not hear, does not react. Does it not indicate that something has gone out of the body ?

Q: But then what is the mind ?

Swamiji: Mind is the sum total of your conscious and subconscious desires/thoughts/ emotions.

Q: And the soul ?

Swamiji: Soul is the reflection of Spirit in the mind, plus mind.

Q: The Spirit is the same in everyone of us ?

Swamiji: Yes.

Q: And Spirit is synonymous with Consciousness ?

Swamiji: Yes.

Q: So if the mind of an individual is not reborn, it melts with the Spirit or Consciousness ?

Swamiji: When the mind dies, the reflection ceases; as when there is no mirror, there is no reflection of the sun in it. And the individual soul also ceases to be. In *Vedanta* they give another example : There is ether in a pot. It is not different from the universal ether and cannot be separated from it. The existence of the pot gives a feeling that the ether in the pot is different

from the ether everywhere. When the pot is broken, the ether of the pot is said to become one with the universal ether. According to *Vedanta* liberation comes when mind dies, and with mind dead, the individual soul ceases to exist.

Q: What about those children who die just after taking birth or those who are totally deaf and dumb ? How do they work out their past *Karmas*? What is the purpose of their lives ?

Swamiji: No one is isolated in this world. If handicapped children are not working out their own desires, some other people related with them would be working out their *Karmas* through those handicapped children. Nothing in the world is without a purpose. The purpose of the lives of such children may be to give some experience particularly to their parents and generally to many other people connected with them.

Q: And what about those handicapped children whose EEG shows no impulse at all, who seem to be just functioning bodies without mind ?

Swamiji: If a handicapped child is totally unconscious of its body suffering, does not its mother also suffer ?

There are children who die four or five days after their birth. You can ask, what was the purpose of their taking birth ? Both birth and death are necessary for evolution.

Q: I still have difficulty in seeing mind and body as separate things. For example now, as I am a bit ill, I feel that my whole being is affected.

Swamiji: They are correlated. If one suffers, the other also suffers. Both are made of matter.

Q: Of matter ?

Swamiji: Mind and senses are made of *Apanchikrit Bhutas* (pure elements); body is made of *Panchikrit Bhutas* (mixed elements).

The earth you see with the eyes is not pure earth. It is half part of earth, and the other half part is fire, water, air, and ether. Similarly, the water you see with your eyes is not pure water. It is half part water, and the other half part is fire, earth, air, and ether and so on.

And they are interchangeable. Water can be changed into air. Air can be changed into water, and so on.

Q: Could you tell us, whether according to your experience a particular diet is helpful on the way ?

Swamiji: If you eat animals, you are making your stomach a graveyard of animals.

Q: But those who eat non-vegetarian food are physically stronger than those who take vegetarian food.

Swamiji: A lion or elephant has much more physical strength than man. But man can control them.

Q: But man can control them regardless of his diet.

Swamiji: Nature has not given you the teeth and hands to eat animals. Have you noticed that even the meat-eating animals have different teeth and paws from the plant-eating animals ?

Q: Yes, but some say our teeth are similar to those of pigs, omnivorous animals.

Swamiji: But you don't have paws. It is easier to digest vegetarian food than non-vegetarian food.

Q: But I remember once asking A to make something easier for me. And he replied : Why do you want to have it easier ?

Swamiji: If the path of Truth is difficult, will you not follow it ?

Q: Yes, sure — at least I will try.

Swamiji: Do you want convenience or Truth ?

Q: Is the path difficult or easy ?

Swamiji: The path is as it is. You make it difficult or easy.

Q: As long as we are ignorant, we make it difficult and suffer.

Swamiji: It is difficult for X [who has arthritic knees] to come up and down the stairs. Will you say the stairs are difficult ?

Q: No, but he cannot help it. He does not make them difficult, but he has no choice.

Swamiji: If the stairs would be difficult to climb, they would be difficult for all of us.

Q: In the West, there is a book with the title "The lazy man's guide to Enlightenment". So for them also there is a way ?

Swamiji: All guides are meant for the ignorant. In France, in 1974 a Frenchman asked me : “Why are there so many fake *Gurus* in the world?” I replied : “It is so, because there are so many fake disciples in the world.” The law of demand and supply works in every field. As a matter of fact, it is the fake disciples that create fake *Gurus*. This, you can easily go and see by conversations between most of the disciples and *Gurus*. Mostly you will find them talking on mundane matters which are even not indirectly connected with spirituality. Some disciples go and give respect to their *Guru* only as a part of tradition, without any true love and service, because they are promised heaven in their next birth if they follow the tradition. You know very well the revolt in Christianity by Martin Luther against the Christian priests who used to sell certificates with which people could go to heaven after death. It gave birth to Protestants in Christendom.

If you reflect deeply and analyse, you will find that it is the wrong *Gurus* and their wrongly living examples and very irrational teachings which produce even non-believers in God.

Q: But the *Guru* must have qualities.

Swamiji: Does a father make a son ? Or does a son make a father ?

Q: A *Guru* is a *Guru* in relation to some of his disciples. A *Guru* can have many disciples, but can a disciple have many *Gurus* ?

Swamiji: If a disciple has many *Gurus*, his/her loyalty becomes divided.

Q: But what about those coming from Yvan Amar or Arnaud Desjardins ? May be Ananda is the same lineage, but Arnaud.....

Swamiji: They don't know the true relationship of a *Guru* and disciple. *Guru* is an Eastern word. A student may have many teachers. But the relationship between a disciple and a *Guru* is much deeper, more intimate and higher than the relationship between a student and a teacher.

Q: What does 'Hari' mean in 'Hari Om' ?

Swamiji: Vishnu, Hari, Narayana, Shiva, Krishna, Ram, Allah, God — are the names of one and the same God.

Q: Yesterday while reading, a fly was annoying me. So I killed it consciously and deliberately. What kind of *Karma* will that create ?

Swamiji: You cannot/should not swallow a fly. But there is no need to kill it, if you can scare it away.

Q: I did so. But again and again it came back and sat right on my nose.

Swamiji: There is a phrase : "Cut your nose to get rid of flies." [laughter]

If there is no other way, you can kill a fly. The life of man is more precious and highly evolved than that of a fly. You have to choose the lesser evil.

As a matter of fact violence cannot be avoided completely so long as there is duality.

Q: When practising alertness while working, I noticed

that I can direct my attention more inward or more outward; and when I tend to feel more inward my body becomes absorbed in the work I do. Is one direction more important, or do I have to be alert in both directions at the same time ?

Swamiji: When X is speaking and you are listening, you are aware that X is speaking. Similarly, you should be aware that your physical body is doing the work and you are seeing that work.

Q: But yesterday I was so concentrated on my eating, that I was not aware of you throwing some *Prasad* on my plate. I was not ready.

Swamiji: Be aware of everything connected with what is being done at a particular moment. But let not the feeling be there that you are doing it. For example while walking, be aware that there is walking, and there is the way on which walking is going on, but don't think that you are walking.

Q: In a dream I saw a cat overpowering a mouse. I stopped the cat, so that the mouse could run away. Then the cat turned to me and said : "Why do you prevent me from eating that mouse ? It is my food, I have a right to eat it."

Swamiji: The cat has the right to eat a mouse. The mouse has a right to run away to save its life. And you have the right to favour the cat or to favour the mouse. [Laughter] This is an unnecessary problem/question raised by your mind. If the mouse had taken your shelter for safety and the cat had followed the mouse and claimed its right to eat the mouse, then the

question should have arisen whether you should have protected the mouse or not.

Q: When we are killing a fly or a mosquito, do we, according to the law of *Karma*, have to face the result of such an action ?

Swamiji: The life of man is more precious than the life of a mosquito or fly. It is a necessary evil to kill them.

Q: The Buddha claimed to be an ordinary man, everybody could reach where he had reached. The seekers, the Buddhist monks don't pray.

Swamiji: They recite "*Buddham Sharanam Gachchami*" — I take refuge in Lord Buddha. There was only one Buddha in the world and he was against rituals. But now Buddhism is a religion which is the most ritualistic. Go to any Buddhist temple, and you will be surprised to note it.

And what about "*Sangham Sharanam Gachchami*". You can take any meaning. But when the Buddhist *Sangha* was made, it meant seeking the blessings of Lord Buddha by taking refuge in Him.

Q: In your lines about prayer you write : the most passive prayer, the one with the least ego is the highest. But to me it seems that Western psychotherapy explicitly backs up the feeling of 'I', the forming of a personality, to become responsible for one's own life etc. Is this opposite to the way of surrender ?

Swamiji: There are two cultures. One is of *Shramans* as those of the Buddhists and Jains. They lay the

highest emphasis on self-effort. The second is of the *Brahmins*, who have faith in the supreme power and lay emphasis on surrender.

Q: In Patanjali's eight-limbed path of *Yoga*, is *Dhyana* identical with the thoughtless state of mind?

Swamiji: The Patanjali system of *Yoga* teaches the discipline through which the modifications/thoughts of mind are totally stopped in order to have the experience of the silent Self, the seer.

Q: Is the seer automatically seen, when thoughts come to a standstill ?

Swamiji: The seer is always there, but it stands identified with thoughts. So the mind must be completely thoughtless, if the seer is to be realized as it is in itself.

Q: And is this realization *Samadhi* ?

Swamiji: Yes — the path of *Jnana* is another way to Realization. *Samadhi* means : thoughtless state of mind. The path of *Jnana* is the path of analysis. The path of devotion is the path of synthesis. The path of *Yoga* is the path through *Samadhi*. Analysis mainly needs intellectual sharpness. *Yoga* involves discipline of concentration and taming of one's mind. *Bhakti* mainly involves sublimation of your emotions and directing them to the Divine.

Q: X told me that there is a fixed period of time — about thirteen days — between death and rebirth. Is that the case ?

Swamiji: There is no fixed rule as to how long it will take for the soul to reincarnate. The general rule is that the more evolved a soul, the less time it takes to assume a physical body again. Some souls take hundreds of years to come back to the physical body. Till then, they remain either in the astral world with their astral bodies, or in other worlds (planes) with such bodies as are relevant to those worlds.

Q: So it may take hundreds of years before a soul can reincarnate and further evolve ?

Swamiji: Even thousands. In between, the soul goes to a world or plane, where it is almost asleep and only assimilates the experiences of its past life. Having assimilated experiences, and having assumed a new personality, it comes back to take a new physical body, which is appropriate to express that new personality.

Q: That is good to know that we come back in a better way.

Swamiji: Better or worse body — to express the new personality. If one has developed a personality that is biting and stinging, the soul can assume the body of a scorpion to express that trait.

Q: But our personality consists of more than one character trait.

Swamiji: Only one personality or similar personality traits can be expressed through one body, because there may be many paradoxical traits in a personality. Usually there are. Assuming of such bodies is temporary to express a certain trait only.

Q: That means you need several lives to exhaust all the traits you have produced ?

Swamiji: Yes.

Q: Just as you need several lives to fulfil all the desires and fears you have built up ?

Swamiji: Yes.

Q: But that means one single life may cause dozens of lives ?

Swamiji: *Karma* is like a seed, it produces many seeds.

Q: And reincarnation does not necessarily happen on this earth, does it ? So then our increasing earth population is no more an argument against reincarnation theory.

Swamiji: You know, there are numerous worlds, some below the human level, some above it. And these souls shift from one world to the other — some go up, some come down. So it is almost impossible to say from which world more souls are coming on this earth in human form. A particular world represents a particular range of consciousness.

Not all worlds have beings with physical bodies. On the earth, earth is the determining element in the bodies of beings who live on the earth. For beings who live under water, for them water is the determining element in their bodies. And so on, in the air and fire also. There are beings who have bodies, in which fire is the determining element. They live even on the sun.

Q: So it is not true in a way, that man consists of

almost ninety percent water — or only true in a chemical sense ?

Swamiji: Yes, it is true, but that water is not pure water.

Swamiji: When Mr. X (who just worked in the dining hall on the new *Ashram's* building-ground) comes next, he will enjoy more than you sitting in the dining hall and eating. The food you buy with your own earnings gives you more pleasure to eat.

Q: Since I don't know, how soon I shall die, I prefer to put my question now.....

Swamiji: If you are a living being, how can you ever die ?

Q: Well, at least this body will come to an end, and I don't know, if on the building-ground outside soon a brick will fall on my head.

Swamiji: Death is the greatest myth. No one has ever experienced one's death, nor will anyone ever experience his/her death. Can one ?

Q: But what about Ramana Maharshi who experienced death ?

Swamiji: He saw death of the body; not of himself. If you are dead, how can you have experience of death ?

Q: As regards being born and reborn you talked about this morning.

Swamiji: If you don't die, how can you be born or reborn ? There can be no birth without death and no death without birth. The birth and death are related to the body only.

Q: Well, let's take it as transformation that takes place when the body dies. You are talking about these worlds as if they are most familiar to you. But I feel much more like in a fairy tale, like in Alice's Wonderland.....

Swamiji: If the different worlds are fairy tales, this world or body of yours is also a fairy tale.

Q: Ananda once told us about a talk he had, when he stayed with you. You asked him: "Where do you come from ?" And he answered: "I come from France." Then you said: "What is France? Prove to me that it exists." And Ananda replied: "You can ask almost anybody, and they will know France." You said: "I don't believe in what people say." Then Ananda said, "Well, you can look at a map.....", and you said: "I don't believe in maps", and Ananda didn't know how to reply anymore.

So you said: "There is one way, through which you can convince me. Take me by your hand and go with me to France; and then you can say — this is France."

When I listen to you, it is as if I could smell something but I'd like to come closer, to bite in it. Can you take me by the hand or show me in what direction to go to get closer ?

Swamiji: There is no need of going to or coming from anywhere. Only be open and receptive. Open your eyes, and you will see. "Keep your eyes open, and the dream ceases", said a Zen monk.

Q: For years already I feel that every pace I make, every breath I take, every beam of light which reaches

my eye is a proof of the Divine. but in the foreword of the French edition of your book, Ananda wrote: "Where many stop in their search, Chandra Swami did not." Now I don't know whether I have to go further and how ?

Swamiji: So long as you don't feel completely fulfilled, be sure there is something left to be realized.

Q: Yes — I think that's why I am here. Is it possible to stop, once we have started to walk the path ?

Swamiji: You cannot walk or run always. You walk so long as you need to walk. When you reach the ultimate destination, your need to walk or run becomes redundant and meaningless and you cannot but stop.

Q: But would you say of yourself whether you stopped or you are fulfilled or is it something different ?

Swamiji: One does not run, nor does one stop.

Q: Well I'd better read that up; I get confused now; for you use one notion to explain the other.

Swamiji: I am not confusing you. I am bringing out your confusion. If you are not already confused, no one will be able to confuse you.

Q: Later, during a halt, X went to a group of three ruminating camels lying nearby and watched them from all over. The camels, however, seemed to take hardly any notice of him. When he was called back to the car, Swamiji handed him a piece of paper.

Swamiji: You are very interested in the camel. But the camel does not seem to be interested in you at all.

Apparently it is more satisfied and at peace with itself than you are.

Q: Missing.....

Swamiji: Food is very important for the body. Water is more important than food. Fire is more important than water. Air is more important than fire. Ether is more important than air. Senses are more important than ether. Mind is more important than senses. Self is more important than mind.

Q: What is ether ?

Swamiji: Ether is the source of air, fire, water and food. Without food you can live for forty one days. Without water you can live for seven days. Without fire you can live for few days. Without air you cannot live for more than five minutes. Without Self you have no existence.

Q: What does fire do ?

Swamiji: Without fire all metabolism stops in the body.

Q: Could one also say without soul there is no existence ?

Swamiji: Without consciousness, nothing can be experienced or proved.

Q: Some saints are said to live directly on ether. Can they ?

Swamiji: Exceptions don't make a rule.

Q: Some say here that many things happen out of or because of your grace. I have no experience of it. I feel

very thankful to you. But in the end, if there is no doer, is there any need to be still thankful, although it is nice? Are we not sitting in the same boat? As the *Guru* cannot help being a *Guru*, so the disciple cannot help being a disciple.

Swamiji: They are not aware of grace though they may have it.

Q: What is grace?

Swamiji: Grace is like air. You cannot live without it, and yet you are not aware of it. Grace is like fire which sustains you even though you are not aware of it.

Q: In the talks at 'La Bergerie' you said that a saint has no self-will anymore, since he is doing the will of God. Can we say that such a man — and also you — don't take a decision anymore? As for me I have a strong feeling of 'I', when I make a decision.

Swamiji: He is only an instrument. If he takes a decision, it is the decision of God. If he does not take a decision, God does not take a decision.

Q: Does the saint feel that he is an instrument in the hands of God?

Swamiji: The saint does not even claim that he is the instrument of God.

Q: But we do not feel, we are instruments in the hands of God.

Swamiji: A fly sitting on the steering wheel of a car thinks and claims, "I am driving the car."

Q: If we don't do, who is the doer ?

Swamiji: The illusion of doing arises because of your identification with your body and mind. You are like a traveler sitting in a car and thinking that you are the car.

Q: Ok. I am not the doer; then the subsequent question is: Who am I ?

Swamiji: Don't bother to know who you are. Knowledge will come by itself. You only deny what you are not.

Q: But who is the doer ?

Swamiji: You have never done anything, you are not doing anything, you will never do anything. Your notion of being a doer is sheer ignorance.

Q: I suppose I am the doer and the seer in my dreams.

Swamiji: Who is the doer in your dream ? You are the doer and you are the seer. It does not fit into the law. You cannot be a witness and a convict at the same time. No court of law will accept it.

Q: Then who is the doer ?

Swamiji: Let the doer do. You just be a witness. You have not to know the doer. You have only to be a witness and know yourself as a witness.

Q: Who is the doer in dreams ?

Swamiji: The dreaming person is the doer in his dreams. When you become the seer of the dream, the dream stops.

Q: How can I test myself whether I have really understood and imbibed that I am not the doer ?

Swamiji: So long as you want to test yourself, you are not established in yourself. To have a desire to test yourself implies doubt in you. And your doubt is the proof that you are not established in yourself.

Q: How can I think and believe that I am not this body ?

Swamiji: Thinking or believing is not seeing. Thinking that you are not the body does not mean seeing that you are not the body.

Q: I agree with you logically, but I do not grasp anything.

Swamiji: Cease to be grasping, and you will see. Stop gathering and you will see. Are you not grasping or gathering ? You are always trying to do it, though you don't grasp.

Q: (astonished) Really ? I don't gather anything ?

Swamiji: You are gathering though you don't gather. You are always gathering without being able to gather. You are always grasping without being able to grasp. Is it not ?

Q: You have tightened me so much with your logical answers that I can't ask anything more, though I have not gathered anything.

Swamiji: I have not tightened you in any way. I only replied your questions. To tighten you means to bind you. I answered your questions so that you will be free. And you say I have tightened you.

You are saying the same thing as X said yesterday. He said, I was confusing him. As a matter of fact I wanted that he became totally unconfused.

Q: Please break, tear, and puncture the veil of my ignorance some day, and make me free from doership.

Swamiji: I will never do that.

Q: Really ? Why don't you want to do it ?

Swamiji: If I force freedom upon you, it will not be freedom for you; it will become your bondage. I will come to you only when you open your doors on my calling you and let me come in. I will not break open your door and come to you..... Yes, I will keep on calling you.

Q: Please take a trial and do come; I shall really welcome you.

Swamiji: If I break open your door and come in, you will hide yourself. [laughter]

Q: Please do come, and I shall not close the doors.

Swamiji: Your not opening the door means, you are not inclined to welcome me.

Q: But I do not know how to open the door.

Swamiji: He has locked the door, kept the key in his pocket, and he says, he does not know how to open the door. [laughter]

Q: I feel that I have been many times in that place or state in which I am now. But in between, I always fell into a long forgetfulness. What to do not to be trapped again ?

Swamiji: What is the trap ? There is no trap at all. If there is a trap, it is the mind that is the trap. And your mind is the key also to open the trap. A purified, placid, relaxed, unprejudiced, non-stubborn, open, receptive mind is the key. A polluted, unstable, prejudiced, closed, tense mind is the trap.

Q: May be a person of renunciation is not the right one to ask about sexuality, but you seem to have insight even in things you did not experience yourself. So what is your view of sexuality, being a force of life and a problem for many people ? Also is one to use this immense energy in a particular way on the spiritual path ? I have come across the notion of *Ojas*; do we have to transform the energy ?

Swamiji: In *Hatha Yoga* in which primarily *Asana* and *Pranayama* are to be mastered, celibacy is a must. Otherwise one cannot be only unsuccessful, but also harm one's nervous system through *Pranayama*.

Sexual pleasure is not the highest pleasure man can have. As a matter of fact, the sex-impulse is an animal instinct, which still lingers on in man. The more one becomes aware of and devoted to the purpose of Self-Realization, the more subdued this instinct becomes. Sex-energy, instead of flowing down to the lower centres in the body, moves up and gets transformed first in *Tejas* and then into *Ojas*.

Tejas is like the glow of fire. When you have it, your physical body becomes a sort of magnet, radiating light, and a force of attraction. *Ojas* is the energy which strengthens your will-power. It gives you mental strength. People lacking *Ojas* are not able to

concentrate their mind, they lack one-pointedness. This *Ojas*, when rightly directed, becomes very helpful in the path of Self-Realization.

Swamiji: How did you reach this place ? (to a seeker who recently arrived in *the Ashram*.)

Q: It was difficult. (Then he described how he asked people about the *Ashram* and how many buses he had to take.)

Swamiji: To find God is much more difficult.

There is a Sufi story. A man brought a burning candle to a Sufi saint and asked: "Where has this light come from ?"

The Sufi blew out the flame and said: "It had come from where it has gone back now."

Q: One of my first question here was: "What or where is the I?" There are things which seem to be done by me, and others in me are not done by me e.g. my body-functions. There is the fly on the steering-wheel thinking it is steering the car. So the doership is an illusion. But there is also the one who makes the necessary effort on the way. So a doer is there ?

Swamiji: Man as a doer has limited power. That power varies from man to man, according to his *Karma*. The limit of man's power is changing. When spiritual knowledge dawns on man, he sees that essentially he is/was not a doer. He is a seer, a centre of Awareness which has nothing to do with actions or movements.

Q: But I am looking after the 'I'. If we say, "Everything

is God's will", we could simply let go. But making an effort is not letting go.

Swamiji: Realization is not the result of your effort. And yet, if you don't want to make any effort on the path of Realization, you cannot realize God. Effort is a must up to a certain stage. Beyond that, effort has no meaning; it may, on the other hand, become a hindrance.

Q: But to do the effort, must there not be a little space for an 'I', for a doer ? Or could we say: The illusion of 'I' is necessary in the beginning to do effort, and then we let it go ?

Swamiji: The illusion is already there. If there were no illusions, there would be no questions. This illusion has to be removed. One thorn is used to take out the other thorn, and then both are thrown away.

(After a power failure some *Ashramites* were lighting candles and torches. As the first candle was lit and placed on the small table in front of *Swamiji*, X asked a question.)

Q: If now someone came and asked you: "Where does this light come from ?" What would you answer ?

Swamiji: I am not supposed to answer every question, am I ?

Swamiji: In sports if you become very tense or very relaxed, you cannot win. The same is the case with the spiritual field. If you become very tense, *Sadhana* is spoiled. If you become completely free of tension, *Sadhana* stops.

Q: But isn't it that there is some tension at times when aspiration is very intense ?

Swamiji: Aspiration should be very deep rather than very intense.

Q: So the question has to be clarified : what is intense and what is deep ?

Swamiji: (laughing) The love of a man is intense. The love of a woman is deep.

Q: Missing.....

Swamiji: That is true. But that intensity does not last long. This is inevitable. In intensity there is a sort of aggression which cannot last long.

Q: Is it a good practice to cut one's thoughts as soon as one notices them arising and thus to keep an empty brain ?

Swamiji: An empty brain is either devil's workshop or God's workshop.

Q: What to do, to stop people from thinking about future ? Mind is always occupied with future.

Swamiji: Remember death always. It may come any moment without sending you a notice. It will help you slow down the thoughts of your mind.

Q: You said that effort could even become a hindrance.....

Swamiji: Effort, when it strengthens your ego, becomes a hindrance, not otherwise.

Q: So can you tell me something about right effort

during meditation ? When thoughts are coming, I can try to concentrate more. But anyway thoughts are overpowering very often. How to deal with them ?

Swamiji: When the master is weak, the servants take over the house.

Q: But who is the master, and who are the servants ? Isn't it that both dwell in mind ?

Swamiji: Essentially, mind is the master of the senses. But when your mind becomes weak and senses rule over your mind, all your thoughts become oriented to satisfy the senses.

Q: So how to make the master strong ?

Swamiji: You have to reclaim your mastery. Reflect on your real nature. Don't identify yourself with the objects and the senses. Meditate regularly. Practise breathing exercises. Try to be more and more aware. Pray. Read books that give you inspiration and self-confidence. Be more and more sincere in your *Sadhana*. Slowly and gradually you will be able to have full mastery over your thoughts.

Q: Effort indicates ego. Effort means faith and certitude which is again ego. When you get success, it is again ego. When you meet disappointment, that also shows your ego. All these aspects puff up your ego. What is that quality of effort in which there is no trace of ego at all ?

Swamiji: If you try to become effortless, you will not be effortless, you will only become lethargic. Effortlessness will happen when you are filled with happiness, when you don't miss anything.

Q: Please, what is right, egoless effort ?

Swamiji: It is true, if there were no ego, there would not be any need of *Sadhana*. Ego is already there. You cannot chop it off at once. You have first to change its direction, sublimate it, and make it weak. It needs right effort and prayer also.

Yesterday I told you that a thorn is taken out by another thorn and then both are thrown away. As you are now, you cannot be effortless. You will keep on making efforts to fulfil yourself, though in a wrong direction. Your effort must be rightly directed. That is what *Sadhana* is.

Q: Missing.....

Swamiji: A dog takes an old bone in its mouth and tries to chew it. There is nothing in the bone — no meat, no marrow. But when the dog chews a bone, the bone presses against its gums, and blood oozes from them. The dog tastes the blood, and chews the bone more and more. It does not know that the blood it is drinking, is its own; it is not coming from the bone.

Similarly man tries to find pleasure from the objects. There is no pleasure in the objects as such. The pleasure which he feels, comes in fact, from the concentration of his mind, the momentary concentration which he achieves on account of getting a desired object.

When you desire an object, it creates tension in your mind. When you get that object, the desire is momentarily satisfied, tension subsides and you feel a

sort of relief. This relief is what is your pleasure, which you seem to have found through the object.

Q: If some experiences happen to you over and over again, is it a good technique just to watch them, accepting them ?

Swamiji: You have been trying it from life after life, and yet you have not learned anything. You only have been repeating the experience. The animals have all sorts of sensual experiences; they are able to enjoy sensual pleasure more than man, but they don't learn anything. They have no ability to sift experience and learn from it.

It is not the experience which teaches you; it is the reflection on an experience through which you learn.

Q: Today I went through a picture-book of the Bhagavad-Gita and read again that man has to go through the pain of birth, illness, old-age, and death. When for the first time I heard the Buddha's teaching that life is suffering, there was a revolt within me. Life is also joy, there is pleasure, love, friendship, nature, many beautiful things.

Swamiji: Dispassion is the basic quality for progress on the path of Self-Realization. How can you go inwards unless you are detached from the outward pleasures ? Each desire to enjoy objects draws your mind out; and you are not able to see inwards. That is why the Buddha said that desire is the cause of all suffering. And desire can never be satiated. A saint, who was a king (Bharthari) before he renounced his

kingdom and became a monk, said : “I was a great fool. I had thought that I was enjoying the objects. Now I see that the objects have eaten me up. I used to think that time was passing. But now I feel that I am passing (going).”

Q: This morning you have also been talking about desire. So during the day, when I had a free time, I was thinking about it.....

Swamiji: I know, I am disturbing you.

Q: Well, it was not a disturbance, but many things I had read or heard about desire came to my mind.....

Swamiji: Disturbing your sleep..... ?

Q: Ok, but please clarify. To me it seems, there are two main types of desires. One is absolutely necessary for life, like food, sleep, and shelter; and one is not necessary like wanting to have an ice-cream or going to a cinema.

Swamiji: You have to discriminate between desire and need.

Q: But how ? It seems to be the same feeling within me, the same attraction; whether I am hungry, or I want to have an answer to a question or an ice-cream.

Swamiji: If you reflect and reflect and reflect, you will come to know that your real need is happiness (God). You want to live and you can live without anything at one moment or the other, but you never want to live without happiness.

Q: Missing.....

Swamiji: You are confounding the easing of your tensions with happiness. You are itching, you scratch; it gives you momentary relief. And you call it happiness.

Q: What is happiness ?

Swamiji: 'The Real' and 'Happiness' are synonymous — that is why you call it *Sat-Chit-Ananda*, Real-Consciousness-Bliss.

Q: For three days now I noticed that my concentration during meditation is very bad. Sometimes only for five breaths there are no thoughts, and then I start daydreaming for a quarter of an hour. Also during daytime my energy for being aware seems to have decreased. I notice a feeling of frustration. I increased my effort, but in vain. Then I let go, remembering that want and effort can also become a hindrance, but nothing changed. Although I know 'I am not my thoughts, I am not my feeling', I feel uneasy.

Swamiji: There are ups and downs in concentration. It is inevitable. It goes on for a very long time during *Sadhana*. One should not be discouraged by these vicissitudes. Be patient. Persevere. And go on watching. The subconscious is being cleansed. It is a very slow process.

Have you ever noticed that when you clean a room with a broom, the dust, which was settled in the room, comes up and you notice the dust. It is not that your mind becomes unsteady now. You are now simply noticing the power of your thoughts over you. First you did not notice it at all.

Q: My problem is that I know that thoughtless state, that peace of mind; and now I feel, as if, I am falling back.

Swamiji: That peace which comes and goes is not real peace.

Q: Even when there is peace inside, in every day life, if something goes wrong in the domestic life — you have to scold the servant, you have to get the work properly done — all this disturbs you. And though your inner peace is not disturbed, yet you feel disturbed. Why does it happen, and how to cope with it ?

Swamiji: If you get upset, it means you have to go onwards a great deal ahead of where you are. It should make you more sincere and earnest in your *Sadhana*.

Q: The span of life is short. I have awareness of this life only.

Swamiji: What are these years in comparison with eternity ?

Q: I have awareness of this life only, and I want to achieve peace for the next life also. Hence I want to use every moment to attain silence of mind. Yesterday you talked of *Kalo Na Gachhati Vaimew Gachhati*. (Time does not pass. It is we who pass away.)

Swamiji: Forget about time and go on doing what you think is good.

Q: I am not attached with anyone, yet I have to work for all, and life remains too busy; there is no time for *Sadhana*. What to do ?

Swamiji: When you accept bondage, it becomes

freedom, When you don't accept freedom, it becomes a bondage to you.

Q: Some saint is said to have done too many austerities that were not necessary for his enlightenment. Is it due to our personal *Karma*, that we have all the difficulties during our *Sadhana* ?

Swamiji: Almost all saints (realized) say that. When you have solved a puzzle, you are obliged to say: "I was taxing my mind unnecessarily; there was no need for it. It was so simple." The puzzle becomes simple only after you have solved it. Before that it was not simple.

Q: How to know the right price which must be paid ?

Swamiji: There is no price of Realization. It is priceless. Whatever you pay for, it is always less.

Q: How do you know the puzzle is solved ? Is it through the feeling of Fulfilment ?

Swamiji: When you are realized, not only do you know it, but your neighbors will also know of it. When a woman gives birth to a child, not only does she know it, but her neighbors also come to know it.

Q: (laughing): So I have to ask my neighbors in case of doubt?

Swamiji: A girl who was to undergo her first delivery asked her mother: "How will I come to know about my delivery ?" Her mother said: "You need not worry about it. Your cries will even make other people know about it."

Q: Would you claim to know your true Self ?

Swamiji: To claim oneself is to deny oneself. You claim a thing which you don't have, isn't it ?

Q: Well, in the beginning it wasn't me who talked about true Self—that was you.

Swamiji: Neither you claim nor you proclaim, when you have realized yourself.

Q: So you neither claim nor you proclaim, but you say that you are realized.

Swamiji: I say nothing [Laughter]. When you say, you have realized, it looks, as, if it is a thing of the past.

Q: No, I asked whether you'd say you are realized. I think it's as well an event as a state of being.

Swamiji: Realization is not an experience. It is experiencing. It is the question which in Hindu terminology is called *Anadhikar Cheshta* (undue attempt). It is like a son asking his father: "Why are you so close to my mother ?" What will the father reply ?

Q: Oh, you could say lots of things.

Swamiji: If you say 'yes', it is wrong. If you say 'no', it is wrong.

Q: That's what I felt.

Swamiji: Truth/God is something which is neither knowable nor unknowable.

Q: But you can be Truth/God ?

Swamiji: Yes—you are Truth.

Q: Missing.....

Swamiji: A man was traveling, and to be knowledgeable, he was noting down in his diary, whatever new he could see. He saw an elephant for the first time and noted in his diary 'elephant'. Then one day he saw a jack-fruit for the first time and noted down 'jack-fruit'.

After six months he came back from the tour to his village. A few days after someone brought an elephant to his village. No villager had ever seen an elephant. So they asked that man: "You are very widely traveled. Do you know, what animal it is?" He went to his home, opened his diary and said: "This is either of the two — either it is an elephant or a jack-fruit."

Q: I feel myself totally defeated. I commit so many sins and stupidities.

Swamiji: When you actually accept your defeat, you will be ready to win. It is most difficult to accept one's defeat. If someone else says this to you, you will be furious. You say you are sinful or stupid. But if someone else says you are sinful, what will you do? You will feel offended if someone says 'Idiot' to you, immediately a reaction comes: "Me? An idiot? — No!" In your heart you feel that you are the wisest person in this world.

Q: You said, "Don't stop to eat sweets. Drop the desire to eat sweets." And you also talked about celibacy. I see that sometimes I am not at all indifferent, when I see sweets or a naked woman. My attention, my reactions are much more intensive.

Swamiji: I have read about a saint. When he would sit in meditation, the desire for eating mangoes would come to his mind. It became a regular feature. One day he got up during meditation, went to the bazar and bought a very precious and sweet mango. He kept that mango in his room and would see it every day and would not eat it.

After some days the mango became rotten. The saint then addressed his mind and himself: "Now eat it." And he actually ate the mango. It was very rotten, with bacteria in it. As soon as he ate it, he felt strong nausea and vomited again and again.

He wrote in his autobiography that never again in his life had he a desire to eat mangoes.

Q: But we have always desires, haven't we ? Money, sex, power, social status. That cannot be cured always with a rotten mango ?

Swamiji: That was one of the ways which worked for him. You have to find out your own way to overcome your desires.

Q: How shall one analyse or tutor oneself, and get rid of one's arrogance of being innocent and pure-hearted ?

Swamiji: There was a sufi saint. He was passing through a street, when a woman threw ashes from a window, which fell on his head. He looked upward and said: "O God, I am worthy of being put into fire. But how merciful thou art! Only ashes have been thrown on my head."

Q: What can I do to eradicate my desires ?

Swamiji: Have a burning desire to be desireless.

Q: Missing.....

Swamiji: The most beautiful person to a mother is her son/daughter. The most beautiful portrait to an artist is the one, which is made by him. A devotee asked a sage: "Who is the wisest sage in the world at this moment?" He said: "If I don't care for good etiquette and speak the truth, I feel that I am the wisest sage in the world."

Q: So who is the wisest sage presently in the world?

(smilingly) Please one answer with regard to good etiquette and one without.

Swamiji: The wisest sage in the world is the one who has no ego of his wisdom.

Q:no ego?

Swamiji: One who is not arrogant of his wisdom.

Q: After you told the story of the rotten mango last night, I had a feeling of loss; as if much of my enjoyment would pass away.

Swamiji: There is a pleasure, when you satisfy your desire. But there is a very deep satisfaction and joy when/after you have overcome your desire.

Q: I am reading a book on Swami Prajnanpad, [by Daniel Roumanoff, Swami Prajnanpad, Paris 1989] where he also talks on desire. He contrasts the statements of *Gita* (which says to 'kill' desire) to those of some Upanishads and other scriptures, which state that one should try to satisfy one's desires, and then see that they can never be satisfied.

Swamiji: It is not necessary to touch fire and burn yourself to know that it hurts. Your observance can also lead to the same knowledge.

Q: Swami Prajnanpad is proposing the latter way. That by experiencing the impossibility of satisfaction of the desires you will overcome your desires.

Swamiji: Desire is not finished, it will finish you before you learn anything. What is the use of locking the stables, when the horses have been stolen ?

Q: Why do you say that ? I cannot transfer its meaning in our context.

Swamiji: Do you know how much energy is consumed by desire ? You could direct that energy to find out the Real.

Q: I thought about the story you told about the man who wrote 'elephant' and 'jack-fruit' in his note-book. I thought when you are telling such a story, there must be a spiritual meaning to it. (Swamiji laughs). But I didn't find.

Swamiji: (laughing) Read your note books.

Q: Oh, they are many. You explained already ? I have to go through them all ?

Ananda once told me that, at the time he stayed with you, once during meditation he felt (in a way) uneasy and could not concentrate.

Then his note books with your words came into his mind — and he had quite a few. He just got up, picked them and threw them into the Ganges. Then he was

at peace again. But I would need a lot of courage to do that.

Swamiji: The Yamuna (the river passing in front of *Ashram*), is not far away.

Q: You know, as long as I'm here, you've no rest. You said instead of using my energy to fulfil my desires, I could use it to find out the Real. But is there anything unreal ?

Swamiji: If there is no unreal, there is no *Sadhana*, no search, no suffering, no pain. Can you honestly say, they don't exist for you ?

Q: But let's say, I don't fulfil one desire. What shall I do using this energy to find the Real ? Does it mean to do *Sewa*, sitting one more hour in meditation, or reading a scripture ?

Swamiji: The desires which involve you in attachments, anger, greed, competition etc., are obstacles.

Q: No, I will tell it concretely taking my example of yesterday: I feel desire for sweet, or a woman. Then I say to myself: "Now you're not going to fulfil this desire, but you use this energy to find the Real." What am I to do then ?

Swamiji: God is much sweeter than chocolate toffees.

Q: So you can enjoy without a previous desire ?

Swamiji: Desire of realizing God is not actually a desire. God is your birthright. You have disowned God. You have to own what is already yours.

Q: Even without desire, I am already involved. How can I get out of the involvement ?

Swamiji: Give up desires and involvements. It is you who get involved, and it is you who have to come out of the involvement. I cannot do it for you. Can I eat for you ? It is your eating which will give you nourishment. I can only persuade you to eat. If I eat, will it appease your hunger ?

Q: Can you show us how to eat ?

Swamiji: Yes.

Q: (pleading) Please.....

Swamiji: Enjoy God in the same way as you enjoy eating a chocolate toffee.

Q: You spoke to us of the burning desire. But it is missing. Please help us in having this desire.

A devotee: But that's what he's doing all day long !

Telling us of sweets which are sweeter than everything we have ever tasted—even sweeter than women—imagine.

Swamiji: God loves you much more than any girlfriend.

Q: Can you give the testimony ?

Swamiji: If God did not love you, you could not breathe and live.

Q: Does the unreal only exist in our mind ?

Swamiji: The mind itself comes in the category of unreal. Mind is a part of the unreal.

Q: How to get rid of the unreal ?

Swamiji: Keep on seeing the unreal as unreal, and in due course of time, it will dissolve. It is there for you, because you have been taking it as real.

Q: How can we discriminate the Real from the unreal ?

Swamiji: Unreal is what does not last — like a dream. The Real is everlasting, eternal, independant, absolute, free.

Q: Is the unreal an illusion ?

Swamiji: Unreal does not mean illusion. Unreal means dependent, that which has only borrowed existence, which has no absolute, independant existence.

Q: In your book you write that the observation of a movement can happen only in comparison to a place which is moving more slowly. And from that you conclude that there must be something unmoving (which you call God). I cannot find any compelling consistency in that. Moreover it would also imply, that the law of constant change would not be valid at a particular place.

Swamiji: Change cannot be perceived without there being something unchangeable.

Q: There might be something changing only very slowly, from where everything else seems to be changing faster.

Swamiji: But how will you feel the slow changing thing ?

Q: Probably I cannot. But then I have to say: "I don't

know whether there is something unmoving, somewhere or not."

Swamiji: You cannot see the moving forms (pictures) unless there is a stable screen behind, on which they are projected. Can you ?

Q: Is there a way to perceive the Eternal, Absolute, Independent ?

Swamiji: Yes.

Q: Is it difficult ?

Swamiji: The only way to perceive the Absolute is to be one with it.

Q: That is a state beyond name and form ?

Swamiji: Name and form are unreal. Everything has five elements in it: Name, form, isness, consciousness, bliss. The first two are unreal, the latter three are real. As a matter of fact the latter three are one and the same thing.

Q: Yesterday X read from a letter a prophecy of world war III and the destruction of New York. What do you think about that ?

Swamiji: If you tell people that the world is going to be finished soon, it is most likely that you will be taken as a prophet. Most of the prophets had been declaring that the world would soon come to an end.

Q: Is it true that *Yogis* don't dream anymore ?

Swamiji: *Yogi* is a word which is used for the *Sadhaks* as well as for the one who has become one with the Divine. The dreams of a perfected *Yogi* are more or less visions and not dreams.

Q: Can you clearly differentiate between dream and vision ?

Swamiji: A vision gives you a feeling of certainty, a dream does not.

He does not want/need to see the past or future. Some coming events are sometimes reflected in his purified, stable and relaxed mind.

The past can also be reflected in the mind. That is why you can see your past lives.

Only one man out of a thousand may be benefited from the knowledge of one's past lives. The other nine hundred ninety nine get disturbed, confused and even mad.

Q: I don't know why am I here ?

Swamiji: 'Why am I here', is not the most important question. 'Who am I', is the most important question.

When you say 'I am not this, nor this', it indicates that you are something, you are not nothing.

Q: If I am only denying what I am not, always saying: "No, not that." I feel becoming smaller and smaller. More and more is taken away from me, and a longing arises for a positive affirmation of what I am.

Swamiji: Why smaller ? You are saying, you are not what is limited.

First realize that you are infinite and unlimited.

When one puts up a question (if the question is authentic), it reveals the state of one's mind.

Dreams indicate more or less the real state of mind of the person.

Q: You once said, the *Sadhak* should care only for the Absolute, that which is permanent; and not waste his time with the impermanent. But I notice that most of the day I deal with impermanent things. I take care and nourish my body, which is impermanent; I work and the results are not permanent. Even you are now building this *Ashram* and for sure it will not last forever.

Swamiji: What am I doing ? I am not taking the impermanent as permanent. Do you think I am taking the building as permanent ?

Q: No.

Swamiji: Should you go and throw your body in the Yamuna (a river), because it is impermanent ?

Q: I feel very afraid of death; and more time is passing, I am also afraid of reincarnation, to come back to a life of tortures, and physical sufferings.

Swamiji: There seems to be a contradiction in the statement. Usually the fear of death makes people God-fearing, and they become enthusiastic to follow the path, which leads to Self-Realization and, in turn, to immortality.

Fear of death awakens the slumbering man. It is even literally true. When you are sleeping and in your dream, you encounter some situation which could cause your death, your dream is broken and you wake up. Have you ever experienced it ? Even a nightmare wakes you up.

Q: I am sure of nothing, only fear.....

Swamiji: Everyone is afraid of suffering. It is quite natural. Suffering does not conform to the essential being of man. So none wants suffering.

Q: I would like to be in a state where I am not afraid of suffering.

Swamiji: Suffering cannot be separated from the world of time. This you may come to see by reflection, or you learn it through innumerable experiences in many lives. Once you see it, you aspire to go out of the world of time. That can only be done by the realization of timeless, eternal Consciousness.

Q: I would like to know more about Hari.....

Swamiji: There is no difference between Hari, Om, Ram, Krishna, Christ, Allah, God, Waheguru and all other names which are used by different people for naming the Divine. All these names represent the same eternal and infinite Consciousness. Water, Eau, Pani, Jal, Aab — as all these names represent water.

A rose called by different names remains a rose. Is it not so ?

Q: Only hearing His name, I would like to be in harmony with Him.....

Swamiji: You cannot see Him unless He shows Himself to you. You cannot force Him in anyway. You can only request Him in all humility and wait.

Q: Can you tell me why my son is sick since his eighth month ? Why has he to suffer in his body ?

Swamiji: Many factors may be involved for the suffering of a small child :

1. Some fault of the parents of the child.
2. Past *Karma* of the child.
3. God's will, which is less concerned with the temporal pains and pleasures of souls but more with the eternal freedom and happiness of souls.
4. Collective *Karma* of the society in which that child is born.

Q: Swamiji, can you tell us a story about the time you spent in the forest ?

Swamiji: Story or anecdote ? A preacher, when he would come on the stage in order to preach God to the audience, used to start with the words: "Now I tell you a story....."

An anecdote means some real happening in the life of a person, directly experienced by that person. A story means something which has not been experienced but only heard, read or imagined.

Q: I was immediately lost when I heard about the supramental consciousness.....

Swamiji: There is a hierarchy in the manifestation of consciousness in different beings. There are some higher levels than mental consciousness. Above mental consciousness there is over-mental, and above over-mental is the supramental. There are submental states of consciousness also. Consciousness in the animals, vegetables and minerals (minerals also have a certain type of consciousness in them) is submental.

The word 'man' comes from 'mind'. Man is basically a being having mental-consciousness, though supramental and bliss-consciousness too are hidden in him.

Pure Consciousness reflected in, or identified with the *Anandamaya Kosha*, is called the *Anandamaya Purusha*. *Kosha* means sheath.

The physical body is called the *Annamaya Kosha*. Consciousness reflected in or identified with the physical body is called the *Annamaya Purusha*. So there are five *Koshas* (bodies) and their corresponding five *Purushas*.

Pranamaya Kosha is immanent in *Annamaya Kosha*, but it is also above and beyond it. Similarly *Manomaya Kosha* is immanent in both *Pranamaya Kosha* and *Annamaya Kosha* and it is also beyond them. The *Koshas* are not exclusive to one another. There is only a difference of level or degree, and not of kind in all these five kinds of consciousness.

Q: Through my teaching I understand that I have to say yes to all situations, but I feel difficulties to respect it.....?

Swamiji: The mind has its own likes and dislikes. So long as one lives at the level of mental consciousness, it is not possible for one to say 'yes' to every situation one meets. You react to different situations in different ways according to your likes and dislikes. But there is another higher level or type of consciousness; when that higher consciousness is manifested in you, you can meet any situation, remaining calm and composed, and

not becoming influenced by the impact of the situation. How can a man who is identified with so many things, persons and situations be neutral to all what happens ?

Saying 'yes' to everything — what does it mean ? Religious people may call it the resignation to the will of God. It is easier for a person to resign to the will of one's beloved and say 'yes'. Love can inspire you to sacrifice anything for your beloved. But on what other basis do you say 'yes' to everything ? Why to say 'yes' to every situation ? Why not to say 'no' to what you don't like or to what does not conform to your interests ? So practically what does saying 'yes' mean ? A man comes to beat you. You say, "yes, you have come to beat me", and then you resist with all your might and even beat him back. Will it be called 'acceptance' ? If your feeling is to kill someone, should you accept it ?

So, a state of complete resignation comes to you, when you reach a certain level of consciousness. You cannot simply will to say 'yes' and to go in that state of resignation. When you are identified with your mind and through your mind, with so many things, persons and situations, you can only pretend to say 'yes'.

Saying 'yes' to everything is like saying that I am God, and everything is happening according to my will. But if a person who is weeping says so, none is going to believe him. If you can weep and say 'yes', you can also make others weep and accept that. Then you can do anything and say 'yes'.

A man sitting in the dark room may say: "The sun gives light." His statement may be correct, but the

statement does not corroborate with his experience. He is experiencing darkness and is talking of light.

One thing is the resignation of which you only talk but cannot live it. The other thing is the resignation which becomes a living experience to you, whether you speak 'yes' or don't speak at all.

Q: I don't understand why you told me there was a contradiction in my fear of death.

Swamiji: It was asked at that time: "I am afraid of death, but I do not do anything for progress on the spiritual path." So I said, it was a contradiction, because those who are afraid of death become more devoted to the path of Realization.

Q: But how to know that I am on the path ?

Swamiji: If you are afraid of coming back in the body again, you should devote yourself whole-heartedly to the path which leads you out of the vicious circle of birth and death.

Q: I feel this fear so much that I cannot be in the present.

Swamiji: To live in the present for a person identified with his/her mind is impossible. Mind cannot even grasp the present; how will it live in the present ? Mind is made of the past; even its imagination and speculation of the future is determined by its past experiences.

Q: Then, what to do ?

Swamiji: One has to go beyond one's mental

consciousness, to rise above the limitations of mind. All sorts of spiritual efforts are for that purpose only. You have not to be mindless, but mind-free.

There is a state which is submental and there is a supramental state also. Vegetables and animals are in the submental state of consciousness, they are dominated by instincts. Man is a mental being, but he can go beyond mind realizing his potential divinity. "Man is potentially divine", said Vivekananda. And, "The purpose of *Sadhana* is to manifest that divinity either by devotion/love or by knowledge, or by *Yoga*, or by all of them together."

Q: What kind of belief should I have ?

Swamiji: When a mother tells her child: "This man is your father," the child has to believe it. How can the child know it otherwise ? Even if the child tries to know it in some other scientific way, he will just have to believe it. Without believing how will he start making research ? Believe in God. Believe in your essential divine nature.

The modern man says: "I will first see and then believe." This is like putting the cart before the horse. When you have seen, you don't need to believe. Belief is needed only so long as you have not seen.

Believing is not the end. It is the beginning of *Sadhana*.

Q: But I am so doubtful....

Swamiji: First: If you believe in God, trust Him and invoke His guidance and follow some path. He will

never let you go on the wrong path. Second: Wrong path only means a longer path. And a longer path for you means, the path which is not in accordance with your aptitude and competence. Otherwise, all the paths lead to God sooner or later. Even going on a path which you call wrong, you learn something and you grow. It may only delay your arrival at the destination if you follow the so-called wrong path.

Either you give your hand (as a child gives to its mother) to God and walk, or you catch hold of the hand of God and walk with Him. You cannot walk alone (barring a few exceptions) on the path that leads to God-Realization.

Q: Seeking starts with a seeker. Does it mean ego has to be there at the beginning of *Sadhana*.

Swamiji: It does not mean that those who do not perform *Sadhana* have no ego. Their ego is very gross. They are so much identified with what is temporal that they even do not see the need for *Sadhana*. They live like animals.

It is only through a purified, analyzing faculty of reasoning or through simple faith that one seeks to go out of 'Time'. An ego dominated by discrimination, reflection and love is helpful in *Sadhana*.

Q: I feel a difference between the ego and the mind. The first one may be useful while the second can be harmful.

Swamiji: Mind and ego are not very much different. There is no difference of kind between them.

Q: Who takes decisions during *Sadhana* ?

Swamiji: It is not the ego which takes decisions. It is the *Buddhi* which takes decisions. To be more precise, it is the soul which takes decisions.

Q: Who performs *Sadhana* ?

Swamiji: Ego is rarefied matter like mind. It is the Spirit reflected in and identified with the mind plus mind, and known as soul, which seeks the Divine.

Q: *Swamiji*, you kindly explained to us that only a pure and stable mind can reflect the Spirit, then how all the souls, with their impure and unstable minds, are able to reflect the Spirit ?

Swamiji: If the Spirit is reflected in an impure mind, the reflection will not be clear. That reflection will also be distorted.

All the *Jivas* or souls are the reflection of the Spirit, but the *Jivas* are many and are of different natures depending upon the multiplicity and purity of minds.

When I say that the Spirit is reflected only in the stabilized mind, it means that the Spirit is reflected in pure and stable mind in its true nature, as it is. When the mind is not pure and stable then, reflection is there but it is distorted. Have you ever seen your face in a laughing mirror or in a broken mirror or in a dirty mirror — how does it look ?

Q: That means, God is seeking God ?

Swamiji: God as soul is seeking God as the infinite, eternal Being.

Q: Who is the true doer of *Sadhana* ?

Swamiji: The soul. Soul lasts as long as the mind lasts. Soul is phenomenal. Spirit is eternal. Mind is like a mirror. Soul is the reflection of the Spirit in mind. It is the soul that is the doer. The doer is not the body, nor the mind, nor the ego, nor even the Spirit. Spirit is pure Consciousness, it is not the doer. When Spirit is associated and identified with mind, it gives birth to a specific consciousness, which is called soul. It is the soul that is the doer.

There are two kinds of souls : the individual soul and universal soul. Individual soul is *Jivatma*. Universal soul is God — supreme Consciousness. Spirit is the common denominator of *Jivatma* and God. As Spirit identified with the individual body-mind is called the *Jivatma*, the Spirit identified with the universal body-mind is called God. As your body, pervaded by your soul, is a living individual being, similarly, the universe, pervaded by the supreme soul, is a living universal Being.

Q: And God is beyond the universal Being also ?

Swamiji: God is beyond in the sense that Spirit is beyond the universe and universal mind. So is the individual being beyond the individual body-mind. These are all metaphysical definitions. You have to realize God at first-hand.

Q: That is the mystery of life. How God, as pure Consciousness could take decisions and create the universal Being ?

Swamiji: God does not need to take decisions as you

take. The past and future do not exist for Him.

Q: My *Sadhana* has stopped. I don't know what to do.

Swamiji: Confronting oneself also is a part of *Sadhana*. *Sadhana* means confronting your mind and then trying to overcome its infirmities and weaknesses.

Q: What can be the faults of parents that make children suffer ?

Swamiji: The child can inherit physical ailments from the parents and suffer. Moreover, the child learns much when it is in the mother's womb, as also from the atmosphere of the house in which it is born. It learns more by the example of the parents than by their teachings. For example if mother and father are fighting with each other, the child (taking up those traits and tendencies unconsciously) also becomes tense and suffers.

Q: Is it good for a pregnant woman to practise *Yoga* — *Asanas* ?

Swamiji: It is not advisable for a pregnant woman to practise *Yogic Asanas* during the last three to four months before giving birth to a child.

It is very beneficial for the child in the womb if the mother practises pure thoughts and entertains constructive and positive thinking.

Q: And to teach *Hatha-Yoga* ?

Swamiji: Whatever a pregnant woman sees, hears, reads, thinks and does, has its effect on the child in her womb. Many years ago I read about a white American woman who gave birth to a coloured child.

A lot of research was done on how white parents could give birth to a child who was black. It was found that the woman, when she was pregnant, had hung a photograph of a black leader (whom she admired very much) in her bedroom and had been thinking of that leader all the time while she was pregnant. And that was the cause of her giving birth to a child of black complexion.

Q: I don't understand what you meant when you wrote on Wednesday: "On what other basis you say 'yes' to everything ?"

Swamiji: Why should you say 'yes' to all ? Why should you say 'yes' to what does not conform to your reasoning, or to what does not conform to the teaching of inspired saints and sages ?

You know, you react to a situation according to the level of consciousness in which you are at that moment. A person who is living at this level of mind which has its own likes and dislikes, its own ready-made beliefs, its own prejudices and attachments, cannot say 'yes' to everything. Even if one does so verbally, it will not mean anything. It will make the person a hypocrite.

You are guided to act or react either by instinct or by reasoning or by intuition, or else, by God's will if you have been totally freed from self-will and desire.

Q: Is this the progression on the path ?

Swamiji: An animal is dominated by instincts, man by reasoning, and a sage by intuition.

Q: Isn't the sage in God's will ?

Swamiji: Pure intuition on the part of man is God's will on the part of God.

We were drawing the circles to show the interrelation of the *Koshas*. In that case the *Annamaya Kosha* represents the smallest circle. But if you want to show the circles in relation to the *Atman* the circle of *Anandamaya Kosha* will be drawn nearest to the centre.

Q: If we integrate all the *Koshas*, will we know also all about the universe ?

Swamiji: The system of *Koshas* in man is similar to the system of planes in the universe. Every *Kosha* and *Purusha* in man has its corresponding plane and cosmic *Purusha* in the universe.

Even in an atom there is the same system. The theory of microcosm and macrocosm explains the same thing. You can understand the system of the whole universe, if you come to know the system of your individual body.

Q: Can we have a glimpse of *Anandamaya Kosha* if we are still in the mind ?

Swamiji: How can you reach the top of a building by totally living on the ground floor ? The *Anandamaya Kosha* is immanent in all the other *Koshas*. You can feel happiness when identified with your body-mind but it has a different flavour.

Q: About the utility to do reflection ?

Swamiji: These world-phenomena are inscrutable. The reasoning mind cannot understand 'how' and 'why' of many things. Moreover man cannot see through his past directly, so he cannot correlate what happens to him owing to the causes which are hidden to his physical eyes.

The seeker of Truth should reflect less on the world-phenomena and more on the spiritual Reality/Consciousness which is the ground of all existence.

It is the awareness of Reality which brings real peace, happiness and Fulfilment.

Q: What about the reflection for happiness in the world ?

Swamiji: Peace will come to the world when each and every person of the world becomes peaceful. How does a person become peaceful and happy ? You cannot make a person happy even if you make him a king. The happiness of a particular person is his/her own state of enlightened consciousness. The best you may do to make the world peaceful and happy, is to make yourself peaceful and happy first. You radiate only what you have within. If you are tense you only contribute to make the world tense. But this is a strange world. In this world, you see tense and agitated people taking out processions for world peace!

Q: Is it not possible to bring peace and happiness for others ?

Swamiji: Why not ? You should wish peace to everyone and pray for it. As a matter of fact you should pray for peace to all including yourself.

In the *Gayatri Mantra*, the person who invokes the Divine asks for enlightenment to one and all including himself/herself.

Q: Our *Karma* is made in our past lives. If we know our past, is it helpful ?

Swamiji: Yes, it is possible, but not worth trying. It may be a life-long effort to be directly aware of the relationships of your past lives ! Why not to devote one's life to the realization of the Divine ? If you come to realize the Divine, you go out of the vicious circle of cause and effect i.e. *Karma* altogether, and forever.

Q: At this moment, we are many coming from a teaching in which we work on our past to overcome it.....

Swamiji:of how many past lives ?

Q: In my case, no past lives at all. With the events of this life I had enough.....

Swamiji: It is nature that makes you forget your past life, to unburden your mind and in order that you can start afresh. You are unable to cope with the problems created by the relationships of this life, what will you do if you come to remember all your past lives also ?

Q: Swamiji, can you see our past lives ?

Swamiji: I have never wished to know other people's mind, what to say of trying to know your past lives. I don't want to encroach on your privacy.

Q: And can you see our future ?

Swamiji: In India there was a saint of very high order — Oriya Baba. Anandamayee Maa used to visit him

often to get his blessings in her early days of *Sadhana*. Oriya Baba, in his early days of *Sadhana*, wanted to have the extraordinary power of seeing other people's mind directly. He went to the temple of Kamakshi Devi in Assam, which is supposed to be a very powerful and charged place, and closed himself in a small room in the temple and started invoking the *Devi* (Goddess) of the temple to give him this power which he wanted. After a few days he started to see through the wall and could see everyone who was passing near his room, while he himself was sitting in the closed room with eyes closed. He felt disturbed by it. He could not stop himself from seeing people, even though he was sitting in a room with closed doors.

After another couple of days he started directly reading the minds of all those people whom he saw passing by his room. And he saw how all of them were thinking — ninety five percent entertaining vicious thoughts. He became very much disturbed. He wanted to stop all these visions, but could not. Then he wept and wept, and requested the *Devi* to take that power back from him. And finally he succeeded in that. He used to tell this to all his devotees.

Suppose a mother comes to know that her daughter was her enemy in their past lives, she will become very unmotherly to her. The whole world is going on because of *Maya*, because of the veil of ignorance on your eyes.

Q: Particularly during meditation, I fight so much with my mind. What should I do ?

Swamiji: The mind is like an ass. If you don't anchor

it with a peg, it will never stay at one place, unless it is completely tired and wants to sleep. The other way is to put some fodder of its liking in front of it, so that it is busy in eating it and does not move about. Which method are you adopting ?

Q: If I use a *Mantra* as fodder, I probably carry on with thoughts. What to do ?

Swamiji: You have to repeat the *Mantra* and hear the *Mantra* at the same time. If and when you start thinking during the *Mantra-Japa*, you will not be able to hear the *Mantra*.

Q: Should I try both methods before choosing one ?

Swamiji: The method which makes it easier for you to concentrate, is good for you.

Q: When we start with a *Mantra*, we belong to a family. Do we have to follow this family in order to reach God ?

Swamiji: There are hundreds of *Mantras* and paths that lead the seeker to Realization. The seeker, already oscillating in mind, does not stick to one *Mantra* and one path when he knows or has heard that there are many of them. More often than not, he/she tries many paths at one and the same time with the result that he/she cannot follow, whole-heartedly and with undivided mind, even one path and thus fails to make progress.

Having one *Mantra* and one path stops you from moving in all directions. The condition of an ordinary man is like a cart being pulled by bullocks in all

directions. The seeker should not be like that. That is why he is made to stick to one *Mantra* and one path. It is not a question of joining a family or a sect.

Q: That is right. People are going here and there....

Swamiji: There is nothing wrong in going to different saints and sages and to read many books. But a time comes, when you don't feel like doing that. You are centred and satisfied, and don't feel the need to go here and there.

Q: But the true *Guru* makes us understand this need....

Swamiji: How will you differentiate between a true and a false *Guru* when you are still seeking ? For Westerners it is very difficult to stop at one *Guru*. Am I wrong ? *Guru* means the true Master.

Q: Five years ago I read your book in French "The Practical Approach to Divinity." And ever since I repeat the beautiful sentence from your prayer, "I take to your refuge." Is it a *Mantra* which I can use ?

Swamiji: "O Lord, I take to thy refuge." This is a very powerful *Mantra*. Repeat it with all love and devotion, and with total trust.

Q: I would like to thank you for the answer you gave to me a few days ago when I spoke to you about my weakness and solitude.

Swamiji: Solitude ! You are in solitude when you are not thinking of someone or other. When you are not thinking, there is no problem for you in that moment. Isn't it so ?

Q: I feel the *Mantra* could be the peg as well as the fodder ?

Swamiji: There are many types of pegs as well as fodders. The peg support may be a divine name, a divine form or a divine idea. Fodder is like some divine qualities on which the seeker can meditate. It may also be some scene from the life of a prophet or any saint on which the mind can dwell and entertain itself.

Q: I feel sometimes *Ananda* (Bliss), and then it disappears. What do you say about it ?

Swamiji: When you see the sun or some stars from the earth or from another planet, or when you see them through the naked eye or with the aid of a powerful telescope, you see the stars/sun not alike from different places and through different means of perceptions. The thing you see remains the same, but the perception of the thing changes when you look at them from different angles and through different means of perception. As a Christian mystic said, "The doors of perception (senses and mind) must be cleansed and purified in order to have the right and correct perception of what you see."

What you call the flash or temporary vision, does not come to you in your ordinary, normal state of consciousness. It comes to you when you are composed, alert, passive, balanced and receptive.

Moreover the sun is not covered by clouds. It is your eye which is covered. When you are not seeing the sun owing to clouds, the people at other places may be seeing it.

Q: What is the cause for the holocaust ?

Swamiji: What did the Jews lose by that ? God must have sent them away from their land to learn something which they would not be able to learn there. You should tell me this, because you, being a Jew, must have reflected a lot on this question.

Q: I cannot understand what God wants to make us understand. My eyes are closed. It was already like that in the past and can be the same in future.....

Swamiji: God does not differentiate between Egypt, Israel or India. People have created boundaries and divided the earth into different countries. These boundaries are changing with time. There was a time when Pakistan did not exist. Many smaller countries are being born in Europe; some are being broken into pieces. It is the people who are doing all this.

Q: I would like some explanations about what you wrote in your book, 'Le Rosaire des instructions spontanées' page 46, aphorism 34.

Swamiji: One denotes complete self-surrender to the Divine, the other denotes self-effort aided by the Divine. As Ramakrishna would say: "There are two types of devotees. Some who are like a baby cat. A baby cat does not catch hold of its mother. It only utters 'mew, mew', and the mother holds it in her jaws and takes it to a place where it is safer for the baby. The other type is those who are like a baby-monkey. A baby-monkey holds fast to its mother itself all the time."

Q: Is there some difference of degree if the prayer is repeated in French or English or Sanskrit ?

Swamiji:

1. God knows all the languages.
2. God does not look to what you are saying, he looks to what you are feeling and what your intentions are.
3. You may not even speak but you can communicate with God. He listens to what your heart says. He can even listen to silence.

Q: (a seven years old child) How to realize God ?

Swamiji: You should not make noise when people are meditating collectively or in their rooms. If you do so, God will be happy with you and bless you. All of us have the same God within us. You may open yourself to God's love, light, power, and bliss — and you will be fulfilled.

Q: Swamiji, do you have some powers ?

Swamiji: I don't claim to have any extraordinary powers. I am fully satisfied with what God has blessed me.

Q: Where is the *Anahata Chakra* situated ?

Swamiji: In the middle of the chest.

Q: If I start to repeat the *Mantra*, I feel it will be done mechanically. What to do ?

Swamiji: Mechanical chanting means that you are orally chanting a *Mantra* but your mind is thinking

of some worldly matters. Attention should be accompanied with the chanting of the *Mantra*. So the proper method is to chant the *Mantra* and listen to that chanting at the same time. When your mind wanders, you will not be able to hear the chanting of the *Mantra*. You have to chant the *Mantra* at the heart-centre.

The heart-centre is the proper place for the practice of *Mantra*. It is not the place to visualize any image. The place for visualizing a divine form is between the eyebrows (*Agya-Chakra*).

Moreover, visualizing an image (divine form) and chanting of the *Mantra* should not be practised simultaneously. If you try to do that, your mind will be split, and you will not be able to do any of these (the chanting or the seeing of the divine form) with a total and undivided mind.

Q: I feel it already difficult to be concentrated at the heart-centre.

Swamiji: First you have to imagine that the chanting is done at the heart-centre. This is not difficult. You just close your eyes and chant the *Mantra* mentally at the heart-centre and hear it also there. You will be able to do it. Do it for a few seconds now and here.

Just keep your attention in the middle of the chest while chanting and hearing the *Mantra*.

Q: Previously you said the mind is like an ass. I feel that it is also made up of fears, all kinds of fears, and, specially, the fear of death. What can you say about

that? I become afraid when my thoughts begin to subside.

Swamiji: There are three parts of mind: Conscious mind, subconscious mind, and unconscious mind. A common man has no communication with his subconscious mind; he lives in the superficial layer of mind only called the conscious mind. Mind is made up of all kind of desires, emotions, feelings, thoughts — conscious as well as subconscious. The subconscious mind is like a big lake, and the conscious mind is just the surface of that lake. One who stands identified with one's thoughts feels as if one is dying when thoughts begin to subside — because one is not aware of one's being beyond mind.

The subconscious of different persons is different. But the unconscious of every person is the same. You are in the unconscious when you are in the deep sleep state. There is no difference between your deep sleep and A's deep sleep or B's deep sleep. When you are dreaming, you are in the subconscious. The dreams of different persons are not the same.

Q: I thought we were in pure Consciousness, when we are in deep sleep state ?

Swamiji: The deep sleep state is the most veiled state of consciousness — the veil of ignorance.

You are totally unaware of everything in deep sleep state. The only thing you are aware of in deep sleep state, is sheer ignorance. That is why, when you come out of deep sleep state, you confirm that you were not aware of anything — neither of the world nor of yourself.

Q: But something happens after this sleep, because we are fresh and relaxed.....

Swamiji: Since you are very much tense in your dreams and in your wakeful state, deep sleep state seems very peaceful to you. You do not know what peace really is. You regard peace only as absence of tension.

Q: Is there the ego in deep sleep state ?

Swamiji: Deep sleep state is the state of completely solidified ego. In your wakeful and dreaming state your ego is flexible and changing.

Q: What is the difference between the *Samadhi* and the deep sleep state ?

Swamiji: There is a similarity in deep sleep state and *Samadhi*. But they are totally opposite states. *Samadhi* is like unbearable light (to your eyes) in which you don't see anything. Deep sleep state is like utter darkness in which you don't see anything. If deep sleep state were *Samadhi*, then you would not need to do any *Sadhana* for it. You may simply take two tablets of 'Calmpose' (a tranquiliser), and you will be in *Samadhi* for four hours.

Q: In fact there are four states, aren't there ?

Swamiji: These are three states : deep sleep, dreaming and wakeful state. As *Samadhi* is different from these three states, so it is called *Turiya* in Sanskrit. *Turiya* literally means 'fourth'.

Q: What becomes of the soul during deep sleep state ?

Swamiji: The soul cannot lose awareness completely. Soul is there in the deep sleep state also. In that state soul is not aware of any objects but ignorance.

Q: And where are the conscious and subconscious mind in that state ?

Swamiji: Conscious and subconscious merge in the unconscious as they come out from the unconscious. They go back from where they had come.

Q: Where is the *Mantra* repeated during that state ?

Swamiji: The chanting of *Mantra* can be taken over by the subconscious. When it happens, the chanting goes on effortlessly.

Q: Does the subconscious mind become purified through repetition of the *Mantra* ?

Swamiji: Certainly yes. The states are different. These are the states of mind. These are the bodies of soul like the physical body. When the mind, the total mind, is purified through the repetition of the *Mantra*, it reflects the soul as it is. In a completely purified and stable mind, soul realizes its essential nature of being *Sat-Chit-Ananda*.

Q: Does the purification of one part of mind influence the other parts ?

Swamiji: These three parts are ever changing into one another. What is your conscious mind today will change into subconscious. Slowly and gradually the subconscious goes deeper and becomes unconscious. For example many things you experienced in your

childhood have been forgotten by you. They are there in the subconscious. You can again bring them to your conscious level of mind and remember them. But the experiences of past lives have gone deeper into the unconscious. They can also be brought back, but it requires special techniques and long practice. So the conscious is becoming subconscious, and then unconscious and vice versa.

Q: Where is the level of *Moksha* ?

Swamiji: *Moksha* means transcending all the levels or planes of existence. *Moksha* also means totally going out of the manifested, phenomenal world of birth and death.

Q: After liberation, are there different levels of liberation ?

Swamiji: All the levels exist in manifestation. *Moksha* can be achieved either gradually by ascending to higher and higher levels (planes) of existence, and ultimately going beyond all manifestation. Or one can directly go out of manifestation, without ascending to and going through all the higher levels. The first is called *Krama Mukti* i.e. liberation by stages, and the second is called *Jivanmukti*. In the first, you go from mind to over-mind and onto supermind — to *Ananda-Consciousness* before going out of all these stages. In the second, you jump from mind directly to the Spirit, without going through over-mind or supermind.

The Buddha jumped from mind to Spirit directly.

Q: Why don't I accept to be what I am ? As I don't

accept it, it makes me more involved in mental process and I chase the ego. I feel as if I want to escape from what I really am !

Swamiji: How will you accept to be what you are ? Do you know what you are ?

Saint Abraham once went out at midnight, far away from the village. He came across a garden with a low boundary wall. He liked that place, jumped over the wall and sat in the garden in meditation.

In the early morning the gardener came and saw a man sitting inside. He called: "Who are you?" Abraham raised his head and said: "For the last fifty years I am trying to know who I am by devoting myself exclusively to this task, and have not yet been able to know who I am."

Q: I don't know who I am, but I have the feeling of what I am.....

Swamiji: Who and what are you ? At present you are a sum total of your beliefs, opinions, desires, emotions, fears..... What more do you know of yourself at present ? You can never be what you see or feel. You can never see or feel yourself as something different from you. And if you are one with yourself and feel your oneness with yourself, how does the question of going deep into yourself arise ?

You see this chair. Can you feel oneness with the chair and accept that you are the chair. You can never experience yourself as an object different from you.

When awareness is flowing away from itself and

is identified with what it is not, it loses, as it were, its real identity. Seeing of Self does not mean seeing yourself as you see a chair. The expression 'seeing the Self' is very misleading. How can the seer be seen ? If the seer could be seen it would not be a seer. You don't realize the Self as something different from you. Self-Realization happens when you stop realizing anything else except yourself, when your whole awareness is self-centred. Now awareness is moving out. You have to turn it back to itself. That is *Sadhana*.

Q: Does awareness mean consciousness ?

Swamiji: Contentless Consciousness.

Q: And what do we understand by witness consciousness ?

Swamiji: Witness consciousness is a step down from contentless Consciousness.

Q: To be more stable on the earth, I practise exercises on the *Hara*-centre, doing Tai-Chi. Is there some contradiction with the concentration in the heart-centre ?

Swamiji: I don't know about *Hara*-centre. Heart-centre is in the middle of the chest. That is why it is best to activate and open it first. From the heart-centre, you can move up or down to work on other centres easily. Once you are able to focus your attention and concentrate on one centre, it becomes much more easy to focus on other centres. If the lower centres are activated first, there is the risk of falling into lower

and negative propensities (working of lower nature in man). If you try to activate the upper centres first, it is not only more difficult but it puts much strain on the brain and you may feel a headache or heat in your head (some people may even manifest mental symptoms). Therefore, it is always best to start from the heart-centre.

Q: How can we know, if the heart-centre is open ?

Swamiji: When your heart-centre is fully open, you develop an overflowing love and good-will towards one and all, even towards animals. You may feel like embracing even the trees out of love. You feel thrilled every moment out of love for the whole existence as if the Divine is touching you. You feel the divine Presence within and without. You become a living embodiment of love and joy. You become very magnetic, extremely lovable and loving. No one can escape you. You become irresistible and infectious.

Q: More about the terminology meaning of the word 'unconscious'. And what is the difference between deep sleep state and *Samadhi* ?

Swamiji: Unconscious is to the subconscious and conscious what a seed is to the tree. As a tree is hidden in the seed, similarly both subconscious and conscious are hidden in the unconscious.

Do you understand the difference between deep sleep state and *Samadhi* ?

Samadhi literally means the state in which mind becomes free of all doubts and questions. If a man is

able to enter *Samadhi*, he will be an enlightened person when he comes out of it. If a person goes into deep sleep state, he will be the same person when he comes out of it.

Q: Are there several kinds of *Samadhi* ?

Swamiji: *Samadhi* has many stages. I have told you the general import of *Samadhi*. The experience of *Samadhi* leaves a very, very deep influence on your mind and personality; it transforms your heart and vision. The word *Samadhi* is made of two parts, *Sama* and *Dhi*. *Sama* means balanced, composed; *Dhi* means *Buddhi*. *Samadhi* means a state when your *Buddhi* is completely satisfied, balanced and fulfilled.

Q: Is there a difference between *Buddhi* and *Bodhi* ?

Swamiji: *Bodhi* means enlightenment. *Buddhi* means intellect.

Q: My bigger pain is to have seen God and not to have been able to merge in Him.....

Swamiji: You merge in Him as soon as you see/know Him. The Upanishad says : "One who knows *Brahman* becomes *Brahman*". As a matter of fact you know *Brahman* by being one with Him. You cannot know Him as you know or see a chair.

Q: If and when I become one with God, do I see all things (as this chair) as myself ?

Swamiji: You can totally know me only if you become one with me. Otherwise, if you are not one with me, I will be hiding some part of me from you. Therefore

your knowledge of me will not be complete. It is the same with God. You know God completely if you become one with Him.

(To X) Do you hide something from your wife ?
Your bank balance ?

Q: I heard different teachings about meditation! With open eyes, with closed eyes. What do you think about that ?

Swamiji: Meditation with eyes closed is better if you don't have the tendency to go to sleep. But if you have the tendency of going to sleep during meditation, you should keep your eyes half open and see downwards, so that you don't see the objects in front of you or around you.

If you are a believer in God with form and want to contemplate on the divine form of God of your faith, you should keep the picture of that divine form in front of you. Look at it with your open eyes lovingly and imagining that the divine light and grace from that divine form is flowing to you and divinising your body and mind. This also is a sort of meditation, very useful and helpful for some people.

Q: How to be guided by a *Guru*, when we are living in America ?

Swamiji: A spiritual guide for you is the one from whom you get inspiration to follow the path of Truth. That inspiration you may get by his example, by his inspiring words, or even by his simple *Darshan*. It is not necessary that you should always be with your

Guru physically. If you are open and docile to your guide/*Guru*, and if the equilibrium of the space between you and him is not disturbed, you will receive inspiration, even if you are physically away from your *Guru*. On the other hand, even if you are staying physically near the *Guru*, but your faith, openness, loyalty to your *Guru* is not upto a certain point, if not total, you cease to get due inspiration and help from your *Guru*.

Q: I took Ramdas' *Mantra*. But as he is dead, can I be helped in the same way ?

Swamiji: Why not ? If you have full faith in Ramdas and the *Mantra* you have received, there is no reason why you should not be helped if you practise that *Mantra* regularly. The *Guru*, even if he has physically expired, can help you through his *Mantra*. So you need not change your *Guru*, if he is dead. Otherwise you will be changing your *Guru* again and again. If you do that, your mind will never become stable.

Q: As the *Mantra* is long, can I repeat only the name of Ram during meditation ?

Swamiji: If you feel it is very long, you make *Pranam* to your *Guru* first, repeat his *Mantra* three times, then make *Japa* of the small *Mantra* or holy Name which inspires you. And in the end, repeat your *Guru-Mantra* thrice again.

Q: We will be going to France soon. Your message for us ?

Swamiji: You are going back to France. But your real

home is God. As you feel that you come from France and that France is your country, similarly you have to feel that you come from God and you have to go back to Him. A man's life on earth is like an exile for him. He is a stranger in this world. He can never feel permanently at home in this world, though temporarily he may get absorbed in certain favourable conditions. Sooner or later he becomes disillusioned with the vagaries and temporalities of this phenomenal world, which can never quench the thirst of soul. It is only God who can fulfil and satisfy the soul.

Q: If I am in my truth, others are in their own truth also, and each situation has its own truth. But what can you say about the true Truth ?

Swamiji: You are confounding the appearance with Truth. What you see and experience through your senses is only the appearance. If what everyone sees and feels were the Truth, there would be no need to search the Truth, nor had you to pray to God to give you the strength to see the Truth. Phenomenal existence has two layers. The outer layer consists of your (individual) projection, and the inner layer is the projection of the universal mind. But both layers are nothing more than a projection. Truth is behind and beyond this projection. You have to go beyond the appearances to find out the Truth. Once you have discovered the Truth, the appearance will cease to disturb you. The discovery of Truth gives you lasting, unshakable peace, happiness, life, and light.

Q: If everything is God, all is for God. I am also God. Why in that case should I go to God ?

Swamiji: When you directly realize that everything is God and you are God, then there will be no need for you to go to God.

Q: Is the real Truth not the same as God ?

Swamiji: Truth is one. It lasts forever. It is timeless. It never waxes and wanes. And it is the infinite Consciousness that reflects these above mentioned attributes, if you call them attributes. You may call this infinite, divine Consciousness by the name of God or by whatever you like.

Q: What are your impressions concerning the USA ?

Swamiji: A Kashmiri Pandit (a journalist who was also a member of the Press Trust of India), Mr. Tupchi, was very fond of going to and living in USA. He went to Nepal, and from there managed to get into USA. There, he somehow got a green card.

After many years he got my Haridwar address from someone in Kashmir and wrote to me a letter, indicating therein a great frustration about the life in USA, in spite of all the physical comforts provided by most modern gadgets. I still remember one sentence of his letter: "India is Haridwar; the USA, Hollywood."

Q: Will you allow seekers from other religious faiths to come and meditate in Sadhana Kendra Ashram ?

Swamiji: Mr. Mustafa was a jew converted to Sufism. He is a USA citizen. He is these days taking meditation classes in the USA.

He once came to Sewak-Niwas (our previous *Ashram*) and offered *Namaaz* three times daily. It was

the month of *Ramzan*, the month in which Muslims observe fast. He also was observing fast. He used to eat early in the morning at four o'clock and then around eight o'clock in the evening after seeing the moon. We arranged facilities for him in our *Ashram* so that he could observe his schedule of fast.

Afterwards he wrote in a letter to one of his friends at the Lahore University, an Arabic scholar, "Now I understand why Europeans and people from the West come to India for spiritual guidance, and why they don't go to Pakistan for that. Hindus don't interfere with your religious beliefs. They welcome you even in temples. But can you allow a Hindu to observe his religious rites in a mosque ?"

We welcome the sincere seekers of all faiths in our *Ashram* for meditation.

Q: I noticed that the people here who keep silence all speak the same dialect of silence. They all make the same gestures and click-sounds as Swamiji.

Swamiji: When you live with a deaf and dumb person, you also tend to be the same.

Have you heard of Bulleh Shah, the great Sufi poet of Punjab ? He has written very inspiring, straightforward, spontaneous and non-sectarian poetry. Of course for that reason he was dubbed as *Kafir*, an infidel, though he came from a highly religious, Muslim family. Very inspiring and divine poetry flowed from him. In one of his couplets he says, "Let Bulleh go and live now in a place where no one admires me, where no one has faith in me, where no one knows about my

bonafides. I now really love to go to the place of dumb and deaf people.”

Q: I have visited many renowned saints in India and their *Ashrams* with their publicity departments to attract more and more people. However with you, it is quite different here.

Swamiji: Have you observed the saints and sages who become very renowned and consequently very rich with a very big organization and intellectuals around them? They become no less than a prisoner, like a President or a Prime Minister, who cannot be available to the poor and to the masses in general. They must even keep security guards; they cannot move alone; you cannot contact them directly. You have to meet them through very influential mediators if you can manage that. You have to stand in line for hours only to have their *Darshan*. You cannot talk directly to them. You may even have to bow to them and touch their feet, though unwillingly, and all that. An upright person must get fed-up one day with all this nonsense and would like to go out of the trap which he himself has created with great effort.

That is what Bulleh is expressing. When you are a President, you must have your political advisors, economic advisors, your security staff, your private secretary, chief secretary, additional secretary, joint secretary, and even very scholarly persons to write the speeches you are to deliver. One has to pass through all of them to meet the President. Can you go and meet the President of your country and talk to him directly? It will be a miracle for you if you can do that.

Q: Do ghosts exist ?

Swamiji: There were two men sitting side by side in a railway train. One asked the other: "Do you believe in ghost ?" The other replied: "Yes", and disappeared.

Q: I only remember a passage in the Bible, where it is said that after Jesus' death, the holy ghost came to the apostles; and then they could speak languages they had never learned — so that they could preach the gospel in other countries.

Swamiji: So the holy ghost, by your explanation, is the ghost who can speak many languages. (Laughter)

In Christianity, when a man dies, they say that the body left the holy ghost (or soul). In India they say that the soul left the body. What a contrast ! Do you understand ?

Q: I was taught that after death soul goes to heaven. The body also goes there but not before the Judgement Day.

Swamiji: Ghost, according to Hindu phraseology, is a disembodied and dissatisfied soul. When a man dies with many strong unfulfilled desires, he becomes a ghost, meaning that his soul does not go ahead on its journey because of its strong attachment and pull towards material and earthly objects and relationships. So these souls, in the form of ghosts, wander around the objects and persons with whom they had been very much attached.

Hindus perform some rituals to relieve a soul from wandering and guide the soul to proceed onto the right

path — to other planes of existences.

Q: Are these wandering souls what they call *Asura* ?

Swamiji: *Asura* means a person of *Tamasic* nature. If you read the 'Tibetan Book of the Dead', you will know how the Tibetans guide the departed soul on its journey after death ?

Q: Shri Nisargadatta Maharaj has written that reincarnation does not exist. Hinduism and Tibetan Buddhism believe in it. What can you say about it ?

Swamiji: What he has said is both true and untrue. True in the sense that reincarnation ceases for one who is perfectly enlightened, free from desires, attachments and prejudices, beliefs and mental complexes. But for those who are still a part of this phenomenal world, full of stress and strain, complexes, knots and attachments, reincarnation is a must.

Reincarnation means change of form. How would you deny it ? The whole world is changing. Your body is changing every moment and in that sense you are being reincarnated continuously. You can not stop this change. Change is the very substance of this phenomenal world. But there is something which never takes birth or dies. That is the infinite, eternal Consciousness. From the standpoint of infinite, eternal, divine Consciousness, reincarnation, birth, or death are only fiction.

Q: Tibetan Rinpoches make a vow to come again and again until every being is liberated.

Swamiji: Those Rinpoches have a *Samkalpa*, a desire,

to come back to the world to help suffering humanity. That desire brings the soul back. That desire is the last desire. You may call it a noble desire if you so like. It is the last obstacle in the attainment of complete freedom and enlightenment. A chain is a chain whether it is made of gold or iron.

Q: That means, they are not totally free ?

Swamiji: They have chosen not to be free for some time.

All those religion which were born in India — Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism, believe in the theory of reincarnation. Even the Sufis believe in it. There is a poem from Jalal-ud-Din Rumi which clearly indicates that he believed in the transition of the soul from minerals to plants, to animals, to human beings, to gods. Christianity has not touched this subject. Islam does not believe it.

Liberation from the phenomenal word is the goal.

Q: X hands to Swamiji a cushion specially manufactured for him. Then someone observes: "So you give us spiritual uplifting, and we give you physical care."

Swamiji: I have, in my life, cared very little for this body. But everything has to be paid for in this world. So, now, I am forced to serve this body as per medical advice. I have to spend three to four hours per day now to serve this thing. I wonder if it is right. Should I continue with or let go ? What is your advice ?

Q: What else could you do ?

Swamiji: Let it go.

Q: Does that mean to do nothing ?

Swamiji: It reminds me of a couplet from an Urdu poet. He says, addressing his life: "I will accompany you, my life, so long as you go along. But, O life, I know for certain that you are not trustworthy and will surely betray me one day."

Q: Did you feel relief in following the prescription ?

Swamiji: Have you heard the story of a doctor ?

A doctor, a very popular one, worked hard in his life and, naturally, he became very rich. He had two sons. One of his sons also wanted to become a doctor. With the influence and reputation of his father he got a seat in the medical course, and after four or five years he became a qualified doctor. His father said: "I have worked hard in my life for you and your brother, I feel quite tired now. I want to go on a holiday for six months to Switzerland. Please take good care of regular patients who are coming to my clinic till I come back." So the father went on a holiday for six months.

When he came back, he found that no old patient of his was coming to his hospital anymore. He asked his son what had happened. The son replied: "Respected father, you will be glad to learn that I have cured all your patients, so they are not coming now." The father became very angry and said : "You are very stupid. Do you think I could not cure them ? You should have waited for another three to four years to cure them, till your younger brother would also have

become a medical graduate.”

Sometimes I have second thoughts on continuing my treatment from doctors.

Q: How to go over from the life of personal interest to the path of love and service ? Is ego not involved in service or *Sadhana* ?

Swamiji: There is a little difference between ego and mind. It will be a great misfortune for man to be mindless or egoless. That will mean going down the ladder of evolution. Nature has taken millions and millions of years to evolve a mind from matter and created man. And man is only a transitional being. From selfish mind he has to go over to refined and pure mind/ego and then transcend it. To give up personal interest totally is easy to say, but almost next to impossible for a layman. This life-interest has to be changed, transformed for a better and higher cause, for higher values, before it can be totally transcended. It is the most difficult task or achievement for a person to become a non-person. It is far easier for you to be a king or the President of your country than to be a non-person. You cannot give up your mind/ego at once. Even to desire for the giving up of one's ego is the working of the ego. How will you give it up ? Ego subsides by itself when it is purified, transformed, centred in the Divine. There is no other direct way of being egoless. There are certain steps or things which purify and weaken your ego, say — service done out of love, reflection, prayer, meditation, listening to and association with inspired sages, etc.

Q: When I want to be present ‘here and now’, I feel

it has already passed. What does that mean — to be 'here and now'?

Swamiji: As soon as you think of the present, it has already turned into past. It is impossible to grasp the present with mind. The present is timeless. You cannot think of it, though you can be in it, and consciously. When your mind/ego completely subsides, you are in the present. It happens. You cannot do it by will or effort. Self-effort has its own utility in *Sadhana*, but it cannot make you enter into the timeless 'here and now'.

Q: Can a practice be done to become more and more aware ?

Swamiji: Yes. Love, deep interest, slowing down of the breathing process, and relaxation make you more and more aware. So you should cultivate these qualities in you.

Q: To have no mind — is it to be immersed in the Self?

Swamiji: To be mindless and to be free of mind are not the same things. I won't advise you to try to be mindless. This pen is mindless. Would you like to be like this pen ?

Q: When we live consciously in the 'here and now', are we aware ?

Swamiji: You cannot be 'here and now' wilfully. I wrote it already. 'Now and here' happens to you when you are free from the thinking mind and ego.

Q: Is nature mindless ?

Swamiji: Mind is part of nature.

Q: But nature does not commit errors or mistakes.

Swamiji: The part can commit a mistake, 'the whole' cannot. I said mind is part of nature. The feeling of the part as being different from 'the whole' creates the whole problem. This feeling is not real. As a matter of fact, 'the whole' cannot be divided into parts. You have to do it, to make 'the whole' intelligible to mind.

Q: (A ten years old girl) Why did you stop speaking?

Swamiji: I have been speaking and speaking for over thirty years, and nothing has changed in the world. The world situation is going from bad to worse. I became silent. May be if people don't speak too much and do not impose their ready-made beliefs on one another (political, social and religious beliefs and opinions), the world situation will become better. But this is not the motive of my being silent. It is unmotivated silence.

Q: I was told to do some techniques to open *Chakras*. What is your advice to that.

Swamiji: *Chakra* means a trap, where the energy gets trapped. Don't be trapped with any *Chakra*. Just pray, meditate, reflect, practise breathing exercises, read inspiring books — not philosophical books but those which encourage you to be regular in prayer and meditation — and all your *Chakras* will open in due course of time.

Q: I knew your answer more or less but as the transformation of our personality is so slow.....

Swamiji: Transformation is not a miracle or a flash. It is a very slow process. Nature has taken billions of years to transform you from a stone into a person. Now, as a person, you have reached the stage where you can cooperate with that evolutionary, divine force and speed up the pace of your evolution — that is *Sadhana*. You can also resist or oppose that evolutionary divine force. Don't expect that transformation will come in a day or two. Just work sincerely and forget everything about the result. People work for lives after lives to realize the Divine. Don't be so impatient. Impatience creates tension and delays your transformation.

Q: Swamiji, we are so very fortunate to follow your teachings; we have received so much from you. Do you think, if our *Chakras* are opened by the right people, our energy will flow harmoniously and we may be in a position to help distressed people around us ?

Swamiji: In the *Sadhana* of opening *Chakras* three things are mainly involved, which are not practicable for you to follow. That is why I have never stressed this *Sadhana* to the Westerners or even common Indian people. If this *Sadhana* goes wrong, it either brings about a nervous breakdown or damage to the brain and harm to the physical body also. The three main factors involved in the opening of these *Chakras* as a *Sadhana* are :

1. The perfection of posture, sitting erect with the spine and neck in the straight line, at least for two and a half hours at a time.

2. Practice of *Pranayama* at least four times a day regularly, which is a very tedious job for a layman. If the method of *Pranayama* goes wrong, it can also do much harm to the nervous system. And during this practice strict celibacy is to be maintained and very rich food like butter has to be adequately taken, otherwise the nerves become dry and one may develop chronic headache, migraine etc.

3. The most important factor is fixing of attention on these *Chakras* daily and regularly (without any break in schedule) for many, many years. All this is possible only for a person who follows the rules strictly and devotes oneself exclusively to this type of *Sadhana*. It is almost impossible for a layman or laywoman.

The other way — very simple and easier — is the devotion, the remembrance of the Divine with love, meditation and simple breathing exercises. All these, too, tend to influence, purify, and open those *Chakras*. Through deep and strong devotion too, the *Chakras* open. Ramakrishna Paramahansa did not do any special *Sadhana* for the opening of the *Chakras*, but by the sheer force of his zeal, burning love for God, his *Chakras* opened, one by one. But he observed celibacy so strictly that he regarded his wife as his mother — that you know.

Q: The last time I was here, you said that the *Guru* can take upon him the disease of his devotees. Would it also be possible for a disciple to take upon him the disease of his Master ?

Swamiji: There is the possibility, sure. But the cases

are very rare in which the suffering of one person can be wilfully taken by another person. It is quite obvious that the *Karma* or position of one person can influence the life of other persons. For example, if you become the President of France (which perhaps you would deny to be interested in), your whole family will be benefited by it.

In the Hindu tradition it is accepted, that if a member of a family really becomes an enlightened sage, the whole family gets a push-up in evolution.

As for sharing the physical suffering of others, it is also possible. If your will is very strong and you wish most sincerely that the suffering of some other person be transferred to you, it will come to you, provided, the other person whose suffering you want to take upon you is also willing for that. Otherwise, it will be a transgression on your part to interfere with the private life of another person.

Q: I asked for a private meeting. But now I feel that the question I want to ask you is also a question felt by the others.

Swamiji: If I am not wrong, ninety nine percent of the problems of all of you are the same.

Q: Even I feel as a tourist, I would like to do my *Sadhana* in your presence.

Swamiji: Tourism is for what ? To see and enjoy the different places, you have not seen ? You have been a chronic tourist for innumerable past lives, but you are still unsatisfied. Jesus said: "The eyes can never

be satisfied by seeing the objects, and ears cannot be satisfied by hearing and similarly all the other senses." It is a truism confirmed by all those who have experimented with life and experienced and discovered the Truth of life/existence.

But if you travel to gain experience and to learn and grow spiritually, then traveling may be considered as a part of *Sadhana*. That is what makes the difference between a tourist and a pilgrim.

Q: I would like to be in seclusion to be able to confront me with myself.

Swamiji: Physically it is not so difficult. He can go into A's room and close himself up there. We will give him food at a fixed time in his room. But will this alone make him secluded ? You are in seclusion only when you give up your mind. Otherwise, even if you are sitting in a closed room, you are actually in a supermarket. Your mind is projecting hundreds of images.

Q: Can there be desire without attachment ?

Swamiji: Desire, need and attachment are different things, though they seem to be similar. Yes, desire can be there without attachment. You may have the desire to fulfil certain obligations without having any attachment.

Q: So attachment is the cause of suffering ?

Swamiji: There is a desire born of attachment. That desire is also the cause of suffering like its mother.

Q: I don't know what I want. Can you tell me what I want ?

Swamiji: It is the question I should ask you. What do you want ? You can know better than me about what you want. There is a want, there is a desire, there is a need, there is a requirement. What do you mean when you say: What do I want ?

I know, you don't want a boy-friend. I know, you don't want a car. I know, you don't want a house. I know, you don't want a 'want'. If you think deeply, I hope, you will agree with me. Think over it today, and tell me tomorrow whether you agree with me or not.

If I give you very delicious food but say that you cannot eat it, will you accept it ? You will not. It means you do not actually want delicious food but something else through delicious food. Am I right ? Please think over it ? Don't react with your old beliefs and convictions.

Q: Does responsibility in the egoless state of mind/consciousness still exist ?

Swamiji: Where there is no mind, no ego, there cannot be any sense of responsibility. In that state of consciousness all your actions are totally free and come out of joy (and not for joy). These activities are not the result of any desire, responsibility, mission, motivation or obligation; they are the expression of inner divine joy. So they never happen in contradiction to the cosmic, divine law.

Q: Is it what you call 'spiritual Fulfilment' the

establishment in the egoless state of mind/consciousness? And does it happen/is it felt at a definite point in time, just as Enlightenment ?

Swamiji: Spiritual Fulfilment is the stabilization of Realization which in turn follows Enlightenment. It is immanent in time and yet transcends time. It happens in the sense that it cannot be achieved by self-effort alone.

Q: So there is Enlightenment, Realization, and Fulfilment ?

Swamiji: Enlightenment is like a flash. It comes and it may go also. When the flash of Truth happens again and again, it starts turning into Realization. And the highest consummation (the highest peak) of Realization is Fulfilment. It never waxes and wanes. It is constant in time, but is timeless at the same time.

Q: Concerning my question of yesterday — “I don’t know what I want.” The people I know who walk on the path go out in the world to look for a Master. But A came to me. It was like a revelation. Then I met Yvan, then you. I feel something is growing in me. But in my normal life it goes away. And I would like to be established in it.

Swamiji: Your normal life ! What is normal; what is abnormal ?

A man was lost in a forest known to be full of wild elephants, robbers, lions and so on. He was very scared. At a distance he saw a small house which was a forest house with two, three rooms and a guard of the house. He went there and asked: “Will you please

allow me to spend one night here ? I have lost my way." The guard said: "Sure, very gladly. You can stay; you are most welcome." The guard looked very strong, robber-like, and ferocious. The visitor became scared of the guard himself, and having some negative thoughts in his mind, asked the guard: "Sir, you have been living here for many years as you say, has something abnormal ever happened in this house ?"

The guard said: "Yes, Sir."

"What was that ?" asked the visitor.

The guard replied, "Only once, since I am here, a man who came to stay in the house for the night, went back alive. This was the only abnormal thing that happened here during the past forty to forty five years."

Q: May I ask one more question ?

Swamiji: Everytime X puts a question, he says : "It is my last question."

Q: I mean the last question for the time being.

Swamiji: (to X) So you still have many questions ?

Q: No more ! At least not so urgently. But it is much fun to produce questions and make the mind reason again.

Swamiji: Mind is a thought manufacturing machine. As soon as you identify yourself with anything, the machine starts working. And eventually you become that machine, like a robot, without having any control on your thoughts. Am I right ?

Q: You are totally right.

Swamiji: Your saying the word 'totally' mechanically is similar to the working of the machine. Thought leads you away from yourself. It makes you object-centred. That being the case, you miss yourself. That is why the total cessation of the modifications of mind is mandatory for Self-Realization. Patanjali defines *Yoga* as the complete stopping of the modifications of mind, that is of thoughts.

Q: When there is no modification of mind anymore, no thoughts anymore, do you still perceive that mind exists at all ?

Swamiji: When mind stops, the supermind takes over. You start to act and reflect through a higher consciousness called supermind. There is a transition. When animal-mind stops, the human-mind takes over. But human-mind is not the ultimate step in evolution. As a matter of fact the transition is not sudden. When human-mind emerges there are still some traces of animal-mind left, which remain active for some time in the life of a man.

Q: Do all these processes take place in human beings ?

Swamiji: The process works both individually and on the universal plane.

Q: Can we differentiate between the human-mind and the supermind ?

Swamiji: How do you differentiate between an animal-mind and a human-mind ? You can only do that, if you are something beyond both these categories. Similarly,

essentially you are something beyond and more than the supermind. That is why you have the ability to discriminate or compare.

Q: Is there some utility of silence when we keep relations with others through writing ?

Swamiji: Yes, it has some benefit. You have control on many matters on which, otherwise, you would indulge in talking. You may ask A how difficult it is for her to be silent. In speaking you can say many contradictory things, but in such a way that no one may notice it. You are more political when you speak. But when you write, you must be to the point, your thoughts must be crystallized. But true silence comes when your speech and thought are fully under your control.

Q: Missing.....

Swamiji: Mixed breeding is done either to make the breed better or to produce a new kind of breed. Even in plants they are producing many new types of plants and fruits by this process. You know 'Keenoo' is a citrus fruit produced by mixed breeding of oranges and Malta.

The purpose of *Sadhana* too is to transform one type of life into the other, the last being the transformation of man into God. But it is a transformation from within. It cannot be achieved by cross-breeding.

Q: I feel the fear of death so deep that my meditation stops.

Swamiji: Fear of death is the messenger to wake you up from the slumber of appearance. You may be consciously afraid of death; all people are afraid of death though unconsciously. The ninth Sikh Master, Guru Teg Bhadur says: "Life after life I have been moving in this impermanent world with fear of death in my mind. But it has not ceased in spite of all my self-effort. Nanak says, O mind, remember you constantly the Lord, Hari; only then you will become fearless."

Without Realization of one's essential, divine, eternal Being, it is impossible to dispel the fear of death. Realization does not come by self-effort alone. Self-effort must be aided by divine grace. Hence the invocation to the Lord for His divine grace.

Q: Which is the best way of helping a person when he or she is dying ? My mother is near her end, and Tibetans have written of procedures to help the transition.

Swamiji: You should pray for her and perform the funeral and all the rites through a Christian priest according to the faith of your mother. You may also give alms to deserving poor or invalid people in her name, if you can afford to do so. Man comes alone and goes away alone from this world. No one, howsoever close one may be to the deceased, can accompany him/her in the next journey. Only one's *Karmas*, one's beliefs, one's *Samskaras* (impression of one's experiences) go with the soul.

The ninth Sikh *Guru* wrote beautiful poetry in Punjabi, full of dispassion and faith in God and His

holy Name. His whole writing is very, very inspiring. He says, in this respect, in one of his poems :

“The path in which no one can accompany you and which you have to travel alone — you cannot even take your sleeping-bag or tooth-brush with you — only the holy Name of God can help you. Where all friends, father, mother, son cannot, in anyway help you in that journey after death, O mind, it is only the holy Name which you have practised all your life, which guides your way.....” And so on. It is a very big poem.

There is an anecdote in Guru Nanak's life. A millionaire, a very miserly person — most millionaires are miserly persons — who had hoarded much wealth, estate and worldly things, once was taken by one of his friends to Guru Nanak. The man did not believe in God and in saints, but just by the persuasion of his friend, who was an admirer of Guru Nanak, went to see him. Guru Nanak was an ever so God-intoxicated saint. Whatever he spoke, it flowed spontaneously in the form of divine poetry. He had very great spiritual magnetism. Though he was an uneducated and illiterate man, owing to his magnetism, people of all faiths — Hindus, Muslims etc. flocked to him, to see him and to be near him; they found very deep peace in his nearness. When the millionaire saw Guru Nanak, he was very much impressed. Never before in his life had he felt such peace and inner joy, as he did on seeing Guru Nanak and sitting near him. He became so absorbed in himself that he didn't notice that people came and went. One hour, two hours passed; it started becoming dark. All people left. But

he still sat there. When he opened his eyes he found himself sitting alone in front of Guru Nanak. He could not restrain himself. He said, "Sir, I have enjoyed all the pleasures of the world. I have so much money, so much estate but within me I have always been missing something. Truly speaking I am so sad within. But here, near you, I have felt such an inner joy which I have never tasted before, not even for a second in my life. Please guide me and show me the true path." Guru Nanak Dev did not give him any oral teaching. Instead he gave him a needle and asked him: "Please keep it with you and give it back to me in your next life." The man was nonplussed and said, "Sir, how can I carry this needle with me when I die ? It is totally impossible. No one can do that." Guru Nanak smiled and said, "If you cannot carry even a needle with you into your next life, then why are you hoarding so much money, estate and so many unnecessary possessions ?" These words went straight into the heart of the man, awakening him, as it were, from a great slumber. He came to realize instantly that he was treading a wrong path of living. He kept his head at the feet of Guru Nanak and wept bitterly, repenting on his wrong attitude towards life. Guru Nanak lifted him up and embraced him saying, "God is so great and gracious. He has accepted you even though you did not believe Him. Go back home and always remember Him with every breath." The man went back, distributed all his wealth among the needy and the poor, opened some charitable, free schools and free kitchen for poor people; and devoted himself exclusively in the remembrance of the Divine.

Q: Is the fact of being more and more fed up with thoughts a help to give up the mind ?

Swamiji: The best thing is to give up one's mind totally. That is what is called self-surrender. If that could happen, things would start working in the right way, which would be good for everyone in the long run. But that is the most difficult thing to happen. Giving up your mind makes you feel as if you are dying; it creates fear; it gives you a sense of insecurity, that is the problem. But there is no other permanent solution. As long as ego is working, it creates problems and occupies itself in solving them. Thus life goes on, and one misses the opportunity provided for Self-Realization.

Just throw your mind away. Say good-bye to it. It has already befooled you for millions and millions of years. Your mind, full of all sort of garbage, is like a cage. You have become attached to the cage. You have just to see it clearly, that it is a cage. Because of living in this cage for such a long time, you have come to love it. You feel that now you cannot do without it.

Nature abhors vacuum. As soon as you give up your mind, a higher force, a conscious force, takes over and your life works more smoothly. There is less friction, less pain, less tension. There are so many grades of consciousness, higher and higher and higher. And by leaving the lower one behind, you go on receiving the higher one, which guides your life better.

It is good to be fed-up with thoughts. If you are not fed-up with them, you will go on cherishing them

and you will never be out of them. Thoughts arise or come from outside, and you identify yourself with them and start working on them. Just observe thoughts coming and do not attach yourself with them. They will start subsiding. It is your identification with them that sustains them.

Q: Should we treat all kind of thoughts in the same way ?

Swamiji: It is very difficult to get rid of all the thoughts at once. Thoughts can just be classified into two categories: Good thoughts and bad thoughts. Good thoughts are those which are concerned with the good of others or with one's moral and spiritual upliftment. Bad thoughts are those which are concerned with harming or disturbing others, or those which create restlessness and tension within your own self. Bad thoughts are to be totally avoided and shunned. They lead to one's downfall. But good thoughts can again be classified into two categories: Important good thoughts and unimportant good thoughts. Important good thoughts are those good thoughts which are concerned with the present. You should try to see to it that such good thoughts materialize, — make the effort for it earnestly and faithfully. The unimportant good thoughts are those which are not concerned with the present. They are concerned either with the future or the past. Such unimportant good thoughts should also be avoided and kept pending. If you follow the above rule, your mind will be much more unburdened and light. Now it is only like a supermarket in which you can have meat, eggs, sweets, lipsticks, cloths, cars, spiritual books, rations etc.

Q: How did the world come into being ? X told me about a version from a scripture.

Swamiji: It is better to start from the inquiry 'what is this world' than to inquire 'who created it, how it was created and why it was created'.

What is this that you are seeing ? Are you seeing it as it is really ? Or are you seeing it according to your own ready-made beliefs ? May be you are seeing a snake for a rope. But it is even better to start the inquiry from asking: "Who am I ?" What if I know the whole universe and do not know myself ? The Upanishad expresses it: "How to know the knower ?"

Knowledge can never be complete without directly knowing one's true and essential Being. As for how did the cosmos come into being, there are different versions in different scriptures. Even the Upanishads describe it differently at different places.

Q: You told me that will-power has no place in *Sadhana*, that we have to develop self-surrender.

Swamiji: You start with aspiration and will-power, and end up with complete self-surrender. Where is the contradiction ? Self-surrender is the end. Aspiration and spiritual effort are the beginning. Where are you ?

Q: May you start to speak again ?

Swamiji: People have been hearing me for the last forty years and putting the same questions for the last forty years and hearing almost the same answers for the last forty years. And the same questions still fill them. They go to all the saints and ask the same

questions again and again. So there is something wrong.

Q: What is the best way to get total concentration ?

Swamiji: *Naam-Japa* is a very efficient and powerful technique to break the process of thinking, should one follow it with total faith and a certain degree of concentration. It has been devised by the sages and *Rishis* on the basis of deep knowledge of mind, and it is practised in almost all the religions in one form or the other. Even those who follow the path of knowledge practise *Naam-Japa* in their own way.

Q: How to observe thoughts ? When I sit for observing my thoughts, I am lost in the unrest of thoughts.

Swamiji: You are confusing the observation of thoughts with analysing your thoughts. Analysing of thoughts is a process of mind. Observation involves looking passively at your thoughts. If you follow the second method, mind slows down and thoughts start subsiding.

Q: Is there a difference between the power/*Shakti* behind thoughts and that observation of thoughts ?

Swamiji: Seeing is not thinking. Thinking is energy — *Shakti*. Seeing is Consciousness — *Shiva*. In manifestation they are intermixed and give rise to another type of conscious-energy which is called *Jiva*, which is *Aham Praty Gochar* (that which you refer to as I).

Q: When I sit observing thoughts, I lose my consciousness of observation and thoughts continue to play in successive chains.

Swamiji: The chain of thoughts starts when you stop seeing thoughts/objects; when you identify yourself with it, and start interpreting it; then mental process starts and seeing stops. Seeing does not start the chain of thoughts. It makes thoughts subside. The purpose of all *Sadhana* is to do away with that identification. It needs dispassion, regular and continuous practice of seeing dispassionately at different situations in day-to-day activities. It needs prayer and most earnest aspiration to overcome the modifications of mind. Thinking has a very deep connection with the pace of breathing. The same with awareness. Therefore, some breathing exercises are also resorted to in order to slow down the mind. Then there is right thinking, reflection and so many other factors which are involved in making the mind passive completely.

Q: In meditation sessions one is expected to merge his individual consciousness with all-round consciousness. Why does this not happen with me ?

Swamiji: You have learned *Sanskrit* for so many years and taught it for so many years, even then you may not be perfect in your subject. How can one expect to lose all one's thoughts — undo the traps, which one has created laboriously for years and years for oneself, in a day or in a month and become totally thought-free and perfectly absorbed in one's true Self ?

Those people who have the aspiration to go out of the rut of mechanical thinking remember the Divine. They sit for it and try. That is a great thing in itself.

Q: Swamiji, have you been reading many books ?

Swamiji: As for me, I have not read any book for over last twenty five years with an interest to know something pertaining to spirituality. Though I have casually seen pages here and there, in the books brought or offered to me by the devotees. By reading two or three pages of a book, most often, I come to know what the whole book is meant to convey.

Q: Missing.....

Swamiji: If all the persons in the world would have identical opinions and thinking, the world would cease to exist.

Swamiji: The world comes out due to the unbalance of forces. The world is movement. When there is complete equilibrium of all forces, there can be no movement. The *Sankhya* system defines the world as a state of disturbed equilibrium of the three *Gunas*, — three forces or qualities. It says that when there is total balancing of all the forces, the world merges into its ultimate source, that is *Brahman* or Godhead.

Q: Would you please teach us the first step in the art of agreeing in difference ?

Swamiji: You have to accept and realize the most stern fact of manifestation — that is diversity in unity and unity in diversity. Should you grasp it not only intellectually but very deeply in your heart and by all the parts of your personality, the art of agreeing in difference will be as spontaneous to you as breathing. To realize the above mentioned truth directly, you have to undergo years and years of right thinking, reflection,

right conduct, prayer, meditation, contemplation etc.

Disharmony is created when you don't accept to agree in difference.

Q: I am often thinking these days of the discourse Krishna gives to Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita, encouraging him to fight for a righteous cause. So fighting cannot always be avoided.

Swamiji: But fighting is advised to restore peace only when all other methods of compromise have failed and fighting only for self-defence and not for conquering others.

Q: Every plant and animal is food for another being. But who is man food for ?

Swamiji: All this process is going on in every living being what you call metabolism.

Everything on earth comes out of earth and then goes back to earth. Our body comes out of earth, it is made of food which is a product of earth (even the bodies of animals are made of earth) and we eat it. It is transformed into body, senses and mind. At death the physical body goes back to earth. A new physical body is created for the mind, so that it can work out its desires. Even if there are beings higher than man, nearly the same process is going on there too.

On earth, matter determines everything. Your physical body depends upon food. If you don't give food to the physical body, even your senses and mind will become weaker and weaker.



SECTION - 2

Q: Could you talk to us about meditation ?

Swamiji: When you have learnt non-doing, you have achieved all that can be done through doings. Meditation is a state of complete, alert passivity, but ordinarily it is very difficult to sit without thinking anything. When you sit, thoughts arise from within or they come from without and enter your mind. What you have to do here is to sit relaxed and simply watch your thoughts as a witness, remaining alert without identifying yourself with them. Alertness is the key. You have to be alert all the time, and you have to watch your thoughts. You have not to think that you are watching. You have simply to watch.

If you are able to do this, thoughts will slowly subside and your mind will be silent but alert. Before starting to watch, you may breath deeply for about five minutes. It will help you in making your mind calm. Also, before meditation, (relating to the daily meditation at Tantur), a short prayer will be read which all of you should hear and feel at the same time. Do not try to do anything in meditation. If you see or hear or experience anything extraordinary during meditation, don't try to interpret it — simply

watch it. Experiences come when your mind is calm and quiet. These experiences come to change something in you. Just be passive and let them be assimilated by your inner mind. Don't try to interpret them; don't let your physical mind interfere with their working.

Q: At the Courmettes in France, during a meditation session with you, I felt something very strong. My heart was touched and I couldn't bear it. What must I do ?

Swamiji: You have tasted the love of Consciousness, wherein everything is linked with the Divine and is the Divine. The taste of this experience is very sweet and it helps you to grow in the Divine.

Keep this taste with you. Let it be more and more settled in you. Cherish it. Entertain it in your heart again and again, it will enhance the pace of your spiritual growth.

Q: I have tasted a little of what it is like to live in that love of Consciousness where everything is linked, or is God. I felt alive, but now most of the time I feel the relativity of *Maya*, and when I go deeper into this feeling, I sometimes feel as though I am touching on a craziness. Am I in a kind of desert, or am I completely wrong ?

Swamiji: The relativity of every object or situation or event in this world is quite so obvious. If you stop and think for a while, you feel this relativity. There is no absoluteness with anything that is connected with this world. The ground of this whole world, which is relative, is a spiritual Absolute. It is called God or the Divine.

You have to be more and more aware of this spiritual Absolute. This alone will fulfil you.

Q: How are we to understand the resurrection of Christ? What is the Holy Spirit, and how is it acting in our lives at this time?

Swamiji: The resurrection of Christ is true. It signifies that the enlightened one never dies. There is no death for one who has realized one's eternal and absolute nature. There is no other way of overcoming the fear of death or death itself except by discovering one's immortal, true and eternal Being.

Divine Spirit is there in everyone, but very few let it work freely in themselves. Your ego does not let it work freely in you, and the divine Spirit is not aggressive. It is like love; it is like light. You are to be free of your ego so that the divine Spirit may work freely in you.

Q: I notice that around you there is a lot of seriousness and ceremony which rather frightens us. Why is this, because you are so full of humour, playfulness and love?

Swamiji: Seriousness! I am serious when I am playing and I am playing when I look to be serious to you. You see me through the glasses of your mind.

Q: I want to be patient, loving, weight sixty-eight kilos, to have peace of mind, to feel financial security and to be healthy in my spirit and my body. What must I do for all these things to happen effortlessly and with continuous joy?

Swamiji: Your demands are very legitimate; I honour them. Everyone here wants what you want. But you know, in this world, if you have money, it comes into your pocket from another's pocket, and the other one does not want that at all, so there is a clash.

It is the same with everything else in the world. Your pleasure which you have, comes to you at the cost of the pleasure of your fellow being. There can be only one Prime Minister or President, and everyone wishes to be that. When you become the Prime Minister, others will not let you sit in rest. They will be always wanting to pull you down, and to occupy your chair. Therefore, in the achievements of this world, there is violence and you cannot get anything in this world without effort. You have to struggle for it. For everything you get in this world, you have to pay in one way or another.

But the Divine is infinite and inexhaustible. Everyone can share It and It remains the same. It is not like the chair of a Prime Minister. You can have the Divine and it does not make any difference to others. They also can have the Divine at the same time.

Q: How to deal with the gap between my spiritual life and the demands of the Western world ?

Swamiji: Well, you cannot please each and everyone in this world. It would be more correct to say that you cannot please even a single person in this world. The other person is pleased with you only as long as his or her interests are safe. You do a thousand favours

to anyone in this world, but if you displease him or her only once, all your previous favours are forgotten, and your one disfavour alone will be seriously considered.

You have to choose between pleasing others and making your spiritual progress. Cooperate with others in so far as they don't interfere with your inner spiritual development. Associate only with those who are themselves seekers. Try to avoid the company of people who are not interested in the Divine, or who entertain different values of life than you do.

But it is very difficult for a seeker to completely isolate himself or herself from society. It is because of this that spiritual groups and societies are made. It is easier for some people, who have the same spiritual interests, to avoid the undesirable influences of the generality of people who have no higher values of life, and to work together to grow in spiritual life.

Q: How does one lose the ego, and what happens when the ego is lost ?

Swamiji: You have not to lose your ego. You have to give it up wilfully and joyfully. Offer your ego to the Divine; it belongs to Him.

He will take it if you offer it joyfully to Him. When you have offered your ego to the Divine and the Divine has taken it, you become a free instrument in the hands of the Divine, which practically means you become as free as the Divine Himself.

Without the ego, you cannot and will not identify yourself with any finite object or situation. When you

have given up the ego, you will become the Divine. You will regain your divinity.

Q: The possibility of talking is a divine possibility for human beings to share with others and comfort them. Why do you choose not to talk ?

Swamiji: I have been sharing my experiences with others through speaking for more than thirty years. Now I am sharing with them through silence, and I have found, though it may be to your surprise, that silence is much more penetrating than speech. You can try and experience it yourself.

Q: How can I contact my sweetness, and how can I keep it ?

Swamiji: When you say 'my softness, sweetness' you acknowledge that it is yours. How do you keep your most precious things? You don't want to lose them at all, so you take an insurance cover for them. You put them in a locker so that they are not stolen.

In the same way, you have to keep your softness, sweetness with you. The saints and sages can give you an insurance cover for it. Please be in contact with them. You have to save it from thieves and robbers also. How will you do it ? Let yourself be in a safe place where it is difficult for the robbers and thieves to reach you. Keep yourself in the company of saints and inspired ones.

Q: What is blocking me from reaching constant silence? How can I overcome the force of death and destruction within me, which seems to block my final connection to the creator, creation and creatures ?

Swamiji: Creator, creation and creatures are essentially one. There is a common denominator to them. That common denominator is the Divine, absolute Consciousness. When you have discovered the absolute Consciousness, when you have awakened in you your divinity, you will feel your oneness with the creator, creation and all creatures at one and the same time.

What is blocking you in discovering your divinity? If you introspect deeply, you will find that there are impurities of your mind (i.e. desire, anger, attachment, fear, greed etc.). Secondly, the instability, and the constant movement of your mind, and thirdly, the veil of ignorance. You have to remove these obstacles to be face to face with your essential divine nature.

You may understand it with the example of a mirror. Firstly, you see your face and recognize it when you look in a mirror. You see your face as it is. Secondly, the mirror should be clean, should be stable (i.e it should not move when you are seeing your face in it). And thirdly, that you have to be assured that what you are seeing is your own face. That is done by your *Guru*. He removes the veil of ignorance.

Q: When we come into this world, we are connected. Then, through life, we seem to lose it and we have to fight to gain it back. Must it be so, or is there a way to allow a new spirit into this world without losing its connection ?

Swamiji: You are connected with the Divine eternally. You can never be disconnected from the Divine. You could not live without the Divine. You can only forget

this eternal connection and forget it temporarily. Ignorance is temporary.

When a child comes into the world, it is not aware of the Divine; nor is it aware of the Divine as you are. It is more or less in a slumber, sleeping not only physically but mentally also. The child's senses and mind are involved in all the experiences of its past. As the child grows, and as its senses and mind grow, it is first, awakened in its own previous world. It is aware of its past birth (life), and you must have seen a child smiling sometimes, or fearing something, even when its eyes are closed and it is sleeping. It does so because inwardly it is seeing scenes of its past life. But as it grows up, it slowly and gradually loses the memory of it. It then starts perceiving this world, and tries to know and understand it. A child, when it takes the birth, is not aware of the Divine.

You can certainly help a child when it is in the womb. The mother can do this. She should restrict her activities and think according to what she wants to make of her baby. She must think divine thoughts, keep herself in a state of universal good-will, and in love of God, if she wants her baby to be noble.

Q: I stopped smoking for a time, and I met all my fears. They were hard to face. Now I am smoking again and I feel unclean. How can I stop smoking without suffering so much ?

Swamiji: Those ugly faces which you started seeing, when you stopped smoking, must have been assumed by that part of your mind which does not want to give up smoking. That part assumed those ugly faces to

frighten you, so that you may again start smoking. It seems to be succeeding.

You must understand the tricks of your mind, which is a past master at playing tricks and befooling you. Please do not succumb to negative suggestions of your mind.

Q: What is the relationship between *Dharma* and spiritual growth ? Can spiritual growth take place without fulfilment of *Dharma* ? I am not sure that my understanding of the concept of *Dharma* is complete, and perhaps your answer can shed some light on this for me.

Swamiji: The word '*Dharma*' is used like '*Atman*' in many contexts. The word '*Dharma*' comes from a root which means 'to sustain'. *Dharma* can often be used for what can be translated in English as 'duty'. Each and everyone has his own duty, and that duty of a person goes on changing with the change of the level of consciousness of that person.

Dharma also means the path which leads to the Divine, to *Nirvana* or Fulfilment. The nature of relationship between *Dharma* and spirituality will depend on the meaning you give to *Dharma*.

Q: I feel something universal, that is not good, is going to come. What do you think about this ?

Swamiji: Hope for the best, and be prepared for the worst!

Q: I have experienced a lot of anger lately. What is the source of it, and what should I do with it ? Should

I accept it, or should I reject it ? What is your opinion?
Is anger okay ?

Swamiji: Is anger okay! No, anger is not okay. You have to get rid of anger if you want peace and harmony within you, and with your fellow beings. You are angry when something goes against your desire. You think you are the most reasonable and most upright person in the world, and no one should do anything against your will. Your desire is the main cause of your anger, so to overcome your anger you have to overcome your undue desires also.

You can accept your anger to a certain limit, but when you are in a fit of anger, you lose the power of right thinking and right judgement. In a fit of anger you may take your friend as your enemy, and may try to kill him or her. I have read in the newspapers of people killing their mother or father in a fit of anger, and afterwards weeping and repenting for their action.

When anger comes, you are not aware of anger at all because you are in a state of a sort of stupefaction at that time. You have to be more and more aware in your day-to-day activities. If you are not aware of what you are doing in your normal state, how will you be aware when you are angry? It will be almost impossible. So you have to practise awareness in all your activities during the day. Don't work like a robot. Be aware of all that you are doing and of what you are thinking throughout the whole day.

Q: Often people describe the Divine as infinite love — a love that does not depend on the receiver, but is just giving to everyone, unconditionally. On the other hand,

the majority of people on this planet, including myself, seek desperately hoping for another kind of love. The love of someone special, erotic love, selfish, egocentric love which would seem quite natural and even essential if we want the human race to continue.

How can both types of love live in the same person? Perhaps, at some stage, if we want to reach divinity, we have to give up erotic love, or the love of our wife. Or, on the other hand, a perfect loving husband gives up his spiritual development. What is the correct way to reconcile these 'loves' together in marriage ?

Swamiji: I have never tried to reconcile them, but you may try. I wish you all success. Your love to your beloved or to your lover may be conditional in the beginning. All devotees do not love or remember even God unconditionally. They pray for, and expect many things from the Divine. Conditional love is better than no love at all. Love, in itself, has the inherent power to grow. When you are in the state of love, you are more or less relaxed and open, and are able to manifest slowly and gradually the true nature of love. Conditional love is slowly and gradually transformed into unconditional love.

Q: I have hurt somebody, and though I have asked for forgiveness, the person is not able to forgive me because it is still too painful for her. On the one hand, I know one cannot hurt anybody unless he or she allows it; but on the other hand, I believe that I have a creative part of my life, and therefore carry responsibility. I see only one sin — the sin against love.

Is it that I was just an instrument of God when I gave that pain through which she had to learn ? Is there any sin or any forgiveness ?

Swamiji: I have read of a love letter, written by a lover to his beloved. It reads: "Beloved honey, enough is enough. I cannot live without you anymore! You are the life of my life, and I remember you day and night, and I have lost my sleep....." And so on. In the end, the lover writes: "Tomorrow we will meet at such and such place and at such and such time if there is no rain! Please don't forget this!" This, they say, is a letter written by a lover!.

I have never been in a situation like the one you are in. However, I not only believe, but I am sure that, if you honestly and earnestly pray to the Divine that He enlightens the person you love or you have loved, then He will surely guide your beloved as well as you, and bring you both out of your predicament.

Q: I find that it is difficult for me to be quiet in my body and mind. Should I sit cross-legged in meditation? Please can you help me?

Swamiji: Sitting cross-legged is difficult for most Western people. It is not necessary, though it is preferable to sit cross-legged in meditation, because it locks the body, as it were, and prevents dissipation of energy.

If you practise sitting cross-legged regularly, and slowly increase the time of sitting, you may be able to sit for a longer period after due course of time. You may change your posture after you get tired of sitting

in one posture. The most comfortable posture, in which you feel the body to its minimum, is the best posture for meditation.

Q: How can I serve my family without becoming a servant, and how should I educate my children so that they become responsible and able to share?

Swamiji: When you serve your family, how much salary do you get? A servant never serves without getting a salary or wages. But when you serve your family, you don't get any salary or wages — you serve out of love or duty. A servant serves only to get wages, so you do not become a servant of your family when you serve your family.

Serve your family with love and care. Serve them in the name of God. If you do so, your service to them will become worship to God. Accept all objects and relationships in the name of God. It will transform your whole life, and you will be able to remember the Divine, even in your day-to-day activities.

Give proper education to your children. It is your duty. Send them to a good school. At home teach them good manners, humility and other virtues.

Q: When I am in nature, I can surrender to it easily and totally. But when I am among people, I am experiencing a deep fear in surrendering to loving relationships, because I am afraid of losing my identity and my freedom. In both these worlds I do feel a deep love. How can I overcome this fear ?

Swamiji: To be in natural surroundings is very good.

Nature is nearer to the Divine. When you are in nature you feel inspired and feel the proximity to the Divine, but you cannot all the time live in nature. Man is a social animal. He has to be in society. He has to be with his family, with his friends and with other relatives. Why are you afraid of love relationships ? Love does not bind you. True love makes you free. It helps you to overcome your ego because it is difficult for the ego to cope with love. Ego is afraid of love.

What is your identity? Do you know your real identity? If you know your real identity, you will never be afraid of love. Your essential nature is an infinite source of love. Please go deep within, and be aware of your true identity. Don't cherish false identity, and don't be afraid.

Q: About two years ago I lived a 'oneness' experience which lasted for two or three months. I was so reconnected with God and life that I could 'see' Him in everything and everyone. I felt it with very deep and infinite joy, and I know that this experience has deeply changed me. But why didn't I remain in this state, and how can I find this joy again?

Swamiji: As you say, you have already had the experience of oneness for more than two months.

The experience of oneness is the highest experience one can have in this life. Usually it comes for a very short period first and then disappears. It does not at first usually last for more than a few days. It comes only to a very, very privileged seeker.

The experience mentioned above goes away

because the body-mind of the seeker is not yet completely purified and transformed. Purification of the body-mind is a slow process. It may take years and years. The roots of desire, anger, fear, etc. are deep in the subconscious mind. It is a very big task to completely purify your mind-body. It requires time and dedicated, persistent effort on your part, and divine grace to undo all the past *Samskaras* and conditioning. When the experience of oneness becomes settled in you, and does not leave you at all, when it becomes permanent, it is called Fulfilment.

Carry on with your *Sadhana*. When you have had the experience of oneness for more than two months, your *Sadhana* must have become more spontaneous and joyful. Carry on with the work of your spiritual unfoldment, and wait patiently.

Q: What is the meaning of passivity, and how can we integrate it into modern life ?

Are form, matter and essence one thing or can we separate them ?

Swamiji: Passivity means the state of mind when the latter is balanced, empty, non-thinking, non-reacting and not preoccupied. When the mind is passive, it is most receptive. Doubtless it is difficult to be passive in this jet-age where life is very fast. There is cut-throat competition in every field. You have to struggle even to survive, and yet it is possible to be passive. You have to change your habits, your way of living. You have to be out of the mad race of wanting to be first and at the top.

Form, matter and essence — they are not absolutely different. The fundamental is one — one without a second. This 'one without a second' appears as many. It becomes many without losing its oneness, and that is the greatest miracle that cannot be grasped by the reasoning mind.

Form is to matter what matter is to Spirit. Essentially they are one.

Q: Can the practice of a *Mantra* lead to emptiness of thoughts? And if this is so, how can a thought, which for me is at the origin of the world, generate emptiness of thoughts ?

Swamiji: The practice of *Mantra* does not directly or immediately dispel all thoughts. It helps you to concentrate on one thought or one feeling which is connected with the Divine, to the exclusion of all other thoughts and feelings. When this one divine thought or divine feeling is there for a long time, and all other thoughts and feelings have completely subsided, then another technique has to be applied, and that one thought or feeling also subsides, and mind becomes totally free of all thoughts and sensations and feelings. In the beginning of the practice of *Mantra* it is not the thought which is annihilated but the thinking process, which is more or less mechanical and sequential, and which has to be stopped.

Q: I find it difficult for myself to take decisions. I hesitate a lot, going back and forth. If I could live only in the present, I think this problem would disappear. How can one live only in the present ? And how can one decide easily, fully and completely ?

Swamiji: A weak mind or person cannot take quick decisions. He or she is afraid that a wrong direction may be taken, and this fear of taking a wrong direction keeps you wavering. You have to have a little more self-confidence; you have to have more trust and faith in the Divine. This you can develop through prayer, meditation and breathing exercises.

To live 'here and now', to live in the present, is the most difficult thing. If you are so weak that you hesitate to take decisions, then to live in the present seems to be out of the question in your case. To be able to live in the present you must first directly see the present moment, if it be called a moment.

It is like first seeing the truth and then living the truth. How can you live the truth unless you have seen it? How can you live in the present unless you have seen the present? Through mind you only see the change in time, the transition of the present into the past. The present cannot be seen and grasped through mind — it can only be seen through no-mind. You have the revelation of the present only when your mind is completely empty, silent, thoughtless and alert.

Q: I do have a big and strong ego, but I do also have an inner voice which leads me towards the truth. I often get confused and am unable to distinguish between the voice of my truth and the voice of my ego. From my experience I learn each time the differences between the voices. Do you have a suggestion which will help me to illuminate the differences ?

Swamiji: It is true; you have in you and you hear at times, both the voice of your ego and the voice of truth.

You should not at once follow a voice if you hear any voice within. You should not react in haste. Be calm and quiet; keep yourself composed; don't become excited. The voice of ego cannot face quietude and calmness. It is very impatient. If it is the voice of ego, it will become less and less audible if you remain composed and unexcited. Moreover, you have to judge the directions of the voice you hear in the light of, firstly, your own experience, secondly, the holy scriptures, and thirdly, the words of your Master, before you follow the directions of the inner voice.

Q: Every person has his or her own character. Does that which is 'special' in us come from the ego or from our true identity—the divine one ? Is the true Self, the true identity the same in everyone ?

What is the role of our character, and how can we know what really belongs to the true Self, and what comes from the ego, from the outside, other people, society and culture ?

Swamiji: What you call the 'special' character of a person comprises the traits, *Samskaras* and conditioning acquired from his or her past experiences. It is constantly being influenced by the present actions of the person, the education one receives and the surroundings in which one lives. It is always changing. It is not the true identity of a person.

The true identity of each and every person is the Divine who is the same in all. This true divine Self can be known and must be known directly at first hand. There can be no true freedom without the Realization of one's true nature. The role of our

character is to become more and more sublimated, pure, clean and unconditioned, so that it can reflect the divinity within us.

Do not judge any person or any teaching merely in the light of your own experience. Your experience may only be hallucination rather than a true experience. Moreover, your experience may be conditioned and influenced by your wishful thinking. Therefore the testimony of the holy scriptures, the words of your Master and of other spiritual Masters, are very important. I will tell you tomorrow an interesting and pleasant story in this regard.

Q: Can you please describe the method that should be applied when you fully concentrate on one thought or feeling in order to let go of this one thought and be completely empty.

Swamiji: When only one divine thought is there and you forget everything else including your body except this thought, it is called *Savikalpa Samadhi*. To reach this state is a great achievement. In this state two things remain very distinct. Face to face with each other is the thought and the seer who is entertaining that thought to the exclusion of all images, other thoughts and feelings. When this state is reached you have to turn your attention back from that thought and direct it to the seer. As soon as you do it, the thought merges itself into the seer, and a non-polar state is reached where the seer and the seen totally become one — where there is no emptiness either. It is a state beyond all description. It is called *Nirvikalpa Samadhi* in which one's true divine Self is realized.

This technique, as far as I remember, is also mentioned in the book "The Practical Approach to Divinity".

Q: Relating to Swamiji's answer regarding not judging any person or teaching merely in the light of our own experience, and that he would give a story in this regard — someone asks if he would give this story.

Swamiji: I have already explained the import of the story. The story itself is a bit longer. I have again thought about it and decided not to write it to save time. What do you think?

Q: The response from the audience is unanimous in wanting him to relate the story.

Swamiji: A man called Nasruddin was traveling. He reached the outskirts of a village where he saw a large congregation of people listening to a man on a stage with rapt attention. The man was saying : "You are very fortunate people who come here to listen to me. I have already recommended you to go to Heaven because you are believers. I am telling you this secret once again; please take it to your hearts. When a man who believes in our prophet and in our holy scriptures dies, he is taken directly to Heaven where he is received by very beautiful damsels. In this Heaven rivers of honey and milk flow. It is a place where you get each and everything as soon as you wish it, and damsels are there to serve you all the twenty-four hours, for the day and night, and so on, and so on."

Nasruddin was very much impressed with the lecture, and at once became a believer and a man of

faith. He became very impatient to go to Heaven. He enquired about the whereabouts of the graveyard and left the congregation and went straight to it. Then he dug a grave; laid himself in it waiting to be taken to Heaven, after pretending to be dead. Time was passing....one hour....two hours....as he lay waiting and waiting. Sometimes he would raise his head and look around to see if someone was coming. He stayed there in the grave the whole night without eating and drinking anything, and dreaming of the Heaven about which he had heard.

The next morning he heard the noise of what sounded like an approaching horse, and he became very excited. He raised his head to see what it was, and as soon as he did so he heard a voice saying : "Who is in there? Come out! Come out here!" So he came out and saw a very strong man with a very large moustache who ordered him: "You come with me." Nasruddin followed him to a mare which was standing a few metres away with a newly born foal. The man ordered him to lift up the foal onto his shoulders and to follow him. He obeyed. After walking for about half a kilometer they reached a village, and the man ordered Nasruddin to leave the foal there, and to go wherever he wished to. Nasruddin was very much tired, frustrated and in despair by this time.

When he moved on, he saw once again the congregation of people, and the same man on the stage giving the same lecture. Nasruddin went straight up on the stage and started addressing the people: "Brothers and sisters, you are very simple people. God

bless you, but this man on the stage is only a liar. He may be a man of letters, but he does not know anything. He is not a man of experience. He preaches only what he is told to preach and his knowledge is only borrowed knowledge. He does not know the truth. He has accumulated so much information and memory which he calls knowledge, but he is misguiding you. I will tell you on the basis of my own experience what happens to a believer when the believer dies."

"After he has died, he is in the grave for the whole day and then the whole night, and no one comes to take him to Heaven. The next morning a very strong man comes and orders him to come out of the grave. He, then, orders him to lift up a foal onto his shoulders and asks him to follow him. After reaching a village he orders him to leave the foal and tells him to go wherever he likes."

"This is what happens to you after you have died. There is no Heaven at all and no damsels come to receive you. I tell you that this is what I have experienced myself. It may not be written anywhere as yet, but I swear that it is true, because I have seen it with my own eyes. It is not second-hand knowledge; it is my first-hand experience!"

Q: How can we quieten mind and what breathing exercises can we do to help this ?

Swamiji: Your mind is always thinking, reasoning, planning, projecting images, ruminating over the past or imagining the future, so long as sleep does not overpower it. It is not silent. It is always moving,

jumping like a monkey. To know something deeper, to know the real nature of what is, the mind must be passive, quiet, silent and calm. How do you do it ? It needs so many things to calm your mind. The foremost of them is your real and sincere interest to make your mind quiet and calm. This interest should be very, very deep. If it is not so, you will never be able to take any method, technique or path sincerely.

So, first of all, your interest to make your mind silent must be sincere. The mind has to be tamed and trained like a child. Discipline and right thinking are most important. As a matter of fact, all the twelve codes which are mentioned in the Buddhist way of conduct are important. You have to follow all these codes with all sincerity, and work very patiently to make your mind calm and quiet.

In breathing, the pattern of your breathing very much influences your mind. You must have noted that when your mind is full of tension, your breathing becomes fast and irregular. When your mind is comparatively calm and quiet, breathing becomes slow and rhythmic. So, if by some exercise, you could make your breathing deeper, slower and rhythmic, it will help you to make your mind calm and quiet.

Sit down or stand up keeping your spinal column straight, and breath deeply. You may follow some type of *Pranayama* if you wish, but practise only inhaling and exhaling with a definite pattern. Practise daily for at least fifteen minutes. It helps to pacify your mind.

Q: I would like to continue from that point on, indirectly. I feel myself subjected to the temptation of

speaking too much, and thereby I weaken the strength of my feelings. For years I am trying, but I don't succeed to be more silent and concentrate more. Is there a way to reach that goal ? I would like to concentrate more in speaking and in doing.

Swamiji: It is very true that when a feeling is expressed either through speaking, or weeping, or laughing, or through any other way, the intensity of that feeling is diminished. You must have experienced yourself or noted, that when you are very angry within, and if you express that anger in words, the intensity of anger is diminished. Or when you are shocked within and are in much sorrow, and you weep or cry, the feeling of sorrow is diminished.

If you talk of your devotion to the Divine to others, the intensity of devotion decreases. When you express your feelings or thoughts, it diminishes the intensity of feeling.

Jesus Christ was alone in the mountains in silence and meditation for a long period. Then he came down and was talking to his disciples and in public about God, and giving talks continuously for many days. He then remarked, "I feel something is being taken away from me." The other day I said that expenditure must balance income. Through meditation and silence you receive and earn, and through talking and sharing you spend what you have received.

When you are connected with the Divine permanently — i.e. when you are established in the Divine, which is an infinite source of love, joy, light, and knowledge — then you may speak or be silent, or

you may give and give, and it does not diminish anything in you. Then you become like an ocean of love, light and life divine.

Q: What do you give ?

Swamiji: What do you want to take from me? (laughter) You will surely receive it, if your want is sincere, and if you tune yourself with me.

Q: Where in me can I tune myself with you ? In the head, in the heart ?

Another Devotee: I'd like to know that too. (laughter)

Swamiji: Whichever part of your being becomes tuned, it will receive. If your heart is tuned, your heart will receive; if your head is tuned, your head will receive; if your whole being is tuned, your whole being will receive.

Q: I'd like to ask how do we tune rather than where ?

Swamiji: First of all you have to be passive. Without being passive, you do not receive anything. You have to become empty to be filled. A big scholar went to see a Zen Master to learn from him. The Master welcomed the scholar, who started speaking and talking about what he had known, to the Zen Master. He was speaking of his knowledge, speaking and speaking, half an hour, one hour — and the scholar still continued speaking of his knowledge. The Master got up and brought tea for him. He started pouring tea in a cup; the cup became full, and the Master still went on pouring tea into it, and the tea started spilling over. The scholar said, "What are you doing ? The cup is

full. It cannot take anymore." The Master said, "Your cup (head) and your heart is already full. It cannot take anything more."

First be empty and innocent like a child. And then aspire, pray with simple love, and wait. And your cup will be filled.

Yvan: *Guruji* asks me to tell you a story of Rumi, that Rumi used to tell his disciples.

It is about a king who wanted to get his portrait made by the best painter. And to test who was the best painter of the two painters that were brought to him, he led them into a room, assigned one wall to each of the painters and asked them to paint grapes on the wall. A curtain was put up in the middle of the room between the painters, so that none of them could see what the other was doing. They were given all materials they needed, and each one started the work on his wall. And when the work was completed, the king came to see which were the most beautiful grapes, so that, that painter would then paint his portrait.

So he entered the room with his attendants, and looked at the first painter's wall and said, "Very beautiful, excellent. This is definitely a great master, a great artist, nice colours, one almost would like to eat them." Then he asked the curtain to be taken away and, looking at the other wall, he realized that nothing was there on the wall. But that painter had polished, and polished, and polished the wall, so that when the curtain was completely removed, the grapes of the opposite wall got reflected on that wall with more

light. And the king asked him to paint the portrait.

Q: What is the meaning of this story ?

Yvan: That you become like Swamiji. (laughter)

Q: But to polish is not very passive. (laughter)

Swamiji: Only a purified heart can be made passive and silent. So first you have to purify your heart. Purifying the heart is like making the wall clean and polished. How can a mind which is agitated by all sorts of emotions and unruly thoughts be passive ? Can you think only what you want to think and stop all other thoughts ? If someone gives you bad names, you become so much agitated that you are not able to stop the thoughts coming in your mind against the person who has abused you. How will you be passive ?

If someone calls you a 'black sheep', how will you react ?

Yvan: You will say, "I am a lion." (laughter)

Swamiji: A man came to the Buddha and spat on his face while he was sitting among his disciples and giving a discourse. The disciples were enraged, caught the man and wanted to beat him. Lord Buddha simply smiled, restrained the disciples and said, "Let the man become unburdened. He is only expressing his anger in a particular way — and nothing more."

The incident was that the son of that man was a student and was very much attracted to the Buddha by his words and by the peace he radiated. This student would even miss his classes to come to the Buddha and listen to his inspiring words. So the father

was very angry. He asked the Buddha to stop that boy from coming to him. The Buddha said, "I have never asked your son to come to me. Why should I stop him ? He is your son, you can stop him." The father did his best, but the son would not stop. So the father was very angry with the Buddha. He one day went to him and spat on his face.

Q: But in this society it is not accepted to express one's anger. And this suppression of one's feeling causes many problems.

Swamiji: Do you welcome someone's anger on you when someone expresses it to you ? And suppose that person starts beating you out of his anger or that person may try to kill you when he/she is in a fit of anger. Will you welcome that person's anger ? How will you like that person to be ?

Q: In this room my question seems almost ridiculous. Anyway, I would like to ask how can I bring a flux in my energies, how can I make my energies flow ? I feel so many barriers. I want to heal and be healed.

Swamiji: Vibration is the essential nature of energy. That which moves, is called energy. The movement should not be mechanical, nor should it move in ruts. The movement of energy should be made conscious and creative. How would you be full of energy, and how will you direct it for creative and constructive purposes ?

For example you have the energy of will. Now this will is not unified in you. You will and wish so many things, even opposite things. Sometimes you want to become a king and a *Fakir* at the same time. Your

mind is a divided thing. You have so many minds. You do not do anything with a total mind. Your life is being pulled and pushed in different directions at one and the same time. It is like a cart being pulled in all sides by the horses of different parts of your mind. It simply dissipates energy. And though you are always moving, you don't reach anywhere. It creates the impression that your life is not moving at all.

The second important thing is to be conscious and aware. Awareness has to be joined with life. Then you not only can give a direction to your unified will, but you will also enjoy the play of energy.

Q: A practical question : What can I do to heal my back ?

Swamiji:

1. Use a wooden bed for sleeping.
2. Keep your mind free of tension.
3. Do not lie on the bed for very long periods.
(Laughter)
4. Don't sit for very long periods in a chair in the office. Or have some special type of chair made, as Ananda has in his office, so that your back is not strained too much.
5. Practise some *Hatha-Yoga* exercises which heal back pain.
6. Have morning walks daily and regularly. You can start it with us tomorrow at seven a.m.
(laughter)

Q: Is God a father or a mother ?

Swamiji: The female and male are two poles — like the two poles of electricity — positive and negative. But what is electricity ? Is it positive or negative in essence ? Evidently, electricity includes both. And yet it is not only the mathematical total of them both, but something more. Similarly the Divine is both : female and male at one and the same time, and yet it transcends all the genders. Masculine and feminine are only manifestations. The Divine is immanent in the manifestation as also above and beyond it. That non-polar, absolute Existence is most important.

Yvan: When you write 'is most important', do you mean it is the most important or that it is very important ?

Swamiji: The most important.

Q: Many holy scriptures mention the fear of God. Can *Swamiji* speak to us about that ?

Swamiji: Fear is of many kinds. There can be the fear of losing one's money, the fear of losing your health, the fear of losing your husband, wife, children, friends. You may have the fear of your wife or your husband. You may have the fear of death, which is very deep rooted in personality, though it may not be visible on the surface of the mind. There may also be the fear of God — but it is only in the believers.

Man's power is limited. Many things are beyond man's power. Man cannot escape death and old age. He has even failed to eradicate disease, though some cures for some of the old diseases have been found, many new and unheard of diseases are coming up. His

limited power indicates the presence of some superior or supreme or unlimited power. You may call it law, you may call it nature, you may call it God. But it is certain, there is something in comparison to which man looks insignificant. So to feel subservient to such a power may not be totally irrelevant. It may create fear also. That fear may be helpful in the beginning of one's transformation. But this fear does not bring about the real transformation. It is, on the other hand, the love of God which brings about real transformation in man.

I have met many men who are afraid of their wives. And the fear of their wives brings a sort of transformation in their lives. (laughter) If the fear of a wife can change your life, why cannot the fear of God?

Q: Moral is : Love your wife and God.

Yvan: Moral is : You don't marry, or tie your wife. (laughter) There is a saying of Nasruddin which runs: "Trust in God, but tie your camel." So you could say, "Trust in God, but tie your wife."

Swamiji: If you reflect and reflect, you will come to the conclusion, that man is feminine in relation to nature and to God. All the wise men of all religions and countries are unanimous on this point. You have to cooperate with and be in harmony with nature and God, and not try to conquer them.

(Pause. The bells of the nearby church ring.)

The ringing of the bells has reminded me of a couplet from an Urdu poet. It says: "Do you know what

the ringing of the time bell is saying to you ? It is saying that the time has eaten up one more hour of your life."

Q: What is the relation between the time on which we are living, of which we are talking, and the fact that time does not exist ?

Swamiji: Time does not exist in absolute Existence. The relative existence is itself the creation of time. And time is eating it up (destroying it) each and every moment.

From the standpoint of infinite, absolute Consciousness, time does not exist. But from the standpoint of individual consciousness, time is the world, and world is time.

Q: I want to know something about the relationship between the different parts, like the body and the mind, and like this. When I sit for meditation or *Japa*, when my thoughts are getting slower, I immediately fall asleep. I was reading in your book about this falling asleep, for example when the body is tired or when I have eaten too much. But I think this is not the only reason. It seems to me as if when I stop thinking, it is an order for my body, now it's finished, you can sleep.

Swamiji: There are many reasons of falling asleep during meditation. Besides other causes, it is true that when thinking process becomes slow, there is a tendency to fall asleep during meditation. As far as I remember, it is also referred to in the book. When you go to sleep in the night, just before that, the thinking

process becomes slow, and the mind is used to it. The state of mind, just before it enters sleep or just before it goes into *Dhyana*, is very similar. It is, therefore, very urgent that this tendency of falling asleep, when the thinking process becomes slow during meditation, must be overcome otherwise instead of going into *Dhyana* you will always be falling asleep. This tendency can be overcome by vigilance and by cultivating deep interest in meditation.

There was a meditation class being held for a week. When the class was over, a lady came to the teacher and requested him again and again to prolong the class for another week. The teacher was taken aback; because he had conducted so many such meditation camps before, but had never been asked to prolong them. He asked the lady for what reason she wanted to get the class prolonged.

First, she would not tell the reason. When pressed for it, she said, "The first day the class began, I had brought my husband with me in the class, though he does not at all believe in such camps; he even hates them. But as soon as he closed his eyes, he went to sleep and had a very good sleep".

"My husband is suffering from severe insomnia for the last six months and does not sleep at all, with the result that his health has gone down and continues to go down day after day. But for the last week he has had good sleep here for at least one hour a day during your meditation class. If you can do it, please do prolong this class. My husband will have sleep for another week. It will surely improve his health."

You don't go to sleep at all when you go to hear the rock and pop music. (laughter) Deep interest and the liking in any activity keep you awake when you are in that activity.

Yvan: May be to fight against sleep in meditation, X has created rock-meditation. (laughter)

Q: I'd like to ask a question. Why do I not sleep, since I have met Yvan ? Since then I have lost my sleep. I sleep one and a half hour, I wake up, I practise, I sleep again — and eventually I sleep very little, just few hours. So often, I live it with tenderness, but sometimes I am quite enraged, for in the afternoon when I work [as a teacher], I don't know anymore what to do; I walk, I pinch myself not to fall asleep. Yvan never answered my question. So I avail myself of the opportunity. And how to have better sleep ?

Yvan: She wants to sleep better. (laughter) Are you an individual case ? (laughter)

Swamiji: It is good if you keep awake and practise his teaching. There is nothing wrong in it. It will not affect your health adversely. It will enhance the pace of your spiritual growth.

Q: Is there a similarity between the states just before entering sleep or meditation and the state just before entering death ?

Swamiji: The state of mind of all the persons just before death is not the same. At that time the person is so much absorbed in visualizing his past activities that he/she becomes totally oblivious of the outer

world. All his/her senses are turned inwards at that time.

Just before one's death a person is, as it were, in the dreaming state, dreaming of one's past; and everyone has his own dreams. The deep sleep state of everyone is the same, but the dreams of everyone are different.

Q: I have heard about the so-called 'work'. And I would like to know more about this. And what did you do with Yvan for all these years that he has become awakened ? What has brought up this awakening ? And what can you do now for me ? And what is this kind of work ? Or for the others ? (laughter)

Swamiji: What have I done to Yvan ? Ask him. (laughter) Can you find something wrong in the work ? Why are you afraid ? What are you afraid of ?

Q: I'm not sure about what to know about, but there is something I cannot touch or it is something closed to me. Or may be to waste my time. I am not so sure. Something seems to be so near—and somehow far.

Yvan: (while Swamiji is writing the answer) You want I tell you what Swamiji has done to me, or do you want I do to you what he has done to me ? (laughter)

Q: You can do this—what do you need for this ?

Yvan: What do I need for that ? You, totally (small pause). I have his grace. I just need you. (laughter)

You ask me, what do I need for that ? I can tell you: either I need you totally; or I need nothing. But you have to become that nothing—and that reminds

me the story of Nasruddin. (laughter)

Swamiji: You want to become sure of what ? Do you need surety before you fall in love with someone ? If you do, you may not be able to love anyone in your life. It is somewhat similar with a Master or even with God. You fall in love with Him without any reason.

Yvan: So the story: Nasruddin is a *Mullah* in the town. And in the town there is a *Kazi*, that is the judge. And the tradition is that when *Kazi*, the judge is sick, then the *Mullah* has to replace him. So everybody knows how quick Nasruddin is, how wise he is, yet they doubt a little. So they want to test him. So they arrange something with the *Kazi*, that he pretends to be sick, so that Nasruddin has to be the judge. And they would bring a very tricky case to him to see how quick he was, and wise. So all the villagers of course were very interested in that.

And one day all the villagers come to Nasruddin's house and they say, "Nasruddin, the *Kazi* is sick. You have to judge a case." So he says, "O.K., I am ready for that. What is the case ?" So two persons come in the front. And the first one says, "Well, I was loading my donkey, and it was somewhat difficult, there was much to put on it. So this other man came to help me." The second man said, "Yes, I was helping him. And at the end, when I finished helping him, I asked him, "What do you give me now that I have helped you?" And he said, "I give you nothing." So now I am waiting for my 'nothing'. He has not given me my 'nothing'. So I am complaining because my 'nothing' has not come so far. So what can you do ?"

Now the villagers are waiting what Nasruddin is going to say. So Nasruddin is walking back and forth in the tribunal. Everybody is waiting and looking at him. Then suddenly Nasruddin looks at the man, "Do you see the carpet there ?" "Yes, yes", says the man. "Just lift it up!" So he lifts it up, and Nasruddin asked, "What do you see there ?" The man said, "Nothing ?" "Then you take it," ordered Nasruddin. (laughter)

(to Swamiji) You told me this one. (laughter)

Q: So now we know, what he (Swamiji) has done to him. (laughter)

Yvan: He has nasruddinized me (laughter). Actually, it would be more proper to say that Swamiji is eternally nasruddinizing me.

Q: If it is so simple to fall in love, why does it not happen so easily ? There are all kinds of complicated things, I'm not aware of. Can I work on this ?

Swamiji: You must work and try to simplify your complication. If you succeed it will enable you to fall in love with God.

Q: How can the eyes of death be the eyes of love ?

Swamiji: The eyes of death and the eyes of love are not totally different.

Q: When I enter this room here, I feel so light and easy, like yesterday, for example. But when I return home, it becomes dull and a burden is there. And I felt so touched and free yesterday, because I had the impression you really hit my point, when telling me,

my mind is going in all directions. And this is what makes me suffer.

And my question is how can I concentrate my mind? So to say, how can I find this love of God? It's the same question that you are putting.

Swamiji: You can choose the Divine. You have the potentiality of love within you. But if you feel, you don't have the strength, pray to the Divine, cry for Him, call on Him from the core of your heart. He will give you strength, or He Himself will choose you.

Q: We are continuously projecting ideas, thoughts on a horizontal line, in linear way. And thus we create time, world. And why does it go on just till before death? Is it to reach the point zero?

Swamiji: Do you project your thoughts, ideas, time and the world — as you say you are doing it — wilfully and with a purpose? Or, are you simply being taken away by them? Is your thinking deliberate, free, conscious and creative?

Q: (to yvan) Can you ask Swamiji, If I could photograph his feet?

Swamiji: Have I to take off my socks? (laughter)

(The devotee then takes photographs of Swamiji's holy feet.)

Swamiji: I have heard of a devotee, who was a great poet and a big scholar who could feel the presence of his Master in his absence but only from his shoes.

There was a poor man. He needed money so that

he could arrange the marriage ceremony of his daughter. He went to Sufi saint, Khwaja Nizammuddin, who was very popular. Many governors and ministers were his disciples. He requested the saint to give him some financial help. Nizammuddin had no money with him at that time. He said, "I have these shoes of mine; you can take them, if you so wish". The poor man was very disappointed but he could not refuse to accept those old shoes, because there were so many people sitting there who loved and respected the saint very much. So the man took the shoes, and started to go back to his home disappointed.

Meanwhile, a great devotee of that saint, Amir Khusro, who was minister of the king and in charge of town Multan, about eight hundred kilometers away from Delhi, decided to resign his post and go to live with his beloved Master forever. He sold all his belongings, collected the money therefrom and set out towards Delhi with heavy horse-loads of money, wealth and with his servants.

On his way to Delhi, he came across the same man on the road on his bullock-cart to whom the saint had given his old shoes. That place was two hundred kilometers away from Delhi where the saint had been physically living. When Amir Khusro came near the cart, he felt the presence of his Master. Where there is deep love, it is not so strange as it appears. On being told the whole story by the old man and that he had the shoes of his Master with him, Amir Khusro begged of that man and took from him those old shoes by giving him all his belongings and wealth.

When he reached Delhi with his priceless treasure of old shoes of his Master and told him all about the incident on the way, the Master remarked, "You got the shoes very cheap."

Q: I have a question — how to remain centred while organizing a seminar ? (laughter)

Yvan: Just get married. (laughter) — but don't ask me, how to remain centred when married ! (laughter)

Q: So, in that case, I prefer to have an answer from Swamiji. (laughter)

What has always come to my mind for many weeks already, since I started making this event here possible, after Swamiji consented to come here..... Because organizing is not something I'd really like to do. But I felt..... I really felt this time that it is a service. So I could also ask: what is more important? To serve or to remain centred?

Yvan: It's funny, there is an expression coming to my mind now. When we were studying Krishnamurti, we would very often refer to choiceless awareness. And listening to what you say, I would suggest: choiceless service.

Swamiji: First be centred. And then do whatever you like or dislike to do. Then you may organize seminars or marry (laughter) or even become a *Guru* (laughter).

Yvan: And I tell you : Becoming a *Guru* is the worst. (laughter)

Q: Well I am just coming back, *Guruji*, from mother

Meera. As from her name we can understand that may be she is a divine Mother. So what is a divine Mother, if she is one ? This is the first part of the question. And the second part of the question is, if there are *Yogis* and *Yoginis* and if she is a divine Mother, are there divine fathers too ?

Swamiji: Divine Mother is the power of the Divine, the divine conscious force through which the Divine creates all the worlds, maintains those worlds, and destroys them. It is not separate from the Divine as heat is not separate from the sun. This divine conscious power is beyond all the worlds that it creates, maintains, and destroys.

It is believed that it is the easiest to realize the Divine through this divine power; therefore, it is called Mother. As a mother takes care of her child, the divine Mother takes care of the seekers and devotees in a special way. If the small baby is dirty, the mother takes up the baby, cleanses it, and then places it in the lap of its father. The divine Mother purifies the seekers, and makes them fit for Realization. This is only a simile.

Q: Yesterday I realized that I am searching this divine Mother of which *Swamiji* was speaking. And for sometime I know too that I am searching for this Mother in a projection — that means in a woman. And in one single woman. And this doesn't work. And I know. And it hurts very much to let this projection go. And I ask for help.

Swamiji: Be like a small child, a baby, a child of the Divine, and you will instantly receive help. The mother

pays more attention to her small child than to her grown-up other children, as she knows that the [small] child totally depends upon her, while the grown-up ones can properly manage their own affairs.

For the divine Mother the Hindus use two words: '*Maya*' and '*Mahamaya*'. *Maya* traps and binds the man while the *Mahamaya* liberates a man. If a man misuses the power given to him, he is trapped and falls into bondage. If he makes proper use of the power he has been given, he gets liberated from all bondage and becomes free. In India the word mother evokes a feeling not only of love but also of respect and reverence at the same time. In the West this is not so. It is only in Hinduism that God is referred to as Mother also. In all the other religions God has been referred to only as Father. A child is closer to its mother than to its father.

A story is often told in India by preachers to show how deep a mother's love is. The story is as follows, in short: A young man fell in love with a girl. The girl was reluctant to marry him and tried to avoid the relationship with this boy. In the end she put up a cruel condition. She said, "If you go and kill your mother and bring her physical heart in a dish and offer it to me, I will marry you."

The boy was so much hooked that he went to his home, killed his mother and took out her heart. When he was bringing the heart of his mother in a dish to his beloved girl-friend, he stumbled on the way, and fell down. As soon as he fell, a voice came out of the bleeding heart of the mother which he was carrying,

“Oh dear child, thank God, that you have not been hurt.”

Q: Sometimes there is a fear in myself which can give me quite strong emotions, and this is the fear of heavy physical pain or torture. And I wonder, when you are in the situation, how you can handle it ? How can you live that ?

Swamiji: This fear of yours is totally hypothetical and imaginative. Not only that, it is based on negative thinking. The image in your mind of any object or situation produces exactly similar nervous and muscular reactions in you which an encounter with a real situation would provoke. If you think of a snake, it will produce different vibrations in you from those when you think of a singing nightingale. Therefore you must be wary of your type of thinking. Why think that you are eating chillies ? Why not think that you are eating sweets of your liking.

Yvan: Mr. X is for me the symbol of *Sadhana*. Because I know him now for almost ten years. And the pace of his *Sadhana* has been constant: Always the same. And with months and years he has been the example of what a regular pace in *Sadhana* can bring about as a transformation: He reminds me of Y.

Swamiji: This time when Y was in the *Ashram*, he observed silence for a few days, but then continued it for more than a month — and Z was doing continuous *Sadhana* in Sadhana Kendra Ashram. He has the temperament of Vivekananda. Vivekananda never cared how he wore his clothes.

Q: A and B keep on telling me that this room here has, let's say, some good atmosphere or vibrations. They tell me in spite of this the landlord gave us notice to quit. We should do everything to keep this room. What I feel, of course there is some atmosphere at certain different places, but actually, where can you find a place where God is not ? So, do you think we should try to keep this room, or it doesn't matter ?

Swamiji: God is like fire. Fire is everywhere. It is in the stone also. But in the stone it is not manifest. You have first to manifest the fire in the stone if you want to use that fire. In the same way God is equally present in each and every place, and in each and every being and person, and yet He is not manifest equally everywhere. Do you think there is no difference between a wise sage and an idiot ? God is equally present in both of them and yet there is a difference.

Why do so many people go to the temples and mosques, if there is no difference between an ordinary house and a temple ? There is difference. The difference is not due to the divine Essence, but due to the manifestation of the divine Essence. In certain places and persons, the Divine is more manifest than in others. But the Divine can be seen or made manifest everywhere and in every person or object.

Moreover, in a house there is a kitchen, a drawing room, a dining room, a toilet etc, and the atmosphere of all those rooms is different. Every room provokes in you a sort of particular feeling. Isn't it so ?

Q: I have never had a big interest either for political life or for social life or for family life. And today even

more — Ananda told me that the way of renunciation was against the nature of women. And my question is since I feel nothing, what can I do ?

Swamiji: Almost all the good painters are like you. I have heard of Van Gogh. He used to be so much absorbed in painting that he did not find time to take part in politics.

If every person is trying to be perfect, then it implies that every man is trying to supplement in himself the nature of woman, and every woman should be trying to supplement in herself the nature of man. So the works of both should be somewhat different.

The way of a woman is the way of surrender.

The way of man is the way of aggression, the way of taking anything by force. There may be exceptions to the rule, but it is a truism that most of the women seekers of Truth approach the Divine through the path of love and devotion.

If there is a fight between a man and a woman, it is the woman who always wins. A man can beat a woman, but in the end, the woman always wins.

Yvan: It's by the power of repetition, you know. (laughter)

I know that. Babaji told you all that ?

Swamiji: The last weapon she uses, is weeping, and man has no counter to that; he becomes like a lamb.

Yvan: Then Bhagwan, we can ask you the question; how do you know that, that well ? (laughter)

Swamiji: I have read the psychology of women and men, but you can confirm, if what is said, is right or not.

Q: When you speak of the path of love and devotion, it seems there is a contradiction in the fact that as long as we are not realized, we cannot really love, — there is attachment — so what is this path of love?

Swamiji: The difference between attachment and love is only the difference of aptitude and direction.

When you direct your attachment and sentiments towards the Infinite, the Divine, it is called devotion to God.

In India there are observed mainly three types of devotion to God:

1. *Dasya Bhava* — devotion to God, like the devotion of a servant to his master.
2. *Vatsalya Bhava* — like the devotion of a child to its mother or vice versa.
3. *Madhura Bhava* — like the devotion of a lover to his beloved or vice versa.

These are the three types of devotion through which love and devotion to the Divine can be symbolized. There is no other way in which the spirit of devotion can be expressed because an ordinary person cannot conceive any other way.

You may start your relationship with the Divine through any type of devotion mentioned above. You may take yourself as the servant of God, you may

consider yourself a child of God, or even a lover or beloved of God. If you practise slowly and gradually, your mind becomes more and more purified through the remembrance of the Divine; then your true relationship with the Divine and the nature of true divine Love will be revealed to you.

There have been many Sufis who consider themselves as the beloved of God and follow that type of devotion.

Q: It is about a couple — I thought: What is the first quality a woman has to develop to be a source of growth and strength for her husband ? And at the same time I feel the quality of..... I feel for me there is identification with some qualities as a woman. So the other part of the question is how to develop other qualities as a woman towards a man without being identified and trapped ?

Another questioner: You don't understand ?
(laughter)

Swamiji: I suppose, I have to be a wife to properly understand it. Anyway, I think that the wife should treat her husband as a partner in life and always share his pains and pleasures. She must serve him with love and devotion, and take care of him, and provide him all the comforts she can.

She should never try to impose herself upon her husband, though it is very hard for a woman not to do so. She should attend towards her duties to him and fulfil them and be less concerned for her rights on him.

Ananda will answer this question in detail.

Q: Since I have started taking part in spiritual practices, I feel somewhat lonely. Why ?

Swamiji: Spirituality does not make a man lonely or sad. It makes him more and more loving and joyful. It should not weaken love between a husband and wife, or the love among the members of a family, but, on the other hand, it should make that love deeper and more stable.

Yesterday I was talking of *Mahamaya*, the power of the Divine and said *Maya* binds, but *Mahamaya* makes a man free. If you can enjoy *Maya* in your own right and become attached to it, it binds you. But if you love it, respect it like a mother, it liberates you. To bind the souls is her play and liberate the souls is her grace.

You can easily discriminate between the use and misuse of any power. For example you have money power. You may gamble, you may put the money in horse race; but if you wish, you may also spend money for better things, for helping the poor and needy, for charitable purpose, on education etc.

You can use your money in manufacturing nuclear weapons, or you can use it in opening schools and hospitals. You can use your money in arranging the shows of bull-fights, or you can use it in arranging spiritual conferences. You can easily understand the use and misuse of money. Similarly with your hands you can rob or kill others, or, if you so wish, you can worship God. You can use your brain-power in a destructive way as also in some constructive way.

Q: To follow this line, I am using my power to do several things at the same time. But since years I'm searching for the turning-point in my life, to do a few important things and to develop my personality or my person. I am afraid to miss this turning-point. After I was putting the question on Thursday about silence, after that on Friday I felt much strength and power in what I was doing. What can I do to keep this power and not to lose it and to develop this ? That is my question.

Swamiji: If you sincerely feel the need to change your life, change must come. You will receive help from everywhere that would bring about transformation in your life. You will not miss the turning-point. Your sincere aspiration for transformation attracts divine help and grace which may come to you through anyone.

Keep this urge alive in you. It is the most precious thing. When you feel hungry, you do something to have food and satiate your hunger; when you have sincere aspiration to grow, you work for your spiritual growth. Make some principles in your life and try to follow them whole-heartedly. It will bring transformation in you.

Q: During meditation, not yesterday but the day before, in the morning, I felt from you a kind of healing and affection of a father. Something in the heart is broken, because my father left us when I was ten years old, and there is something I always feel about it. And I felt this..... From you a stream of healing. I wanted to know whether you are conscious about this or aware of this ?

Swamiji: I do not do such things wilfully. But such things have happened, and they can happen. Some other people told me of such things happening to them also.

Q: Swamiji, I noticed not only during this seminar, but also when I was in France and in former times, that I tend to choose to work for my Masters instead of being close to them. But at the same time I feel as if I'm..... well, this is some offering of mine; because I'd like to be close to them, I would prefer that.

So now there came the story of the Bible into my mind (Luke X 38). There are Mary and Martha; Martha was serving Jesus in the kitchen or somewhere, and Mary was cleaning the feet of the Master, something like this. And later Martha came in and complained to Jesus and said, "Well, I'm doing all the work; and my sister here is just sitting at your feet and washing your feet..... you should tell her, she should come and help me." And Jesus said, "No, she has chosen the right part; she has acted correctly."

So my question is: Is what I am doing wrong ?

Swamiji: What Martha was doing, was right for Martha; and what Mary was doing, was right for Mary. Jesus did not say that Martha was wrong. He only said what Mary was doing, was right. What you do or what you do not do for your Master, is not so important. What is important is that you are in a state of love and harmony with the Master. Devotion and love can express itself in so many ways—it can express itself in outer activities which appear to be opposite to each other.

A saint was traveling. He was a great devotee of Hanumanji. He stayed in a village where there was no temple at all. He persuaded the poor villagers to build a temple, collected some funds, bought a statue of Hanumanji, and installed it in the village. But as the villagers were very poor and would not afford to construct a *Pucca* [well-made, first class] temple over there, the saint persuaded them to make a roof of dried grass and bamboos over the statue, so that it would be sheltered from rain and sun. The saint stayed there for a month or so, and then went away.

After two, three months another saint who too was a great devotee of Hanumanji, came there. He saw the roof made of dry grass and became very much concerned. He thought, "If the grass catches fire, my Master will be in trouble." He persuaded the villagers and got that grass shed removed. He said, "It would be better, if there is no shade at all than a grass shed".

Both saints are the devotees of the same Master. One makes a shade; the other removes it. But both love their Master very much.

Q: This morning you were speaking about the place of a woman or the way of being of a woman in a marriage. And I would like to know the way you see a man in a marriage, his way of living, and his manner with the woman.

Swamiji: The husband must also love his wife as deeply as the wife loves him. He must provide all type of protection and security to her. Both of them should share the pains and pleasures of each other and be co-

travelers in the sojourn of this life. In India they say that they should be like 'one soul in two bodies'.

Q: Could Swamiji speak about the relationship between the Master and the disciple when they are not together? How does the Master work with the disciple?

Swamiji: If the Master and the disciple are not living together physically, it does not make any difference in the inner relationship between them. If the disciple is open and receptive, he/she will receive all the love and guidance of the Master even when he/she is away. The disciple should, however, go to see the Master and avail of his direct presence whenever he gets the opportunity to do so. The disciple is supposed to follow the instructions given by the Master with all faith and trust wheresoever she or he is living.



SECTION-3

You are conscious of time only when you are tense. In the state of pure and perfect happiness, time-consciousness completely disappears.

Jesus often talked of the 'Kingdom of Heaven'. A devotee asked, "What will be there in Heaven ?" Jesus said, "There will be no Time in Heaven." Do you understand its import ? Going beyond time does not mean forgetting time. Forgetting your bondage is not freedom. To be free you have to be first aware of your bondage. You can try to break your chains only when you know that you are in chains.

By 'Kingdom of Heaven' Jesus meant 'God' and not any world in the sky or clouds.



At the time of death, you have no choice or freedom to think or understand. It is, as if, you have only a single card in your hand. The game of the life is going to end and you must play that only card without a choice. Your last moment at the time of death is completely determined by how you have lived your life.

Have you ever played any game of cards, bridge

or any other game ? In the beginning you have thirteen cards in your hand and you can play any card out of those thirteen cards. But as the game progresses, you have lesser and lesser cards left with you among which you can choose and play. So long as you have two cards in your hand, there is choice. But when only one card is left in your hand, then all choice ceases and you must play that only card. Likewise, at the time of death all choice ceases.

You are bound to remember at the time of death only that which has made the deepest impression on your mind during your life.

The dying man is engrossed in reading the book of his own mind; at that time he does not hear what you are reading to him.



Can drinking water by me quench your thirst ?



Realization is always there. It comes only when your thoughts cease and you are aware.

Now it is mixed up and tainted with your thoughts, hence you do not realize it as it is in itself.

Thoughtlessness and alertness are the preconditions for Realization.

There are disturbing thoughts and non-disturbing thoughts. The latter are better; but all thoughts must cease.

Silence is a state where you don't react at all. Or, if you react, you do it very superficially, but remain actually calm and quiet at the centre.

There may be response but no reaction.

Response involves intuition. Reaction is based on your senses and conditioned mind.



Simple observation and not analysis, is the key for right understanding.

You should forget time completely — past, present and future. You cannot do any thing with the past. It is dead.



It is not intellectual understanding that makes you free. It is the understanding based on intuitive and unitive (non-polar) experience that gives a man lasting happiness and freedom.



Invoke Him. Do not resist His working in you. Be passive and alert, cooperate with the evolutionary Force. Surrender to His will. Do not be egoistic. You resist. You are being dragged. You do not flow with divine current. All pain/tension emanates from friction. When you do not flow with the divine current, it causes friction. That friction is translated in the feeling of pain.



What is God's will ? Give up your own will and you will come to know the divine will. Our will is superficial. Our will is only to stick to the world.



There is conflict of faith and doubt in you. When doubt wins, you fall down. When faith wins, you are pulled up to God.

Grace pulls you up; gravity pulls you down.



You can be liberated if you sincerely wish so. Do you really wish liberation from the world or do you wish the world ? Ask yourself ? Do not refer to the advertised motive of your mind.

All the pleasures of senses are easily available to animals. Man can enjoy higher pleasures through service, art, music, love of God, that is what a man is expected and required to realize in life. Worldly pleasure are nothing in comparison with the joy you get from communion with the Divine. These pleasures are not lasting. When these end, you feel frustrated.

So long as you have energy, you will do something. Use that energy in a constructive way. That is what right effort is. The surrender will happen when all your energy is spent in right direction.

People prefer the world to God. That is why they again and again come to the world.



Divine pleasure is entirely different and basically higher than sense pleasure.



It is very difficult to be child-like. If we become child-like, we would be completely secured. To be child-like means to be simple, unprejudiced and to be responsive to love only. A child lives in the present. He is sincere to himself and to others. He means what he says and says what he means. His words, thoughts and actions are totally synchronized. He is in harmony within.



Surrender is not cultivated; it just happens. Effort is the beginning and surrender, the culmination. The two i.e. effort and surrender do not contradict, but fulfil each other.



Truth is to be lived; it is not to be merely talked about or discussed. There is really nothing to argue about this in the teaching. Any arguing is sure to go against the intent of it.

Throw away your cleverness and have bewilderment. Cleverness is perverted opinion; bewilderment is the ecstasy of innocence.



Do without attachment the work you have to do. For, a man who does his work without attachment,

attains his supreme goal verily. By selfless action alone men like Janaka attained perfection.



Realizing the Divine alone, one transcends death; there is no other way.



Having achieved human birth, a rare and blessed incarnation, the wise man, leaving all vanity, should strive to know God and God alone, before life passes into death.



He who knows does not brag of knowledge; he who brags of one's wisdom does not know.



He who suffers for love does not suffer, for all suffering is forgotten when the Beloved is found.



Know that when you learn to lose yourself, you will find the Beloved. There is no other secret to be learnt, and more than this is not known to me.



The simplest and the most widely practised spiritual exercise, is repetition of divine Name, or of some phrase affirming God's existence and the soul's dependence on Him.

If we wish not to go back, we must burn the bridges behind.



He who interrupts the course of his spiritual exercises and prayers is like a man who cannot eat because of stomach upset.



Certain it is that without gigantic effort one cannot realize the new birth in one's being. One cannot experience this blessed state without withdrawing oneself from that which binds him to the world.



Work is for the purification of mind, not for the perception of Reality. The experience of Truth is brought about by light of awareness and not, in the least, by actions, even millions of these.



The *Atman* is the witness of the individual mind and its operations. It is not a thinking faculty.

The wise man is the one who understands that the essence of *Brahman* and *Atman* is pure Consciousness, and who realizes their absolute oneness. The oneness of *Brahman* and *Atman* is affirmed in hundreds of sacred texts.



There is a soundless sound. It is not created by friction as sound usually is created. When mind becomes thoughtless, alert and is drawn sufficiently inward, it may hear that soundless sound. This sound is very magnetic and draws and keeps mind pivoted to it. It gradually leads the seeker towards realizing its source which is the spiritual Being.

There are also some other subtle sounds in the body. Whenever there is motion, there must be some sound. In the body many fluids are flowing and creating subtle sounds. One may hear these sounds also when one goes inward. But these sounds are heterogeneous. Moreover, the hearing of such sounds does not thrill mind as the hearing of 'soundless sound' does.



Yes, desire is a must to the life which is worldly. When you are desireless, you stop coming to this world again and again. There is no controversy on this point among different Masters — modern or of the past — Krishna, the Buddha, Christ, Ramakrishna, Mohammed, Vivekananda, Krishnamurti, Ramana Maharishi and others. "Desire is the root of all suffering." (The Buddha)

Transform your desire into aspiration; transform your passion into dispassion. This is the purpose of all *Sadhana*.

Desire is desire whether it is on the conscious plane or whether it is the subconscious desire.

What is the difference between consciousness and subconsciousness ? That what is conscious at this time, becomes subconscious after some days/months and it may happen vice versa.

You should not confound desire with aspiration. The aspiration to know the Truth is very rare. It is a blessing. It is like dawn. It precedes the discovery of Truth. It is to Realization/Enlightenment what dawn is to sunrise. Desire is the life of worldly people. Aspiration is the life of the seekers of Truth.

The Divine is not someone other than your true Self. Desire implies seeking someone or something other than yourself. Therefore Realization of your Being is not like seeking and getting some external object. It is the very discovery of yourself. It is the owning of yourself.

It is the energy of desire which is sublimated and transmuted into aspiration and love of the Divine. Therefore dispassion, which Jesus called 'holy indifference', is a must for spiritual unfoldment. Holy indifference means not to take anything seriously except the Divine.



Do not lend your life to passing things. Do not spend all your energies in the pursuit of objects which are destroyable by death.

Do not try/waste your time in making possible the impossible. Do not be a servant of your body, senses and mind. Do not try to squeeze milk from sand.

Nature is evolving consciousness in minerals, plants and animals . It is only man who has the psychic being in him which makes self-effort for evolution.



You can help others in God-Realization only after you, yourself, have attained to it.



In ninety nine point ninety nine percent cases, thinking, in the hour of death, is shaped and controlled by whatever has left the deepest mark on your mind, and by whatever you have been influenced throughout your life.



The first person to be harmed by anger is the one who is angry. Self-will is the root cause of anger. When someone does something against your will, you become angry. So long as self-will is there, anger cannot be avoided. You have to change your attitude.



Accept all relations in the name of God. If you do so, the relations become a means of remembering God. You can turn the stumbling stones into stepping stones, if you so wish.



A mother should try to alleviate the suffering of her children to her best capacity. It is the motherly duty delegated to her by God.

The child is not yours. He is God's child. You are only his custodian. You should take full and proper care of the child only as a maid-servant does.



You have not to put your hand into fire in order to learn that fire burns. We can learn from the experiences of others also. It is the duty of parents to guide their children.



Why do you get cheated ? You get cheated only when you are not alert. Once you recognise that a person is a cheat, you cannot be cheated by him.



Silence is more eloquent than speech, and also more effective and powerful. Complete silence is the sure means of communicating with your own-self, your real centre and your true Being.



You want to know about yourself and you are asking me about it ! What an absurdity ! You have to delve inward and discover it for yourself. No answer from anyone will convince you about it. Only Self-Realization will give convincing reply to your question, "Who am I".



Sit quietly and do nothing. This is the essence of Zen.

Zen asks you to simply 'Be'. Do not do anything. Do not become anything.



There is nothing that can be excluded from Hinduism. You can not exclude even atheism from it, not to talk of excluding Zen.

Buddhism is an offshoot of Hinduism as Chritianity is an offshoot of Jewish religion.

Vivekananda appeals to reasoning mind, the Buddha to an agnostic, Christ to a man of faith and love, and Zen is the amalgamation of Taoism and Mahayana Buddhism.



You should always entertain positive thoughts. Be trustful. A trusting heart is ever peaceful. A doubting and cynical mind creates unreal problems which never come up in life and he remains unnecessarily disturbed.

Resign to the will of God who always works for our good whether we know it or not. For our long-term good, we may have some short-term suffering; but **whatsoever happens** to us, it happens only to teach us something. We should be open and alert and ready to learn and grow. Pray/chant His holy Name. Read some holy books. Go in the open on the bank of a river for a walk. Do deep breathing. It will help you to overcome the feeling of dejection.



Mind is like a prism. It splits consciousness/experience as a prism splits light. Mind has many states. The more refined your mind, the more subtle and higher experiences will you have. But in the absolute experience mind is completely transcended. When you see a wooden chair, do you see the chair or wood? The chair can veil the wood, or it can also reveal the wood. It can do both. As the chair veils the wood, so the world veils God.

So long as there are both subject and object present in any perception, mind is involved in that perception. I mean in every polar experience mind is involved. It may be a higher experience if the mind is very refined, unbiased, pure and open. Polar means involving opposite poles.



Once you have realized that the water of a mirage is not water but only sand, you will always afterwards know that it is sand even if it looks as water due to reflection of light.

Once you find Truth, you never lose it, even if your mind is active or inactive. Out of gold you make a ring or a necklace. It is actually gold and nothing else. But you see only the ring or the necklace and not the gold.

Name and form veil the real substance. You know the name and form only, but miss the thing in itself.

When you are completely identified with your real Self, all relative perceptions stop; the duality of subject

and object ceases. There is total oneness.

The veil turns into a mirror after Realization.



There is no higher authority than your authentic experience.

If you need an authority or proof or if you quote an authority to justify what you say, it often means your experience has not convinced you about what you are saying.

If you are told what you already know, you will say, "What is there in it, I already know it." But if you are told something which you don't understand, You will say, "The teaching is very, very high. It can not be understood by an ordinary person."



Stop seeing the world, and God will be revealed. Think that God is concealed (hidden) in the world. Think of Him. It will enable you to see Him in due course of time.

Have faith in the existence of God. Be like a child, trustful and sincere. Have a trusting heart. If you do not have such a heart, cultivate it.

Your faith is only skin-deep. Your knowledge is not based on your own experience. It is only information and not knowledge. Your knowledge is borrowed, second hand.



None ever dies. When you call some one as dead, that death is only a change in place, form and change in the state of consciousness.

One who is alive can never die and the one who is dead can never be alive. Body is dead even now. It seems to be alive only due to the reflection of Consciousness in it.

Death is forgetting of one's true nature, one's divinity. Most of the people are dead though they appear to be alive.

For one who sees the Absolute everywhere, death does not at all exist.

Identification with body/mind causes the fear of death. As you are not aware of your real centre, which is beyond body/mind, you feel as if you are dying when the body dies or when your thoughts subside. What to say of identification with the body/mind, your identification with things is so deep that you feel as if you are dying when something very dear to you is lost.

I have seen a man crying, "I am completely dead, finished," when his house was completely destroyed by fire. If a man driving a car says, "I am the car," you will say the person is crazy. The body is like a car and the soul is a driver but the man says, "I am the body." Is the man not crazy ?

However, it is true that body has its own value in the scheme of things. If you are given anything by nature/God for some purpose and you do not utilize it

for that purpose, you will not be given that thing again. Rather that thing may be taken back from you. If it is true that you have been given human body for a specific purpose of spiritual unfoldment and you do not use it properly, it will not be given to you again. If you give me some money so that I could pay school fees, but if I use it for taking wine, will you ever give me money again ?



I have seen the Westerners referring to God as ‘unknown’ — even I heard you using the word unknown for God just now.

God is neither unknown nor known. He is other than known and other than unknown too. If you say that God is unknown it gives the wrong impression that God cannot be realized. It can discourage a *Sadhak* from following the path of God-Realization.

God cannot be unknown because He is essentially your Consciousness. When it is said that God is unknown it really means that God cannot be seen or known as an object — as you see a table or a chair.

God-Realization comes to you as the Realization of your inmost Self, and not as someone separate from you.

In the Upanishad, the *Rishi* has used exactly the same expression for *Brahman*, the “One who is other than known, and who is other than unknown.”



Love of God means love of the infinite, eternal Consciousness and boundless ocean of Awareness — the love of absolute Existence. It is something quite different from the love of finite things/situations/relationships.

Going back home really means going to God, to the innermost depths of Self.



When you are angry, you throw away plates and bang doors, if you cannot express your anger against a person.



Most of your dreams are the outcomes of your suppressed emotions/desires. Dreams work like a safety valve.

When your mind is detached from physical body, as in the state of *Samadhi*, its power to know is enhanced. In *Samadhi*, when your consciousness is dissociated with body-mind, it feels unrestricted knowledge and happiness.



At one place Vivekananda says that when a great sage appears in a family, he takes up the powers and divineness of many people in his past lineage, as well as from his lineage of the future, which is yet to come.

There must be proper base for the 'descent of the Divine' to happen.

The literal meaning of *Avatar* is the Divine coming down, the supreme Soul descending into the world of phenomenon to give a push to the process of evolution.



You see your race clearly in a mirror which is clean and stable. Divine knowledge is revealed only in a mind which is pure and stable.



There are customs which change with time and place.

Do what you can. But don't bother for what you cannot do.

Rituals are not as important as love and respect and faith in the *Guru*.



How to drop off doubting and questioning mind? Cultivate faith and a trusting mind. Do not give too much importance to what is impermanent and passing. Reflect upon the passing nature of all phenomena.



Yes, the more sincere and intense the aspiration to be free, the less time would be needed for Realization. Ardent aspiration and alertness are the backbone of all spiritual effort.

Desire is the life of body. Desirelessness is the life

of the Spirit. Desire kills the Spirit. Desirelessness puts an end to body-consciousness.



There is a divine law which no one can transgress. Pains and adversities come uninvited. Happiness and pleasure may elude you inspite of your best efforts. It proves that your life is governed by a law, even if you boast of being free.

Karma is insentient. How can it work by itself ? It will not distinguish between a criminal and saint. There is a conscious divine power which directs the law of *Karma*. Mind itself is insentient. Insentient means without consciousness. Mind being rarefied matter reflects consciousness and appears to be conscious. The law of *Karma* — of cause and effect, is the greatest law governing the universe.

No one wants pain and yet it comes. Everyone wants happiness, but very few get it.

Karma also does not last. Nothing in the world is lasting. The world has no existence if you take the Divine out of it. The Divine secretly guides all the laws of the world.



Mind itself is a part of the phenomena. How can it go beyond the phenomena ?

There is only one thing that is beyond the law of cause and effect, and that is Self. Self is not created. Misery is the creation of your mind. It is not the creation of God.



You are not the creator of the universe as long as you are in an individual mind.



Saints never die. They only appear to be dead.



If you believe even the unreal, you see it. Why won't you see Truth if you believe it. The only difference is that when you encounter God, you become God. But when you encounter the unreal, you cannot become it.



In your essential being you are always beyond cause and effect, beyond suffering, and beyond birth and death.

It is the soul (*Jiva*) that suffers — *Jiva* is the reflection of consciousness in the mind plus the mind. Suffering is in dream only. Who suffers in the dream? The dreamer. Keep your eyes open and the dream will cease.

The sufferer is phenomenal like suffering itself. The Divine appears to suffer but It suffers not. How can Bliss suffer? There is no bigger untruth than to say that there is suffering.



The proper time for meditation is during three hours before sunrise. *Prana* is the principle of activity and desire, which are obstacles to meditation and

relaxation. Sun is the source of *Prana*. When the sun rises, the *Prana* becomes active and doing meditation is relatively difficult. Have you noted that birds become active just as the sun rises.

It is in regard to what is the proper time of meditation. Just before sunrise or just after sunset. It is called *Sandhya*.



Only a realized one is out of 'Jail'.

Desire/attachment is the 'Jail'; it binds you.



Meat is not a food for man. The teeth of a man testify to this fact.

The meat eating animals have different type of teeth. Meat eating involves violence also. Meat has peculiar effect on your mind. It is a *Rajo Guni* food. It makes you aggressive and violent.



L.S.D., acids etc. — these drugs simply stimulate *Prana* in your body, which rushes towards the brain. The brain is flooded with *Prana* temporarily, giving you a feeling of transportation, as if your consciousness is heightened. You also see visions in that apparent heightening of consciousness. But it may damage your brain cells at the same time. And when that energy i.e. *Prana* comes down, you feel very deep depression. To get rid of depression, you use the drugs again and

again and you gradually become addicted to these. It ultimately ruins your life. *Pranayama* and meditation also make physiological changes in your body as drugs do.



All emotions make physiological changes in your body. Anger, greed, desire etc. disturb your system with the result that your stomach is upset, the body even trembles, you may get a heart attack, blood pressure or diabetes etc.

Is the anger of French people different from the anger of Indian people ? The way of expressing anger may be different with different people but anger is the same emotion.



You should not think of love. Let your brain not interfere with your heart. Pure love does not suffer reasoning; it is motiveless and selfless.

Do not try to reconcile the teachings of all the saints. If you try to do it, you may become confused.

Every system works properly if you follow it in its entirety. But if you take some elements from one system, some from another system and yet some from a different one and try to work them together, it may not work at all. It will be like putting in a Maruti car the carburettor of a Mercedes and gear of Bucate, Alternator of Toyota; the car may not start at all.



The way of surrender: "I am nothing, only God is ! He is all in all".

The way of *Sankalpa*: "I am the maker of my destiny. I am totally responsible for what I do. I am the cause of my bondage and I am the cause of my liberation."

The way of surrender and the way of *Sankalpa*: Both ways have their own *Mantras*. When you come to realize God, you will come to know what He is. But if you say, "He is the doer in me alone and He is not the doer in the others say A, B, C, then you are using double standards.

When you are there, your actions will also be there.

If you don't feel responsible, there will be no effect of any action on your mind. If your mind is affected, it means you have become responsible.

He is the doer in you and He is the doer in everyone. Then there should be no reaction in our mind if someone else does a wrong to us. One standard is that He is the doer in everyone. The other standard is He is not doer in anyone. Do not use double standards.

If you are there, you will be responsible. If you are not there, the question of your being responsible will not arise at all.



Feel sorry when you need to feel sorry and do not feel sorry when you feel no need for it. You are both

at one and the same time. Are you with form or without form ? When you are responsible, you are *Jiva*. When you are not responsible, you are pure *Atman*. But you are not the same person all the times. There are many persons in you. Be one. It is not only with you. It is a common disease which is called split-personality.

When you have integrity, then your thoughts, emotions and words become harmonious.

Contemplation on the one brings integrity. Thinking of multiplicity splits the mind.



Mind and body are not two things. Both are physical. Mind is rarefied matter; body is mind expressed in the form of gross matter.

That is why in Hindu terminology body is called '*Sthool-Shareer*' and mind is called '*Sukshma-Shareer*'

Like ice and water they are different — only in use not in kind.

Samskara is a conditioning. It has to be eliminated ultimately. But in the beginning one has to nourish good *Samskaras* and resist bad ones.



Once the Buddha and Ananda, his disciple, were traveling together through a forest. They crossed a small stream. After walking over some distance, the Buddha asked Ananda to bring some water for

drinking from that stream. When Ananda went there, he found the water muddy. He went deep into the stream to get clean water, but he did not succeed; and came back and told the Buddha that the water was muddy and not drinkable. The Buddha told him, "Go back to the stream; don't get into it; just sit on the bank and wait." Ananda did as he was told. He sat on the bank. He did not do anything with the water. After a while all the mud settled down and the water became clean and pure. He took a pot of clean water and brought it to the Buddha.

If you remain a witness of your thoughts, emotions and desires and do not involve or identify yourself with them, they gradually subside. You become agitated only when you get involved into them.



But you do not/cannot live in the present only. So you should think of the next journey also. Would you not plan your own journey you are to undertake? You book the tickets in advance. You take all things with you which you would require during the period of your journey. Don't you do that? Then why should you not prepare for the journey, the duration of which you do not know, but which is certain. The journey after death?

Do you know what would you need for that journey. Your bank-balance is not going to help you in that journey.

In the case of sudden death, mind does not get time to be prepared for it. So it is not considered good.

When a man becomes old, weak, sick, and then dies, it is the natural way of dying. If one is on the death-bed for some days, it brings a lot of transformation in his mind.

If you take death to be your friend, be prepared to welcome it. If you take death to be your enemy, try to win it over. But if you forget death, you will surely lose and death shall surely win.



Suffering comes to shatter your slumber. It comes to you when you need it. It is a messenger of God.

One man does not get food and is hungry, and is very upset and miserable. The other one observes fasting; he is also hungry but he enjoys hunger.

Life looks like a dream when one is on the death-bed. It weakens attachment. You become attached to life and its relationships only when they appear to be real to you.

The import of the above statement is that you should not postpone your *Sadhana*, meditation for the old-age or till the time of death. You do not know in what physical or mental state you may be when death comes; you don't know how death will come.



There is a limit of feeling pleasure or pain through the physical body. When that limit is crossed, you become unconscious. But in the subtle body that limit is enhanced.

With subtle body you feel more pain (without becoming unconscious) and you feel more pleasure without becoming unconscious. That is what Hell and Heaven are for you,. You are in Hell or Heaven with a subtle body only (physical body is not there). Hell or Heaven are states of mind, when the soul is relieved of the physical body.



People attempting suicide do not want to die. They only want to get rid of the miserable condition they are in, through death. As a matter of fact they expect that death will bring a better life to them afterwards. They aspire for better life through death. Desire for death is never real or sincere. It is superficial. Desire for life is innate and natural.



Ramana Maharishi had a flash of experience of the deathless state. He had seen his mother dying. He wanted to know what death was. He went to a room, lay down like a dead man, withdrawing all his senses from the body. The body became exactly as a corpse and he watched it as such. The experience revealed to him that soul was not the body, and that it had no death.



Awareness is joy itself. It is not an object of enjoyment. Mind is the barrier to simple awareness. Awareness is spaceless and limitless.

When the world does not exist, there are no questions, no answers, no body and no mind.



The saint is like a bridge which, on the one side, is connected with God and, on the other side, is connected with the world. He is with you; but you are not with Him. Be with Him. Do not evade Him. Do not escape Him. Do not close your eyes to Him and do not close your heart to Him. A realized saint has reached a state where going to and coming from does not exist at all.

The *Atman* is not in the world. The world is in the *Atman*. Consciousness is the life of all life, the mind of all minds, the eye of all eyes, the ear of all ears. (Katha Upanishad) *Atman* is the infinite ocean of Consciousness.

Who will see consciousness ? It is through consciousness that you see all things. In *Samadhi* consciousness is centred in the Self, it is not identified with anything. Deep sleep is a copy of *Samadhi*. In deep sleep consciousness is identified with ignorance.

In *Samadhi* there is no deliberation. You enter into *Samadhi* when all deliberation ceases. Consciousness is not a state.



To be open means to be egoless, to be passive, to be unoccupied, to be unprejudiced, to be choiceless and alert and with no preferences.



You are confusing Awareness with the fever of ego, full of motives or say that you are confusing the eye sight with the spectacles.

Taking refuge in God is a device to get rid of your ego.

You are confusing alertness with mind (mental attention). The latter is born of conflict and confusion, the former is manifested when mind is pure and relaxed.

Ego is a false centre. You need it when you are not established in your real centre. Otherwise, you will not be able to live.

Ego is the shadow of soul. It is born of lack of consciousness and it has no positive existence, as darkness has no positive existence.



When you try, there is no surrender. Surrender just happens when all efforts and will cease. Surrender is not the result of any effort, nor does it come to those who refuse to make any effort. When you put your life at stake and are ready to sacrifice everything for the sake of the Divine, divine grace blesses you with Realization. But this does not mean that your sacrifice creates divine grace.

There are many states of prayer. The highest is most passive. It is transformed into complete silence.



In meditation the object and subject merge with each other; there is no separate experiencer.

Sleep is unconscious rest. In *Samadhi* you are at rest consciously. There is no 'time' in *Samadhi*. Fifteen minutes of *Samadhi* refreshes you as fifteen days of sleep. That happens in *Samadhi*. You just fall into *Samadhi* as you fall in love at first sight.

Jesus was asked, "What is there in Heaven"? Jesus replied, "In Heaven there is no Time. Heaven is the state of perfect Bliss."

When effort reaches its ultimate limit, it turns into effortlessness. The aim of meditation is aimlessness. Having an aim means to be one pointed. In aimlessness that point dissolves into infinity. In aimlessness concentration is changed into complete relaxation.

Passive alertness is *Sakshi* (witness); only seeing, not doing. Seeing without thinking.

Observation is not analysis. It is only seeing; not thinking that you are seeing !



When there is no mind, there is no difference between subject and object. It is the mind which creates all dualities. In dream you read a book. You are the reader and you are the book also. Is it not so ?

Yes, you can know anything only if you already know it. Knowing is only owning, remembering.

Ego is identified with the Spirit (Infinite); ego is

identified with the finite body and mind. In the first case you become the master and in the latter case you are the slave.

Ego is the root of fear and not vice versa. Ego is the root of all emotions, negative or positive. Ego is the root. It is the ego which is transformed into fear, anger, hate etc.

Have a trustful heart. The doubting mind is the problem, an obstacle to relaxation and cause of bad health.

Anger comes out of ego. As a matter of fact, desire, anger, greed, infatuation, fear, all of them come out of ego.



Ninety nine percent of Indians believe in God.

The word 'God' is becoming allergic in France. There if you say 'Real or Infinity or Divinity or Truth', it is all right. But if you say 'God', no one will listen. Isn't it ?

God is the source of all qualities, and yet He is above all qualities (transcendent). If there is nothing other than God, then anger also comes out of Him. What do you say ?



Mind is made of rarefied matter, body of gross matter. Mind is flexible, body is rigid. It is easier to change your mind than to change your body.

If there is something wrong in the body, it aches. If there is something wrong in the mind, it suffers. The function of mind is to deliberate, think and analyse. *Buddhi* unites separate ideas and takes decisions. Mind is like a scissors and *Buddhi* (intellect) like a needle.

Intuition is above both, mind and *Buddhi*.

When you become one with the known object, you know.

Intuition is immediate response to a situation. It is always right.

Reasoning is delayed response. It may be right, it may be wrong.



Man by nature is more reasoning. Women by nature are intuitive. It is easier for women to realize God. Their natural path is the path of love and surrender. The natural path of man is the path of effort and knowledge.

There are exceptions. Some women are manish and some men are womanish.



Spiritual *Sadhana* is a means of killing your ego; with ego alive, you are finite. It is the ego that suggests to you that spiritual path should not be pursued; ego never wants its death.

Self-Realization does not mean that you have to

achieve something. Realization is full Awareness of your essentiality, of what you already are.

Ego's greatest trick is to appear as egolessness — its ultimate device to survive. Because, as soon as you are able to see your ego, it ceases to exist.



There are two ways of approach: one is concentration, the other is relaxation. Both ways lead to the same goal.



What will you do the whole night if you come to know for certain that you will die tomorrow early in the morning ? I am not asking what you should do. I am asking what you will do. In ninety nine point nine nine percent cases people become unconscious at the time of death. If an ordinary person comes to know of his/her death in advance, he will become restless and scared. To identify oneself with death continuously is impossible because it is unnatural.



The door opens when you stop choosing and not choosing.

When the hardest effort on the part of the seeker, and unreserved grace on the part of the Divine meet, miracle of Self-Realization happens !

There is not even one fraction of second in *Samadhi*; it is timeless. I would like to give you

eternal *Samadhi* if you could take it. You cannot take it because you are afraid of death. Because you prefer other things to *Samadhi*.

Samadhi is the easiest thing, provided you are simple. *Samadhi* comes/happens when you don't feel the need to be the body. When you do not feel the body, how does it matter to you if it is there or not.

If happiness is your nature why are you unhappy? It is due to your identification with your mind that you feel happy at one time and unhappy at another time.

What will *Guru-kripa* do if you are not open to it. It will come but it will go back, finding your doors closed.

You can always be happy but you cannot always be unhappy. It is so because happiness is your nature, unhappiness is not. That is why you don't like unhappiness.



Communication between two minds is possible only when the minds are at the same level. Or, when one mind is totally empty, without any preconceived and ready-made ideas and beliefs and the other mind is transmitting something.



Whatever is in the subconscious must come up. When you suppress something, it goes to the subconscious; it is not eradicated though it seems so. But as soon as it finds an outlet, it comes up again.

Unwanted things have to be reflected upon and rightly understood before they can be outgrown and overcome.



The *Guru* does not give you a system to follow. He only helps you in your awakening and in your inner growth and transformation. Growth is always from within. Transformation is normally a very slow process. Thirty years of *Sadhana* is not a long period, there is no fixed time for Realization. The time taken by a *Sadhaka* to realize Truth depends on many factors. On the intensity of aspiration, sincerity of purpose, right effort, right orientation and, primarily, on one's ability to be completely relaxed and silent.



Divine love never asks or makes demands. It only gives.

Divine love liberates; worldly love binds.

Divine love is an expression of joy; worldly love seeks pleasure.

Divine love never imposes; worldly love is compelling.

Divine love enlightens; worldly love stupefies.

Divine love calms; worldly love gives excitement.

There are no ups and downs in divine love; emotional love is never stable.

Divine love cannot be exhausted; worldly love cannot be lasting.

It is by the *Sadhana* that you attain divine love. Divine love is not different from the Divine. Does the Divine impose Itself ? If the Divine imposes Itself, there would be no ignorance left in anyone.

If I forcibly make you free, that freedom will be a bondage for you.



God's grace comes to you every moment, but you don't accept it.

If you close all the windows of your room, light will not come in. Light is not aggressive, though it is always ready to come in. If you don't accept freedom how will you be free ? Don't close the window.

The journey within oneself is much more pleasant and joyful than travel in the countries of the world. Is it right ? But it is so only for the one who has dropped his mind. So long as the mind is there, division is immanent. Even the realized one sees multiplicity, but it is only an appearance for him; to others it looks real.

Have you ever seen a mirage ? In a desert where there is all sand, it looks like water due to reflection. But once you have gone to that place and found it for yourself that it was sand which looked as water, the eyes will again show you the water, but you would not be deceived by the mirage.



Simply watch your mind. Simply watch. Don't think that you are watching; and, the mind will stop.

Remember, the Being watches. It is you who watch and that proves you are not the mind. You watch a chair. It means you are different from chair.

Mind is a thought manufacturing machine. But this machine works only when the Spirit gets identified with it. Otherwise it does not work. It is just like a running fan. If you switch off, the fan stops.



You are confounding awareness with mind which confirms. During sleep you are still aware but there is no confirmation of awareness.

When you are sleeping you are watching sleep at that time. Sleeping is like going into a closed market and seeing a closed market. In sleep, awareness is identified with sleeping state.

Closed market means a place where different things are not displayed.

There is no difference in awareness. There is difference in states of mind. In waking you are aware of the waking state. In dreaming you are aware of dreaming. In sleep you are aware of sleep.

The problem is that you have not seen yourself when you are not associated with any state of mind. Once you see yourself in your pristine purity, you will be able to see without the mind.

Let you not confound eyesight with glasses.

If your service in the name of God helps others, it directly helps you in the path of God-Realization, as

through such service you remain aware of God. But if you help others only because they are suffering, it will be social service only. And if you do it without expectation of any personal reward, it purifies your mind which, in turn, may develop in you love of God, in due course of time.

Be more and more sincere and hold on to the path of Self-Realization with consistency of purpose. Self-Realization comes when mind is totally unoccupied, silent and alert.

Do other people suffer because you do *Sadhana* ? People suffer because of their *Karma* and ignorance. Serving others is not at all against *Sadhana*. It is rather a part of it.

God has not made anyone ignorant. Ignorance is self-imposed. Man prefers passing pleasures, born of ignorance; that is why he is ignorant or say that he has a vested interest in ignorance.

You can make others free and happy only when you yourself are free and happy. You can give to others only what you have.

It does not matter which path you follow. You should follow the path which suits your temperament and for which you are fit.



Do not be afraid of difficulties. Do not be discouraged. Face difficulties boldly and they will flee. When you are afraid of difficulties, they overpower you. You have not to accept difficulties, you have to accept

their challenge and work out your way through them.



“I was pulled up to God through His Grace. I came down because of my weight.” (St. Augustine)



You are always with Him. Be aware of it. Be aware. Be aware. Awareness is life. Forgetfulness is death.

Security and certainty are there in God. Trust Him. Be with Him and you will be secure.



The question is how to make *Ghee* ? There are different methods of making *Ghee* and you have to use the method which suits you and you have to use the means available with you.



Passivity is not dark or negative. It is an asset.



It is more difficult to be non-violent than to be violent. Aggressiveness is the problem. Women are more receptive and open than men because they are passive. Men are aggressive. Man is physically stronger, but if there is a fight between them it is always the woman who wins.

You are immovable when you are stronger. When you are passive the Divine acts through you. You must be passive, and positive also.



It is just like a dream-world. When you are in dream, you do everything with the dream-body/mind and senses. After this body is shed (i.e. after death) soul travels through the astral and mental world to a state where it becomes unconscious to be able to assimilate the experiences of its past life, and then to be born again with a new personality in a new body in which it will be able to work out its *Karmas* and *Samskaras*.

Liberation is the fruit of Self-Realization. One gets the next birth according to the thoughts one is having at the moment of death.

Usually, the thoughts of a person, at the time of his/her death, are determined by what he/she has been doing/practising through out his/her life. It will depend on the resultant of good and bad, positive and negative deeds and thoughts. Suppose there are many forces acting on a particle, trying to move it in different directions, where will the particle go and move ? It will move towards where the strongest force is pulling it. Or it may not move at all, if the forces are balanced on all sides.



Simplicity means spontaneity, which is the fruit of complete self-surrender.

Free-will is a misnomer. There is no free-will at all. Will is the product of ego. Self-will is the first and the last obstacle in the path of Realization.

Self-surrender means abandonment of one's sense

of doership, one's self-will and one's sense of separateness from the Divine; spontaneousness is unplanned, without motive.



Between the setting of one thought, and the rise of another, there is a vacant moment (or interval of thoughtlessness). Between the rise of one image, and the setting of another, there is an empty space. If you could be aware of this vacant interval, this pause, this thoughtlessness or timelessness, you would have a glimpse of Eternity/Truth.



An animal has no self-will. It is the slave of its instincts.

Only a man has will. If he exerts his will in the right direction, he can go beyond will.

A blind man needs a walking stick. The stick is a substitute for the eye. Reasoning is the substitute for intuition. Self-will is a substitute for divine-will.

Only two kinds of people do not make spiritual effort: those ones who are completely liberated and the second ones who are completely drowned in ignorance and are living at the level of animal plane of existence.

Human beings can rise to the level of the Divine or may fall even below the level of animals.

The potentiality of ascending so high is accompanied with the possibility/danger of falling down so low.



An ant does not see the world as you see it. Whose perception is right ? Yours or ant's ? The number of ants in the world is much more than the number of human beings.

Perception depends upon the means of perception available to the one who is perceiving. You see the sun with a naked eye, it looks like a small disc. If you see the sun through a powerful telescope, it looks different. Which view is correct ? What is the criterion of right perception ?

When the doors of perception are cleansed ,everything appears to be divine. (a Christian mystic)

Everyone is standing at a particular point in regard to one's mental make-up and perception of the world. So the same thing is being seen in different forms by different people. But that does not prove that there is no object of perception. It only proves there is something which people perceive differently.

The perception of all those who see with no-mind is the same.



In the first stage you repeat the *Mantra* and hear it at the same time. In the second stage the *Mantra* is repeated automatically and you simply hear it. In the third stage the *Mantra* stops and only its vibrations are felt and you are aware of it. In the fourth stage the vibrations of the *Mantra* merge in awareness that alone remains.

It is just like when you hear me, you cannot listen

and think at the same time. When you engage your mind in hearing the *Mantra*, how will the mind think ? If the mind is thinking, you will not be hearing the *Mantra*.

Mantra embodies a meaning. By repetition that meaning goes deep into your subconscious mind. The thinking mind is very superficial. It has no power or very little power. Power actually lies in the subconscious mind. If your subconscious mind understands, your life is changed.

Every *Mantra* has a vibration. For it to be more potent, you must know the meaning of the *Mantra* and, at the same time, it should be such as may have been practised by great many people for thousands of years with faith and devotion.

Finding God is no fun ! Longing for Him must consume you. Do you have a longing for God ? Tell me honestly. He is ever so ready to embrace you. But He is not violent at all. Your willingness is a must.

Let your understanding permeate each and every fibre of your being. Let it not be only an intellectual want.

The proof ? As soon as you want Him, you find Him. Your want should be like the thirst of a man dying for want of water. Stop resisting Him. Be open and available to Him. Keep your doors always open so that He does not have to turn back, finding your doors closed.

How will you do it ? You know the method ? But



what if you do not do what you know already ?

I will surely help you if you let me do so.



Simply practise deep and conscious breathing for fifteen minutes before you start meditation. You can also practise it early in the morning in fresh air for half an hour daily. It is very helpful. It strengthens your will power.

Anything you do consciously weakens the hold of your mechanical habits on you. Doing any activity consciously makes that activity a sort of meditation. We breathe mechanically. Is it not ? Even our thinking is mechanical. It is not what is called creative thinking. Creative thinking is not influenced by reactions as well as by past *Samskaras* (past impressions). Any thinking which originates out of selfless love is creative thinking. When you become selfless then your thinking becomes creative.

You have many creative thoughts. All your thoughts are not selfish. There is something in you which is totally selfless. If you lose it completely, you will cease to exist. You may forget it, but you cannot forget it completely. You may only misrepresent it partially. The selfless element in you is the divine spark within. You can never be without it.

When you are cooking, are you conscious of cooking ? It is done mechanically. When you are walking, are you conscious that you are walking ? Walking goes on and your mind is thinking many things.

Action performed out of love for God, and in the name of God, is devotion. Love is not an activity. It is a state of mind, though love can express itself into an activity. Say a mother slapping her child — a mother can slap her child out of love. Can there be an activity without a direction, a motive ? And if an activity is directed that activity must be related to someone by someone. How can it be related to all at the same time by someone ? Highest love makes the lover one with the Beloved.

Consciousness without a direction, without a content, is infinite Consciousness.

Meditation is the state of no-mind.

Consciousness is like a mirror. It reflects whatever there is in front of it — and yet, it does not become related with what it reflects. Does the mirror become affected by what it reflects? You see your face in the mirror, but it never enters into the mirror. Consciousness is like light. You may read the Bible in the light or you may read a novel in that light. Light is not affected by what you read. Light of the sun illuminates the water of the Ganges. It also illuminates the water of dirty drains, but it does not become purified or contaminated.

The question of selfishness and selflessness does not arise in love. The question of selfishness arises only in attachment.



Love, devoid of self-interest, and without expectation of any returns, does not cause suffering.

Transform passion into compassion, and desire into aspiration to know Truth. Joy will be there only when you will feel oneness with the one you serve.

Even if you have only proximity but not complete oneness with the one you serve, you will derive joy from serving him/her.

A mother feels joy when she serves her children, a sister when she serves her brother, a wife when she serves her husband; because there is close relationship in each case. If a child does not reciprocate its mother's love, does her love become any the less ?

When there is relationship in the name of God, you feel more joy in service to anyone even though there is no blood relationship. A disciple feels joy in serving his master; that relationship is even closer and more intimate.

If you are a devotee of God, and you feel you are serving Him (in the form of a man or a woman), will you not feel joy ? If you have been dealing with someone and then, suddenly, you come to realize that the one you have been dealing with is your beloved in disguise, how will you feel ? Will it not transform your attitude at once ?



I have written when you come to realize and not when you hear.

In the evening you had said, "I have been hearing for years that God is everyone but I don't feel moved." I ask you: "Is God your Beloved ? Are you the knower

or the known. You will surely love Him when you come to realize that He is your Self. Then you will love Him without any reason. Why do you love yourself ? Is there any reason for it ? Everybody loves oneself. Even the greatest sinner loves himself." I am not talking of your real-Self or false-self. I am saying that whatever one is, one loves oneself.

Ego is not Self. It is non-self. It is the false centre. It is the substitute. Can you show me your ego ? Would you say that there is no difference between the knower and the known ? You know this table, because you are separate from the table. If you know ego, ego is the known and you are the knower and then, you are not the ego.

Why should you not be selfish ? You have not to be selfless. You have only to know what you really are. Discard everything that can be separated from you, and you will come to know what you are. All that can be separated from you at any time is not your real Self. You are the Divine already, only stop identifying yourself with the ego.

Practical ? Practical what ? Should the body become the Spirit ? Should the ego become the Self ? You are like a fish in an ocean asking for water.



Ego is like a shadow. Can you catch hold of a shadow ? Shadow of the Self. When you face light your shadow becomes invisible to you. When you turn your back to sun and move on, you follow your shadow.

When you forget yourself, you don't cease to be yourself. Remember yourself; that is what is needed.

How long can you be in a dream ? The dream cannot be everlasting. With whose volition has your dream come, if not from yours. If you don't sleep, can there be any dream for you ?

In meditation the subconscious comes up. When the conscious mind is passive or subdued, the subconscious comes up. Dream or coming up of subconscious is like a safety valve releasing suppressed desires. Let the steam go off. Be only a witness of it. It will subside if you don't involve yourself with such desires/thoughts which are coming up. Don't cherish them or suppress them. They will subside. Just observe them dispassionately.

When you clean the room with a broom, the dust settled on the floor will fly up. It is natural.

She said: "The desires come up." I told her not to cherish them. Just be their witness and they will subside.

What is the difficulty ? Have you to do something to see ? Seeing is your innate nature. Is it not ? It is always there inspite of you. Even when you are identified with some thought, it is not totally absent.



What splits you ? It is attachment with various, rather paradoxical desires of the diverse world that splits the personality. If you aspire for one and live for one, it will integrate and harmonize all parts of

your being. Do not be a divided house. Let not your mind be like a market place of multiple desires and thoughts.

The centre is the Divine. It is everywhere. It is the ground of all existence. It is not only located in the body of an individual, but it is the centre of the whole universe and yet it is transcendent. But it is easier to realize the Divine in one's heart first.

Do not be only a technician. If you follow a technique, a method, but do not have the love of the Divine in your heart, you will become a technician only. There is nothing greater than love. It is love that uplifts you. It has tremendous force. Intellect does not move even a blade of grass. It is love that can move mountains.

By thinking and analyzing you only become a philosopher. Philosophy creates more doubts than it solves, and a doubting and indecisive mind is the most restless one.



Deep sleep is the substitute for non-polar meditation. In both these states there is no duality. Because in the former, mind is completely merged in ignorance/*Tamas*; in the latter state, mind is completely transcended.

A man cannot see in utter darkness, nor can he see in dazzling light. Similarly there is no relative perception either in deep sleep or in non-polar meditation; but both these states are radically different

from each other and the experience in these two states is also totally different.

Non-polar meditation is the meditation in which duality is completely abolished; it is pure perception, without pairs of opposites; the seer and the seen, the knower and the known, the subject and the object become one in non-polar meditation. It is supramental perception, the perception independent of mind and senses.



Intuition is of three kinds. Intuition of the senses, intuition of the mind and supramental intuition. Intuition of senses is called instinct. It is natural to animals. Man has lost even this because of the interference of his prejudiced mind full of preferences, attachments and hatred.

How will you understand no-mind with mind ? You can only understand it if and when you have tasted no-mind. The deep sleep state is the copy/substitute of no-mind.

Awareness is not the product of the senses or of the mind. It is rather vice versa, the other way round.



Body can never be perfect. It is full of limitations. It is subject to disease and death. If you are identified with the body you will never feel fulfilled.

Cannot you break up your identification with your shirt ? Breaking up your identification with your body

does not mean that you have to commit suicide or throw away your body. You have to use it as you use your shirt. Don't be a slave of your body.

Mind is only rarefied matter and matter is only a gross form of the mind. They are not different in kind — like water and ice. Ice, water and steam — are these not the different forms of the same thing ? Similarly body, mind, over-mind, super-mind, are different states of the same energy. Energy itself can be resolved back into consciousness.

When you live only for the body and for satisfying its desires, you regard it as an end in itself. This is being a slave of the body.

Don't you feel tired of all this ? You identify consciousness with mind. Mind also is a sort of body. The Hindus call mind subtle-body.



Discriminate between need and desire. Legitimate needs have to be fulfilled. You cannot ignore them. Earn money honestly to fulfil these needs. Money is not bad. It is the greed of money that is bad. It is not money that binds you; it is the greed of money that binds you.



Moksha means freedom. To be free, you must first become aware of your bondage. What is it that binds you ? Reflect upon it.



Simply watch your thoughts and they will subside. Observe your mind disinterestedly. Sit calmly and watch your mind. Don't fight with it. Don't suppress it. Only watch it.



Stay at a place where you feel minimum hindrances in your meditation, the place which you find most conducive for meditation, and which has spiritual vibrations.

There is nothing without a meaning. But the meaning of the experiences in meditation should not be interpreted by the physical mind. Their meaning is revealed to you some time after they have done their work on you. Usually people who have such genuine experiences never talk of these what to say of boasting about them.

It is the impact of genuine experience which makes you silent. Why ? — goodness only knows. You are given the experience, and your lips are sealed !

All the experiences are not confidential. But most of the substantial spiritual experiences cannot be expressed.



What do you want ? I give blessing to you daily, but you reject it. What should I do ? I come to you, but you close your doors. Don't you know how you are closing your doors ? Please think over it and tell me honestly.

Your doors have remained closed for ages. When you try to open them, they screech and you stop. Go on, persist and break open the doors for ever.

At some level of your consciousness you are still aware of spiritual joy; otherwise you would not long for it. Why do you want joy ? Can you want a thing which you have never seen or tasted ?

Mind is like the glasses; without glasses you may not be able to read or write but, surely, it is not the glasses that read.

You cannot forget that joy — that is why you want to taste it again. “Cheerfulness is the music of soul” (Aurobindo)

There is no object or activity in deep sleep state. But you enjoy your deep sleep. Why ? There is joy in sleep but there is no confirmation of this joy. It is the mind which confirms, and in sleep, mind is not there. It means your mind is the cause of all worries. Why do you not want to leave your mind ?



When there is something wrong with the system of your body you have fever, swelling, rash, pain etc. If there is something wrong with your psyche, you feel anger, infatuation, fear, greed, desire, jealousy etc. and mental pain.



Compassion is the medicine for passion, love for anger, detachment for infatuation and fearlessness for fear.

Civilization has given man manners, some morals also, but at the same time, it has made him very cunning and deceitful.

Cheating needs very sharp intellect. To be dishonest and a liar you have to be very intelligent, otherwise people will not believe you. Intelligence is not needed to be honest. Isn't it ?

Man's meat is said to be delicious. In Africa there are some tribes that eat their parents when they become old. But they never tell lies. They don't deceive or cheat anyone.

Civilized man is more prone to diseases also. Civilization has made life full of stress, strain and very fast. It robs you of your spontaneity. Wild animals don't have individual diseases. They mostly die of epidemics.

Ninety nine percent of rich men and politicians die of heart-attacks, yet everyone strives to be rich; everyone would like to be at the top, say a Prime Minister or President. Even Prime Ministership is too small for you. You want to become God. Your ambition makes you stressful. Your desires rob you of your peace.

One has to be single minded, total minded, undivided minded. We have so many gods which we want to realize in life. And so our mind is split. It is not unified. It is like a broken mirror. Can you see your face in a broken mirror, or for that matter, in an unstable, moving mirror ?



Mind is like a street dog going from door to door to get a few morsels of food. It goes like that because it misses something. It tries to locate that 'missing something' in objects. It has already seen it in some way, otherwise how would it go in search for that ? It has seen it but partially forgotten it, and that is why there is the search for it ! It is pushing you and pulling you. It will not let you be in peace and at ease. Time is needed for preparing you to receive God.

I will keep on pushing you and pulling you towards this goal.

There cannot be headache without a head. Can there be ? A *Guru* has no head. *Guru* means 'no-mind'. No-mind is the ground of all minds.

Do you see the efficacy of selfless service ? Just three-four days of selfless service, and X has today thrown away his cigarettes (smoking stuff) saying that he will not smoke. None told him to do so. He did it himself.

Don't the scriptures say : Selfless service purifies your *Chitta* ? Whatever scriptures say is absolutely right. '*Chitta*' means unconscious mind. Selfless service performed with dedication, right understanding and right belief is as good as worship or meditation.

You may be serving selflessly, but you may not be dedicated and working with your whole mind and capacity. Dedication means working with concentration and working enthusiastically.

Right belief and right understanding help you grow in the spirit of service — serving in the name of

God. That will keep you aware of God, while you are serving.

From the spiritual viewpoint, it is not the work/action that matters but it is the awareness of the Divine that matters. Any action or work that awakens or generates or sustains the awareness of the Divine in you is divine work howsoever small it may be.

When you are telling beads or performing *Japa*, how does that physical action alone matter ? It has no utility whatsoever. You are just moving your hand or your tongue. But since that action is connected with the remembrance of God, it is keeping you aware of Him, that is why it is divine work. The more any action makes/keeps you aware of God, the higher it is.

If you feel that your *Ishta* is seeing you, you will never pretend serving, but you will serve very sincerely. Feel the presence of God always with you when you are serving. Be aware that your *Ishta* is seeing you when you are serving and He will be pleased with your service and will give you Enlightenment.

Master is the living symbol of God through whom you can communicate with God. If you could do that directly there is no need of any symbol.



If you don't want to go back, burn the bridges behind. Say to the bridges, "Thank you for leading me across", and then set them on fire. How many bridges you have left behind ?

God is the End. *Guru* is the End as well as the means.

God is the eye of all eyes, the ear of all ears, the mind of all minds. When you need misery, He gives you misery. When you need pleasure, He gives you pleasure. He sends everything for your spiritual evolution.



The more passive you are, the more alert you are. Alertness is directly proportional to passivity.



Your knowledge is only second-hand knowledge. As a matter of fact it is not knowledge but information only. When you know, you must change. Real knowledge must bring about a change in you. A professor or scholar knows all this, but he is an ordinary person subject to all negative emotions. His knowledge does not at all change him.

If you feel hungry it shows you are physically healthy. Similarly, if you feel an urge for your spiritual Fulfilment, it too is a positive sign of your spiritual well-being.

When you are working hard, your mind is free of thoughts, is it not ? Only if you could supplement awareness with hard work, it would be the highest type of meditation.

Have total faith in Him and follow the guidance of your Master sincerely. Don't be impatient. Hold on

to the path with unbroken perseverance. There is no short-cut to Truth. A complete transformation of all the parts of one's personality is needed for substantial and genuine spiritual experience.

There is no other way to abiding peace and lasting happiness but the discovery and realization of one's true and essential divine nature.



You are not thinking nothing. You are thinking that you are not thinking. If there were no thinking at all, but only alertness, Self-Realization would come to you.

Ego, mind, relative feeling and knowing etc. are the off-shoots of false identification. I say false identification. False means that identification is only a phenomenon. It is not real. It is like a dream. In reality, it does not exist. Your question would be valid only if the identification were real. It exists but only in time. And whatever is in time, and of time, is not real. Timelessness is real.



Seeing is always there. But it is mixed up with mind. So mind must be silent, then there is seeing in its pristine purity. But once you taste it, you never miss it even if your mind is there.

Can you show me your mind ? Look within and see where it is and you will not find it. Just try it. It is your non-seeing which gives birth to your mind. Knowing in itself is mind.

When you are in a dream, you cannot know when the dream started. When you are awake, you simply know that the dream was not real. You may use the word 'ignorance' for false identification, then it will be easier for you to understand what I mean. It has only relative existence. It has no absolute existence.

A child has childish ego. Your ego is the off-shoot of your false identification with what you really are not.

Drop off your mind and the 'Kingdom of Heaven' is easily accessible. It is most easy to achieve anything spiritually when you lose your ego. Spiritual achievement is difficult in proportion to the intensity of your ego. It is most difficult and yet most easy.

Ready-made answers don't satisfy you. And most of the questions people ask are second-hand questions. A mind that has the capacity to create an original question, has also the potentiality of knowing the answer by reflection. It is the mind which creates questions and then keeps itself preoccupied in finding the answers to them. I have found people asking the same questions year after year. When I answer them they are intellectually satisfied and nod their heads in affirmation, but they miss the import of the answer. Next year they come and ask the same questions again.

Understanding the answer does not take much time. The assimilation takes time.



Grace is like a piece of sweet, which you can eat all right but the sweetness of which you cannot describe to others.

Grace is like water, you can drink it if you want.

Grace is like earth, which upholds you through all time, though you are not aware of it.

Grace is like light. When you are sitting in a room with only one window open, you will receive only as much light as one window can allow it to pass into the room. If you keep two windows open, you will get more light. But if you come out of the room into open, you will be bathed in the light wholly. Try to understand that your ego is like the room.

Grace is like fresh air. It is readily available. No price at all. But if you sit in a room and shut all the windows, you are deprived of it.

The spiritual path is not like the path in the plains. It is like a mountainous path. You have to climb higher and higher. You climb a certain height to reach a plateau, come down and then climb a higher peak. Again you have to come down to climb a still higher peak. Slowly and gradually you reach the highest peak. There are so many ups and downs which you have to face in your path upwards. You must persevere.

And there is a reason behind all this. You must be acclimatised to intermediate situations, to the heights of the intervening hills. If you reach the highest peak directly, you may not be able to bear the rarefied atmosphere of that peak.



To be passive means not to react. A child up to age of three to four years, acts spontaneously, unconsciously. Afterwards he becomes more and more hypnotized and reacts to suggestions.



Do you know even a seeker like Swami Vivekananda started crying when he was transmitted an experience by Ramakrishna, the experience for which Vivekananda was not then ready and ripe ? *Samadhi* means death. Absolute death, death of your mind and ego, and personality. It is very, very painful to a person who is not ready for it. Do you want it ? Ramakrishna had to withdraw it, but it changed much in Vivekananda. Vivekananda was not an ordinary seeker. He was a very evolved soul. Ramakrishna wanted to make him a medium through which he could convey the message of his Realization to the world. Ramakrishna treated Vivekananda in a very special way.



We notice that sometimes we get suffering but cannot know the cause of suffering; on other occasions we get some very favourable conditions, but cannot know their reason as well. Our favourable or unfavourable situations are not always the result of our immediate past actions. Sufis believe that there is always a hidden divine dispensation. Whether we are able to correlate the effect with cause or not, there always is a divine law secretly working in this universe.

You get the mango from the mango tree, and an apple from an apple tree: this is the law. You get wheat, and you say what! I had sown maize, why am I getting wheat ? Now the nature cannot make a mistake. It only means that you had sown maize in an unmindful state of hypnosis mistaking maize seeds for wheat seeds. *Karma* is like a seed; you sow the seed, but do not get the fruit immediately; the fruit comes so late, that you even forget that you had sown a seed of a particular fruit.

Have you heard a joke ? Nasruddin once went to have a Turkish bath at a famous hotel in Turkey. Dressed as he was, in worn out and dirty clothes, the waiter took him for a beggar. He gave him a dirty towel, and the bathing water offered was not well heated. On finishing bath and leaving the hotel, Nasruddin gave a tip of fifteen Dinars, a big amount, to the attendant who was surprised and even ashamed of his behavior. After a couple of days Nasruddin again appeared at the hotel.

The same attendant now received him nicely and gave him clean towel and scented water, well heated, and a good massage too. On leaving the hotel this time, Nasruddin gave the waiter just one penny saying that the fifteen Dinars he had given to him on his first visit was a tip for his present visit and one penny, which he gave him now was meant as a tip for his previous visit.



The world process is like a circle. If you move in a circle you don't reach anywhere. To go out of that

circle you have to go towards the centre.

You prefer the knowledge which gives you temporary pleasures to the knowledge which gives you lasting peace. That is why you miss divine knowledge.

There is something in you which is beyond the law. That is why you can transcend the law.

Reflection, association with sages, right contemplation, right belief, right action — all these help you to gain purity and silence of mind through which you can realize yourself.

There is difference between desire and aspiration. Desire means you want something which is separate from you. Aspiration means you want to discover what you really are.

When you have sweet dreams you don't want to be awake. Nightmares are good if they disturb your slumber. Ouspensky wrote a book and dedicated it thus: "Dedicated to the one who disturbed my sleep."

Would you like to be a happy slave or to be an unhappy Master ? In this relative world there is no absolute (complete) slavery or absolute liberty. There is absolute liberty when you transcend the world of relativity. In that state there is no difference between a slave and a master.

It is better to be poor and healthy than to be rich and unhealthy. It is better to be a happy beggar than to be an unhappy king. What do you say ? What would you like to be ?



If you can recognise a *Guru*, you don't need a *Guru*.



There is not this bank and no other bank and no other country. There is only Isness.

At dawn, light is there but the shadow of darkness still persists. At noon darkness is completely eliminated. Awakening is like a faint perception of the initial moments when you are just coming out of sleep.



Arnaud is Arnaud, Ramakrishna is Ramakrishna, and Ramana Maharshi is Ramana Maharshi. Don't compare the sages.



Realization is like the clear and permanent perception when your sleep has completely vanished. Awakening is like lightning, a glimpse only. Realization is a total and permanent experience.

Awakening is not Realization. Awakening is the first step to Realization. It is like giving a jolt to a sleeping person.



Such thinking of death is, as it were, a self-imposed mental shock to awaken the sleeping mind.

Unless one has fully and directly realized that one's essential nature is beyond death, one cannot but

be afraid of death. All saints may not be fully realized ones. To be afraid of death is quite natural for an unrealized person. You are afraid of death because death is quite foreign to your essential nature. You have practically forgotten death. You are not afraid of a snake now. But when the snake is near you, you try to run away.

You are not afraid of death now, because you think you are too young for death. But in old age you cannot but feel the shadow of death over you and be afraid of it. Many atheists become theists in old age. Wait till you become old. You are not afraid of death because you are not aware of it. The older you grow, the more attached you become to your body. In the old age man starts feeling the shadow of death over him and as he does not want to die, he clings to the body more and more. But it should be the other way round.



The realized ones are one with that, which is not thoughtless but which is free from thoughts.

To be thoughtless is one thing, and to be thought-free is quite another. A stone is thoughtless. Do you think a realized one should become like a stone. You are subservient to your thinking, the realized ones are not. They use their thinking. They think when they want to think and they don't think when they don't want to think. You cannot stop your thinking at will.

Only man can discriminate between body, mind and soul.

Your conscious mind is the sum total of your memories and imagination. Mind can know by comparison only. That is why mind's knowledge cannot be perfect and final.

To use your mind is one thing and to be subservient to your mind is quite another. The realized one uses his mind — yes, but he is not bound by his memories. He only uses his memories. He is not swayed by his past.



Mira is Mira, Ramdas is Ramdas and Yogpremananda is Yogpremananda. Why should all the flowers be similar ? Every flower has its own fragrance. You enjoy the fragrance of the flower you like.



Realization is not an experience. It is experiencing. Experience comes and goes. Experiencing is constant. It is unbroken Awareness.

Sadhana means preparation. When you are ready for Realization it comes instantly. It is, as a matter of fact, timeless. *Sadhana* is to make your mind passive, alert, open, docile and receptive. Passive means not preoccupied. Docile means docile to light, to divine presence, to life everlasting. Mind is preoccupied either with the memories of the past or with the imagination of future. What is present ? The present cannot be grasped by mind. The present can be lived only in the state of no-mind.

There is no 'how', no method. It just happens. It is not the result of any effort. But it also does not come to those who do not want to make any effort. Effort has its utility. All efforts have to be completely exhausted before you become effortless. The utility of your effort is to bring yourself to a state where you are convinced of the futility of your effort and of your ego. You have to put in all your energy and save not an iota of it. You have to stake your whole life for it. You have to die completely. "Die and come to Life," said Jesus.

Every individual is a centre of stress and strain and is, unconsciously and constantly, interacting with all other things and persons.

There are so many invisible beings constantly influencing you — some good influences and some bad. All types of forces are influencing you. You can feel and know them surely. Non-alert or non-occupied mind is most easily influenced; an emotional mind is also easily influenced.

The beings with subtle body (without physical body) are stronger. You don't see them and they don't see you. But both are exercising their influences on each other.

You can stop the influences only if and when you are able to see them coming, or if you keep your mind fixed on God. When your mind is active it does not easily receive outer influence — good or bad.

When mind is active it is less receptive. The strongest mind never imposes itself on anything. It is

the weaker mind, which wants to impose itself upon others.

When you are in harmony with me, you will not get those unwanted influences.



When you see your ego, it subsides. Ego is the product of non-seeing. Can you show me your ego ? Give it to me. What do you mean by ego ? Who is responsible for your ego ? You have made it, and you can unmake it.

What do you love ? Whom do you love ? You cannot be without love ? You have only to change the direction of your love. Do you love yourself ? Everyone loves oneself. Even an insect loves itself.



When you find your beloved, all the troubles and pains you have taken for him/her are forgotten.

If you remain loyal, you must reach the goal. Do not be an infidel. Be patient. The seekers spend lives and lives to find out the Truth. Some get tired and give up. Some get distracted and go astray. Some revert to the old life of desires. But whosoever perseveres must reach the goal.



Surrender is not done. Surrender happens. It is the state of non-doing, a state of no-mind.

Lasting peace, unshakable peace comes only with

Self-Realization. But whenever you have right understanding and control on your passions and emotions/desires, even for a short period, you can have a taste of peace.

The positive and the negative coexist. You are not at peace when you are having positive thoughts only. With positive thoughts you become optimistic, hopeful, excited. When you have negative thoughts, you become pessimistic, depressed and uneasy. Your mind is always changing. It creates heaven and hell for you.



Cannot service and meditation be complementary ?
Why are you putting service against meditation and vice versa ?



When you become totally aware of God, you don't become insensitive to anything, and yet you are at peace.

You cannot stop others from misbehaving with you. You can only ignore them if you so wish.

Don't take things very seriously. Let the Divine be the 'be-all and end-all' for you. When your life interest is totally changed, you will be able to ignore whatever is less than God.

You have to fall in love with God totally. Love suffers no duality. He (God) loves you, but you have to acknowledge and reciprocate His love.

You are always more than and above what you create or what you can create. Isn't it ?

A man sitting in his office gets a phone call saying that his house has caught fire and his only beloved son is inside. He runs to his house. In the way someone misbehaves with him or someone praises him. Do you think that praise or misbehavior can in anyway affect him ? His total mind is fixed on his home. He sees all people on the way and yet, he sees none.

If you cannot take a jump, then walk step by step; you should not expect instant Realization.

He is radiating His grace but you reject it. Just open the window, that is your heart.



Meditation means to fix your mind on the Divine. But how can you do it if you don't withdraw your mind from what is not divine ?

O.K., don't think of the Divine. The Divine is eternal and imperishable — his much you believe ? So only discard other images (of what is impermanent) which enter or arise in your mind during meditation/*Japa*.

You don't want to use a symbol. You say you don't know what is the Divine. At the same time you say that the Divine is beyond mind. So what will you do ? Either you have to follow the positive approach or negative method. What else can you do ?



Body is not the true 'I'. 'I' is the substance, body is only a shadow. Reflection is also a part of *Sadhana*.

Your own Self is the Self of all. Otherwise how could love exist ?



There are two kinds of actions you do: voluntary and involuntary.

All your voluntary actions are done through *Sankalpa*, your desire. You make a volition to come here and you come. You want to eat and you eat. You want to sit and the body obeys.

Your involuntary actions are being done by your subconscious mind, that is why you feel as if they are not being done by you. You feel these are going on automatically. If you could have access to your subconscious mind, you would know that these actions are not automatic.

What is subconscious now, was conscious sometime ago. It can be brought to conscious level again.

What you call instinct, is in fact degenerated or involved reason.

You sow the seed and forget it. When seed turns into a plant and bears fruit, you say it is not done by me, I am not responsible. It is your desire, your mind which is responsible for the creation of your body. The body is created for you so that you could exhaust your *Karma* through it. And so long you have desires you will have to take the physical body again and again

to work-out those desires. You are put into a certain situation according to your past *Karma*.

If you want to have full control on your life, you must be totally aware, even of your subconscious.

But for liberation and freedom you need not go into your subconscious. Self-surrender is the other way. The first involves *Yoga*, the second involves surrender.

The path of *Sankalpa* and the path of *Samarpan*: the path of will/effort and the path of surrender.



God/Nature is very kind to us that we don't remember our past lives. Otherwise, life would be difficult to bear. The relationships of the present life already disturb man so much. Were he to remember his previous lives too, he would become mad.

If a father comes to know that his son was his enemy in his past life, how would he treat him ?

You have to be totally disinterested in your present life and your conscious mind must become inactive so that subconscious may come up. Ego exists so long as you don't discover your true Self.



When your ego actually accepts defeat, it is ready to win. It is most difficult for one to accept defeat. You say you are sinful. But if someone else says you are sinful, what will you do ?

You have to find out your own way to overcome

your desires. Have you a burning desire to be desireless ?



In true seeing you don't see anything but God.

Meditation is nothing but auto-suggestion. In the beginning of meditation you have a divine thought. Even to have the thought that there should be no thought, is also a thought.

Deep meditation and *Japa* are the devices.

Conscious mind is like a *Chawkidar* (watchman). Subconscious mind is like a master of the house. When subconscious comes up the conscious mind steps aside. The roots of all strong habits are in the subconscious. Pure seeing is seeing without a mind.



You meditate to seek happiness. A realized one meditates to express happiness. As a matter of fact all the activities of the realized one are simply to express happiness.

A realized one is always in meditation even while he is walking, eating, sitting or even when he is sleeping. The meditation of the realized one is like dancing. You cannot ask a dancing person why he is dancing.



Subconscious mind is the seat of all negative emotions. The roots are there, so thinking/reasoning

which is the function of conscious mind, does not help much to remove emotions such as anger, attachment greed etc. Everyone knows that anger is not good, that it creates tension, that it gives blood pressure and yet you become angry. Intellectual understanding of anger, thus, does not help much in dispelling anger. The *Japa* of a *Mantra* cleanses your subconscious.

Meaning is there in the *Mantra* as its power. You need not think while repeating the *Mantra*. It is enough to know the meaning and believe in the efficacy of the *Mantra-Japa*. Faith in the *Mantra* and certain measure of concentration is what is needed in *Mantra-Japa*.



The seeker should see the misery involved in the states of birth, death, old age and disease, and cultivate dispassion for temporal world. Birth, death, old age and disease are inseparable from life in the physical body.

If you remain unconscious of the physical body, then what is the use of assuming the physical body? You have been given this physical body so that you can feel its limitations, reflect upon these and develop dispassion.

If man does not suppress his inordinate impulses, what is the difference between an animal and man.

Dispassion itself has its characteristic peculiar joy.

You receive grace of God when you are passive

and alert. Otherwise, grace comes and goes back, finding all your doors closed.

A sincere effort to overcome one's negative emotions is not suppression. It is self-culture.



God is like the thread of a rosary which holds together all the beads; without that thread, rosary cannot exist. All of us have to be aware of that divine thread which upholds us all.



How to stop the mechanical thinking of mind ? If I tell you not to speak, will you ask how not to speak ?

If thoughts come without your willing, don't cherish them and don't identify yourself with them. If you can do that, they will drop off and cease to come.

Right meditation should make you relaxed. Meditation is the art of complete relaxation.



How do you know you are progressing on the path of Realization ?

If the mind is slowing and thoughts are more and more subsiding, if one feels more and more undisturbed and calm amidst both favourable and unfavourable conditions, if the zeal to discover Truth is becoming stronger and attachment to impermanent things, situations and relationships is becoming

weaker, one may safely infer that one is progressing on the path of Realization.

Sit in meditation regularly. Pray and invoke divine grace daily. Reflect and learn from your past experiences. It will hasten your inner growth.



An important person is not the one who has pelf, power, riches, authority, learning and high position and all that stuff which puffs up the ego. An important person is, doubtless, one whom people need, and whom they give reverence out of love and not out of fear; one who is the unquestioned beloved of everyone irrespective of caste, creed, colour or position in life.



Thought is the source of words and deeds. A man whose words, deeds and thoughts are in harmony is said to be a man of integrity. If a man thinks something, says something else and does something which is not in harmony with his thoughts and deeds, he is not a trustworthy man. The seeker has first of all to create harmony in his mind, in his thoughts and feelings, and then act according to those harmonious feelings and thoughts.

Watch tension as a witness, and it will subside. If you watch your anger, it loses intensity.

Concentration makes your mind stable. In stability you feel a sort of joy. *Japa* is a method of concentration. In *Japa* you concentrate on feeling,

thought and word. Witnessing is not like standing in the current. It is like standing out of current. Seeing through the mind is not true seeing. In that case you are not seeing. You are thinking that you are seeing.

A mind which is full of contradictory thoughts is very tense; it is always in conflict; it has virtually no power. All its energy is wasted. A man with such a mind is like a cart being pulled in all directions at one and the same time. You can imagine what shall become of such a cart.



The word help is not proper. You should serve others selflessly. Service is a part of *Sadhana* for Self-Realization. There is no contradiction between service and meditation.



Pure food is that which is *sattvic*, and is cooked and served with love.



Your choice is according to your liking. So long as you have likes and dislikes, you are bound to choose; you cannot say 'yes' to each situation.

Don't cherish opinions. Give up preconceived beliefs and convictions. Drop your mind. If you could do that, choiceless awareness will come to you.



Drugs are not the way to Realization, not at all. On the other hand, their use makes a man totally unfit for Realization. They damage your sensitivity for all higher values of life, even human values.

Awakening is often sudden in appearance, but actually it is not so. It comes to you only when you are ripe for it, and one becomes ripe for awakening after a very long preparation.

Moreover, awakening is not the end. It is only the beginning of Realization. There is no short cut to realization of Truth. The whole personality of the aspirant needs to be purified and transformed before the awakening can be established into an everlasting awareness of Truth.

Awakening is like a flash. When it stays with you for longer and longer periods and becomes deeper and deeper, it turns into Realization. When this Realization becomes settled and stabilized in you, it may be termed as Fulfilment. Fulfilment never, never deserts you, or say, you become Self-Fulfilled for ever and unceasingly.

Every sincere seeker is welcome to stay here in the *Ashram* for meditation, provided one follows the rules and regulations of the *Ashram*.

You have stayed here, you know the schedule and the atmosphere. We always try to accommodate all sincere seekers of Truth. I will help you in your quest for Truth if you need my help. You have to start from ABC. To begin means to begin.

What will you find in the old ruts of life even if you go back. If you still think that something can be found there, you should first try that and then begin to travel on this path.

Your state of mind in meditation proves whether you are a master or a slave, whether you are God or a helpless creature, whether you are free or not.



In nature (manifestation) emptiness is impossible. There is movement all around. Wheresoever a small vacuum is created, all the forces around rush in to fill it.

Even modern science accepts that it is impossible to create a perfect (total) vacuum. The world-phenomena are a transition, an evolution, a change.



Beyond manifestation there is something, you may give it any name — which is formless, timeless, spaceless, causeless. You may call it absolute Emptiness, or you may call it absolute Fullness. These are two ways of indicating the same indefinable, inscrutable, 'something' which mind fails to grasp.



Well, poets are not philosophers. They are basically men of heart rather than men of reason. They never care to say things which are consistent.

There have been some devotees who were

philosophers as well as poets. But their personality is multidimensional, very complex. At times they look most rational and consistent; at other times they forget logic completely and look intoxicated with love and devotion. But your question is somewhat different. We discuss it tomorrow.



Nisargadatta Ji Maharaj was a *Vedantin*, a hard core *Vedantin*, in theory and a ritualistic devotee in practice, as I have heard about him. Intelligence, awareness is the ultimate proof of anything that exists or that may exist. So intelligence is involved in each and everything. Without intelligence the existence of anything cannot be proved. As a matter of fact a *Vedantin* never uses the word 'creation'. He says the world is not a creation but a manifestation. Creation is unmotivated expression of the Divine.



When a dancer, not a professional dancer, dances what is his/her motivation ? It is the spontaneous expression of joy he/she expresses through dancing. There is no motivation.



The whole universe is an evolutionary process. The process of evolution of soul goes on for ever. Through million and million of years of normal journey and passing through and transcending the mineral, vegetal and animal consciousness, the involved consciousness has

evolved into mental-consciousness. The being dominated by mental-consciousness is one who is called man. The human being or mental-consciousness is, however, not the final stage in the process of evolution. The human being has, of course, infinite potentialities and has manifested along with, a relative capability to realize these potentialities. That is why a person becomes responsible for his/her *Karmas* (actions). The divine power is unceasingly at work and secretly guiding to evolve the soul; but a person becomes responsible by choosing to cooperate with or oppose the divine evolutionary force. As a result, a person may slip down to the level of an animal or alternatively, may by the sublimation of his/her consciousness, realize the infinite, eternal, absolute Consciousness-Bliss-Truth. Perhaps, with the same intent, a poet has written:

“Animal, man, angel and God,
There are, indeed, thousands of varieties of men.”

